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CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND POLITICS

Feminist Institutionalism

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The "institutional turn" in both feminist and mainstream political science has been well documented. However, despite some common preoccupations, little work to date done by feminist political scientists has explored the uses of neoinstitutionalist scholarship in the development of feminist institutionalist frameworks. This Critical Perspectives collection of contributions explores the limits and possibilities of the dominant institutionalist approaches. Each of the first four pieces outlines the potential contribution of its preferred type — rational choice, historical, sociological, and discursive institutionalism — to a feminist institutionalism. The contributors address a number of key questions: What can their (neo)institutionalist approach contribute to feminist scholarship on political institutions, broadly defined? If there is a feminist institutionalism, what might it consist of in theoretical and analytical terms? How can it be used and what are its limits? The final contribution stands back and, taking a more critical stance, considers what gendered and institutionally focused feminist work could contribute to mainstream institutionalist understandings of structure and agency in political life. We intend for these Critical Perspectives essays to play a part in the development of a feminist institutionalism.

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