Beyond Bodies: Institutional Sources of Representation for Women in Democratic Policymaking

S. Laurel Weldon

Purdue University

The idea that individual members of marginalized groups provide substantive representation for the wider group rests on a problematic understanding of the relationship between individual experience and group perspective. I propose understanding group perspectives as collective products. In this view, institutional structures and social movements, not just bodies, can be more or less representative of groups. Comparing the impact of various modes of women's representation on policies to address violence against women in 36 democratic countries in 1994, I find that women's movements and women's policy agencies may provide more effective avenues of expression for women's perspective than the presence of women in the legislatures. Thus, studies of representation for marginalized groups should consider institutional changes and increased political mobilization as potential sources of improved political representation.

Introduction

The literature on representation for marginalized groups has tended to focus on the question of whether women should represent women and blacks should represent blacks. But the idea that individuals can represent groups through their persons or behavior is based on a problematic understanding of the relationship between individual experience and group perspective. I propose that group perspective is a *collective* product of social groups, developed through intra-group interaction. This suggests that institutional structures and social movements, not just individuals, can be more or less representative of marginalized groups. I apply this argument in an examination of the impact of women's representation on policies to address violence against women in 36 democratic countries in 1994. Using OLS regression analysis, I find that women's policy agencies (such as women's commissions or women's bureaus) and women's movements provide more effective avenues of expression for women: in combina-

tion, they give women a stronger voice in the policy-making process than does the presence of women in the legislature. Thus, studies of representation for marginalized groups would do well to consider institutional changes and increased political mobilization as potential sources of political representation. The point is not that bodies provide *no* representation, but that bodies are extremely limited as an avenue of *substantive* representation and that *multiple* sources of representation should be considered and compared. The contributions of and interactions between modes of representation can then be more effectively evaluated.

Reconceptualizing Representation for Marginalized Groups

Political scientists have developed an impressive body of work arguing that in order for historically marginalized groups to be effectively represented in democratic institutions, members of those groups must be present in deliberative bodies. In this article, I focus mainly on these arguments as they apply to women as a historically marginalized group.[1] However, I suspect that many of the issues I raise are also relevant for other groups, such as historically disadvantaged racial minorities and gays and lesbians.

The literature examining the consequences and determinants of representation for women and minorities tends to conceptualize and operationalize representation as the presence or behavior of individual women or minority legislators or bureaucrats (Bullock and MacManus 1987; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1987; Darden 1984, 109; Grofman, Handley, and Niemi 1992; High-Pippert and Comer 1998; Hill 1981; Jones 1996; Matland 1993; Matland and Studlar 1996; Nixon and Darcy 1996; Rule and Zimmerman 1994; Selden, Brudney, and Kellough 1998; Shugart 1994; Singh 1998; Welch 1990; Welch and Studlar 1990; Zimmerman 1994). For example, many studies employ Pitkin's (1967) distinction between descriptive representation and substantive representation (or passive/symbolic and active representation) (Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996; Epstein and O'Halloran 1999; Fraga, Meier, and England 1986; Gigendil 1996; Gigendil and Vengroff 1997; Hero and Tolbert 1995; Kerr and Miller 1997; Lublin 1999; Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard 1999; Tremblay 1998; Welch and Studlar 1990). In these studies, descriptive representation is defined as *individual* legislators "standing for" their groups. Substantive representation is defined as *individual* legislators having opinions or behavior favorable to the minority community or to women (Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996; Tremblay 1998, 439). This focus on whether individuals are present or how they vote stems from the idea that individual members of marginalized groups can stand

[1] Williams (1998) defines marginalized groups as those groups for which social and political inequality is and has historically been structured along the lines of group membership, for which group membership is not experienced as voluntary or mutable, and for which negative meanings are assigned to group identity (16).

and/or speak for the group as a whole. As I explain below, this assumption is problematic, and it obscures more effective means for the articulation of the group's perspective.

The Limits of Individuals as Spokespersons
for Marginalized Groups

Political theorists have argued that historically marginalized groups have a distinctive perspective that is unlikely to be articulated effectively in contexts from which members of those groups are absent. This perspective derives from shared experiences and/or social position, and it is manifest in narratives that members develop collectively. It often differs from or conflicts with the perspectives of dominant groups. Representation for marginalized groups should reflect group diversity and should not assume a false homogeneity of interest or identity. Substantive representation requires processes through which marginalized groups authorize and hold accountable those who speak for them. Finally, substantive representation requires that the group's voice or perspective is articulated and heard in policy processes (Mansbridge 1999; Phillips 1995; Williams 1998; Young 1997).

The weakness in these arguments is the link between the personal experience of individuals and their knowledge of the group perspective. These authors emphasize that they are not claiming that women or African Americans share a set of similar experiences or identities. But if women do not share a set of similar experiences, in what sense do women in office represent women?

