

An Open Boundaries Workshop: Women and Politics in Comparative Perspective—Introduction

The American Political Science Association and Women's Studies at the University of Delaware co-sponsored the Third Japanese American Women's Symposium (JAWS) at the University of Delaware from August 24 to August 26, 2003. The program was supported by a grant from the Japan-United States Friendship Commission and the University of Delaware's College of Arts and Science, Office of International Programs, Department of Political Science, and Women's Studies. The seven Japanese and seven American scholars of women and politics who participated in this symposium spent three days considering similarities and differences in political participation and the effects of this participation on public policy decision making in the U.S. and in Japan. This is the group's third meeting.

by
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The first meeting was held in August 2000 at American University in conjunction with the APSA's Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. and was coordinated by

Karen O'Connor. In August 2002, the scholars reconvened in Japan where they met and lectured to community groups in Tokyo, Tsu City, and Sapporo. This year, the program was held in conjunction with the APSA's Annual Meeting in Philadelphia and was coordinated by Marian Lief Palley, professor of political science and director of Women's Studies at the University of Delaware. The grant from the Japan-United States Friendship Commission was facilitated by the APSA, especially by Deputy Director Robert J-P. Hauck.

Chieko Kitagawa Otsuru, Tokuku Ogai, M. Margaret Conway, Michele Swers, and Melissa Deckman wrote papers that focus on women's political participation in local venues in Japan and the United States. Masako Aiuchi, Yoshie Kobayashi, Julie Dolan, Barbara Palmer, and Dennis Simon contributed papers that focus more directly on non-local elections in both nations. Misako Iwamoto, Hiromi Tanaka, Chiharu Takenaka, Joyce Gelb, and Marian Lief Palley each considered a public policy that had a specific impact on women in their respective nations.

The 2004 E-Symposium

The papers presented here, a result of the extremely successful Japanese American Women's Symposium, focus a fascinating lens on the study of women and politics both in the United States and in Japan. More so, the lens casts the light of comparison on the very different, and very similar, issues affecting women in politics in both countries.

To better present current research in the timeliest of fashions, *PS* brings its readership the e-symposium. This format provides our readers with the most current research on women and politics in the United States and Japan, research that, due to typical publication deadlines for the traditional journal format, would otherwise not be available to the scholarly community for several more months.

The following abstracted articles can be accessed whole at the APSA web site, www.apsanet.org/Jan04/.

Incorporating Gender Equality at Local Politics: A Case of Toyonaka

—Chieko Kitagawa Otsuru
Kansai University

This paper examines the development of gender-equality policy in the City of Toyonaka and compares it to policy development at the national and prefectural levels to illustrate how the concept of gender is being incorporated into local politics. My analysis reveals the importance of focusing on the local political process to understand and promote gender equality in Japan.

The national government passed the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society in 1999. Corresponding to this development, and reflecting the general trend in Japanese politics to promote bottom-up local initiatives, prefectural and local governments were encouraged to develop their own ordinances to reflect the spirit of this act according to the conditions of each local community. To date, 142 local governments and all but five prefectural governments have enacted ordinances, some of which were in effect as early as April 2000.

A close examination of a gender-equal society was influential in the implementation of gender-equal policies at the local level. Those prefectures that developed policies early on, such as Saitama and Yamaguchi, closely followed the language of the national Basic Law; however, latecomers were more likely to either specifically acknowledge manhood and womanhood in the ordinance language, or to have the whole process of enactment delayed due to disputes over language. Many local councils have responded to political pressure imposed on them to be a national movement opposed to the basic idea of gender equality. This conservative movement regards the Basic Law for a Gender Equal Society as a radical attempt to d-gender Japanese society.

If we accept the definition of gender as the imposition of socially constructed differences on individuals, rather than as an immutable characteristic inherently attached to biological sex, then clauses acknowledging an

essential distinction between masculinity and femininity are inconsistent with the spirit of gender equality. The Japanese public's low level of interest in, and understanding of, issues concerning gender created an opportunity for conservatives to dilute the effectiveness of gender-equal ordinances by inserting gender-specific language. Not only is the concept confusing to the general public, but the basic structure of society is still based on unconscious assumptions about rigid gender roles that are accepted by a large portion of the population, including women. Furthermore, conservatives have successfully used the tactic of dividing women into opposing camps and encouraging one group to contest gender-free policies by portraying them as threatening to female identity and family life.

The outcome of local debates over the use of gender-free language depends partly on how well women's perspectives were represented on the local councils responsible for writing the ordinances. The lack of women's representation in the conservative parties is quite striking at the local political level, and even when local ordinances were passed without including a masculine-feminine clause, the pro-inclusion arguments attracted little criticism during the sessions. Survey results indicate that women and men differ in their perceptions of women's slow advancement in the political arena. Although women are more sensitive than men to the effect of gender role attitudes on women's low representation, women also report that women are poorly represented because they are "no positive enough." This self-criticism may be a product of exposure to the gendered image of women as followers.

Given the slow speed at which perceptions of dichotomous gender role change, it seems more, rather than less, important to work toward embracing gender-free ideology. Attempts by conservatives to reverse the trend toward women's advancement in society in the name of Japanese tradition and culture have resulted in considerable backlash against the gender-equality movement. Because advocates for gender-equal policies lack adequate resources to counter conservative activities, at-

tempts to implement genuine social change through the enactment of gender-equal ordinances could be futile. The fundamental task, it seems, is to make the concept of gender more widely understood among the population at large, not just among certain interested individuals, and to redefine women's issues as issues critical to every member of society.

Advance of Japanese Women in Politics: The General Local Election of 2003

—Tokuko Ogai,
Ochanomizu University

After Japan held the Fifteenth General Local Election on April 13 and 27, 2003, the percentage of women in local assemblies increased from 5.4% to 8.8%. Although young male candidates also increased their political representation in this election, this paper focuses on the women who ran as Independent candidates. Independents make up the largest group of women elected to local assemblies in the 2003 election.

My research indicates that there were three distinct pools of women candidates—the political group, *Seikatsusha Nettowaaku*, or Consumers' Network (Netto hereafter); participants from the political training programs known as "Back-up Schools"; and the relatively new local government program designed to raise women's political interest and involvement, the Simulation Women's Assembly (SWA). The SWA is of particular interest because it appears to be an important new mechanism for promoting women's election to local assemblies in rural towns and villages, where women's representation is considerably lower than in cities.

Netto, which was founded in Tokyo in 1977, originated from the COOP collective purchase consumer movement, or Seikatsu Club Cooperative. By April 2003, Netto had produced 144 female local assembly members. According to Netto's basic philosophy, elected representatives are there by

“proxy of the citizens”; thus, each seat belongs to the citizens, not to individual office holders. This results in each political position being transferred to another member after eight or 12 years. Netto also requires assembly members to share their salaries with the organization, which means that representatives do not have to fund their own re-elections, because Netto uses the pooled salary money to pay its members’ campaign expenses.

Most Netto members were initially wives and mothers concerned with quality of life issues such as garbage recycling. Participation in COOP activities and community-based volunteer work raised these housewives’ political consciousness. As women began winning elections to public office, they found themselves responsible for both domestic work and their new political roles. This experience shifted their concerns from matters of daily community life to women’s issues.

When a woman wants to see more women in political office, she either needs to run herself or identify another woman candidate to support. The “Back-up Schools,” established in the 1990s to train women in the election process, help women develop knowledge, skills, and political networks that support their ability to get elected. One of the most outstanding Back-up Schools in Japan is the one sponsored by the Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association (FIMA) in Tokyo. Over 300 women from all over Japan attended FIMA programs from 1994 to 2002, including incumbent assemblywomen, would-be candidates, and campaign managers. Because more than 80% of candidates trained there have won elections, most on modest budgets, FIMA has attracted considerable public attention. When these candidates won their elections, most became the first woman to serve on the local assembly, or at least the first woman running as Independent. As feminists or alternative candidates who oppose the status quo, these representatives are often isolated in the assembly. Although they work hard making speeches, distributing political information to their communities, and performing their other duties, it is difficult for these “lone sheep” to maintain their seats in the local assemblies.

The goal of the Simulation Women’s Assemblies (SWA) held by local governments is to promote women’s participation in the political decision-making process. On the day the SWA is held, participants meet in the formal

assembly hall, select a chairperson, and conduct a mock session. In the 2003 election, participation in SWA gave women who had been working as volunteers in their communities the opportunity to secure the approval of local bosses, who have considerable influence over the nomination process in small towns and villages. The women candidates’ competence was publicly confirmed in the widely distributed government newsletters that provided coverage of the SWA sessions, which revealed that women possess the interest, dedication, and skills to serve as elected officials.

This paper identifies the primary factors supporting women’s recent political advancement. More women are demanding that they be represented in government, and more women who are interested in politics now have the opportunity to receive the training they need to run for office. As it becomes less exceptional for women to run for office, and women develop more extensive networks, it becomes easier for women candidates to receive the support they need to win elections. A second condition supporting women’s political advancement is the public’s growing distrust of established political parties during this period of economic stagnation. With the demographic composition of Japan shifting due to a low birth rate and an aging population, there has been an increase in diverse lifestyles. More people are choosing to vote for candidates who represent alternatives to the status quo, namely women, young men, and non-partisan candidates. Furthermore, men are increasingly retreating from the political arena because the profitability of holding office has declined. This is a golden opportunity for women to challenge the old boys’ political network.

Women Running for Congress: An Overview of the 2002 Elections

—Julie Dolan
Macalester University

Media commentators and political scientists alike referred to the 1992 elections as ‘The Year of the Woman’ because of the unprecedented numbers of women running in and winning congressional elections. Women’s remarkable successes in that year have been attributed to a variety of factors:

the large number of open seats due to redistricting and congressional retirements, strong anti-incumbency sentiments among voters combined with public perceptions of female candidates as honest outsiders, and women’s perceived strengths in dealing with issues on the national agenda such as sexual harassment and health care (Palley 1993).

In 2002, redistricting once again created a healthy number of open seats, but voters seemed less bothered by ‘politics as usual’ than in 1992 and stereotypically masculine issues such as terrorism and the impending war with Iraq topped the national agenda. Not surprisingly, female candidates did less well in 2002 than in 1992. Why is this the case?

This paper provides an overview of the 2002 congressional elections, examining three questions in particular. First, did women run disproportionately as sacrificial lambs, or in districts where they had no realistic chance of winning? Second, how successful were female candidates in raising campaign funds in 2002? Finally, did women’s campaign slogans convey an image of tough, aggressive women ready to tackle the nation’s problems or did they stick to touting more stereotypically feminine traits and areas of policy expertise in their campaign communications?

In almost all respects, female congressional candidates fared as well as similarly situated male candidates in 2002. They faced similar competition in their primary election bids, won their primary races at rates comparable to their male colleagues, raised more money than male candidates, on average, and had similar success rates in November. The only area where female candidates did less well than male candidates was in competing for open seats, and here their success rates were significantly lower than men’s and noticeably lower than women’s success rates in the 1992 congressional elections. While women won 56.4% of their open seat contests in 1992, they were successful in only 31.3% of these elections in 2002 (CAWP 2002).

Without public opinion data, it is premature to conclude that the political climate and influence of voter stereotypes sunk women’s candidacies in 2002. The bulk of existing research on voter stereotypes hints that such a factor may have mattered, though (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Mueller 1986; Rosenwasser and Seale 1988; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Sapiro

1981–1982). And it does not appear that female candidates in 2002 congressional races went to any special lengths to assuage voter stereotypes by touting their own masculine traits and capabilities. A cursory look at the campaign slogans used by women and men in the 2002 congressional elections demonstrate that both sexes used sex-role appropriate slogans most of the time.¹ Neither sex emphasized their leadership over military issues or defense policy, but women more often included the words families or values in their campaign slogan while men more often stressed their leadership and strength. Thus, female candidates did not fashion campaign slogans to counter voter stereotypes, but instead stuck to emphasizing stereotypically feminine policy issues and personality traits on the campaign trail.

Women's Political Participation at the State and Local Level in the United States

—M. Margaret Conway,
University of Florida

In the United States, approximately 550,000 offices are filled through the electoral process, with only 537 of those being at the federal level. However, research focuses primarily on forms of participation related to federal level politics. At the state level, research has emphasized electoral contests for state executive offices and legislatures. Given the policy making, implementation, and enforcement responsibilities of state, local, and special district units of government, more attention to patterns of participation at state and local levels is warranted. The paper summarized here examines rates of women candidates' electoral success in 2002 and trends in women's success in winning elections as well as the mass public's participation in non-electoral political activities.

