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in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Ellen D B Riggle, Barry L Tadlock, eds. *Gays and Lesbians in the Democratic Process: Public Policy, Public Opinion, and Political Representation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. x + 304 pp. \$49.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-11584-1.

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Published on H-Pol (June, 2001)



At the 2001 American Historical Association meeting, I found myself arguing for the importance of lesbian/gay civil rights issues, and sexuality generally, for our understanding of U.S. political history in the post World War II period. The present volume confirms my belief, both in demonstrating how the failure to study those issues impoverishes our understanding of political processes and outcomes in the period, and in demonstrating how little scholarly work yet exists on the topic.

Gays and Lesbians in the Democratic Process is a collection of original articles by political scientists. The essays explore a variety of topics, including correlations between institutions and practices, such as home rule and districts vs. at-large voting, on one hand, and passage of lesbian/gay civil rights legislation on the other hand; public and elite attitudes toward lesbians and gay men; and the electability of openly lesbian or gay candidates for public office. Many of the conclusions that these scholars come to are rudimentary as compared to our understanding of other twentieth century social movements, such as the African-American civil rights and women's movements, but that observation reflects the state of research in the field, not the abilities of the authors.

As the final chapter, by Kenneth Sherrill, makes clear, the lesbian/gay civil rights movement provides a useful case study for anyone who would understand how social movements emerge and come to influence political and policy outcomes. Lesbians and gay men are distributed randomly through the population and have the capacity to hide their minority identity. They can be hard to organize, and what factors lead any given lesbian or gay man to become politically active are far from clear. As

Sherrill's data reveals, at least the cohorts of movement leaders and rank and file whom he studied in New York City in 1973 differed very little in their political views from a control sample of avowedly heterosexual Hunter College students.

Finally, the basic agenda of the lesbian/gay civil rights movement has not changed much over the past twenty-eight years. Marriage rights, military service, and equal employment opportunity were important then and they remain important today. This apparent policy failure at the federal level clearly is not the result of a more general political failure in that same period. Sherrill notes that the lesbian/gay civil rights movement has "matured" in moving from reliance on volunteer activists, mostly affiliated with the New Left, anti-war, and African-American civil rights movements, to professional political operatives who raise the money to pay their own salaries and therefore moderate their political positions to comport with the beliefs of their major donors. What, then, does this book tell us about the relationship between political success by social movements and policy change?

Much of the empirical information in this volume is not terribly surprising to anyone who is familiar with the topic, but it provides a useful entry point for newcomers. Chapters by Gregory B. Lewis and Marc A. Rogers, "Does the Public Support Equal Employment Rights for Gays and Lesbians?" and by Steven H. Haeblerle, "Gay and Lesbian Rights: Emerging Trends in Public Opinion and Voting Behavior," find that level of education correlates positively to support for lesbian/gay civil rights while adherence to evangelical Christianity correlates negatively. Persons who believe that lesbian/gay identity is an in-born trait are much more likely to support lesbian/gay

civil rights than those who believe that lesbian/gay sexual activity is simply a choice. Women are more likely to support lesbian/gay civil rights than men, and younger persons are more likely to do so than older persons. Public support for lesbian/gay civil rights also depends heavily on the particular issues—widespread support for equal employment opportunity vs. widespread opposition to same-sex marriage, for example—and how one frames those issues—as the right of adults to engage in sexual activity with members of the same sex (lower support for the gay rights position) vs. whether government should interfere with the decisions of consenting adults about sexual activity (higher support for the gay rights position).

Some of the information is surprising, however, and all of it contributes in important ways not only to our understanding of lesbian/gay civil rights issues, but also of social movements and their impact on American politics and policy during the second half of the twentieth century. Two chapters, Rebekah Herrick's and Sue Thomas's "The Effects of Sexual Orientation on Citizen Perception of Candidate Viability" and Ewa A. Golebiowska's and Cynthia J. Thomsen's "Group Stereotypes and Evaluations of Individuals: The Case of Gay and Lesbian Political Candidates," explore the public's willingness to support openly lesbian/gay candidates for elective office. Golebiowska and Thomsen discovered that their study participants were less likely to support a stereotypically masculine lesbian than a nonstereotypically feminine lesbian. The response to gay men, however was just the opposite: greater support for a stereotypically feminine gay man than for his nonstereotypical, masculine counterpart. The authors find this result surprising because most people equate the list of desirable characteristics in an elected official—leadership, etc.—with masculinity. One wonders, however, if perhaps feminine characteristics are becoming more desirable to most voters in the post Cold War period. Regardless, both articles find that voters are willing to support openly lesbian/gay candidates, but that such candidates continue to face uphill battles.

In "Elite Attitudes Toward Homosexuals," Jean Reith Schroedel confirms the common observation that level of education correlates positively to support for lesbian/gay civil rights except for an important cohort of highly educated conservative activists. In that case, she finds increased opposition to lesbian/gay civil rights, presumably the result of careful inculcation of conservative principles—of a worldview—that one would expect from an avowedly conservative education.