In spite of their acknowledgement of intra-group diversity, these scholars sometimes seem to argue that individual legislators can speak for the group by drawing only on their personal experiences. For example, Williams (1998) suggests that when a legislator from a disadvantaged group speaks, "The needs she articulates are not hers alone, but the needs shared by members of the group she represents . . . In articulating the group's perspective on behalf of her constituents, the representative does not need to take up the standpoint of another; the perspective is hers *immediately*, although it is not the full expression of her individuality" (141, emphasis in original). Similarly, Mansbridge (1999) argues that descriptive characteristics often act as a proxy for identifying shared experiences. Reflecting on these shared experiences provides a limited basis for representing the group (645). She notes that this method results in substantive representation when the person in question is in fact most similar to her or his constituents. When representatives do, in fact, share the experiences of their constituents, "representatives engaged in introspective representation will reflect the policies their constituents would choose if they had greater knowledge and time for reflection" (646; see also Whitby 1997, 6).

The assumption that a group perspective resides complete in any individual from the group implies that including individual members of the group is sufficient to represent the group perspective. Epistemologically, any individual has

the knowledge to articulate a group's distinctive voice. This conclusion con-
flicts with the recognition of within-group diversity that these theorists explic-
itly recognize (Mansbridge 1999, 637–39; Williams 1998, 293). Even if the
woman is typical in a statistical sense, as Mansbridge suggests, she cannot
"speak for" women. If she is a white, straight, middle class mother, she cannot
speak for African American women, or poor women, or lesbian women *on the
basis of her own experience* any more than men can speak for women merely
on the basis of theirs. Moreover, marginalized group perspectives are not trans-
parent to *individual* members of the group. Group perspective is a *collective*
phenomenon. How can individuals come to have access to these collective phe-
nomena on the basis of their own, relatively limited experience?

Individual Experience, Group Perspective and Representation

I propose an account of the link between group perspective and individual
experience that avoids these contradictions. Group perspective is related to group
member's individual experiences, but not in a direct, transparent way. A social
perspective is a type of group knowledge that reflects the vantage point of the
group's social position (Young 1994, 1997). Group members are marked by
society as members of a particular class: they confront obstacles and issues
that others need not confront (Williams 1998).

But individuals can rarely provide a complete account or analysis of the ob-
stacles confronting the group without interacting with others from the group.
The distinctive voice of marginalized groups flows from group organization
and mobilization; it is a product of the interaction among members of a social
group (Weldon 2002). Only a small part of this group perspective is reflected
in the experience of any particular individual. The group perspective is created
when individual members of the group interact with other members of the group
to define their priorities.

Group perspective can be thought of as a puzzle of which each member of
the group has a piece. The more pieces of the puzzle, the better picture we
have. When additional pieces are very similar to existing pieces (the same color
or texture) we learn little about other areas or features of the puzzle. The greater
the diversity in pieces, the better idea we have about the different areas and
parts of the puzzle. Moreover, when members of the group come together, they
can compare their puzzle pieces, and each person gains a greater understanding
of the larger puzzle to which she or he holds a piece after seeing the puzzle
pieces of others. Thus, the process of putting together the puzzle pieces is in-
teractive rather than simply aggregative. One's puzzle piece likely gives one
more information after interaction with others than before, but there is a point
of diminishing returns: the last pieces are not as valuable as the first few.

It may seem as if this analogy suggests that interaction among women will
produce agreement on the meaning or implications of the picture. But merely

identifying similar obstacles or issues does not suggest that women will experience or interpret these phenomena in the same way. If the puzzle were an abstract painting, for example, viewers could have very different reactions to or experiences of it while agreeing about the physical characteristics of the work. Sharing a perspective on women's social position does not suggest agreement on the meaning of that position or the political dynamics that produce it.

Even when women have conflicting interests, the issues that divide them are strikingly similar. For example, middle-class and working class women have conflicting interests in relation to the issue of wages for child care. The former would benefit from lower wages for child care while the latter would benefit from higher wages for child care. But in both cases, it is *women* who have responsibility for child care, and it is *women* for whom the issue has the most serious consequences. The important thing is to note that *all* of these women confront the issue of the relationship between motherhood and work. What they share is not a list of policy proposals, but more like a list of "women's issues."

Group perspective resides most fully in collective products, such as the agendas of coalitions of organizations, or the newspapers, magazines, and other cultural productions where the group discusses its own issues and concerns. A group perspective is not as specific as a policy position or recommendation: It is more like an agenda of topics for discussion or list of problem areas (Weldon 2002). Because social perspectives are developed through interaction among the members of a social group, no individual member *on her own* has a full understanding of the conditions that confront the group. Participating in group activities provides deeper knowledge of the issues and concerns that members share with others of their group. Individual members of the group cannot legitimately claim to speak for the group without having participated in such interaction because they lack the epistemological bases (as well as the normative bases) for doing so.

Of course, interaction among women often involves conflict, and subordinated subsets of women often have difficulty getting their issues recognized as issues of importance by more privileged women. But debate among women makes these divisions *themselves* the topic of discussion, particularly when marginalized subsets of women can organize as such. For example, when women's organizations and activists from all over the world gathered in Beijing for the fourth United Nations Conference on Women in 1995, they pushed governments to attend to the way race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and other factors create additional or different barriers for women of marginalized subgroups.

