

EDITORIAL

## ***Politics & Gender* and International Relations**

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*Politics & Gender* is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2025. To mark the occasion, the journal published a special issue in March, featuring essays on the impact of *Politics & Gender* on political science and the growth of the gender and politics research community. Contributors showed how scholarship published in the journal has shaped knowledge on core topics in political science (Barnett et al. 2025), such as gender and voting (Cassese and Friesen 2025), electoral gender quotas (Krook 2025), and intersectionality (Christoffersen and Siow 2025). Authors also shared how the journal has shaped their career trajectories (Jalalzai 2025) and the institutionalization of feminist perspectives in political science (Sawer 2025).

Celebrating this milestone anniversary has not simply provided an opportunity to look back on what the journal has accomplished over the last 20 years (Baldez and Beckwith 2025; Caputi et al. 2025; Tripp 2025). It also offers us a chance to think about how we would like to develop and grow the journal — and our research community — in the coming decades (Hahn 2025). For the current editorial team, one priority has been to increase submissions in political theory and international relations (IR), two subfields that have traditionally been underrepresented in the journal — despite the large number of scholars working in these areas (Angevine 2025b; Krook 2023).

With these goals in mind, the current issue brings together and seeks to highlight recent submissions to the journal in the subfield of IR. The timing of this issue is not accidental. The year 2025 marks the 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the first time that the Security Council adopted a gender perspective in its work. UNSCR 1325 paved the way for a series of other UN resolutions and institutional reforms on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) that have informed global politics and inspired a large and continually growing research agenda in feminist IR.

The year 2025 has also been a difficult year for feminism in politics and public policy. At the domestic level, anti-gender actors in government and civil society

have succeeded in many countries in dismantling and delegitimizing feminist institutions and programs. These trends have also affected foreign policy. At the end of 2022, Sweden — the first country in the world to adopt an explicitly feminist foreign policy — rescinded this commitment. Although scholars have been critical of the shortcomings of feminist foreign policy in practice, the overturning of these policies is unsettling. The emergence of *anti-feminist* foreign policies is also a real possibility.

The articles in this issue grapple with these questions from various angles. The first five articles were submitted independently to *Politics & Gender* in recent months. They include three articles on questions related to WPS, including women's participation in peace processes (Aanstoos 2025), women ex-combatants in post-conflict political parties (Palik 2025), and the invisibility of masculinities in humanitarian programs (Gilmore 2025). The article by Flowers (2025) contributes to the growing literature on gender and diplomacy, while Angevine (2025a) develops the concept of an *anti-feminist* foreign policy, focusing on the role of abortion politics in shaping American foreign aid policies.

The next set of contributions on feminist foreign policy was curated by Columba Achilleos-Sarll, Toni Haastrup, and Jennifer Thomson (2025). This special section comprises three research articles analyzing feminist foreign policy in diverse national contexts (Färber and Standke-Erdmann 2025; Mühlenhoff, Popovic, and Welfens 2025; Thomson and Wehner 2025). It also includes five Notes from the Field, offering various insights on feminist foreign policy from the perspective of feminist practice, particularly in the Global South (Balbon and Christiansen 2025; Haastrup 2025a; Leclerc 2025; Philipson Garcia and Velasco Ugalde 2025; Sepúlveda 2025).

This collection of articles is followed by a Critical Perspectives section on UNSCR 1325, edited by Summer Lindsey (2025). The contributors reflect on successes and failures in implementing UNSCR 1325 (Asante and Shepherd 2025; Basu 2025). They consider how feminist activists are, or should be, responding to challenges to the WPS agenda (Haastrup 2025b; Hagen 2025; Schulz and Lewis 2025). They also map new visions and strategies for overcoming the current wave of backlash against WPS programs and feminist foreign policy (De Jonge Oudraat and Brown 2025; Hudson 2025).

As a group, the articles in this issue not only draw attention to important questions and contributions in the field of gender and IR. They also show how feminist IR scholars are tackling questions that are highly relevant to the broader gender and politics research community. We would very much like to continue to publish more of this kind of work, and we sincerely hope that this issue provides inspiration for IR scholars to consider submitting their work to *Politics & Gender* in the future.

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