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Gender Dialogues: A Space for Community and Conversation

Monday, July 9, 2018

Response to: Big Questions Surrounding Gender Equity

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When I entered the field of public administration, gender equity was framed by simpler concerns. It focused on the underrepresentation of women in MPA programs and among MPA faculty. There was perhaps a tacit assumption that as women's presence grew, their impact on the theory, scholarship and practice of PA would grow accordingly. Maria D'Agostino and Nicole Elias's blog post examine a world where this has yet to happen. They place some of the responsibility for this on women's lack of representation on editorial boards and in the position of editor-in-chief.

I concur. Decisions about what and who to grace the pages of PA and Policy journals influence the content and leadership of our field. The Feeny et al. (2018) *PAR* article "Power in Editorial Positions" made this clear. This article called for more transparency and voiced concern about bias. All of their arguments made sense. While we do not want editors or editorial boards to be bias, they are selected for their expertise and judgment. This judgment guides their decisions about the nature and future of the field. When women are missing from these positions, their guiding judgments are missing. I believe the field would be stronger if these guiding judgments reflected greater diversity. Voices, which now feel marginalized, can be better synthesized.

A commitment to increase the presence of women on editorial board and in the decision-making role of editor, is about the future of PA. I believe we should also turn our attention backward and re-imagine our past. A history of PA absent women is a contemporary problem. We need to find and re-integrate women into our historical narrative. Women's contributions may not fit the neat categories that provide us with the stories of our founding fathers. We will need to look in unorthodox places and make the connections. The women are there, they were just marginalized and often pushed over into social work. Non-profit administration offers another avenue of investigation.

Even without the authority of the vote, women organized to recreate their communities. Theda Skocpol's (1995) *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy* and Cam Stivers (2000) *Bureau Men and Settlement Women* are examples of work that should be part of mainstream PA history. I feel certain that if we look into social work, particularly the branches that focus on policy and advocacy, we will find many amazing pioneers of public administration. We need a historical pluralism and revisiting and reintegrating the work of women at the time of the founding is one way to

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do this.

Nicole and Maria asked me to contribute to the discussion because I have edited a journal for almost 18 years. *Armed Forces & Society* is on the SSCI for both political science and sociology. It is international and interdisciplinary and looks broadly at social science and policy issues, which emerge as military and society intersect. Subjects we entertain include veterans, military families, gender integration, base closures, privatization, democratic control and mental health. About 15 percent of our submissions come from faculty in public administration or policy schools.

I published my dissertation, which examined the equity of the draft during the Vietnam era in *Armed Forces & Society*. The organization that owns the journal, Inter-university Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, was begun by military sociologists. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s leaders in this organization offered me many opportunities to expand my scholarly horizons, particularly in the areas of military recruitment, women and family issues. During that time, I attended conferences, participated in invited policy forums, contributed three journal articles, wrote nine book reviews and reviewed about three manuscripts a year. All of these activities contributed to the invitation in 2000 to become the editor-in-chief of *Armed Forces & Society*.

In that role, I have been able to exercise that editorial judgment and influence the scholarship of civil-military relations. One surprising way I did this was to assign more European reviewers to manuscripts about the US military. I believed these papers often needed a more international perspective. Only later did I learn that European scholars were pleasantly surprised that they would be asked to comment on papers about the US military. They also began recommending *Armed Forces & Society* as a publication outlet to more of their colleagues. The US authors responded positively as their assumptions were challenged and horizons widened. The tone and scope of these articles improved in unexpected ways. I use this as an example of how seemingly small editorial decisions (who receives reviews) can influence scholarship. I also believe that my perspective as a woman contributed to that editorial decision.

