GENDER AND ELECTIONS, SECOND EDITION

This new edition describes the role of gender in the American electoral process through the 2008 elections. Tailored for courses on women and politics, elections, and gender politics, it strikes a balance between highlighting the most important developments for women as voters and candidates in the 2008 elections and providing a deeper analysis of the ways that gender has helped shape electoral politics in the United States. Individual chapters demonstrate the importance of gender in understanding presidential elections, voter participation and turnout, voting choices, the participation of African American women, congressional elections, the support of political parties and women’s organizations, candidate communications with voters, and state elections. This updated volume also includes new chapters that analyze the roles of Latinas in U.S. politics and chronicle the candidacies of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin.


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Gender and Elections

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN POLITICS

Second Edition

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Contents

List of Figures, Text Boxes, and Photos  page vii
List of Tables  ix
Acknowledgments  xi
Contributors  xiii

Introduction: Gender and Electoral Politics in the Early Twenty-First Century  1
Susan J. Carroll and Richard L. Fox

1 Presidential Elections: Gendered Space and the Case of 2008  13
Georgia Duerst-Lahti

2 The 2008 Candidacies of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin: Cracking the “Highest, Hardest Glass Ceiling”  44
Susan J. Carroll and Kelly Dittmar

3 Voter Participation and Turnout: Female Star Power Attracts Women Voters  78
Susan A. MacManus

4 Voting Choices: The Politics of the Gender Gap  117
Susan J. Carroll

5 Latinas and Electoral Politics: Movin’ on Up  144
Christine Marie Sierra

6 African American Women and Electoral Politics: A Challenge to the Post-Race Rhetoric of the Obama Moment  165
Wendy G. Smooth
Contents

7 Congressional Elections: Women’s Candidacies and the Road to Gender Parity ........................................... 187
    Richard L. Fox

8 Political Parties and Women’s Organizations: Bringing Women into the Electoral Arena ............................. 210
    Barbara Burrell

9 Advertising, Web Sites, and Media Coverage: Gender and Communication along the Campaign Trail .......... 239
    Dianne Bystrom

10 State Elections: Why Do Women Fare Differently across States? ............................................................ 263
    Kira Sanbonmatsu

Index ................................................................................................................................. 287
List of Figures, Text Boxes, and Photos

Figures

1.1 Newspapers covered the “woman” candidate and the “black” candidate about the same until December, when race became the dominant story  

2.1 Women have registered to vote at higher rates than men in recent elections  

3.1 Women have voted at higher rates than men in recent elections  

6.1 The number of African American women elected officials has increased in recent elections while the number of African American men has leveled off  

7.1 Historical gender disparities in congressional representation  

8.1 EMILY’s List contributions increased dramatically from 1986 to 2006  

9.1 Obama received more positive television news coverage than Clinton throughout most of the 2008 campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination  

10.1 The proportion of women serving in state legislatures reached a record high in 2009  

10.2 Women are a greater share of Democratic than Republican legislators  

10.3 The number of Republican women in state legislatures has declined  

10.4 The proportion of women elected to statewide office has declined in recent years

Text Boxes

1.1 A gender primer: Basic concepts for gender analysis  

1.2 Finding Mrs. Right for a run in 2008: Not the same as Mr. Right
### List of Figures, Text Boxes, and Photos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>The history of the women’s vote</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>EMILY’s List and the Clinton campaign for the presidency</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Photos</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>The Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance was quite active in the 2008 election</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td><em>Saturday Night Live</em>’s stars Tina Fey and Amy Poehler, portraying Sarah Palin and Hillary Clinton</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Microtargeted direct-mail ads</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Candidate use of e-mailed messages and pleas for help</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

