

Women's Policy  
Journal  
of Harvard,  
John F. Kennedy  
School of Government



Summer 2001

Volume 1

*Work, Money, and Power*

*Challenges and Opportunities for  
Women in the 21st Century*

Hattie Babbitt ❖ Susan Bird ❖ Sheila Burke  
Mickey Edwards ❖ Anita Perez Ferguson  
Anna Greenberg ❖ Swanee Hunt ❖ Sally J. Kenney  
Earl W. Morris ❖ Arthur D. Murphy  
Deepa M. Ollapally ❖ Hilary C. Pennington  
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Yana van der Meulen Rodgers ❖ Marlene B. Seltzer  
Elizabeth A. Sherman ❖ Elizabeth Wieling  
Mary Winter ❖ Joseph E. Zveglich, Jr.



To Our Readers:

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *Women's Policy Journal of Harvard, John F. Kennedy School of Government*. Every year there are many initiatives that take shape at the school, and it is always exciting to see ideas come to fruition as productively as they have in this journal. The *Women's Policy Journal* is an important step toward a growing and increasingly important focus on women's policy issues at the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Many of our faculty have contributed to the success of this edition — in writing, editing, advising, and perhaps most importantly, moral support. It is a testament to the tremendous effort and commitment that our school places on women's policy issues in all disciplines. On the following pages you will find pieces on politics, legislation, international development, and entrepreneurship, which all speak to the theme of "Work, Money, and Power."

The Journal hopes to help unravel the complexity of women's policy issues in the twenty-first century, with the intention of not only better understanding, but also creating a forum in which to influence the debate over policymaking on these issues. Economic and political empowerment is more important than ever in the globalized economies of the world. By highlighting women's policy priorities, we hope to focus attention and problem solving on these multifaceted issues.

The hard work and determination that went into founding and publishing the *Women's Policy Journal* provides an inspiring example of our students' leadership, drive, and motivation outside of the classroom. We are proud of this rigor and provocative spirit at the Kennedy School. The *Women's Policy Journal* is a tribute to our students.

I look forward to many more editions of this important journal and hope that you enjoy the intellectual debates that take place within these pages. I want to congratulate the staff on creating this publication.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Nye', written in a cursive style.

Dean Joseph Nye, John F. Kennedy School of Government

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**Summer 2001**

**Cambridge, Massachusetts**

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***We would like to extend special recognition to Therese Leung and Joanna Veltri for developing the concept of the Women's Policy Journal of Harvard, John F. Kennedy School of Government. We hope this legacy continues to be a source of inspiration for the women at the John F. Kennedy School of Government.***

***Very special thanks to Ceci Connolly for her support with the editing process and helping us bring the inaugural edition to fruition.***

***Thanks to the following students for their support:***

Natalie Ashton  
Catherine Dun Rappaport

## FROM THE EDITORS

We are pleased to present you with the inaugural edition of the *Women's Policy Journal of Harvard, John F. Kennedy School of Government*. In this volume we are exploring work, money, and power, and the inherent challenges and opportunities for women in the new millennium. Our intent is to create a forum that uniquely blends the views of practitioners and academics on subjects ranging from international security to entrepreneurial ventures. As we began our task of putting together this journal, we thought about how the focus on women's policies has evolved over the past decades, and how this will impact policymaking in the future.

We all share a global responsibility to work toward progress and empowerment for women worldwide. Our collective futures are inextricably linked to improving the lives of women. As such, one of the goals of the journal is to highlight work that has been successfully completed and that challenges social norms and the status quo. This journal is designed to be the start of an informed and intelligent dialogue on policy issues that impact women and are impacted by women.

In the following pages you will find articles from practitioners in the field and academia. The areas of expertise are varied, but the common thread that runs through all of the pieces is that they each urge us to take action to move toward an environment where women are fully empowered, and the issues that hinder our progress are well understood.

We would like to thank all of the staff, authors, administration, faculty, sponsors, advisors, and board for the tremendous effort that was put forth to make this issue possible. In particular, we would like to express our appreciation to Joanna Veltri and Therese Leung, both of whom were instrumental in creating the idea for the journal and guiding the staff as we developed the first edition.

Finally, we are grateful for your support and welcome your comments and feedback on this edition.

