The U.S. Women's Jury Movements and Strategic Adoption: A More Just Verdict

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Recommended Citation
a part of the first modern national gun regulation enacted in 1934). Brown’s
diagnosis for how and why a stricter gun regulatory regime succeeded in
Canada but not in the United States is on the mark: Canada lacked any dom-
estic handgun manufacturers, and instead relied on imports, which could
be readily regulated; the nation had a national police force: something the
United States has never had; and Canada had nothing equivalent to the
Second Amendment “right to bear arms” found in the United States
Constitution (it should be noted here that that amendment posed no actual
obstacle to stricter gun laws in the United States until its meaning was changed
by the Supreme Court in 2008; however, its symbolic power over the national
gun debate sometimes has functioned as though it really did serve as a barrier
to gun laws).

Chapter 5 examines the period from the end of World War II to 1980, when
a rising tide of hunters and gun enthusiasts rebelled against ever-stricter gun
laws, including proposals to impose similar restrictions on long guns. In the
face of this backlash, the ruling Liberal Party then in power backtracked on
these proposals, settling for a measure in 1977 that focused more narrowly
on the link between guns and criminality. Chapter 6 examines the period
from 1980 to 2006, when the Canadian gun community, feeling its oats
after beating back stricter laws, was disappointed when the Montreal
Massacre of 1989 tipped the political scales to control supporters. A final
change, enactment of a nationwide firearm registry system in 1995, continued
to rankle gun owners.

For Americans sympathetic to stronger gun laws, the path Canada took rep-
resents what might have been for the United States. To Canadians, it has been
a mostly popular, if controversial, effort to rein in gun excesses. Whatever else
might be said, gun traditions survive in Canada alongside tough laws.

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Holly McCammon, The U.S. Women's Jury Movement and Strategic
Adaptation: A More Just Verdict, Cambridge: Cambridge University
doi:10.1017/S0738248013000552

In this comprehensive and engaging book, Holly McCammon explores the
activism behind the laws that eventually, although sometimes begrudgingly,
granted women in the United States the right to serve on juries. Although
the general timeline of women’s inclusion on juries and the key judicial
decisions that slowed or hastened the process have been well documented
and analyzed, McCammon takes on the more difficult question of how women’s jury activists “were able to win reforms in state-level jury laws.” (3) Her well-argued thesis is that “[j]ury rights for women were ultimately won because of the strategic activism of mobilized women,” (5) and that the key difference between states that were “swift” or “slow” in their adoption of inclusive jury laws was the willingness or ability of the local activists to strategically adapt their methods in the face of losses or indifference. She documents how movement actions and tactics can “lead to political success,” (11) and argues that the “[t]actics are likeliest to help activists achieve their goals when they are a well-tailored strategic response to the particular political and cultural context.” (17)

Women in this country were slow to gain access to the jury box. Although many people today dread jury service and will go to some lengths to avoid it, the right not to be excluded was hard fought. Early on, the Supreme Court ruled that the exclusion of blacks from jury pools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment because the exclusion marked a “brand upon them . . . an assertion of their inferiority.” (Strauder v. West Virginia, 100 U.S. 303, 308 (1879)). Although women had suffered similar types of formal exclusion from public and political life, the Court made clear that states could continue to insist that juries be made up solely of men. And whereas it was widely believed that the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted women the right to vote in 1920, implicitly made women eligible for jury service, one did not inexorably follow from the other, even when the jury statutes used phrases such as “all electors.” Not until 1975, in Taylor v. Louisiana, did the Court find a constitutional problem with the exclusion of women from the jury pool. (Later cases extended the rights of both blacks and women to get from the jury pool to the jury box by holding that peremptory challenges could not be used on the basis of race or sex.) The state laws that voluntarily granted women the right to serve, enacted between 1870 (Wyoming) and 1968 (Mississippi) despite the lack of a constitutional mandate, were, therefore, even more important.

McCammon begins her exploration with a chapter on theory and method, in which she defines “strategic adaptation;” identifies the conditions that lead to, and result from, its use; and argues that “movement groups engaged in strategic adaptation are more likely to gain the political reforms they seek and to do so more rapidly than movement groups not practicing strategic adaptation.” (33) She then provides a comprehensive history of women’s jury service, including both legislative and judicial developments over a century. The remaining chapters—the centerpiece of the book—are devoted to in-depth analyses of the women’s jury service movement in fifteen states, in which she documents how and under what conditions strategic adaptation unfolded. She first compares and contrasts four states based on the whether they changed tactics in response to early losses; California activists worked to put more
women in the legislature after the defeat of a jury bill and conducted an educational campaign to make its claim that women wanted to serve on juries more defensible. Activists in other states stayed the course, or even "grew frustrated and... withdrew." (55) The second grouping revolves around the axis of countering public opposition and indifference. In New York, activists responded to concerns about women's fitness for jury service by bringing to light actual cases in England and the United States in which women served "to demonstrate that their opponents' fears were unfounded." (84) The third grouping focuses on the different degrees to which activists deployed strategic framing "to respond to cues from the broader context" and to "take advantage of signals and opportunities in the political field." The success of Vermont activists, for example, in framing the question as a matter of fair verdicts rather than just women's rights contributed to their achieving jury rights in relatively short order. Women's voice on juries, advocates promised, "would mean fairer and more just legal verdicts." (123) Finally, McCammon considers the turning points in various states, when their movements finally became more strategic and then achieved their goals.

_A More Just Verdict_ is not a quick read, but it is worth the effort. McCammon provides an impressive level of detail, from archival sources that have been largely untapped by other researchers, about this highly important facet of women's citizenship. With compelling prose and ample support, she answers a previously unasked, but important, question: how did women gain the right to serve on juries in the United States?

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_Caring for America_ is an important, difficult, and timely book. It is important because it recasts the history of the American welfare state. In their quest to understand the development of America's long-term care system and the vast, undervalued, and increasingly assertive labor force that now powers it, Eileen Boris and Jennifer Klein reveal a welfare state that is more complicated than we knew. Whereas previous scholarship has stressed division—boundaries between public and private, separate "tracks" for different types of recipients, clear demarcations between clients and workers—Boris and Klein emphasize interconnectedness. They show how the tropes of rehabilitation