Although this view of group perspective is consistent with theoretical arguments for the self-representation of marginalized groups, it undermines much of the extant empirical work on representation: It suggests that there is no reason to assume that the greater bodily inclusion of members of marginalized groups, in itself, should *significantly* increase their substantive representation. Small improvements can be expected, but significantly improving substantive

representation for groups requires that representatives be able to articulate the *group* perspective. The individual alone cannot effectively articulate this perspective.[2]

Marginalized groups, then, are poorly represented in most contemporary democratic policy processes because their perspectives are not equally reflected or considered in the policy process. Better substantive representation for these groups would provide mechanisms for the effective articulation of their distinctive perspective as a regular part of policy processes, and would seek to eliminate barriers to the equal treatment of that perspective in policy deliberations. Mechanisms for the articulation of group perspectives must attend to both the interactive nature of such perspectives and the requirements of accountability and authorization.[3]

Institutional Sources of Representation

The focus on representation by individual legislators has distracted scholars from examining other, more important avenues of representation for marginalized groups. One mechanism that has received little consideration as an avenue for representation is the creation of public agencies whose responsibility it is to provide an intra-governmental voice for particular marginalized groups. Most national governments, for example, now have a women's policy machinery, that is, a government body responsible for promoting the status of women (Staudt 1998; Stetson 1995; Weldon 2002).

Understanding why such offices can provide a mechanism for representation requires an understanding of the limitations that political institutions place on the individuals who fill particular positions within them. Policy outcomes, as noted, are not just a product of the legislators that enact them. They are shaped and implemented by the institutional structure in which they are formed. This institutional structure does not affect all policy ideas in the same way. As Bachrach and Baratz (1962) noted, every organized undertaking involves the mobilization of bias: the very creation of categories makes some issues and concepts salient and renders others irrelevant. The very organization of the administrative structure facilitates some policies and obscures or obstructs others. The organization of government, for example, tends to reflect the priorities of the

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[2] At best, an individual member of the group, without interacting with others from the social group, can articulate a truncated version of the group perspective, *if* she is so inclined. This is a weak version of the argument that in cases where group perspectives are uncrystallized, the reactions of members of marginalized groups in legislatures can help to define the interests of marginalized groups (see Mansbridge 1999; Phillips 1995).

[3] Even though social choice theory has treated the relation between individual and group preferences in depth, I do not employ that approach here. Methodological individualist tools are relatively poorly suited to a theorization of social group perspective because such perspectives are not achieved by aggregating individual preferences, and *perspective* is much less determinative than a specific preference.

dominant groups who defined the basic administrative categories, creating a sort of institutional bias in the structure of public administration in favor of the issues important to historically dominant groups. In this way, institutional structures can also formalize and entrench the understandings of policies ("policy-images") preferred by dominant groups (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). As a result, organizational priorities sometimes conflict with or obscure the interests of marginalized groups, making it difficult to propose or enact policies that further their interests. Without reform, the current structure of public administration tends to provide an unrecognized form of substantive representation for historically dominant groups, while blocking or stifling the articulation of the perspective of marginalized groups.

Such an institutional bias might affect women as a marginalized group in democratic policy processes. The current construction of administrative categories in most of the political institutions in question makes it difficult to address issues of concern to women. Policies addressing violence against women, the protection of reproductive freedom, and economic inequality between men and women usually require coordination among a number of major government departments. Government response to violence against women, for example, requires action in areas as diverse as criminal justice, education, and income assistance policy. But these areas are usually the responsibility of a variety of different agencies, posing considerable coordination problems (Weldon 2002).

Because administrative structures tend to reflect the particular problems (and the understandings of those problems) that prevail at the time of their creation, most public administrative systems are designed to address problems other than women's issues. Moreover, traditional understandings of these problems tend to reflect the context of sexual inequality in which these bureaus were created (Staudt 1997). For example, in the United States the official definition of unemployment excludes women who are looking for paid employment but cannot obtain work because they cannot find child care. The current mobilization of bias present in political institutions disadvantages women and their concerns, creating a sort of gender bias in the fundamental structure of political institutions.

Women's policy agencies are one way of creating state institutions that at least partially reflect women's perspective. A women's policy machinery can focus on issues of concern to women in their entirety: one need not segment problems confronting women (such as violence) into their health aspects, criminal justice aspects, and so on in order to address them (Weldon 2002). Stetson (1995) argues that those agencies that had centralized, cross-sectoral approaches to promoting gender equality were the most effective (288). These agencies must be set up to coordinate women's policies in an authoritative manner, having the power to direct policy making across a number of departments. This suggests that a sub-departmental desk in a low-ranking ministry is unlikely to be an effective mechanism for representing women in policy deliberations. Similarly, an agency with few resources will be unable to carry out the

monitoring and analysis required. This suggests that a women's policy machinery must have a degree of independence, some of its own resources, and positional authority in order to be consistently effective in representing women.

The representativeness of the perspective articulated by women's policy agencies can be improved if the represented have the opportunity to comment on and critique the agency's proposals. Women's bureau consultations with women's movement organizations and activists can improve agency proposals. Examples of such consultations are the advisory committees set up in both Canada and Australia whereby women's organizations had regular access to government officials. In addition, in Australia (and in Canada for a while) there were regular meetings between political officials and women's movement activists to discuss a "women's agenda."

Where access is based on informal channels, it usually depends on good relations between women's movement activists and the individual bureaucrats. If consultation with women's groups is a formal part of the policy agency, then access is likely to be more uniform across policy areas and over time. It may be more difficult for new administrations (who may be hostile to women's groups) to shut women's organizations out of the policymaking process when formal, regularized channels for consultation exist and are part of the normal operation of government.

However, improving institutional capacity is not the same as providing the political will to address a problem. Kathlene (1995) notes that gender mitigates "position power," that is, influence derived from one's position in the bureaucratic hierarchy: Women obtain less benefit from powerful institutional positions than do men. Thus, as a prominent former bureaucrat in a women's policy agency in Canada notes: "without external pressure, these structures have little hope of doing more than holding the fort or maintaining the status quo" (Geller-Schwartz 1995, 57). In addition, providing mechanisms by which women's movements can be consulted will not be of much use if there is no one with whom to consult. This suggests that political support from external social movements is necessary to provide women's bureaus both the political pressure and input that is necessary to capitalize on improved institutional capacity. *Thus, when women's policy machineries have positional authority and adequate resources, they can improve substantive representation for women by providing a mechanism by which women's distinctive perspective can be articulated, and by providing some mechanism of authorization or accountability for women (through consultations with women's organizations). But this impact depends upon the presence of a women's movement, and we should expect little in the way of direct effects.*

Women's Movements as Sources of Political Representation

Women's movements, as mechanisms for the articulation of women's perspective, provide another important but generally unexplored avenue of representa-

tion (Dobrowolsky 1998). This is not to suggest that women's movements are a perfect incarnation of "women's voice." Women's movement articulations can only ever be partial articulations of women's perspectives because some sub-groups of women are always dominated or excluded. Still, because women's move-ment activities provide an arena where women interact as women to define their priorities, women's movements are likely to come closer to articulating women's perspective than a disparate, unorganized group of women in the legislature.

However, it is not just the existence, but also the *autonomy* of women's groups that is important for their success in influencing policy (Busch 1992; Elman 1996). An autonomous women's movement is a form of women's mobilization that is devoted to promoting women's status and well-being independently of political parties and other associations that do not make the status of women their main concern. For example, if the only women's organizations are wom-en's wings or caucuses within the existing political parties, the women's move-ment is not autonomous (Molyneux 1998). Autonomous organizations must be self-governing, and recognize no superior authority, nor be subject to the gov-ernance of other agencies.

Autonomous women's organizing improves women's ability to articulate their perspective. Organizations that are not mainly focused on women's concerns are more likely to adopt those "women's issues" that fit easily into the existing organizational agenda as priorities. When women's groups are only subsidiaries or wings of larger organizations, it can be difficult for them to make the case that considerable amounts of organizational resources should be spent on a "women's issue." Violence against women is an issue that is of concern mainly to women. As such, political parties, trade unions and other political organiza-tions may have more difficulty adopting such an issue as a priority than they would adopting other women's issues that can be adopted under a universal category, such as old age pensions, minimum wage, or family and medical leave. Thus, women's wings or sub-organizations of larger organizations will have a harder time using organizational resources to articulate women's perspective than independent women's organizations that can directly translate women's is-sues into organizational priorities (Weldon 2002).

In addition, autonomous women's movements can improve the accountability of government bureaucrats in ways that non-autonomous movements may not. If the women's movement is entirely contained in the state, the ability to criti-cize government policy may be curtailed. Autonomous groups can challenge the existing order of priorities by drawing attention to issues that are not on the agenda. *Thus, autonomous women's movements can improve the representation of women in the policy process.*

Interactions Between Sources of Representation

Distinguishing multiple sources of representation makes it possible to con-ceptualize interactions between these different sources, and to theorize their

combined impact on democratic political processes. Women's policy agencies provide an important avenue of representation for women, but this is only likely to have an effect on the policy process in the context of an autonomous women's movement. Strong, autonomous women's movements improve the institutional capabilities of government in addressing women's issues. This magnifies women's voice inside government. When the women's movement is strong, the women's policy machinery has more influence with other government departments. Bureaucrats inside the women's policy machinery seeking to articulate women's concerns can point to public pressure from the women's movement. Thus, a strong, autonomous women's movement improves the representative function performed by a women's policy agency.

Conversely, women's policy agencies can strengthen women's movements. By providing financial support for organizing and independent research, women's policy machineries provide additional resources to women's organizations. In addition, by providing research support and opportunities for input on policy development, women's policy machineries can assist women's movement activists in publicly articulating women's perspective. *Thus, strong, autonomous women's movements and effective women's policy agencies reinforce one another in improving women's representation. This effect is interactive: Each factor magnifies the effect of the other.*

Women's Representation and Policies on Violence Against Women

Although descriptive representation may have positive effects on the political process (such as improving the legitimacy of representative bodies, or improving symbolic inclusion of marginalized groups), the argument that it significantly improves substantive representation has important weaknesses. Moreover, descriptive representation is rarely empirically compared with other modes of substantive representation, such as articulation of group perspective through social movements or institutional reforms. Such a comparison reveals that descriptive representation is a relatively ineffective way to ensure that policy outcomes reflect the perspectives of marginalized groups.

In this section of the paper I examine the impact of different sources of political representation for women on policies to address violence against women. Violence against women is central to women's subordinate status: Violence hinders women's efforts to achieve parity with men in the areas of employment, education, the family and public life. Violence against women is consistently identified as an important issue in women's collective endeavors to advance their status: Activists and governments from more than 180 countries have identified violence against women as an issue of literally vital importance (U.S. Department of Labor, 1996). This agreement reinforced the growing body of evidence that violence against women in the form of sexual assault and wife battering are serious problems nearly everywhere in the world (Heise, Pitanguy,

and Germain 1994; Weldon 2002). Still, there is great variation among democratic governments in terms of their responsiveness to violence against women. Some governments undertake broad, multifaceted initiatives to address violence against women while other governments do not even recognize the problem.[4]

In spite of the importance of this issue, there have been only a few systematic cross-national analyses of policy outcomes (Busch 1992; Elman 1996; Weldon 2002). None of these studies investigated the question of the impact of women's representation on policies on violence against women.[5] Thus, this policy issue area provides an important but unexamined test-case for examining the impact of women's representation on national policies of importance to women.

The institutional forms and policy outcomes affecting women vary most clearly across national contexts. The strength and other characteristics of women's movements also vary most clearly across countries. A cross-national study may provide insights into the effectiveness of different modes of political representation for women that are difficult to discern when only a single national context is considered. Below, I first explain how each variable is operationalized and then analyze the relationships between modes of representation and policy responsiveness to violence against women.

Government Responsiveness to Violence Against Women

Violence against women takes a number of forms. This study focuses on the categories of sexual assault of women by men and battering of intimate female partners by males. Action on violence is an important indicator that a women's perspective is influencing policymaking, since it suggests that government is responding to the articulation of an issue of importance to women. Despite the many differences among the countries considered, similar features of the problem and the existing policy structure make it possible to identify a common set of needed actions to address violence against women. A cross-national data set developed by Weldon (2002) includes data on seven different aspects of government response to violence against women:[6]

(1) Has there been any legal reform dealing with domestic violence?
(2) Has there been any legal reform dealing with sexual assault?
(3) Is there any national government funding for shelters for victims of domestic violence?

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[4] Responsiveness should not necessarily be understood to imply effectiveness (see Weldon 2002).

[5] Elman (1996) and Weldon (2002) do consider the impact of women in public office, but the impact is considered in terms of policy effectiveness or responsiveness, not in terms of political representation.

[6] This dependent variable has eight categories (0 to 7), and so can be used in an OLS regression equation. Since the dependent variable is not an event count, a Poisson regression function is not appropriate (Winkelmann 1997).

(4) Is there any national government funding for rape crisis centers?
(5) Are there any government sponsored training programs for service providers?
(6) Are there any government sponsored public education initiatives?
(7) Is there a central agency for coordinating national policies on violence?

Asking how many of these types of policy action a government undertakes provides a good measure of government responsiveness: A government that addresses more areas is enacting a broader, more multifaceted response. Although these seven types of policy action are important for different reasons, all seven policy areas are important for addressing violence against women.[7] The seven policy areas are weighted equally: The indicator simply sums the scores (1 for each area in which policy action occurs, 0 for a lack of action) across the seven areas. This variable therefore measures the *scope* of government response, that is, the amount or breadth of government activity, rather than the particular substantive focus or quality of the individual initiatives (Powell 1982; Putnam 1993).[8] Further, note that this indicator does not measure which governments enact the policies that result in the greatest reduction of violence. Indeed, some of the policy measures considered here are aimed at raising awareness or serving victims, rather than at directly reducing the overall incidence of violence.

   The data set includes these seven aspects of national government response to violence against women for all stable democracies. The focus is on national

   [7] Note that this means that governments sometimes obtain the same score by enacting different policies. This is generally considered a problem with this sort of indicator, but for our purposes this feature of the indicator is of little interest. Policy experts and activists argue that there is no single policy solution and that an appropriate policy response is one that attacks the problem on all fronts (Busch 1992; United Nations 1998; Chalk and King 1998; Elman 1996). For this reason, the dependent variable is measured in terms of the number of different sorts of things that governments are doing (scope) rather than by which of the seven policy areas they address. On this measure, a government that undertook only a criminal justice response or only public education initiatives would receive a lower score than one that undertook both criminal justice and public education initiatives.

