

Women in Comparative Perspective: Japan and the United States

This symposium had its genesis in a workshop on understudied groups in advanced industrial democracies. Sponsored by the American Political Science Association and funded by the Japan–United States Friendship Commission, the workshop met from August 27 through August 29, 2000 in Washington, D.C. It was the first of a cross-cultural series on a spectrum of topics that will give trans-Pacific scholars the benefit of each other's experiences and perspectives. When APSA applied for the grant it stated that: "Japan and the United States share many attributes but also have striking differences. These similarities and differences allow for informative comparisons and interesting exchanges that are the hallmark of good scholarship. Sharing different perspectives and experiences on a wide range of topics will be helpful and enlightening to scholars on both sides of the Pacific."

by
Marian Lief Palley,
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This initial workshop focused on women and politics. Five Japanese scholars and six American scholars worked together for three days, examining political behavior, political and social institutions, and public policies as they relate to women in the two nations. Each workshop participant has authored an article for this symposium, and the pieces that they wrote relate to the issues discussed at the workshop's sessions. Five articles address Japanese women's political participation and political behavior, as well as public policies that affect women in Japan. Six of the articles look at these same political dimensions in the United States.

The first section of this symposium compares Japanese and American political institutions. Tokuko Ogai in her piece, "Japanese Women and Political Institutions: Why are Women Politically Underrepresented?," discusses the structural and party constraints that have limited the role of women in Japanese politics. Next, Yumiko Mikanagi considers the literature on Japanese women and political institutions and proposes some areas for future study. Julie Dolan looks at political appointments of the last two decades in "Political Appointees in the United States: Does Gender Make a Difference?" Michele Swers addresses the policy impact of electing women to Congress and to state legislatures in "Understand-

ing the Policy Impact of Electing Women: Evidence from Research on Congress and State Legislatures."

The next section of this symposium asks questions about women's political behavior in Japan and the United States. Masako Aiuchi's article, "How Women Won or Lost in the Japanese Lower House Election: Case Studies of Women Candidates Who Ran as Challengers," analyzes data from the June 2000 election for the Japanese House of Representatives. This piece is followed by Misako Iwamoto's "The Madonna Boom: The Progress of Japanese Women into Politics."

Iwamoto considers the conditions that have led to an increase in the number of women holding public office in Japan. Stephanie Larson addresses American political behavior in "American Women and Politics in the Media: A Review Essay," as does M. Margaret Conway in "Women and Political Participation." Larson scrutinizes the research that has been published on the effects of the media on women and political participation, while Conway asks: "Why are so few women elected to public office in the United States?"

The final section of this symposium considers public policy issues and women in Japan and

the United States. Barbara Palmer offers "The Integration of Women into the American Judiciary," in which she considers the effect that women have had—and will likely continue to have—upon the judicial system and judicial decision making. Following Palmer's article is Mikiko Eto's "Women's Leverage on Social Policymaking in Japan," in which she gauges the leverage of women on social policy making and, in particular, how women may influence social policy decision making in Japan. The final piece in this collection is, "Women's Policy Leadership in the United States," by Marian Lief Palley, who assesses women's participation and leadership in the policy process as it pertains to local jurisdictions.

Editor's Note

On April 26, 2001, Junichiro Koizumi, Japan's new Prime Minister, announced the appointment of his Cabinet. Rather than appointing ministers from the factions that have dominated the government since 1955, Koizumi appointed a Cabinet that broke with the traditional political factions. Women were among the beneficiaries of his move from tradition-bound appointments. Five of the 17 ministerial appointments went to women.

The articles that appear in this *Symposium* were written prior to the election of Mr. Koizumi. Therefore, the perspectives presented by the authors of the articles in this issue do not reflect the outcome of the most recent election or the unprecedented appointment of women to head important ministries such as the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Justice.

—Marian Lief Palley

Contributors to "Women in Comparative Perspective: Japan and the United States"

Masako Aiuchi is associate professor of political science and women's studies at Hokkaido Asaigakuen University in Japan. She has previously served as a visiting researcher at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

M. Margaret Conway is professor of political science at the University of Florida. Her research interests are primarily in American politics, with particular emphasis on political parties, electoral choice and political participation as reflected at both the mass level and in party legislative organizations.

Julie Dolan is assistant professor of political science and public administration at Virginia Commonwealth University. She received her Ph.D. in political science from American University in 1997 and won the NASPAA Award for the Best Dissertation in Public Administration that year. Her research interests include women and politics, bureaucratic and executive branch politics, public policy and Congress.

Mikiko Eto is professor of political science at Hosei University in Tokyo and visiting fellow of the Centre for Women Leaders, Lucy Cavendish College at the University of Cambridge. Her main research field is social policy in Japan. She has focused on public participation in policymaking and political influence of citizen interest groups.

Misako Iwamoto is a professor at Mie University in Japan. Her primary research area is gender and politics.

Stephanie Greco Larson is an associate professor of political science at Dickinson College. Her research focuses on the content and consequences of political news and the representations of women in popular culture (including television news, campaign brochures, and soap operas).

Yumiko Mikanagi is associate professor of political science, International Christian University. She is the author of *Japan's Trade Policy: Action or Reaction?* (Routledge, 1996) and *Josei to Seiji* (Women and Politics) (Shinhyoron, 1999).

Barbara Palmer is assistant professor of political science at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Her research and teaching interests are in the areas of women and politics and judicial process.

Marian Lief Palley is professor of political science and international relations, professor of public administration and director of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Delaware. She is the author or co-author of many books including, *Women and Public Policies*, *Women of Japan and Korea*, and *Race, Sex and Policy Problems*, as well as many articles.

Tokuko Ogai is a lecturer at Rikkyo University in Japan. Her book, *Women's Political Participation* is forthcoming this summer.

Michele L. Swers is an assistant professor of political science at Mary Washington College. She received her Ph.D. in political science from Harvard University in 2000. Her research interests include legislative behavior, political parties, and women and politics. Her analysis of roll call voting on women's issues appears in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. She is currently working on a book that evaluates the policy impact of women in Congress.