Melanie Anderton  
Angie Datta  
*Editors in Chief*

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## Let's Change the Numbers

by Sheila Burke, MPA

Myths die hard. The Ozzie and Harriet fiction is one — the wife at home raising children and the husband out working. The numbers tell a different story. Today, only 17% of all families fit that description. Today women comprise 47% of the labor force and earn only 67 cents for every dollar a man makes, and 60% of all marriages are dual-career marriages. Either out of economic necessity or career choice, more and more women are entering the labor force, and many signs point to the trend continuing.

These changing numbers affect men, women, children, and families in a myriad of ways, creating numerous personal and political issues: healthcare and child-care, wages and working conditions, taxes and trade, education and equity. We would do well to research and debate such issues as thoroughly and objectively as possible, for everyone's benefit. That is why the launch of this journal is so important at this particular time.

As we explore these issues, I believe it is necessary to look to the past for perspective on how far we have come, and to discover how best to proceed. More than two centuries ago, in March 1776, Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, "I desire you would remember the ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors." For the most part, the founding fathers were not so generous and favorable, so women stood up for their own rights, quite successfully, and must continue to do so.

The Smithsonian Institution is the largest museum and research complex in the world and the guardian of America's most treasured cultural, scientific, and historic icons. As undersecretary for American Museums and National Programs at the Smithsonian Institution, I am blessed with easy access to the past through the more than 142 million objects that we preserve and promote for the benefit of all Americans.

The collections offer an inspiring history of the many accomplishments of such great leaders as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Jeannette Rankin, Margaret Chase Smith, Althea Gibson, Helen Keller, Rosa Parks, Clara Barton, and my favorite, Florence Nightingale. They struggled and sacrificed to win women the vote, to gain access to education, to increase women's wages. In doing so, they faced enormous challenges, but they persevered and succeeded.

Obviously, women are not alone in these struggles. Last November, the Smithsonian recently opened a new exhibit on *The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden*. It is an unprecedented look at the office of the presidency. We

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examine not only the role and duties of the president, but also the meaning of this office to the American people.

Some men have performed brilliantly in that office, and some have failed miserably. Some rose to the occasion and became great leaders; some sank under the weight of their own ambition and lust for power. The real great ones were able to lead not only because of their position, but also because of their character. As Emerson said, "Character is higher than intellect."

So we must ask, what makes a great leader? Do women wield power differently, and if so, how? Does Lord Acton's dictum apply equally to them? If power does not corrupt, does money? Those are the kinds of questions the *Women's Policy Journal* will explore.

Some research, most notably a meta-analysis study by Alice Eagly, a psychologist at Northwestern University, indicates that, in general, professional women have a more participatory, egalitarian, and consultative style than men. I would suggest that in both the private and public sector, but especially the public sector, we will certainly need that style (practiced by both males and females) now more than ever. In the information age, flexibility and speed are valuable traits. A rigid hierarchical structure often cannot evaluate information fast enough to make a reasoned decision in today's marketplace.

So, make no mistake, women do make a difference — a crucial and unique one. As Pat Mitchell, president and CEO of the Public Broadcasting Service, said recently: "When women are at the top, we can and do change the culture and the numbers. And numbers matter."<sup>1</sup>

Overall, the numbers tell a mixed story. Women make up nearly 50% of Kennedy School of Government enrollment, 51% of college enrollment, and, for the first time, a majority of law school enrollment. In the near future, these encouraging statistics should help reverse some rather dismal ones: Among the Fortune 500 companies, there are only two women CEOs. Women only make up only 13% of the U.S. Senate and 14% of the House of Representatives.

In 1929, more than 150 years after Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, novelist Virginia Woolf wrote "A Room of One's Own," a seminal piece calling for women's independence. Today we can say to Abigail Adams, "We have made progress;" we can say to Virginia Woolf, "We have a room of our own;" and we can say to both, "Now we want more seats in the board room and a seat in the Oval Office of the White House."

Best-selling author and former presidential advisor David Gergen has said, "Nothing would do more to cleanse our politics and lift our spirits than to elect a woman president."<sup>2</sup> I could not agree more, which is why I would like to see more women go into public service. The top job awaits.

Our Smithsonian exhibition demonstrates that the presidency is a tough job. Thomas Jefferson, before he even held the highest office, called the presidency a

“splendid misery,” and Harding simply said that, “It’s Hell!” But my favorite comment is from Harry S. Truman, who said that being president is “like being a jackass in a hailstorm — all you can do is stand your ground and take it.”