   [8] Unfortunately, the usual criteria for assessing composite dependent variables are inappropriate for this measure of scope, and for my research question more generally. For example, a common mode of assessing a composite indicator is to examine correlations among the items. The items in this indicator (policy areas) are conceptually related to the problem of violence against women, and are widely considered important elements of comprehensive response to the problem. But they need not be correlated with each other in order to indicate the breadth of government response. For example, funding for battered women's shelters is often distinct from funding for rape crisis centers: governments often fund one, but not the other, even though both are important elements of any government response to violence against women. If the adoption of these two different types of policies is only weakly correlated, should I conclude that one of them is unnecessary or unrelated to the underlying concept, the scope of government response to violence against women? I think the answer is no, since we can see that they are both clearly related to government response to violence against women. Eliminating one of these items would weaken, not strengthen, the measure, because the very concept of the scope of government action suggests that policy will range across distinct areas. One would not necessarily expect government provision of public education programs to be related to government funding for rape crisis centers.

government response because in general, action by the central government, even if it is only providing funding to local areas, is a key symbolic indicator that the political community is seriously addressing a problem. Thus, even in federal systems such as the U.S., Canada and Australia, action by the national government vastly increases the importance given to the issue and the consistency with which it is addressed. In Australia, where some relevant areas of law are state responsibilities, the federal government has developed model laws and pushed for state adoption. Freedom House data are used to select stable, democratic countries for comparison.[9]

These data on government response are based on a variety of primary and secondary sources including academic, government and activist publications; materials from CEDAW proceedings; U.S. Department of State Human Rights Reports; Human Rights Watch reports; and communications (emails, faxes, and letters) with activists and government representatives in the countries concerned. There are multiple sources for every country, and the sources for each country include at least one government source and one source independent of the national government. This analysis is for the year 1994.

Women's Movements and Political Representation

Above I argued that autonomous women's movements provide an important avenue of representation for women. The vast majority of nations in this study had active women's movements by 1994 (Weldon 2002).[10] Women's movements can be coded as *autonomous* if they have an organizational base outside political parties, unions, and other political institutions. They must also be independent of organizations that do not make the condition of women their primary concern: They may not be subsidiaries, auxiliaries or wings of larger, mixed-sex organizations. Data on organizations was taken from historical accounts of women's movements and encyclopedias of women's organizations (Weldon 2002).

In addition to gauging the autonomy of women's movements, we need some sense of whether they are strong or weak. Movements might be independent but have little impact on the attitudes or awareness of the broader public. Strong women's movements can command public support and attention, while weaker movements have trouble convincing others that their positions and opinions are

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[9] A very thin definition of democracy is employed here: Democracies are those countries in which basic civil liberties are respected and in which free and fair elections are regularly held (Freedom House, 1997). States that were continuously democratic from 1974 to 1994 were judged to be stable democracies. There are 36 such countries.

[10] Women's movements are not equivalent to women's organizations. The idea that organized interests provide a form of representation has a long history, and is one of the core ideas of pluralism (see Williams 1998 for a discussion). I am arguing that women's movements, which include but are not limited to women's organizations, provide such a representative function. Movements include a broad range of activities such as protests, cultural productions, and "personal politics" (Costain 1998; Ferree and Martin 1995; Katzenstein 1995).

important. Such strength is indicated by the size and number of protest activities, the degree of support expressed for feminists in opinion polls, the degree of support for women's organizations, the diversity and membership of women's organizations, the proliferation and diversity of women's cultural institutions (such as women's festivals, newspapers, concerts, and so on), and so on. Given what we know about democratic policymaking, it seems likely that strong women's movements will influence policy outcomes more than weak ones, but strong movements do not *always* influence policy outcomes.[11]

Although it is notoriously difficult to construct accurate measures of women's movement activities across national contexts (Beckwith 2000), there is considerable convergence among experts' assessments of the relative strength of women's movements (e.g., the Swedish women's movement is considered to be relatively weak, while the U.S. women's movement is considered relatively strong (Bergqvist 1999; Elman 1996; Gelb 1989; Kaplan 1992; Nelson and Carver 1994; Norris 1987; Randall 1987; Stetson 1995)). Movements are coded as strong if they are described by expert observers as strong, influential, powerful, as mobilizing widespread public support, and the like. Comparative and country-specific accounts of women's movements explicitly assess the strength of women's movements over time and/or relative to other countries, relying on multiple data sources, including size and frequency of demonstrations, public support for the women's movement as expressed in public opinion surveys, the proportion of women belonging to women's organizations, the proliferation of feminist organizations, bookstores, magazines, and the like, and the frequency with which women's movement activists are consulted in the media and in other public deliberations.[12] Where the movement is *both* strong and autonomous, the country is coded 1; otherwise it is coded 0.[13]

Women's Bureaus as a Form of Political Representation for Women

Above, I argued that women's bureaus can provide a form of political representation for women, and may play an important role in the area of policies on violence against women. We would expect women's bureaus to improve the political representation of women when they have:

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[11] Women's movement strength is thus logically separable from policy influence, preventing what would otherwise be a tautological claim: that women's movements influence policymaking when they are influential in policymaking.

[12] I compared these expert assessments with data on the number and membership of women's organizations drawn from historical accounts and encyclopedias of women's organizations. I found that coding strength according to the number and membership of organizations would have produced the same comparative assessments in most cases.

[13] Note that a women's movement is never coded as strong simply because it appears to have influenced policies on violence against women. The codings are taken from Weldon (2002), Table 3-1.

(1) formalized channels of access for women's organizations, **and**
(2) the independence and resources needed to formulate and implement aspects of a women's agenda.