Participation in Non-Electoral Forms of Political Activity

Are women more or less likely than men to engage in non-electoral political activities? In both 2000 and 2002 women were less likely than men to work with others on local community issues, to express their views on a public issue to public officials, and to attend a meeting about a school or community issue. Only a very small por-

tion of either men or women report participating in a protest or demonstration.¹

Holding Elective and Appointive Offices and Trends in Office Holding

To what extent do women seek elective office at the state and local level? How successful are they in winning office? What are the trends in holding state or local elective office? Women's representation in state legislatures has increased substantially since 1973. In that year, women held 5.6% of state legislative seats. Prior to the 2002 election women held 22.7% of state legislative seats, while in 2003 they held 22.3% (CAWP 2003a). In 2002, 501 women were candidates in state senate races and 58.3% were elected. In that same year, 1,843 women were candidates for state house seats and 61.7% were elected. Women's electoral success in state legislative contests varied substantially from state to state (CAWP 2003d; 2003e; 2003f), with incumbency playing a very important role in electoral success. In the 2002 elections to the lower chamber of state legislatures, 94% of the women incumbents seeking re-election won and 75% of the women elected were incumbents. In state senate elections, 95% of the women running for re-election won and 77% of the women elected were incumbents (CAWP 2003d; 2003e; 2003f). Other explanations for patterns of women's representation in state legislatures focus on differences in the states' political cultures, the use of multi-member legislative districts (Rule 1999), and the candidate pool, with increased proportions of women in the workforce and in professional occupations being related to increased representation of women in state legislatures (Ford and Dolan 1999).

Women have less frequently held executive offices at the state and local level. Six women served as state governors in 2003. Only 24 women have ever held the post of governor, with 16 elected in their own right, three replacing their husbands, and five succeeding to the governorship under constitutional provisions. Women have been more successful in obtaining election to other state-wide offices. Of the 273 state-wide elected offices other than governors, women held 27.3% in 2003 (CAWP 2003b; 2003c).

Women are more likely to seek and to be elected to local offices at the city and county levels. Of the 243 cities with a population over 100,000, women served as mayors in 37 and as mayors

in 14 of the 100 largest (CAWP 2003b). In 2002, women served as mayors in 206 cities with a population greater than 30,000, or 17% of the cities of that size. In comparison, in 1977, 6.2% of cities of that size had women mayors, and by 1997, 20.6% of cities of that size had women mayors (Costello, Miles, and Stone 1998, 361, Table 8.3).

One hypothesis explaining patterns of state and local office holding is the desirability thesis: "The higher the level of office and the more power the office has, the less likely a woman is to be elected" (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994, 44). Support for that explanation is provided by research on the types of cities in which women serve as mayors or city council members. Women are more likely to serve as mayors in cities in which the post is part-time and more likely to be city council members in cities with large councils, those which do not pay council members, or those with term limits for city council members (MacManus and Bullock 1996).

The proportion of county level and school board offices held by women has increased substantially, with the proportion of county commissioner posts growing from 3% in 1975 to 24% in 1998. The proportion of school board positions held by women rose from 25.7% in 1978 to 44% in 1997 (MacManus et al. 1999).

Discussion

In both 2000 and 2002 women were less likely than men to engage in several forms of non-electoral political activity. Why might women participate less? The social context of women's lives may limit their opportunities to participate, with family and work responsibilities restricting the time available for political activities.

Turning to serving in elective office, the proportion of offices, such as state-wide elected officials, state legislators, and mayors, held by women increased from the 1960s to the late 1990s or 2000. By 2002, however, the proportion of state legislators who were women decreased, as did the proportion of mayoral offices held by women. Why? In the case of state legislators, two factors appear to be at work. One is the effect of term limits. Research indicates that women legislators forced from office by term limits are not being replaced by other women (Carroll and Jenkins 2002). Obviously, term limits remove the effect of incumbency. A second factor may be the required redistricting of state legislative districts. Those districts may have been

drawn to benefit candidates of one party, and that party may have been less likely to support the nomination and election of women to the state legislatures.

Whatever Happened to the Year of the Woman: Lessons from the 1992 and 2002 Elections

—Michele Swers,
Georgetown University

The labeling of the 1992 elections as the “Year of the Woman” created the expectation that women had finally breached the political glass ceiling and were on the path to making the electoral gains that would lead to representation of women in the nation’s governing bodies that approaches parity with men. Since that banner year, the progress of women in elections has continued at a slow pace. By examining the political and structural contexts of the 1992 and 2002 elections, I evaluate the major barriers to the advancement of women in office and provide a window on the future for women in electoral politics.

The scholarship on women and electoral politics has highlighted both structural and political factors as inhibiting women’s advancement in electoral office. At the structural level, researchers find that women raise as much money and win legislative seats at the state and national level as often as men in similar, challenger v. incumbent, and open-seat races (Burrell 1994). Therefore, the incumbency advantage is viewed as the major structural barrier to the advancement of women in American politics. Suggestions for structural reform range from the adoption of proportional representation to increased recruitment of women for open-seat races and the expansion of term limits at the state level.

With regard to the political context, research on voter attitudes and stereotypes demonstrates that voters view female candidates as more compassionate and willing to compromise and they favor women on issues such as education and health care while they rate male candidates as more capable of handling the economy, foreign affairs, and military crises (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a, 1993b; Burrell 1994; Sanbonmatsu 2002). However, the mechanisms by which these stereotypes impact actual votes are unclear.

A closer look at the 1992 and 2002 elections reveals the strong interconnection between political and structural factors. In 1992, the political context strongly favored women as both the national campaigns focused on the domestic issues, particularly health care, on which voters prefer female candidates. Additionally, the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings highlighted the issue of sexual harassment and the paucity of women in Congress, allowing many women candidates to explicitly raise the need for more women in Congress as an issue in their campaign. In 1992, women were able to capitalize on a favorable political environment created through census-year redistricting combined with an increased number of strategic retirements in response to scandal, leading to an unusually large number, 93, of open-seat congressional races (Palmer and Simon 2001, Swers 2002).

In contrast, the 2002 elections offered women candidates neither a favorable political context nor an advantageous structural environment. The focus on the war on terrorism and the impending war with Iraq focused voters’ attention on stereotypically male issues, requiring female candidates to work harder to establish credibility in these areas. Despite the status of 2002 as a redistricting year, few open seats, 49, were created as most states drew incumbent protection plans (Giroux 2002). Although an increasing number of state legislators were term limited out of office, the number of women in state legislatures declined slightly from 22.7% in 2002 to 22.3% in 2003 (Center for the American Woman and Politics 2003). A predicted “Year of the Woman Governor” did not materialize as the number of female governors advanced from only five to six.

The investigation of the political and structural elements of the 1992 and 2002 elections highlights several important areas for future research in order to discern the nature of the barriers to women’s advancement in political office and the actions needed to increase women’s representation. First, research is needed to clarify the conditions in which voter stereotypes impact votes, the decisions of political elites to recruit women, and the political calculus of individuals concerning whether to run. Additionally, to take advantage of the structural opportunities that result from open seats and the expansion of term limits in the state legislatures, scholars need to gain a better understanding of the process of

political recruitment. In their study of state term limits, Carroll and Jenkins (2001) note that women have made some gains at the state senate level because there exists a pool of term-limited or other sitting female state house members ready to run for senate. However, there is no clear pipeline of candidates for state house seats

In addition to the individual level factors that influence political recruitment, scholarship must devote more attention to the differing fortunes of women candidates within the Republican and Democratic parties. Many have noted that 1992 was really the “Year of the Democratic Woman.” Palmer and Simon (2001) maintain that the number of women candidates in Democratic and Republican primary and general election races began to diverge in the late 1980s. Additionally, Carroll (2002) finds that while the Republican Party has made great gains across state legislatures, the proportion of female legislators who are Republicans has actually declined over time. Research is needed to clarify whether women are disadvantaged in the Republican Party because of a bias among a more socially conservative primary voting base, bias among party elites who recruit candidates, or a lack of quality candidates willing to emerge from the pipeline. The concentration of women in one party can have detrimental effects on women’s influence on the political agenda when the opposing party controls the majority in the legislative body.

Women Running Locally: How Gender Affects School Board Elections

—Melissa Deckman,
Washington College

Political scientists who study women and politics have long recognized that the number of women serving in higher political office will increase only if there are more qualified women to run for these positions. Substantial gains by women candidates at the local level, it is argued, will pump the political pipeline, providing more women with political experience to run for higher offices. Yet, is school board office in reality part of the political pipeline for most citizens who seek it? Or, is school board service viewed more

along the lines of community service? This question has important gender implications. As women are more likely to serve at the school board level than in any other level of government, whether or not they see school board service as the first step in a longer political career has serious consequences for the political pipeline argument. Is service on the school board more likely to be viewed as a stepping stone by women, perhaps because it is more accessible to them than other offices, than by men? Or do women view school board service as a separate track altogether? At the heart of this issue is political ambition and whether men and women run for political office for different reasons.

The data for this study come from a cross-sectional, national survey of school board candidates drawn from a random sample of school districts that I conducted in 1998 (N=671; 55% response rate). I find that among the respondents to the national survey, 38% were women, which is close to the national average of women currently serving on school boards. In many ways, women and men candidates are similar in terms of their socioeconomic backgrounds. Women school board candidates (23%), however, are almost twice as likely as men candidates (12%) to come from a professional education background, which is consistent with previous studies on the background of school board members. Of all survey respondents, 62% won their races. When broken down by gender, women candidates won 65% of their races, compared with 61% of men—a difference that is not statistically significant. Moreover, when additional controls are introduced in a logistic regression analysis, gender remains insignificant (instead, incumbency is the major explanatory variable in predicting the success of school board candidates). However, women candidates do fare better in at-large elections than men, which is not surprising given that previous research indicates that there is a tendency for women to be elected in “at-large” or multi-member district elections at both the municipal and state legislative level.

Although women are just as likely as men to win when they decide to become school board candidates, men and women appear to weigh different factors in their decision to run for school board. Women are more likely than men to rely on the encouragement of family and friends before they seek out a

school board position, which suggests that family obligations weigh heavier on the minds of women candidates. Indeed, women are more likely than men to say that having children in the schools is what prompted their decision to run for school board in the first place.

This study finds that other important gender dimensions exist when it comes to political ambition. Men are significantly more likely than women to say that they run for school board with the hope of both gaining political experience as well as affecting local education policy. Women, meanwhile, are more likely to indicate that the social reasons, such as working with like-minded individuals on a school board, are what propelled their decision to become school board candidates. In some ways, these findings run counter to other work on political ambition and higher political office, in which the “ambition gap” appears to be closing between men and women and that women are even more likely than men to say that issues are what matter in their decisions to become engaged in politics.

Of course, the findings from this study might demonstrate that school board elections are a unique case when compared to other sorts of elections. While men are more likely than women to say that gaining political experience for a run for higher office was important in their decision to become a school board candidate, the fact remains that relatively few men or women feel that this reason was important. Both men and women are more likely to indicate that social and community reasons are what prompted their candidacies. Although men may be more ready than women to use school boards as the first step in their political pipeline, the chances of candidates of either sex doing so are slim. Those individuals who wish to recruit well qualified women (or men) to run for higher political office may wish to do so from other arenas besides school boards.

The Governor’s Race in Hokkaido: The Election of a Female Governor and its Impact

—Masako Aiuchi,
Hokkaido Asaigakuen University

In April 2003, Hokkaido voters elected their first female governor,

Harumi Takahashi, during the 15th General Local Election. She became the fourth female governor in Japan, following those governors elected in Osaka, Kumamoto, and Chiba. The election of a female governor is quite a recent phenomenon in Japan, and there are both similarities and differences in the political conditions that supported this development in each prefecture. Recent efforts to devolve power from the national government have increased the power and responsibility of the prefectural governments in general, and of governors specifically. Both constituencies and political scientists are concerned with whether women will make a difference as governors during this critical period. This paper examines Harumi Takahashi’s election as Hokkaido governor, focusing on the political party’s recruiting process as well as the campaign strategies used by her followers. This campaign, like many others, raised the question of whether a candidate’s gender should be emphasized to appeal to voters.

Nine people, two of them women, campaigned for the office of governor of Hokkaido. In the beginning of the campaign, Takahashi and her followers were reluctant to emphasize her gender. The other female candidate, Takako Itoh, was a former Diet member and third-time challenger in the governor’s race who chose to target the general public and not take up feminist issues. When several opinion polls showed voters were dissatisfied with the candidates’ vague policy perspectives, Takahashi’s camp swiftly changed its strategy, specifically taking up women’s issues to target female voters. In her manifest, Takahashi tried to distinguish herself from other candidates by declaring she would develop legislation to support child rearing and give financial aid to women entrepreneurs.

The exit poll showed that the majority of women voted for male candidates; thus, the candidate’s gender did not have a strong impact on voter choice in the Hokkaido governor’s race. Takahashi failed to mobilize women partly because her career as an elite bureaucrat and her affiliation with a conservative party gave many feminists the impression that she was simply “a man with a skirt on.” Ultimately, Takahashi’s victory was brought about by the Clean Party’s decision to endorse her at virtually the last moment of the race.