Everyone, including non-presidents, has had days that they have felt like that — all you can do is “stand your ground and take it.” Yet, that is not the only option. You can move forward and change the situation, however difficult that may be. Like many of the 19th century women I listed, many of today’s women know the feeling of being the first and only woman in the room. The looks, the stares, the hostility, the attitude of “prove yourself” and by the way, you had better be perfect. I have experienced it.

I was the first woman to serve as a chief of staff to a Senate majority leader. There was a fair amount of skepticism as to whether or not I was tough enough for the job. The senators took their clue from my boss, Sen. Bob Dole. He never undercut me, never reversed a decision, and never treated me in any way that suggested that I was not indeed his chief of staff.

I worked hard to earn his trust; I never lost sight of the fact that he was the one who was elected. I was careful to never overstate my authority, but I was never reluctant to use it.

Throughout my career, I have had critical help from friends and mentors. You can overcome challenges if you keep your friends, your sense of perspective, your sense of history, and your eyes on the goal.

For most of my adult life, my goal has been that of public service. I have never regretted the path that I have taken. Even on the tough days, I go home at night convinced of the value of what I am doing. Every morning I return to my work at the Smithsonian Institution, at the Castle on the National Mall. I look to my right, and I see the nation’s Capitol; I look to my left, see the Washington Monument, and I am vividly reminded that I have made not only the right choice, but the perfect choice for me. I may not have had the most remunerative jobs in the world, but I have had the most enriching.

This country needs bright, creative, and dedicated public servants. It is an honorable career path, and I assure anyone contemplating it that if you take it, you will not look back “. . . with a sigh, somewhere ages and ages hence” on “the road not taken.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes, a graduate of Harvard University, once said, “To live life fully is to be engaged in the passions of one’s time.” Public service offers you that unique opportunity. I strongly encourage you to take that road — it is a little smoother now with the *Women’s Policy Journal* to help pave the way. Congratulations to all involved and best of luck. Together, we can change the numbers.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> *Washington Post*. 2001. 18 March, L1.

<sup>2</sup> Gergen, David. 2000. Chicago speech rebroadcast on C-Span radio. 24 September.

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## A Gender Divided: Women as Voters in the 2000 Presidential Election

by Anna Greenberg, PhD

The “gender gap,” which refers to the tendency of women to support Democratic candidates in greater numbers than men do, is now such a regular feature of electoral politics in America that it is almost boring to talk about. Traditionally scholars date the appearance of the gender gap to the 1980 presidential election when women were less likely than men to support Ronald Reagan’s candidacy.<sup>1</sup> While the size of the gender gap has varied, by the 1990s, it was firmly established in presidential and congressional races. This gap clearly emerged in the 2000 presidential race, with women favoring Gore by 11 points (54% to 43%), while men supported Bush by an equal margin (53% to 42%). This result is almost identical to the 1996 gap, when 54% of women voters cast their lot with Bill Clinton, compared to 43% of men.

The perennial gender gap leads many commentators and activists to make claims about how women win elections for Democrats, defining them as base voters similar to urban residents or union members. But the data shows the “women’s vote” is much more complicated. The clearest gender issue revealed in this election is that women are much less solid in their allegiance to the Democrats than the men who support Republican candidates. If it were not for the 94% of African American women who supported Al Gore, he would have lost women by one point. Looking at white voters demonstrates this most clearly — 60% of white men supported Bush, while 48% of white women supported Gore. Moreover, white women voters were shaky throughout the election, only returning to the Democratic fold late in the campaign. Women’s support for Gore rose to dizzying heights after the Democratic convention, only to erode severely in the debate period. According to surveys conducted for Democracy Corps,<sup>2</sup> Gore garnered a nine-point advantage among white women by the end of September, which declined to a four-point disadvantage by mid-October. Most white men, on the other hand, never seriously considered the Gore candidacy. Bush’s 25-point lead among white men in September persisted throughout October and election day.

What these election returns also reveal is that the differences among women voters are far more interesting and important than the differences between men and women.<sup>3</sup> Certainly there is a vast gap among women of different races, but religiosity, region, urbanity, and class divide women as well. Like male voters, women’s political choices are rooted in their particular life experiences and group loyalties, which create considerable political diversity when it comes to electoral politics. Last year, Gore and Bush split white women voters nearly evenly, though

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both candidates fared better or worse with particular groups of female voters. For example, Gore garnered record support among college-educated women, while Bush made Republican gains with young and high school-educated women.

