

Preface

"WHERE WERE THE FEMINISTS WHEN WELFARE REFORM PASSED?" demanded Cathy Johnson over lunch, not long after the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) became law. "Hoisted on liberal feminism's petard," Georgia Duerst-Lahti answered, more than a little defensively. Thus began the odyssey of this book and this collaboration. When Noelle Norton signed on, we had laid the basis for a truly enjoyable and productive scholarly collaboration. Because we were scattered across the country from east to west—Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and California—the collaboration could have been difficult. Although a few week-long home visits and annual conference lunches were part of the writing, mostly, we e-mailed. In the thick of things, our messages flew nearly as fast as our teenagers' IM-ing.

Instead of being difficult, our work together proved fruitful because we had the perfect mix of expertise and temperament. In order to answer Cathy's question adequately, we needed to cross our respective fields of gender theory (Georgia), social policy (Cathy), legislative behavior (Noelle), and political ideology (all of us). In addition, Cathy writes calmly with unusual clarity, Georgia pushes the boundaries of convention in great bursts of energy, and Noelle possesses superior quantitative skills and an ability to tackle daunting mounds of data while retaining her sanity. We became our own best and worst reviewers—if one of us couldn't understand it, we knew others would not either. By triple-checking and constant e-mailing, we can now claim that we bring "inter-coder reliability" to every assertion we make. The process often crawled at a snail's pace, but never once did we argue or otherwise exude negativity, a remarkable feat. Our respect for each other's distinct talents abound.

As we launched this project, we quickly discovered that our combination of subfields would not fit neatly into any of the categories familiar to political science. Nonetheless, we persisted, and with plenty of help from scholarly friends we have designed an approach that, we hope, brings coherence to much of the work related to gender, ideology, welfare, and policymaking. We developed an original framework that helps to make sense of a complicated and nuanced set of ideas used to make policy. In the process of creating welfare policy, lawmakers also create gender. Gender is regularly created through policy, but seldom is that process of gender creation either explicit or tacitly acknowledged. Therefore, legitimated gender is established without scrutiny or debate. We hope this book provides the tools to analyze gender's legitimation in future policy debates.

The particular catalyst for this work was the observation that, in making PRWORA, legislators had destroyed the last vestige of standing given to care work by mothers. No longer would work as mothers—to foster children into able citizens—be recognized by the government as a public contribution. Instead, yet another masculine norm had been elevated—work in paid employment, or breadwinning. Even feminists in Congress seemed not to notice that motherhood had been made masculine. Maybe even more pernicious, but certainly intriguing as an academic puzzle, was that odd alliances and new oppositions arose during the PRWORA debate about motherhood. Our inclination to research and understand the politics behind these fascinating relationships and new bedfellows was made urgent by the fact that this new gender policy carries the force of law. It allocates values about which mode of gender—for women and for men—is to be sanctioned and rewarded with resources, and which will be discouraged and punished. This disciplining of gender is no small matter. It deserves to be brought to the fore of policymaking scholarship.

Our question, “Where were the feminists?” suggested that feminists should have taken a very public stand against PRWORA and that doing so would have made a difference for the value of mother-work. It also suggested that the feminist policymakers abdicated their responsibility to protect and advance the interests of women and children, which then begged the question of why only feminists had this responsibility. Our answer needed to avoid blaming feminists for something everyone should care about, even if they do not, and to attend to the fact that policymaking was ultimately in the control of elite men rather than feminists. Still, we could not let the feminists in legislatures entirely off the hook for participating in a reform effort that clearly had detrimental effects on poor women and their children. So our question expanded to, “Who were these feminists, who else was involved, and how were they involved?”

Clearly, feminists are not a monolithic political force, so we needed to approach this project with sensitivity about hyphenated feminisms and the diversity of ideological orientation across feminism. We also needed to incorporate the ideas of nonfeminist women, recognize men as gendered beings, and sort out the gender ideological variation both among and about men. Georgia had been working on such a project already, spawned by a colleague who casually equated feminism to Marxism. With the late Rita Mae Kelly, she had spelled out the basic notion of gender as protoideological, but quite clearly more nuance was required. Among other things, a new term was needed. Women are not more “liberal” than men, as they often are labeled; instead, they care about things associated with women. They have a feminist orientation (for a definition, see Box 1.1), and that’s why we saw Republican and Democratic women working together to mute the excesses of welfare reform proposals. Men are not more “conservative”; instead they care about things associated with men. They have a masculinist orientation, and that’s why we often saw men working across the aisle to offer bipartisan reform proposals by men and about men. Nonetheless, conservative women and men held similar ideas, as did liberal women and men. So we needed a way to show convergence between the sexes. In the end, we developed a framework of compound ideology to help explain the shared and divergent ideas of women and men making policy—the compound gender ideology we outline here.

Cathy brought her expertise and passion for social policy, especially for children’s policy. Her knowledge of the history of welfare policy helped her to take charge of the gender paradigms and to apply them to welfare policy as it evolved. In the process, she anchored our contemporary ideology in the paradigms that proponents dispute.

