

Issue
2007

GENDER FORUM

An Internet Journal for Gender Studies



Women in Power

Edited by
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ISSN 1613-1878

Universität
zu Köln



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abstracts (October 1),

completed papers (January 1)

Summer Issue:

abstracts (January 1),

completed papers (April 1)

Fall Issue:

abstracts (April 1),

completed papers (July 1)

Early Career Researchers Special Issue:

abstracts (May 1),

completed papers (August 1)

Winter Issue:

abstracts (July 1),

completed papers (October 1)

About

Gender forum is an online, peer reviewed academic journal dedicated to the discussion of gender issues. As an electronic journal, *gender forum* offers a free-of-charge platform for the discussion of gender-related topics in the fields of literary and cultural production, media and the arts as well as politics, the natural sciences, medicine, the law, religion and philosophy. Inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier in 2002, the quarterly issues of the journal have focused on a multitude of questions from different theoretical perspectives of feminist criticism, queer theory, and masculinity studies. *gender forum* also includes reviews and occasionally interviews, fictional pieces and poetry with a gender studies angle.

Opinions expressed in articles published in *gender forum* are those of individual authors and not necessarily endorsed by the editors of *gender forum*.

Submissions

Target articles should conform to current MLA Style (8th edition) and should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words in length. Please make sure to number your paragraphs and include a bio-blurb and an abstract of roughly 300 words. Files should be sent as email attachments in Word format. Please send your manuscripts to gender-forum@uni-koeln.de.

We always welcome reviews on recent releases in Gender Studies! Submitted reviews should conform to current MLA Style (8th edition), have numbered paragraphs, and should be between 750 and 1,000 words in length. Please note that the reviewed releases ought to be no older than 24 months. In most cases, we are able to secure a review copy for contributors.

Article Publishing

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Editorial

1 The progressively heated events surrounding the election of the of the US Democratic Party presidential candidate have led to a discursive explosion sparked and fueled by questions of gender and political power. All the more reason to update our special issue of 2006 by including Julie Biando Edwards' analysis of the gendering of the 2008 presidential race. While both Merkel's and Rodham Clinton's election campaigns have to be considered in their respective historical and discursive contexts, a transcultural cross-reading elucidates the strategies of (non-)gendered campaigning employed by Rodham Clinton, Merkel, and their male competitors respectively.

Germany's First Chancelloress: A Case Study

2 Chancellor Schröder's call for early elections last year resulted in the access to executive power for the first woman in the Federal Republic of Germany. Before Chancelloress Angela Merkel eventually took office most Germans, especially women, seemed to have resigned themselves to a post-feminist age in which the decisive gender battles had been fought and won. Throughout the election campaign the future Chancelloress herself did not tire to emphasize that sex/gender does not matter in the political arena. This very emphasis, however, was an indicator for the special relevance of sex/gender in German society. Angela Merkel, the political leader of the Christian democrats, should have known best how crucial the issue of gender is in German politics: in the previous election in 2002, she had to give up her candidacy to the Bavarian Edmund Stoiber, and her unexpected candidacy in last year's election was made possible by the premature decline of the Schröder administration seeking a new vote of confidence. Evidently, Angela Merkel tried to avoid the gender issue because she knew how devastating her association with either femininity or feminism could be for the public opinion.

3 The events before and after the election on 18 September 2005, however, brought it home to everyone that we have not yet arrived at successfully undoing gender. On the contrary, the old patriarchal mechanisms are alive and kicking. They have never flourished better. This was an election time where the two candidates were clearly gendered in the media (notwithstanding the woman's protestations). The decisive television debate between the two candidates was a debate which was overwhelmingly perceived and read by the media in terms of the master and the woman novice boiling down to the question of 'whether she can be his equal' and 'meet him eye to eye'. On the election night this culminated in the TV debate about

the election results when the defeated chancellor Schroeder turned into 'the man who sees red', as Alice Schwarzer, the best-known, popular and influential German feminist writer/journalist, titled in her newspaper article (*FAZ*, 25.09.05). Active in the women's movement both in Germany and France since the 1960s, Alice Schwarzer's articles have always hit home. For 30 years now her bi-monthly feminist journal *EMMA* has continued the fight for gender equality and women's rights. Her analysis of the election night ("A Man Sees Red") provocatively summed up the gender issue in German politics. The election and the painful process of adjusting to the first Chancelloress have reminded Germany of the sex/gender debate as a most topical issue. In "We Are Chancelloress", Alice Schwarzer explores the gender mechanisms operative at the time of coalition negotiations and the hopes of women connected to a female political leader in Germany (*EMMA*, Nov/Dec 2005).

4 Almost a whole year has passed since the last German election and the publication of those two articles. But the issues involved are still topical. It may be no coincidence that there has been an increasingly audible/visible call for a new feminism as an article in the most influential German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* termed it ("Wir brauchen einen neuen Feminismus" issue 35, August 24, 2006). Is this part of an (international) development discernible in other countries as well? Is there a resurging interest in and need for a new feminism? Is this need linked to questions of women and power in politics?

Hillary Rodham Clinton and the "W" question

5 In her article "Spousal Politics and the Bipartisan Positioning of Hillary Rodham Clinton," Julie Biando Edwards focuses on the gendering of the 2008 presidential race, with particular emphasis on the Democratic party and Clinton's campaign. Central to Edwards' analysis is Clinton's positioning as both woman and wife of extremely popular former president Bill Clinton. The public's appreciation of the "two-for-the-price-of-one" approach, i.e. the inclusion of her husband in the campaign, is critically evaluated, as are the strategies of instrumentalizing the gender issue employed by the media, the Democratic competitors, and the opposition. Ironically, as Edwards shows, although gender issues are highly relevant in the race, their importance is rarely addressed. For Clinton, the matter of positioning is found to be a highly complex matter, situated in a dialectic between asserting her autonomy and capabilities while avoiding to appear manly or in neglect of her matrimonial duties. The situation is further complicated by both the obscuring influence of political correctness and the participation of candidates Barack Obama and John Edwards in what the author observes has become a race to out-Woman each other. Edwards concludes that the omnipresent

question of whether or not America is ready for a female president cannot adequately be approached until questions of gender pertaining to this election have been addressed and their influence on this election openly acknowledged.