Takahashi's campaign drew considerable media attention because both her background and the recruiting process employed led Hokkaido voters to recall the successful campaign of Fusae Ohta of Osaka, the first female governor in Japan. Like Tokahashi, Ohta was a career bureaucrat, and being an elite METI woman had a strong impact on the recruiting process in both cases. Fusae Ohta was elected following her predecessor's resignation due to a sexual harassment scandal involving one of his campaign workers. In that race, the political parties carefully calculated the anti-male and anti-populist sentiments among Osaka voters.

Japan's second female governor, Yoshiko Shiotani, was elected in the prefecture of Kumamoto in April 2000, two months after Ohta's election in Osaka. Shiotani was the lieutenant governor of Kumamoto before her election as governor. Unlike Ohta and Takahashi, Shiotani did not come from an eligibility pool comprised of career elites. When the incumbent governor suddenly passed away, the local political network asked Shiotani, a devout Christian with many years of service in the welfare institution, to run for office. Although she ran as an independent, Shiotani had the endorsement of the conservative LDP and the Clean Party. The extensive involvement of community and women's organizations in her campaign contributed to her landslide victory.

Akiko Domoto was elected in Chiba in March 2001, making her the third female governor in Japan. She was the first woman governor who ran and won the election as a real independent, that is, without receiving the endorsement of any major political party. Her success can be partly attributed to the active involvement of women's rights organizations and other civic groups in her campaign. Although Domoto did not serve as lieutenant governor, she was formerly a member of the House of Councilors. As the head of the small political party, *Sakigake*, she had been championing women's causes, human rights, and environmental issues, was well known by Chiba voters, and often appeared on television. Feminists and other activists evaluated Domoto's performance highly, so when she decided to run for governor to challenge the male- and money-dominated political culture of Chiba, she could reasonably expect moral and practical support from women and younger people.

With the exception of Domoto, female governors in Japan have two dis-

tinctive features: appointment as a lieutenant governor and elite status in the ministries of the central government. Both Ohta of Osaka and Shiotani of Kumamoto were lieutenant governors before they were elected governors. Shiotani moved directly from one office to the other in the same prefectural government, whereas Ohta served as lieutenant governor in the prefecture of Okayama before being elected as governor of Osaka. Lieutenant governorship seems to grant women running for governor greater credibility. The METI that sent Ohta and Takahashi to the governor's office serves as a mechanism for career women interested in politics to gain access to political office.

That people with elite status in the ministries of central government comprise an eligibility pool for governor is true for both women and men seeking governorship in Japan. It is possible that the increased entry of women into a nontraditional sphere such as central bureaucracy, and their subsequent promotion to the executive position, will enhance women's political recruitment, thus promoting their entry into the even more untraditional sphere of the governor's office.

There are also similarities in the electoral settings in which Ohta, Shiotani, Domoto and Takahashi entered the governor's office. These women ran for office in the context of a male-dominated political culture, sometimes during crises caused by their male predecessors. For example, there was a sexual harassment scandal in Osaka, a sudden death in Kumamoto, corruption in Chiba, and extreme distrust of the prefectural government in Hokkaido. Although the candidate's gender did not seem to have a discernible impact on voter choice, women candidates provided a compelling alternative to "politics as usual" in these gubernatorial elections, at least from the perspective of the candidates' recruiters.

The four women governors recently developed a proposal to the Japanese government calling for more effective enforcement of the "Violence Against Women Act." The jointly submitted proposal suggests that women governors are united in their defense of women's rights and protection of women's interests *as women*, thus implying that "women represent women." Although Takahashi and other women in political office regularly face this common assumption during their tenure, further research is needed to determine whether women governors actu-

ally represent women, particularly because electing women to the governor's office is such a recent phenomenon in Japan.

Has the Closed Door Opened for Women? The Appointment of Women Ministers in Japan

—Yoshie Kobayashi
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When Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro appointed five women ministers to his cabinet, the decision not only surprised the Japanese, but also foreign observers who had criticized the nation for its dearth of women in politics. His appointments increased the representation of women ministers to 22%, the highest in Japanese political history.

Because backlash against the gender equality policy is widespread, it is unlikely that the increase of the number of women ministers resulted from social demand or the rectification of gender inequality in Japan. This paper addresses the question of why, despite the antagonistic political situation in 2001, Prime Minister Koizumi appointed five women to the cabinet. In this paper, I consider the likelihood of the number of women ministers increasing, or at least remaining stable, in the near future. I also discuss those factors that both promote and hinder the appointment of women ministers in post-war Japan, including legal restrictions on appointment and the history and conditions under which women ministers have been appointed in Japan.

The first hypothesis I examine is that the more women there are in the Diet, the more likely it is that the number of women ministers will increase. My analysis indicates that although an increase in women Diet members may help increase the appointment of women ministers, it is neither a necessary precondition for their appointment nor an inevitable consequence of women's increased representation in the two legislative houses.

My second hypothesis suggests that the male-oriented political recruitment process hinders women's ability to be appointed to the cabinet. The data reveal that women Diet members were appointed to the cabinet most often, but there was also a notable increase in the number of women cabinet members appointed in the 1990s and 2000s who were ex-bureaucrats. In general, women

Diet members lack the type of political experience, career length, and patronage necessary to secure appointments as ministers. One way for a woman to compensate for these deficiencies is to have experience as a government officer; in fact, women who are former bureaucrats and have strong ties to particular types of organizations are most likely to be appointed to the Cabinet.

My final hypothesis is that if a woman-friendly political opportunity structure exists, the number of women ministers will increase. One such structure might be a left-wing administration, which tends to appoint more women to high status positions than does a right-wing administration. My examination of the political characteristics of the prime ministers and administrations under which women ministers were appointed revealed support for the political opportunity structure hypothesis. I conclude that Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro was able to appoint five women ministers because he is a minority in the LDP and lacks a strong power base in the party. More importantly, he appointed them as a way to distinguish himself from incumbent LDP representatives and win popular approval as a “liberal” and “uncorrupted” politician.