If the women's policy agencies in the 36 stable democracies in this study are categorized according to these criteria, only 8 of the 35 agencies actually meet these criteria (the agencies in Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, The Netherlands, Belgium, Venezuela, Portugal and Germany). Countries are coded a 1 on this variable if they meet both conditions, and 0 if they do not.[14]

The Interaction between Women's Movements and Political Institutions

As argued above, such a women's policy machinery does not, on its own, guarantee any government response to violence against women. Rather, it is the interaction of the apparatus with a strong, autonomous women's movement that results in better representation for women in democratic policy processes. Where such women's movements interact with effective policy machineries, we should see greater responsiveness to violence against women. This interactive effect can be captured by using a multiplicative term (***strong and autonomous women's movement * effective women's policy machinery***) in the regression analysis.

Representation by Women Legislators

Above I argued that these alternative modes of representation were more important than descriptive representation in improving policy outcomes for women. What measure of descriptive representation should be used in making this case? The strongest accounts for the substantive impact of descriptive representation have argued that women legislators should only be expected to speak or act for women after the proportion of women passes a threshold or tipping point, usually thought to be between 15% and 30% (Bystydzienski 1992; Thomas 1994). As the proportion of women reaches 10% or 15%, women legislators feel freer to express their distinctive concerns. However, they may still not be sufficiently numerous or powerful to be able to diffuse their concerns throughout the legislature. This is more likely to occur when women regularly comprise a greater proportion, say 35%–40% of the legislature (Thomas 1994, 154). As Thomas observes, it is possible that the proportion of women constituting a critical mass varies over time and location. Nevertheless, she notes, "the concept that greater percentages of women legislators will lead to a diffusion of their perspectives throughout the governing body is sound. And the issues of special concern to female representatives . . . will permeate legislative bodies as women's repre-

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[14] The machinery is coded 1 only if both conditions are met, because neither condition alone is theoretically sufficient for political influence. Examination of the interactions between these two dimensions supports this coding.

sentation is closer to parity" (154). This implies, I think, that we would expect a greater proportion of women legislators, especially a proportion of 35% or 40%, to be associated with greater policy responsiveness to violence against women.[15] In contrast, I have argued that, in itself, *a greater number or propor-tion of women (even the presence of a critical mass) in the legislature would not have a consistently large effect on government responsiveness to violence against women.*

The Proposed Model

In general, then, the interaction between strong and autonomous women's movements and institutional structure produces better representation in the pol-icy process, which is here measured by responsiveness to violence against women. We might also expect strong and autonomous women's movements to have an impact independent of this interaction, since such agencies are not necessary for women's movement influence. We would not necessarily expect such an independent effect from women's policy agencies. In addition, the number of women in the legislature does not determine responsiveness to violence against women. Level of development and culture are thought to be fundamental fac-tors influencing politics and policy.[16] I control for these factors using dummy variables to measure level of development, region, and dominant religion (the latter two as proxies for culture).

Analysis

I employ OLS regression to examine the association of different sources of political representation for women with responsiveness to violence against women. Multivariate regression analysis can be used to examine whether (and how strongly) each of these modes of representation is associated with more govern-ment action on violence against women (Table 1). Scope of government re-sponse is coded from 0 to 7, depending on the number of areas of policy action that a national government undertakes. If a mode of representation produced better policy outcomes for women, we would expect the mode to be associated with governments addressing an increased number of additional areas.

As expected, there is no linear relationship between proportion of women legislators and government responsiveness to violence against women (Model 1, Table 1). More generally, a critical mass effect is not visible in this policy area. Of those governments where women comprise more than 30% of the legisla-

[15] Some scholars have used the logged number of women to capture the critical mass effect (Berkman and O'Connor 1993; Hansen 1993). This operationalization does not change the conclu-sion (not shown).

[16] Unfortunately, the cross-national data on levels of violence are not of sufficient quality to warrant inclusion in a regression analysis. The data that do exist, and are somewhat comparable, suggest that level of violence bears little relationship to government response (Weldon 2002).

TABLE 1

Regression Coefficients, Dependent Variable = Scope of Govt. Response to Violence Against Women, 36 Stable Democratic Countries, 1994

Model	Independent Variables	B	SE	Beta	T	Sig.*	R^2
1	Level of development	1.20	.64	.30	1.87	.07	.37
	Strong and autonomous women's movement	1.90	.55	.50	3.44	.00	
	Percent of women in legislature	.00	.02	.00	−.02	.98	
	Effective women's policy machinery	.45	.66	.10	.68	.49	
2	Level of development	1.09	.54	.27	2.03	.05	.43
	Strong and autonomous women's movement	1.39	.59	.36	2.33	.02	
	Effective Women's Policy machinery	−.86	.96	−.19	−.90	.37	
	Eff. women's policy machinery * strong, aut. wm	2.33	1.27	.42	1.82	.07	
3	Level of development	−.28	1.43	−.07	−.20	.85	.61
	Strong and autonomous womens movement	.80	.67	.21	1.21	.24	
	Eff. women's policy machinery * strong, aut. wm	2.30	1.34	.43	1.71	.10	
	Logged number of reps	.01	.42	.04	.17	.87	
	Region–Africa	−1.12	1.84	−.14	−.60	.55	
	Region–Asia	2.31	1.48	.34	1.56	.13	
	Region–Latin America	−.88	1.68	−.18	−.53	.61	
	Region–North America	2.44	1.23	.30	1.99	.06	
	Region–Oceania	1.22	1.25	.18	.98	.34	
	Dominant religion–protestant	.00	.65	−.01	−.06	.94	
	Dominant religion–other	−2.3	1.3	−.47	−1.7	.08	