## A Gender Divided

The differences among women voters in the 2000 presidential election reflect larger divisions in American politics. Traditionally African Americans, Jews, white working class and Southern voters, and ethnic Catholics held the Democratic coalition together. Over the past 30 years, however, we have seen the decline of white Southern and working class support for Democrats, especially among white male voters. On the other hand, since 1980, Democratic presidential candidates have been able to rely on the loyalty of minority voters, socially liberal women, and senior citizens. Since the late 1970s, Republicans cobbled together a similarly disparate coalition of affluent voters and rural, socially conservative, religious citizens, who supported the successful candidacies of Ronald Reagan and George Bush. White male voters remain solidly in the Republican camp, with no Democratic candidate garnering more than a third of the white male vote since 1980. Furthermore, the Republicans continue to make inroads with white ethnic Catholics and working class voters.

Among women voters, the 2000 election did not witness any substantial changes in these fault lines. Gore found his strongest support among African American women, college-educated women, single women, and elderly women, while Bush performed best among religious women, Southern women, and married women. This year, however, young women and women without a college education were swing voters, meaning they were fairly evenly split between the candidates and vacillated between the Democratic and Republican camps during particular campaign moments such as the Democratic Convention and the debates. As the Voter News Service (VNS) exit polls show, Gore won about half of high school-educated and young women, representing a four- to five-point decline for a Democratic candidate. Among white voters, moreover, Bush made inroads with working class women. According to a post-election survey conducted for the Institute for America's Future (IAF), Bush won white non-college women by seven points and young, white non-college women by nine points. (See Table 1.)

In some respects, these results are surprising. We would expect downscale and working-class women to be more supportive of Democratic candidates than affluent and educated women, given the Democratic Party's positions on economic issues and social policy.<sup>4</sup> As many scholars argue, the gender gap is rooted in women's liberal views about the role of government in people's lives. Generally, women are more likely than men to set priorities such as spending on education, healthcare, and retirement, and women favor an active government role in maintaining the social safety net.<sup>5</sup> These economic views bind women to the Democratic Party and generate gender differences in electoral politics.

Table 1: The Presidential Vote  
 Percentage of Women Voters for 2001 Presidential Candidates, by Category

|                         | Gore | Bush | Nader | Gore-Bush |
|-------------------------|------|------|-------|-----------|
| Black Women             | 94%  | 4%   | 2%    | +90       |
| Latinas                 | 67   | 33   | 0     | +34       |
| <b>WHITE VOTERS</b>     |      |      |       |           |
| Single Women            | 54   | 42   | 4     | +12       |
| College Women           | 50   | 45   | 3     | +5        |
| Senior Women            | 50   | 48   | 2     | +2        |
| Young Women             | 47   | 50   | 3     | -3        |
| Non-College Women       | 45   | 52   | 2     | -7        |
| Young Non-College Women | 44   | 53   | 2     | -9        |
| Married Women           | 43   | 54   | 1     | -11       |
| Religious Women         | 34   | 65   | 1     | -31       |

Source: Institute for American's Future Post Election Survey, November 2000

But in the 1990s, Democratic candidates struggled with white working-class women, while gaining ground with college-educated women.<sup>6</sup> In particular, Democrats took a major hit in the 1994 congressional elections, though Clinton was able to regain some ground in the 1996 presidential race. Between the 1996 and 1998 elections, however, the Democratic share of the congressional vote fell from 58% to 52% among high school-educated women, while it rose among college women by three points. We see similar erosion at the presidential level. Gore won 50% of women with some college education and 52% of women with a high school education compared to 57% of college-educated women. This represents a four-point increase among college women and four-point decline among high school women since 1996.