Gender, Party and Political Change: The Evolution of a Democratic Advantage

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In this preliminary analysis, we apply the theory of issue evolution developed by Carmines and Stimson to the politics of gender (1989). Issue evolutions involve issues “capable of altering the political environment . . . and the party system from which they emerged” (1989, 11). Most relevant for our purposes is the idea that the positions of American political parties on these issues exhibit a distinctive pattern over time. At the beginning of this evolutionary process, the positions of the political parties are indistinct, and a particular issue area does not easily break along partisan lines. A “critical moment” can occur, however, that fos-

ters a period of change, in which the positions of the parties become clearly defined. In other words, in the wake of the critical moment, the parties take a side. Subsequently, the parties’ positions become polarized over time. As Carmines and Stimson (1989) demonstrate, this crystallization and polarization between the parties can be seen among various party elites and the mass public.¹

Carmines and Stimson (1989) use this theory to explore the issue of race and its impact on American political parties and racial policy. In this paper, we suggest that this theory can also be applied to gender issues by exploring a variety of policies, the integration of women into the political system, and the links between the parties and the mass public. Prior to the 1960s, support for gender issues did not split along easily identifiable party lines. But in the wake of a “critical moment” in the early 1970s, the positions of the parties on issues of gender polarized, and clear ideological divisions developed among party elites, party activists, and the mass public.

In general, prior to the 1960s, issues of gender were not clearly partisan issues (see Wolbrecht 2000). The history of the Equal Rights Amendment, for example, is a good example of this and how even women’s rights groups were split over the issue.² In 1921, Alice Paul, the head of the National Woman’s Party, drafted a version of an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which was introduced in Congress in 1923. It was, however, immediately opposed by labor unions and other progressive organizations, including Florence Kelly’s National Consumer League (NCL). Kelly opposed the ERA because it would threaten the maximum hour and minimum wage laws for women for which the NCL had fought hard (see Mansbridge 1986; O’Connor 1980). By 1940, however, the Republican Party adopted the ERA as a plank in its platform. The Democrats followed suit in 1944 (Mansbridge 1986, 9). Although women’s rights were not a priority for President Kennedy, in 1961, he did create the Commission on the Status of Women (see Davis 1991; Harrison 1988).

We argue that the critical moment in the issue evolution of gender in American politics was from 1970 to 1973. In 1970, new women’s rights organizations were being created faster than anyone could count (Freeman 1975, 147–48). Membership in NOW exploded from 3,000 in 1970 to 50,000

in 1974 (Davis 1991, 108). The “small-scale disruptive actions” of the 1960s were being replaced by mass marches, such as the 10,000 demonstrators who paraded down New York’s Fifth Avenue to mark the 50th Anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment (Costain 1992, 2). January of 1970 also marked the beginning of “the grand press blitz.” For the next three months, almost every major media outlet in the American press featured stories on the women’s movement (Costain 1992). In addition, during the 93rd Congress (1973–1974), Congress passed the largest number of women’s issue bills in its history (Costain 1992, 10). “Women’s liberation became the latest fad” (Freeman 1975, 148).

During this three-year period, the Equal Rights Amendment also attracted widespread publicity and was given serious attention in Congress. As Boles (1979, 38) explains, 1970 was a “pivotal year in the ERA’s legislative history.” By this time, a consensus had been reached on the ERA, even among labor groups (Mansbridge 1986). After a series of set backs and procedural maneuvers, Congress finally passed the ERA in 1972 with bipartisan majorities and sent it to the states for ratification (see Mansbridge 1986; Boles 1979). By the end of 1973, 28 states had ratified with lopsided bipartisan votes in favor (Boles 1979, Table 1.2).

As with civil rights, issues of gender became increasingly partisan and polarized in the wake of this critical moment. Congress cleared the ERA in 1972 with a ratification deadline of seven years. After the initial rush of states, however, ratification all but stalled, and serious grassroots opposition was mobilized. Over the next four years, only five more states would ratify, and all of these votes were much closer (Boles 1979, Table 1.1). As the ratification deadline approached, 35 states had ratified, but approval by the three additional states needed for the 3/4 majority was looking bleak. A number of states also asserted the prerogative of rescinding their vote for ratification. Proponents of the ERA then introduced a resolution to extend the deadline for ratification to June 30, 1982. In contrast to the initial passage in the early 1970s, the congressional effort to extend the ratification was far from bipartisan. Majorities of Democrats voted against majorities of Republicans. In the states, Democratic party leaders were now putting pressure on state legislators to vote in favor (Mansbridge 1986, 154). In 1980,

the Republican Party removed the ERA from its party platform. In spite of the extension, no additional states ratified the ERA, and it died in 1982. Beginning in the mid 1970s, the politics associated with a number of gender-based issues became increasingly partisan and ideological (see Wolbrecht 2000).

Based on data drawn from the National Election Studies from 1952 to 2000, we find that party identification among the mass public with regards to gender follows the pattern of issue evolution. Between 1952 and 1964, women were more likely to call themselves Republicans. The period from 1966–1978 is one of fluctuation. In 1980, “separation” occurs, with women more likely to call themselves Democrats. This trend continues through the late 1980s and early 1990s. By the mid-1990s, there is a 10-point gender gap for the Democratic Party.

There are similar patterns evident among party activists. The pattern here, also based on NES data, is similar to the changes among the mass public.³ Again, three periods are evident. Prior to 1968, Republicans have a greater proportion of female activists than Democrats. The second period, from 1968–1978, is one of fluctuation. Finally, there is a separation in 1980–1982 that persists through the end of the time series. From 1982 forward, women comprised at least half of the Democrat activists and marks the last time that women comprised at least half of the Republican activists.

The same pattern can also be seen in the partisan distribution of women elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from 1956–2000. There are relatively equal numbers of Republican and Democratic female House members in the elections from 1956 until 1968. In the early 1970s, there is more fluctuation, especially among the Democrats. Separation occurs in 1988 and increases through the elections of the 1990s and 2000. In 1968, the last election prior to the “critical moment,” eight women were elected to the House of Representatives, five Democrats and three Republicans. After the election of 2002, there were 59 women, 38 Democrats and 21 Republicans. Of the 14 women in the Senate today, nine are Democrats. Similar patterns can also be seen among women in state Houses of Representatives and state Senates (Simon and Palmer 2003).

While very preliminary, all of this suggests that gender triggered an issue evolution that fundamentally changed the electoral landscape in the United

States. A deeper historical and more rigorous statistical analysis is needed to determine whether the dynamics of change conform to the top-down, elite-to-mass evolution found in the issue evolution of race. Ultimately, we hope to contribute to our understanding of the slow integration of women into the political system. One of the theories that attempts to explain why, 82 years after women were granted the right to vote, only 15% of Congress is female is the “pipeline theory.” The basic premise underlying this theory is a “bottom-up” approach, in that there is a sequential lag structure in the American political hierarchy. We argue, however, that parties, political elites, and policy goals play a fundamental role in this process. Although there has been a slow, relatively steady, increase in the number of women in public office, women are no longer evenly distributed across the two parties. Thus, we may have to account for more of a “top-down” explanation, in which political elites at the national level foster changes in lower levels of the political system and eventually in the mass public.