*I report statistical significance as a matter of interest, but I consider this set of countries to be a complete set of stable democracies (i.e., a population), and I am not employing sampling techniques.

ture, none have addressed more than four policy areas (Weldon 2002, 99). Moreover, among those governments that have been the most responsive to violence against women (i.e., have adopted five or more policies), percent of women in the legislature varies from 6.4% to 21.2% (Weldon 2002, 98).[17] It may be that individual feminist women are important in getting policies passed as policy entrepreneurs. Indeed, it may be that the presence of at least one woman is a necessary condition for policy development. But there is no linear relationship between the overall number of women in the legislature or in cabinet and government responsiveness to violence against women.

The presence of a strong, autonomous women's movement is more strongly positively associated with scope than the proportion of women, with standardized Betas of .50 and .00 respectively (Model 1, Table 1). Controlling for level

[17]Nor are absolute numbers of women linearly related to government responsiveness, even focusing on women in more influential positions, such as the proportion of women in cabinet (not shown).

of development (Model 1, Table 1), the presence of a strong and autonomous women's movement is associated with about one or two additional areas of policy action on violence against women $(1.90 +/- 0.55)$. This supports the argument that the existence of strong, independent women's movements improves women's representation in the policy process more effectively than increasing women's presence in the legislature.

In contrast, the presence of an effective women's policy machinery is not associated with government responsiveness to violence against women (Table 1, Model 1). This may seem to contradict the hypothesis that these institutions have an effect on government responsiveness to violence against women. But I argued above that the policy impact of these institutions depended on the presence of a strong and autonomous women's movement, and that we should not expect to see an independent effect. If this argument holds, then a term capturing the interaction between effective women's policy agencies and strong and autonomous women's movements should be strongly associated with government response to violence against women, and should explain more than either term alone.

An indicator representing the interaction of a strong, autonomous women's movement and the presence of a women's policy machinery (one that provides access and resources) is a very strong predictor of government responsiveness to violence against women (Table 1, Models 2 and 3), being associated with more areas of government action than either of the two parts alone (Model 2). The interaction of a strong, autonomous women's movement and an effective women's policy agency is associated with about two additional areas of policy action $(B = 2.33 +/- 1.27)$ (Model 2). This association seems to hold even controlling for level of development, region, and religion (Model 3).

In sum, then, strong, independent women's movements and effective women's bureaus interact to provide an effective mode of substantive representation for women. Indeed, in the area of policies on violence against women, cross-national data suggest that women's bureaus and women's movements together are more effective than large numbers of women in the legislature at securing policy action.

Conclusion

The literature on representation for marginalized groups is currently focused on whether individuals can represent groups. I argue that although individuals can provide a partial or limited articulation of group perspective, such perspectives are best articulated in those fora where members of marginalized groups interact to formulate their distinctive concerns. This suggests that legislatures, as currently organized, may not be the only (or best) place to examine whether representation of marginalized groups is occurring. Group perspectives can be articulated by social movements or even by government agencies. Political institutions, I have argued, tend to reflect the social perspectives of the histori-

cally dominant groups that created them, thereby embedding a bias toward these groups in the very structure of public administration, and providing a type of substantive representation for these groups. Institutional reforms to remove or mitigate these biases can improve representation for marginalized groups.

Discussions of substantive democratic representation, then, should consider multiple sources of political representation. Considering a number of modes of representation makes it possible to compare different modes of representation, and explore interactions between them. In this study, the interaction between modes of representation appears to be critical: The interaction between women's movements and institutional structures is more important for understanding policy responsiveness to violence against women than the proportion of women in the legislature.

This is not to suggest that individual members of marginalized groups provide no representation. Indeed, the presence of such representatives can have important symbolic and sometimes substantive effects on policy processes. But descriptive representation is severely limited as an avenue for providing substantive representation. Of course, as noted, social movements and women's policy agencies are also limited in terms of substantive representation: Some women feel excluded or dominated in women's movements and lines of accountability are unclear. Women's policy agencies are characterized by similar exclusions and weaknesses. Examining multiple sources of representation provides a more complete picture of the possibilities for—and limits on—influence in democratic policy processes.

More generally, this analysis shows the value of examining the structural conditions in which policy is made (Ashford 1978; Bobrow and Dryzek 1987). Examining the social order, the patterns of political inclusion and exclusion established by institutions and norms, is important for understanding democratic policymaking (March and Olsen 1989). Understanding the impact of such patterns, I have shown, is key to understanding whether and how social groups are represented in democratic policy processes. Thus, the study of women and politics, and of democratic policymaking more generally, should focus as much on political structures such as institutions, social movements and other macro-level phenomena as it does on individual-level variables and characteristics.

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S. Laurel Weldon is assistant professor of political science, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907-1363.