### **Gender, Class, and “Family Values”**

The fact of the matter is that Gore fared best with secular women, single women, and college-educated women while Bush found favor with religious women, married women, and women without a college education. This reflects both the enduring power of cultural issues in electoral politics and the centrality of values in the most recent election. Since the 1970s, the parties have been polarized over cultural issues such as abortion, feminism, the Equal Rights

Amendment, sexuality, and gay rights.<sup>7</sup> At the moment, Democrats are clearly associated in the public's mind with liberal positions on these issues, while the Republican Party remains the guardian of "family values."<sup>8</sup> These issues drive a wedge between women as well — generally, highly educated and secular women adopt more feminist and pro-choice views, while less educated and more religious women are more socially conservative.<sup>9</sup> Not surprisingly, for some women, these conflicts strongly influenced electoral choices throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Values played an important role in the last presidential election. We saw hints of the importance of the values debate when socially conservative women dropped off from the Democrats in 1998; high school women fell from 58% to 52%, married women dropped from 49% to 46%, and women over 60 years of age fell from 52% to 48% — a clear reflection of the impeachment scandal. In fact, Gore started at a disadvantage in the values climate of the election. According to the exit polls, three-quarters of voters who said the Clinton scandals were very important or somewhat important (44% of electorate) voted for Bush.

Post-election surveys clearly demonstrate that despite the strong economy and Gore's advantage over Bush in policy areas such as healthcare, prescription drugs, and Social Security, character, leadership, and values played a role in working class women's voting decisions. When asked what motivated their support for the candidates, white working class women were far more likely to cite values and leadership than white college-educated women. For example, the IAF study compared two hypothetical statements made by the candidates in which Gore emphasizes economic issues such as "tax cuts for education and childcare," while Bush concentrates on values such as "personal responsibility" and "accountability" (see below). Comparing Gore's populist message to Bush's values message, white non-college women were nearly twice as likely as white college women to strongly agree with Bush's notion of respecting the values of middle class families.

Overall, 31% of white non-college women in the IAF survey cited Bush's position on family values as a reason to support him, compared to 22% of white college women. This divide emerged on more narrow "values" questions. For instance, white non-college women (24%) were more likely than white college women (16%) to have doubts about Gore's position on legalizing gay unions. (See Table 2.)

This election year, despite the candidates' reluctance to engage the abortion issue, choice divided women voters. For example, in the IAF survey, 40% of white college-educated women cited Gore's support for "a woman's right to choose" as their top reason for supporting his candidacy, while only 28% of white non-college women took this position. Twenty-five percent of non-college white women cited Bush's efforts to reduce abortions as reasons for supporting his candidacy compared to 20% of white college educated women.

**Values Matter**

Every election has its own "gender story" that the media tells about the role of women voters in the presidential race. Nearly all of these stories focus on women as Democratic voters based on their views about abortion rights and other "women's issues." But it is clear that important political divisions exist among women that are driven by long-term partisan loyalties and short-term political events. Women, like men, vote based on their affiliation with groups such as unions or their identities as African Americans or feminists. Like men, women voters are influenced by short-term political events such as the heightened attention to character and values generated by the impeachment scandal.

These differences make it difficult to claim there is a "woman's vote" that either party can claim with any authority. Recognizing these differences should force the parties to think about how to build a majority coalition that includes a

Table 2: Gore's Populist Message versus Bush's Values Message

|  | Non-College Women | College Women |     |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-----|
| "It is important to fight for working and middle class families, which means expanding education and skill training, having trade policies that protect wages and the environment, and tax cuts for education and day care expenses."  | Strongly Support  | 39%           | 47% |
|  | Somewhat Support  | 12            | 10  |
| "It is important to fight for working and middle class families, which means respecting their values, as well as their interests. We need more personal responsibility, which means more accountability in education, fewer abortions, and respecting the rights of gun owners." | Strongly Support  | 12            | 10  |
|  | Somewhat Support  | 31            | 18  |
| Both/Neither/Don't Know  | 6                 | 14            |     |

Source: Democracy Corps/Campaign for America's Future Post Election Survey, November 2000

reliable base and attracts swing voters. It would behoove both parties to consider the way the family values debate divides women voters. Democrats need to consider that feminism and abortion draw certain women — not all women — to the party. Republicans need to consider that a set of sexual scandals heightened attention to values in ways unique to this election. Neither party can afford to take women voters for granted.

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Democracy Corps  
September 2000-November 2000  
Post-election survey, November 7-8, 2000  
2036 election day voters  
Conducted by Greenberg Quinlan, Inc.