Gary M. Segura studies the switch from at-large to district elections for San Francisco's Board of Supervisors in "Institutions Matter: Local Electoral Laws, Gay and Lesbian Representation, and Coalition Building Across Minority Communities." Existing scholarship might suggest that the interests of lesbians and gay men would conflict with those of ethnic minorities in that ethnic minorities should benefit from districts in contrast to at-large schemes because of their presumptive geographical concentration. Stereotypes of "gay ghettos" aside, Segura argues, even in San Francisco—the queer capital of the world—lesbians and gay men nowhere make up a sufficiently large percentage of a district's population to ensure election of a lesbian or gay representative. Segura argues, however, that ethnic minorities rarely achieve such concentrations either. When they do, frequently the neighborhoods that they dominate will be split during the districting process, possibly preventing them from electing one of their own altogether, or at best capping minority representatives at one, given a neighborhood split such that the minority is the majority in one district but a minority in all adjacent districts. He concludes, therefore, that lesbians and gay men share with ethnic minorities an interest in supporting at-large over district schemes in local elections.

But perhaps most surprising is the finding that the public debate over allowing lesbian/gay soldiers to serve openly in the U.S. military appears to have increased overall support for lesbian/gay employment rights. The specific policy outcome of that debate, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy of allowing lesbians and gay men to serve so long as they hide their sexual orientation, struck most lesbian/gay civil rights activists as a major disappointment, not least because it demonstrated the ability of conservative groups to mobilize their members overwhelmingly in opposition to lesbian/gay civil rights measures in Congress. Haeberle, however, finds that public opinion polling showed an increase of 10.2%, from 58.5% to 68.7%, in support for openly lesbian/gay soldiers in the period from 1992 to 1996 (p. 157).

This finding is consistent with the well established observation that most Americans claim to support the concept of equal employment opportunity for lesbians and gay men. The legislation adding sexual orientation to the protected categories of equal employment law has arrived on the floor of one house of Congress (the Senate) only one time, in 1996, where it failed passage by one vote, 49-50. This suggests that the voting public does not attach great significance to this issue—clearly the majority that claims to support the principle does not ex-

ert pressure on their elected officials to enact legislation. Oddly, Lewis and Rogers find that, while education correlates strongly with support for the idea of equal employment opportunity for lesbians and gay men, it does not correlate significantly to support for passage of actual legislation.

Clearly, anyone who is curious about the relationship between public opinion and political and policy outcomes will want to take these findings into account. As with many of the findings in this book, it may seem obvious why Christian conservatives have so much greater success than lesbian/gay civil rights groups in translating their grass-roots support into the policy outcomes that they prefer, but empirical research on this topic by political scientists and historians will at least prove edifying, and probably in important cases surprising, nonetheless.

Donald P. Haider-Markel provides a useful overview of federal activity on lesbian/gay issues from 1920 to 1996, noting in the process how little empirical work exists on this topic ("Creating Change—Holding the Line: Agenda Setting on Lesbian and Gay Issues at the National Level"). He explains that, as early as 1920, conservative Christians framed "homosexuality" as a moral and political threat to the nation, initially with virtually no opposition from an organized lesbian/gay rights movement. Conservative Christians increasingly worked in concert with cold warriors on this project after World War II. From the 1950s, however, the homophile movement and the lesbian/gay civil rights movement provided a challenge that grew in effectiveness over time to this framing of the issue.

Haider-Markel's chapter illustrates nicely the poten-

tial for productive cooperation between political scientists and historians. He finds that the number of lesbian/gay rights groups and the number of opposition groups are the most important factors correlating to the number of hearings and votes in Congress on lesbian/gay civil rights issues. He contrasts his findings to studies of the women's movement finding that grassroots activity and communications infrastructure played a major role in Congressional activity on women's issues. On the one hand, Haider-Markel's research will prove very important to my on-going research into lesbian/gay civil rights and federal policy from 1975 to 2000. On the other hand, how the lesbian/gay civil rights movement relates to the women's movement and to the Christian right, and how grassroots activity and communications infrastructure relate to organized lobbying and Congressional activity, are questions that only empirical research into the movement's past can answer more fully.

In sum, there is much that we do not know about the history of the lesbian/gay civil rights movement, and there is much that we do not know about the political history of the United States during the years since the advent of that movement's militant, organized phase starting in 1970. Riggle and Tadlock's collection makes an important contribution from political science to our knowledge of that history.

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Citation: William B. Turner. Review of Riggle, Ellen D B; Tadlock, Barry L, eds., *Gays and Lesbians in the Democratic Process: Public Policy, Public Opinion, and Political Representation*. H-Pol, H-Net Reviews. June, 2001.

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