1.1 Only three women were among the candidates mentioned early for the 2008 presidential election
1.2 Dominance words were more than four times more common than expertise words in articles about presidential candidates during 2008
1.3 Change and dominance masculinity combined most often in articles about presidential candidates during 2008
1.4 Masculinity was covered much more in 2004 than in 2008
4.1 A gender gap in voting has been evident in every presidential election since 1980
4.2 A gender gap in voting was evident in the races of all women who won election to the U.S. Senate in 2008
4.3 A gender gap in voting was evident across a wide range of demographic groups in the 2008 presidential election
5.1 The proportion of Hispanics among eligible voters has increased over the past decade
5.2 Only nine Latinas served in statewide and federal offices in 2009
6.1 Six African American women have appeared on general election ballots for president
6.2 Twelve African American women were mayors of cities with populations of more than fifty thousand in 2008
6.3 The proportion of African American women among state legislators varies across the states
6.4 Fourteen African American women were serving in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2009
7.1 Over time, more Democratic women than Republican women have emerged as House candidates and winners
7.2 Women and men House candidates have similar vote shares for 2006 and 2008
## List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Women and men House candidates have similar fund-raising patterns for 2006 and 2008</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Sharp regional differences exist in the proportion of U.S. representatives who are women</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>More than one-third of the states had no women serving in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2008</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Types of seats contested by women candidates in the U.S. House vary by years and party</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>Among potential candidates, women are less interested than men in seeking elective office</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>Among potential candidates, women are less interested than men in running for the U.S. House or Senate</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Important dates in the history of parties, women’s organizations, and women’s candidacies for public office</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Description of four major women’s PACs</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Contributions to federal candidates by PACs concerned with women’s issues went predominantly to Democrats in 2008</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>More Democratic women than Republican women sought election to the state legislatures in 2008</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>The presence of women legislators varies considerably by state</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Only six women served as governors in 2009</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>The presence of women varies by type of statewide office</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Women won six of North Carolina’s ten statewide elected positions in 2008</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgments

This volume had its origins in a series of three roundtable panels at professional meetings in 2002 and 2003 focusing on how women fared in the 2002 elections. Most of the contributors to this book were participants on those roundtables. As we gathered at these professional meetings, we began to talk among ourselves about a major frustration we faced in teaching courses on women and politics, campaigns and elections, and American politics. We all had difficulty finding suitable, up-to-date materials on women candidates, the gender gap, and other facets of women’s involvement in elections, and certainly, none of us had been able to find a text focused specifically on gender and elections that we could use. We felt the literature was in great need of a recurring and reliable source that would first be published immediately following a presidential election and then updated every four years so that it remained current.

At some point in our discussions, we all looked at one another and collectively asked, “As the academic experts in this field, aren’t we the ones to take on this project? Why don’t we produce a volume suitable for classroom use that would also be a resource for scholars, journalists, and practitioners?” In that moment Gender and Elections was born. We are enormously grateful to Barbara Burrell for organizing the first of our roundtable panels and thus identifying and pulling together the initial core of contributors to this volume.

We produced the first volume of Gender and Elections in the immediate aftermath of the 2004 presidential election. Gratified by the positive response, we are pleased to provide this updated and expanded version that includes information through the 2008 elections. We hope to continue to revise and publish new editions following future presidential elections.
Acknowledgments

We have added two new chapters to this edition, reflecting important developments in American electoral politics. In recognition of the growing significance of Latinos in U.S. politics, a chapter on the political role of Latinas seemed a necessary addition, and we were delighted when Christine Marie Sierra agreed to write a chapter on the political engagement and contributions of Latinas to electoral politics. History was made in the 2008 elections not only by the election of the first African American as president but also by the campaigns of Hillary Clinton for the Democratic presidential nomination and Sarah Palin for the vice presidency on the Republican ticket. Although several chapters in this volume deal in one way or another with the campaigns of Clinton and Palin, the historic and unprecedented nature of the candidacies of these two women seemed to merit a more in-depth examination, leading to the addition of another new chapter by Susan J. Carroll and Kelly Dittmar.

The second edition of this book would not have been possible without the assistance of the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University. Debbie Walsh, director of CAWP, has embraced and encouraged this project and been supportive in numerous ways, especially in making CAWP staff available to assist on the project. Gilda Morales, who is in charge of information services at CAWP, continues to be an invaluable source of knowledge about women and politics, and several contributors relied on her expertise as well as the data she has compiled over the years for CAWP. We also would like to thank Jessica Rowan who offered technical and logistical support.

While everyone at CAWP was helpful, we want to single out Kathy Kleeman, a senior program associate at CAWP, for assistance above and beyond what we ever could have expected. Kathy, for both editions, has spent numerous hours making each volume much better than it otherwise would have been. She brought a third set of critical eyes to the reading of every chapter, and as an extremely skilled writer, she helped to make all of our chapters more readable, accessible, and polished. We are especially indebted to her.

Finally, we also would like to thank Cambridge University Press and our editor, Ed Parsons, in particular, for unwavering enthusiasm and patience. We have both thoroughly enjoyed working with Ed and hope to continue the partnership through future election cycles.
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