The Mother’s Body Protection Act and the Contraceptive Pill: Reproductive Rights and Policy Making in Japan

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The development of reproductive policy in Japan has followed an unusual path compared to other industrialized nations. Specifically, women gained access to legal abortion in 1948, yet the low-dose contraceptive pill only became available in 1999. This paper argues that controversy over reproductive policy in Japan stems from the male-centered, patriarchal character of the political administration. Women’s low representation in the national government is directly related to the slow development of policies protecting women’s reproductive rights, because legislative acts of specific concern to women tend to be introduced through private members’ initiatives.

Prior to the Meiji Restoration in 1868, abortion and infanticide were relatively common; however, abortion was designated a crime when it was

added to the penal code in 1880. In 1940, people with disabilities became subject to forced sterilization under the provisions of the National Eugenic Act. In 1941, the government increased restrictions on abortion and birth control and issued the Program on Population Policy to increase the size of the “healthy” Japanese population.

In 1946, the adoption of a new constitution established legal equality between men and women. Two years later, the National Eugenic Act was amended to the Eugenic Protection Act, which granted women the legal right to abortion in certain circumstances, such as genetic problems. The following year, women were granted the right to have an abortion for economic reasons. Although abortion still appeared in the Japanese penal code in 1948, it had essentially been decriminalized.

Women’s groups and medical doctors successfully defeated the ruling conservative political party’s multiple attempts to impose new restrictions on abortion in the 1970s. Another factor that protected women’s reproductive rights was the government’s decision to sign the “Treaty to Abolish All Discrimination Against Women” in 1980 in order to maintain Japan’s status as an “advanced country.” When the demand for reproductive rights grew among disability rights groups in the late 1970s and early 1980s, some feminist groups collaborated with them in a joint attempt to have abortion removed from the penal code as a crime. In 1996, clauses restricting the rights of people with disabilities were removed when the Mother’s Body Protection Act amended the Eugenic Protection Act.

After the United States approved the use of the contraceptive pill in 1960, the Central Board of Medicine considered distributing it in Japan. The Board’s deliberations were interrupted due to political concerns about the pill’s effect on sexual morality. In 1966, certain middle-to-high-dose contraceptive pills were approved for use in the treatment of painful menses. Ironically, the male potency drug, Viagra, was legalized in just six months, whereas deliberations over the low-dose contraceptive pill lasted nine years. This notable situation stimulated public discussion about the sexual double standard in Japan, enabling women to finally secure government approval for the low-dose contraceptive pill in 1999.

Equal Employment in Contemporary Japan: A Structural Approach

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Much of the literature about Japanese society explains the marginalization of women as a cultural trait; however, it is naïve to conclude that the issue of gender equality is specific to the “nature” of a certain society or culture. To adequately understand gender inequality requires a systematic analysis of the sociocultural, economic, and political structures that produce such inequality. It is within these structures that the issue of equal employment arises, becomes problematized, and is negotiated. This paper relies on a structural perspective to understand the major developments concerning equal employment in contemporary Japan. To illustrate the problem of structurally based gender discrimination, I critically examine women’s position and treatment in the Japanese corporate employment system and consider how various actors contributed to the policy development process that culminated in the passage of the 1985 Equal Employment Opportunity Law.

Four primary features characterize the Japanese employment system—high job security, high worker commitment to the company, cooperative company unionization, and personnel management involving extensive in-house training and frequent transfers. These aspects constitute what is called “life-long” employment. The transfer system, known as rotation, is vital for Japanese companies’ ability to produce highly skilled workers, because these companies usually recruit recent graduates who lack management skills. Rotation provides executive trainees, in particular, with opportunities to become acquainted with all aspects of the company’s operations, as well as establish personal networks that promote their authority. Within the fairly rigid life-long employment system, such structural flexibility enables companies to adjust to market changes, technological innovations, and the globalization of the economy.

Data reveal that fewer women than men are employed, and among women, those ages 30 to 34 tend not to participate in the labor force. This pattern of Japanese women’s employment, referred to as the “M curve,” is partially explained by women’s withdrawal from

the labor market due to household and childcare demands. However, women’s employment must also be understood in the context of gender imbalances in the labor market and gendered practices in the Japanese employment system. Discrimination against women is embedded in the job recruitment and assignment process, wage structure, and training, promotion, and retirement systems of Japanese corporations.

The Japanese labor market is characterized by both horizontal and vertical segregation. Similar to the United States, women workers are highly concentrated in certain industries and occupations. Segregation within occupations and companies also exists; that is, men hold a disproportionate number of the high status positions. That only a small number of women hold positions of authority in Japanese companies reflects a cultural preference for men, who are regarded as more valuable employees. Women who want to work have had to accept positions as assistants, regardless of their professional qualifications and desires, resulting in the widespread devaluation of qualified women workers as well as a significant wage gap.

Although the Labor Standards Act of 1946 requires equal wages for women and men, the equal pay clause only applies to the same type of labor. Therefore, employers may claim that a substantial wage difference exists because women and men usually perform different jobs. Because wage disparity due to discrimination in recruitment, training, job assignment, and promotion is beyond the scope of this law, those groups that support full equality in employment began to call for new legislation around 1975. Their efforts were facilitated by the United Nations’ introduction of a set of women-friendly policy initiatives, including the CEDAW, which Japan ratified in 1980. Although its passage was complicated by conflicts between business and labor interests, Japan’s first Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) was enacted in 1986. The EEOL prohibited gender discrimination in training, pension allocation, and employee dismissal, but only encouraged companies to eliminate discriminatory practices in recruitment, job assignment, and promotion. Moreover, the law imposed no penalties for violations.

Many companies introduced the two-track system—a career-track (*sogoshoku*) and an assistant track (*ippanshoku*)—in response to the EEOL. Although the new system fi-

nally gave women an opportunity to enter the career track, it created new inequalities among women workers, and it continues to disadvantage women in terms of job content, pay, and promotion. In 1997, the EEOL was revised to prohibit discrimination in recruitment and promotion, require public disclosure of the name of companies that violate the law, grant employees the ability to enter arbitration without the employer’s consent, and encourage companies to adopt measures to end sexual harassment. Although the 1997 EEOL addressed several problems in the original law, it was still too weak to substantially prevent discriminatory practices.

I conclude that, overall, Japanese policy concerning equal employment reflects dramatic progress over the last three decades, yet employment conditions still vary substantially for men and women. It appears that systematic, indirect discrimination in personnel practices is at least partly responsible for impeding women’s full integration into the workplace. Another type of workplace inequality that is increasingly common in Japan is the division between full-time and part-time or dispatched workers. These forms of “flexible” employment have emerged in response to changing economic conditions. Since the 1990s, the equal employment bureau (formerly the women’s bureau) has worked ardently to implement measures that support part-time workers and help them reconcile the competing demands of paid work and family life. This reflects the shifting emphasis of women’s employment policy from universal equality to reconciliation.

Engendered Violence: India in Comparative Perspective

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Although gender has often been neglected in standard academic discourse concerning violence and the state, increased media attention to collective violence against women in Bosnia and Rwanda in the 1990s raised public consciousness and challenged scholars to view political conflict through a gendered lens. For a long time, political analysts failed to recognize the gendered organization of violence during armed conflict. As a

result, rape and other sexual assaults committed during riots, wars, and other political conflicts were viewed as distinct deviant acts perpetrated by a few individuals. In this paper, I argue that the common view of rape as an individual act spontaneously committed during violent confrontations is erroneous. In fact, sexual assault is a common strategic weapon in the commission of political violence.

The first half of this paper focuses on how and where incidents of gendered political violence occurred. Narrowly defined, gendered violence includes molestation, rape, other sexual assaults against women, and rape-murders. These acts of abuse have a broader purpose than the sexual exploitation of individual women, however, because they serve as a way to demoralize individuals and damage entire communities. This explains why gender violence is often closely associated with ethnic cleansing and genocide. Excerpts from a human rights fact-finding task force report are provided to reveal how victims of gendered political violence suffered during and after armed conflicts in Gujarat and Kashmir. These reports conclude that the state did not sufficiently protect or defend women from having their civil rights violated. After the assaults ended, women continued to suffer from psychological trauma, miscarriage, unwanted pregnancy, social ostracism, divorce and abandonment, domestic violence, and life in refugee camps. A review of these cases suggests the assaults against women were strategically planned, deliberate attempts to incite violence by recruiting new members and clearly identify an enemy, supporting the thesis that violence against women is an integral part of hostile political struggles.

The second half of this paper exposes the narrative that supports collective violence against women. Religious norms, traditional rituals, and indigenous customs are rearranged to construct a new identity politics of community. Gender is an essential component of this warrior discourse, which is composed of the dichotomous rhetoric of masculinity versus femininity as well as the deeply gendered rhetoric of family. Through this discourse, dominant men make women signifiers of the family and community, and chastity comes to symbolize the group's honor. In the context of this ideology, raping women is a highly effective way to denigrate the enemy group's honor. Transformed into objects by men's struggle

for power, marginalized women become trapped between enemy men and their own men in a desperate attempt to prove the authenticity of their own bodies. In volatile political situations, marginalized groups are called on to prove their worth in the community, and women are often exploited by both their own men and enemy men as the men struggle for power. Thus, the dynamic of communal violence against women both has its roots in, and supports the commission of, domestic violence.

By comparing the political violence during riots in Gujarat and military occupation in Kashmir to other incidents of collective violence against women around the world, as well as to particular forms of domestic violence in India—*sati*, *dowry* murder, and *triple talaq*—this paper reveals how political violence is deeply gendered, and how patriarchal ideology and family structure support both domestic and communal violence. Each of these individual cases of violence against women was justified using the discourse of family privacy. As long as women are confined to the domestic sphere and that space is defined as one where men are entitled to exert authority over other family members, women will continue to be victimized. In the age of globalization and democratization, however, patriarchy is facing serious challenges in politically volatile societies like India. The basic units of society—family and community—are in the process of transformation, as are the concepts of tradition and religion. I conclude that we must not only assign gender a central place in analyses of political processes, but that we also need to develop a feminist critique of politics based on bordered sovereignty. Such a critique may enable us to develop an alternative way of organizing the political system to effectively challenge violence in our international society.

Equal Employment Policy in the United States

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Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited employment discrimination based on sex, as interpreted and advocated for by a women's policy network, has proven to be a potent resource for American

women in the labor force to date. Additional legislation in 1972 and 1991 expanded the scope of women's equal employment rights. The presence of a national enforcement agency, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, (EEOC) and sanctions for non-enforcement have also been significant factors in creating dramatic increases for women in professional and managerial positions, where they now number over 45%.

The cause of equal employment for women was aided by the EEOC's power to prosecute discrimination cases and act as a repository for complaints. Litigation has proven to be a crucial tool for American feminists, sometimes supported by government efforts through the EEOC and other federal enforcement agencies. There have been thousands of cases litigated in U.S. courts since 1964; as of 2002, one in five civil lawsuits dealt with harassment or discrimination, as opposed to one in 20 a decade ago, supporting the view that women as individuals and groups have often mobilized effectively to seek favorable judicial rulings from the court system.

In the U.S., when outcomes have been most helpful to working women, policy communities have brought together bureaucrats ("femocrats") and feminist advocates, as well as members of Congress, to support legislation and other government action to strengthen civil and employment rights.

Medicalization versus Demedicalization of Women's Health Care

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This essay focuses attention on some specific issues related to medicalization versus demedicalization of women's health care.

The intersection of cultural norms, politics, economics, and demographics is especially apparent in the broad area of women's reproductive health care. Included within this rubric are concerns with puberty, pregnancy and childbearing, and menopause. All of these states are normal; no one of these life cycle stages is an illness as illness is usually defined. The *Webster-Merriam Dictionary* defines illness as "an unhealthy condition of body or mind." It also relates illness to sick-

ness. Sickness is “ill health,” “a disordered, weakened, or unsound condition,” or “a specific disease.” Puberty, pregnancy and childbearing, as well as menopause, are not unhealthy conditions nor are they specific diseases. Quite to the contrary, these are normal and healthy conditions.

Whereas women’s reproductive health cycles have been medicalized, there are several health-related prob-

lems women confront that are seen as politically explosive and have, in effect, been demedicalized. In particular, a woman’s right to terminate a pregnancy, violence against women, and rape have health care implications and have been excluded from the women’s health agenda. There are political reasons that must be understood as one ponders the reasons for such demedicalization.

The question then arises as to why some conditions have been medicalized whereas others have been demedicalized. Also, has the medicalization of women’s life cycle stages produced a positive or negative situation for women, or is the answer someplace in the middle? This essay focuses on one specific case of medicalization, pregnancy and child birth, and one case of demedicalization, abortion rights.