I have several suggestions for how to increase the visibility of and impact of women's ideas and scholarship in PA. First, don't be shy. Promote your ideas and scholarship. Present at conferences, use social media platforms like Academia.edu and Research Gate. Cite yourself. Second, find a network of likeminded scholars and publish with them. Cite each other. Third, review for journals. Believe it or not, strong reviews set you up as a possible editor. In these reviews, when appropriate, suggest additional works by women be integrated into the literature. If your work fits, include it too. Fourth, have an active research agenda with manuscripts in various stages of completion. Learn from reviews. Figure out how the comments can contribute and make the changes. I had one particularly nasty and mean-spirited review. After a period of shock, I thanked my stars that I was not married to that jerk and revised taking into account the useful stuff. The line on my vita is sweet revenge.

at July 09, 2018 No comments:



Tuesday, July 3, 2018

Big Questions Surrounding Gender Equity in Academia and the Field of Public Administration

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During the 2017-2018 academic year, sex and gender dynamics became a primary focus across disciplines. For example, central topics included: under representation of women in academic leadership and scholarship, gendered content within top journals and editorial board membership, and the #MeToo movement prompting sexual harassment and assault within academia and campus settings to come to light. This interest in gender taking form underscores the need for MPA curricula to promote gender competency for faculty, students, and future practitioners alike. Organizations such as Women in the Public Sector at John Jay College, ASPA's Section for Women in Public Administration, and Academic Women in Public Administration have taken steps to further understanding, collaboration, and fruitful projects that promote greater gender equity in the field of public administration.

As we start our summer projects, and catch up on all our reading and writing, we should take time to pause, reflect, and engage in discussion on recent research and women's roles that focus on women in academia and public administration. Here, we highlight recent scholarship that embodies these critical issues for women. We invite reflection, responses, and ongoing dialogue considering next steps for addressing these challenges and proposing new ways of thinking and taking action.

Women in leadership are underrepresented across all fields, including academia. The need for more women in top management roles is discussed as part of the #MeToo movement to counter the existing power imbalances in organizations. In their 2018 *Journal of Public Affairs Education* article, *Gender and the Role of Directors of Public Administration and Policy Programs* Stabile, Terman and Kuerbitz, Stabile, Terman & Kuerbitz assess gender as it relates to director positions in Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Master of Public Policy (MPP) programs. They explore whether women are more likely than men to serve as MPA and MPP program directors and whether men and women report different experiences in the role, such as length of service, rewards and burdens, and possible constraints on research and teaching and thus promotion potential. They found that some gendered characterizations of women's leadership persist; yet, men and women program directors typically experience similar struggles in balancing their administrative roles with the demands of teaching and research, both of which are likely to suffer during their service. The recent research by Beaty and Davis (2018) *Gender Disparity in Professional City Management: Making the Case for Enhancing Leadership Curriculum*, highlights the paucity of women in senior management positions even though there is no lack of women with professional training. They call for the teaching of public administration to reflect its changing world by including specific areas of inquiry in the MPA curriculum including why more women do not attain senior executive positions. They conclude that professional training programs can better prepare women for the new world of public administration by making gender more visible within the leadership curriculum. There is no doubt that the MPA curriculum should highlight sex/gender issues. However, this presents us with another fundamental challenge articulated by Meghan Hatch in (2018), *Quiet Voices: misalignment of the three c's in public administration curriculum*, Here, Hatch asks how

we achieve greater equity in academia when women write less than 20% of required readings. As Gina Scutelnicu and Hillary J. Knepper emphasize in *A Tale of Two Journals: Women's Representation in Public Administration Scholarship*, women publish less than men as solo, lead, and top 10 authors in leading public administration journals. Meghan Hatch maintains that although scholars preach congruence between "the three C's" (concepts, context, and content) of public administration in order to keep the field relevant, the content and concepts taught in the MPA classroom do not match the context in the field and provides strategies to address the problem. Beyond addressing these gender imbalances in the classroom, Feeney et. al. (2018) focus on a root cause of this problem in *Power in Editorial Positions: A Feminist Critique of Public Administration*. They maintain that women's representation as journal editors and editorial boards is key to shaping the direction of research in the field because editors are the gatekeepers of what will be published.

Using this recent scholarship as a point of departure, we ask authors, journal editors and board members, those in service leadership roles, and members of academia interested in the topics of representation of women, gendered curriculum content and pedagogy, sexual harassment and assault, and other salient topics to contribute to this discussion.

The responses from authors, journal editors and board members, and leaders in this area of scholarship will be posted. We, also, would like to invite anyone whom would like to contribute to, please email their contribution to the Women in the Public Sector email account: womeninthepublicsector@gmail.com or wps@jjay.cuny.edu.

at July 03, 2018

No comments:

