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One criticism of this book is that Romania and the former Yugoslavia are dealt with in comparisons and generalizations, but are not given a separate chapter. It seems that the authors make sweeping generalizations in the present uncertain situation, without sufficiently distinguishing between different countries and regions within them. However, it is an interesting and illuminating book, which balances the concentration on economic challenges and political institution-building that is found in the existing literature.

*Fred Olav Holm & Jan Erik Lane, University of Oslo*

Marja Keranen (ed.): *Gender and Politics in Finland*. Avebury, 1992, 127 pp.

*Gender and Politics in Finland* contains five articles covering different fields of women's studies in political science. The book presents recent research on women in the political and administrative elite, research dealing with the development of equal status ideologies, the state and the women's movement, research on the concepts of similarity and difference, and investigations on women's studies. The theme that permeates the book, the way I read it, is the changing condition of womanhood.

In the introduction, the editor expresses some familiar, accusatory remarks about political science: issues of gender are marginalized, and political scientists lack reflection on the gendered premises of knowledge production. This is regrettable, as women's studies expand, supplements, correct and change the very heart of our discipline. I recommend that male colleagues take the opportunity to read this book, reflect on their relation to women's studies, and respond to the authors' claims.

In the first article, Jaana Kuusipalo has written about Finnish women in top-level politics. She completed a number of interviews with women Cabinet Ministers in 1926–86 in an effort to discover when, how and why they got to the top level. A total of 18 interviews were conducted, but we are not told why only 14 are used in the study. The representation of women at this level is a recent phenomenon, and even in Finland women are far from having an equal share of power. Up until 1968 women were not 'guaranteed' a seat in the Finnish Government, but the 'quota' has increased to three women since the first half of the 1980s.

Not only did the numbers of female representatives change during recent decades, so did the channels of representation, as well as the perception of representation itself: whereas women ministers before 1970 saw themselves as representing women and women's interests, this was much less the case in the 1970s. Then the dominating belief in equality seemed to embarrass a more women-oriented basis for representation. Women in top positions before the 1970s had been actively involved in women's politics, and conceived themselves primarily as representatives of women. This was different for the 'equality-thinking' generation of the 1970s. The importance of the women's sections in the parties then diminished compared to the impact of the representatives' educational and vocational background. Women in

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the 1980s, however, are more conscious of their role as women. The women's sections of the parties have become more radical and women have started to cooperate in local politics.

It is interesting to see how differently these top-level women think about women's role in politics, but I miss a more thorough discussion of their actual role. Although the author refers to several women's studies in this field, she never tries to reject or confirm their controversial thesis about women's political behaviour. For instance, the old hypothesis stating that women's *de facto* power has decreased even although their share of positions in government and parliament has increased, is repeated rather uncritically.

Helena Karento has written about women in the Finnish state administration. She asks if the feminization of the public administration, despite the often-stated public obligation to promote equal opportunities, has resulted in segregation between the sexes, as is usually the case when women enter a male-dominated area. She also examines the (gendered) dilemma of combining paid work and family life. Her study is based on a survey comprising 240 women and, as distinct from Kuusipalo's study, a control group of 512 men. In addition, she has completed interviews with 25 female directors.

It was not until 1926 that women gained the right to enter posts in public administration in Finland. Today, women constitute 32 percent of the administrative personnel. This feminization of public administration took place especially in the period 1966–76, when 37 percent of the new employees were women, and has continued in the subsequent years. However, the representation of women in top offices, was no more than 13 percent in 1988, and the number is not increasing.

Traditionally, women in public administration have been assigned reproductive tasks, while men have dominated the system maintenance and development tasks. Even women who enter public administration through other sectors, move to the field of reproduction as the years go by. Men, on the other hand, move from the field of directing production and economy into the field of system maintenance and development. Thus, in a rather pessimistic conclusion, Karento states that the growing number of women in public administration has strengthened the sexual segregation in the government's fields of activity and in the official hierarchy. She does not, however, question the reasons for the horizontal segregation. Is it mainly a reflection of different interests – or does it imply a manipulative state patriarchy?

Anyhow, the study shows how women form an unofficial group of their own, and that they are isolated to a certain degree. All the more important, then, is the fact that mutual solidarity between women is fairly widespread. The author argues that this can be seen as a kind of disobedience, because it goes against the bureaucratic principles of objectivity and equality. This, I think, is a rather crotchety argument, but it does highlight the relevance of gender even in the internal workings of public administration.

Anne Maria Holli's article is called 'Why the State? Reflections on the Politics of the Finnish Equality Movement Association 9'. Asking why the state is so often, even more than in the other Nordic countries, seen as the feminist movement's best friend, Holli examines the relations between state, society and politics in Finland. Her point of departure is politics in general in the 1960s, with a special focus on the activities and ideology of the distinctively Finnish Association 9, active in the years 1966–70. Association 9 strongly influenced the goals and means of the Finnish equal status machinery that was established in this period, and, according to the author, its ideological influence can still be felt.

Interestingly, Holli focuses on both the politics and the concepts of politics of

Association 9, choosing a diachrone method of study: the question of emancipation is more a question of time and place than of historical continuity, she asserts. Accordingly, the choices available to the women's movement always have to be looked at. Holli describes the dominating social thoughts of the 1960s, and stresses the fact that direct action never took the same hold in Finland as elsewhere. The state took priority over society in the Finnish attempt to combine individualism and statism, and radicalism consisted of attempts to change the state from within.

Association 9 was a mixed-sex organization striving for the elimination of sex roles mainly through shared responsibilities for household chores (until household tasks had withered away through rationalization, and child care had become collectivized). Equality was to be realized through harmonious cooperation, as it was seen to be in the interests of women and men, as well as the individual and the collective. Logically, the organization developed a state-associated, non-conflictual concept of politics, and thus denied the legitimacy both of sexual conflicts and of women's right to build separate women's organizations. Association 9 perceived itself as complementary, never critical, to the state, and decided to dissolve when a permanent public equality organ had been established.

Thus, the politics as well as the concept of politics of the vigorous, influential and 'early second-wave feminism' in Finland pacified women, and, at least partly, explains why the feminist movement never really got a foothold in Finland during the 1970s. One of the questions that still remains to be answered, however, is how politics came to be hegemonized to the degree that Holli's research indicates.

In the article 'Conceptions of Gender Equality; Similarity and Difference', Tuija Parvikko discusses equality and gender. She also highlights how the ideological premises for research have influenced women's studies in Finland. Parvikko examines studies and pamphlets from the social sciences from the 1960s onwards, and contrasts the Finnish and Italian debates on feminism to trace the changing conceptions of equality.

The author refers to well-known arguments, stating that the 'male-stream' political thinking about equality is rooted in the social contract theory. One of the troubles with this theory is its implicit assumptions of the individual as a male being, and consequently its blindness to women and gender differences.

The author maintains that equality and difference are concepts usually understood as being on the same level, opposing each other. This can be seen very clearly in the debate about sex roles in Finland. Parvikko's examination of this debate reveals how the discussion has come full circle: in the 1960s, it was considered radical to think of men and women as similar, and it was traditional to think of them as different. The ideal was to dissolve the sex roles by mixing them, and there was hardly any space for a separate women's movement. In the 1980s, however, it was considered radical to take difference as one's point of departure, while it was considered traditional to think in ways of similarities.

No surprise, then, that gender differences were hardly acknowledged in social research during the 1960s and 1970s. Studies on equality usually meant juxtaposing women's position with that of men's, focusing on work and politics. Logically, women's studies in Finland were not established until the 1980s, and along with it came an effort to locate a more woman-centred point of view.

Even although the ideal of equality is still the basic parameter in the discussion on gender relations, the definition of equality has changed. According to Parvikko, there has been a major shift from a more or less sex-neutral concept of equality in the 1960s, to gender as socially constructed in the 1980s. Parvikko suggests that we should reconsider the concept of sex, and that we take the female body into account.

When equality and difference are no longer treated as alternatives, but understood as concepts on different levels, the limits of the liberalistic concept of equality will finally be surpassed.

Marja Keranen focuses on political science from a post-modern perspective in her article *Modernity, Modernism, Women*. She presents literature that criticizes modernism as a specific world view in a historical period underlining reason and progress. According to Keranen, political science as a discipline is normative and modernistic, reproducing the 'master narrative' of rationality, progress, liberalization and democratization. The message is harsh and clear: political science is a dry, abstract, alienated and aggregated discipline. Without women, it is even a reduced science.

The modernist's world view is described as ethnocentric, implying that the centre universalizes its own conditions, and covers its dependence on the periphery through binary relations. Keranen uses this perspective to explain how and why political scientists generally either totally neglect gender or follow the binary logic, and she is critical of both approaches. She wonders what a post-modern political science would look like, when the centre and the binary logic have dissolved. Her assertion that the discipline is unable to integrate women without undergoing major changes in its content is, I think, somewhat impaired by lack of concrete examples. But, of course, one could say that the book serves as one.

Although I quite agree with the main line of argument, I would have liked the author to have been more specific as to what kind of literature she has based her descriptions on, and to the extent of her criticism. Are there no exceptions? Does she see any sign of change in the direction she recommends?

My general impression of the book is a positive one, although a bit mixed, probably because of the different nature of the articles. Although the first two articles present interesting and important data, they seem to lack the more buoyant theoretical perspectives. Personally, I found the articles by Anne Maria Holli and Tuija Parvikko the most stimulating. They probe in greater depth than the two previous articles, probably (partly) because their topics are more limited. Also, they made me understand more of the special Finnish conditions concerning equality and the women's movement. Most of all, however, they discuss problems of the utmost relevance to the present Norwegian situation, as we are anxiously waiting for another green paper on equal opportunities. The last article presents a post-modern perspective rarely found in political science in Norway. As such, it was worth while reading it. Also, of course, it is interesting to note the similarities between the countries when it comes to the marginal position of women's studies in political science. The book itself, however, proves the relevance of women's studies.

Finally, I must admit that the book leaves me with a rather pessimistic impression of the situation of women in Finland, and I stop to wonder about the reasons for this. For instance, according to the authors, the feminization of top-level politics and public administration has made very little impact on the real power structure in Finland. How come my Finnish colleagues seem to see less light at the end of the tunnel than feminist scholars in political science elsewhere in the Nordic countries? Is it due to worse conditions for women's liberation in Finland, or maybe to a greater belief in progress in the other countries? The fact that the book refrains from genuine and explicit discussions of potential progress is perhaps because of the seemingly deeper influence from post-modern thinking on women's studies in political science in Finland. But why is this so?

*Beatrice Halsaa, Oppland Regional College*