Noelle provided expertise on analyzing legislative behavior to demonstrate quantitatively that we could make the claims we wanted to make. She also teased out quantitative proof from a survey of Wisconsin state legislators, who passed the welfare policy that became the model for federal reform.

We owe an intellectual debt to many scholars who came before us. Their contributions are written through us and onto the pages that follow. Cathy J. Cohen’s *The Boundaries of Blackness* served as a model. We strove to theorize meaningfully about gender much as she did about secondary marginalization. For her, the main question was AIDS; for us, it was welfare reform. Mark Kann has written more (and better) about masculinity than anyone else in political science. Joan Tronto has written masterfully about care work, and Christine Di Stefano showed us the place of (m)others in political thought. Gwendolyn Mink has led scholars to think critically about race in social policy. The late Rita Mae Kelly in-

spired us with the reach of her ideas and her capacity to cross scholarly boundaries. Her memory was with us throughout. We also owe an intellectual debt to several legislative scholars. Richard Fenno and Richard Hall have inspired us to look deep inside the recesses of the legislative committee to find the real players and policymakers. Eric R.A.N. Smith has helped guide us through the measurement of ideological legislative behavior. Sue Carroll, Sue Thomas, Debra Dodson, and Cindy Simon Rosenthal, among others, have written extensively about female members of Congress, providing us with the support to make our claims about female legislators. Michael Cohen taught us to look beyond the obvious. Deborah Stone's creative work on policy analysis inspired us to connect the rhetoric of politics to the goals of policy. The work of many historians, including Linda Gordon, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Rickie Solinger, reminded us that we care about politics because the actions of government have a lasting impact on people's lives.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to those who helped us hone our ideas and who willingly subjected themselves to earlier versions of this book. Some were official discussants who reviewed our papers with care, whereas others were professional colleagues. We thank five anonymous reviewers whose ideas strengthened the book immeasurably. We apologize in advance for missing some who have helped us. Georgia would especially like to thank Susan Carroll, Jane Bayes, Mary Hawkesworth, Wendy Sarvasy, Kenneth Hoover, Tony Affigne, Julia Jordon-Zachery, Ann Davies, John Rapp, Barbara Burrell, and Dorothy Stetson. She also owes an enormous debt to Virginia Sapiro and Dennis Dresang, who continue to mentor her, even now. Noelle would like to thank many of the same colleagues and would like to add Barbora Morris, Sonia Garcia, and Del Dickson to the list of those who provided sage guidance and moral support from beginning to end. Cathy would like to thank Alison Case for reading an entire draft of the manuscript and giving excellent advice about narrative, and the Political Science Department at Williams College for lively feedback and conversation. David Heesen is commended for outstanding work in formatting the manuscript, and a debt of thanks is owed to Arno Damerow for his ability to solve word-processing problems.

This book took longer to complete than we would have liked. Through it all, Leanne Anderson of Lynne Rienner Publishers always showed enthusiasm for the project. We should have listened to her from the beginning; she is a delight to work with. Her insistence that we not write as boring social scientists has improved the book immensely, although we suspect we never quite reached the creative flow of her dreams. We also thank Lynne Rienner, who did double duty as our edi-

tor while Leanne was on maternity leave. Her wisdom shone brightly through the many details she covered to make this book better.

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With all this help, one could hope we have expunged all the inconsistencies and mistakes. Alas, such a feat seldom occurs, and we likely are not to be exempt from such failures. We accept responsibility for any mistakes we have made in using others' ideas, or developing our own.

Finally, no one undertakes a project of this magnitude without the support of family and friends. Cathie Duerst Schroeder continues to inspire Georgia with a positive attitude and willingness to try new things. Cyndi Taylor is a friend beyond compare, who helps with the kids and otherwise keeps Georgia sane. Carol McPhee Norton and Ann FitzGerald were critical to Noelle and this project as her lifelong editors, mentors, and counselors. Beth Norton, Claire Norton, Barbara Morris, Helen Westcott, Deborah Sundmacher, and Jane Beck, all mothers, friends, and sisters, not only keep Noelle sane but all continue to talk through the meaning of mothering, whether on the beach, in the park, or over a lemon-ginger muffin. For Cathy, Scott Wong is a source of good jokes, support, and companionship through the long working days; Gretchen Long and Alexandra Garbarini remind her to breathe and help her unpack comments she does not understand; Cheryl Shanks goes shoe shopping when a break is needed; and Monique Deveaux has delightful conversations about life and politics over a glass of wine.

Finally, to our spouses and life partners, good guys all—Tris Lahti, Tom Gais, and Erwin Willis—we say thanks for your patience when we got cranky, for being a sounding board as we worked through both substance and strategy, for helping to keep the computers running, and for all the many, many things done to make this project go smoothly. Most important, we thank all of you for being good fathers and for inspiring us to think about fatherhood through your example.

—*Cathy Marie Johnson,
Georgia Duerst-Lahti,
and Noelle H. Norton*