Institute for America's Future  
November 7-8  
2036 respondents  
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### Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Bendyna and Lake 1994; Ladd 1997; Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997. Over time, other "gender gaps" have emerged. There is a gender gap in partisanship and in Congressional voting. There is also a small turnout gap, where women are slightly more likely than men to vote in presidential elections.
- <sup>2</sup> See sources for details.
- <sup>3</sup> Greenberg 2001.
- <sup>4</sup> Miller and Shanks 1996.
- <sup>5</sup> Shapiro and Mahajan 1986.
- <sup>6</sup> Teixeira and Rogers 2000.
- <sup>7</sup> Carmines and Layman 1997; Wolbrecht 2000.
- <sup>8</sup> Greenberg and Greenberg 2000.
- <sup>9</sup> Himmelstein 1986; Luker 1984; Mathews and de Hart 1990.

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## **Engendering Real Security: Moving Beyond Theory to Policy**

by Deepa M. Ollapally, PhD

### **Introduction**

Few analysts today would question the need to broaden the notion of security from a purely military definition to a more encompassing one. Indeed, a substantial body of literature on human security and comprehensive security is emerging, seeking to make security people-oriented rather than territory-based.<sup>1</sup> In this debate, the critiques rising from feminist literature have been crucial to challenging the dominant paradigms of international security. However, this shift in discourse has not been accompanied by commensurate changes in real world policymaking, and much remains to be done.

This is due in part to a disjuncture between purveyors of the new thinking and policy formulators and practitioners. Ironically, it is also a function of the nature of feminist theory-building in international security, which until recently did not pay adequate attention to the multiple realities women face. This disconnect with the real world has implications not only from a policy perspective, but from a wider global perspective. Many people view the U.S.-centered theoretical enterprise as too distant from the arenas of actual conflict and tension, which are mostly located elsewhere. In this essay, I suggest that we need to address these gaps in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of how a gendered view of security can become both relevant to policy and meaningful across borders. A varied approach is essential to closing these gaps, but given the limitations of space, this essay will concentrate on raising a number of key issues which should be on the agenda.

### **Redefining Security**

A number of factors have led to the rethinking of security — in particular, the maturation of three of the most critical social movements of the late 20th century: the environmental movement, the human rights movement, and the women's movement. The last has provided a valuable framework for responding to new developments in war, especially the changing identity of the victims of war, who are no longer mainly soldiers, but predominantly women and children. Currently, nearly 80 percent of the people displaced by conflict are women and children.<sup>2</sup> During armed conflict, women and girls are at a heightened risk for gender-based violence. The catastrophic conditions produced by conflict, coupled with the fact

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that women around the world are responsible for food security at the household level, mean that women end up shouldering a disproportionate portion of the burdens of war. In the face of such compelling images and facts, it is increasingly difficult for national security managers to focus exclusively on the military and defense aspects of security.

Ironically, the feminist scholars on international security theory who were at the forefront of rethinking security beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s have been rather insulated from the events on the ground. These scholars expressed a deep dissatisfaction with the dominant theory of international security, i.e., Waltzian neorealism, which they see as too disembodied, rarified, and reflective of a strong masculine bias.<sup>3</sup> This form of neorealism builds on assumptions and explanations based on behaviors associated with masculinity. Neorealists tend to use the analogy of the Hobbesian state of nature to explain the behavior of states. They describe the Hobbesian decisionmaker, in turn, as the political equivalent of the economic man, driven by rational self-interest, highly individualistic, and concerned with pursuing his own economic goals without any social obligations to a larger community. Thus, in a self-seeking international system, the greatest value is accorded to self-help, autonomy, and power, with security logically defined in strategic-military terms.

Most contemporary feminist critics have challenged this notion of international behavior, and have pointed out that these attributes best represent masculinism. They suggest that women's experiences might constitute different standards of behavior. For example, feminist theories can offer a definition of power as positive-sum, rather than the zero-sum power characteristic of competitive male behavior on the international stage. This would mean shared, as opposed to assertive power. Some think that since women have had less access to the instruments of coercion, women have used persuasion more often as a way of gaining power — for instance, through coalition-building.

These critiques have been extremely useful in highlighting the shortcomings of the dominant paradigm and in drawing out its unstated emphasis on the characteristics of an inevitably Hobbesian male. However, the problem arises when theory meets policy — or rather, when it does not.

### **Theory-Building and the Empirical World**

In responding to realism, a highly deductive theory, the critics have not been able to fully move beyond it in theory or in practical terms. Indeed, what is striking is that deductive theory-building contrasts with the substantial empirical work emerging from Africa, South Asia, Latin America, Northern Ireland, and the Balkans. In these areas, the lived experiences of women are generating a different type of research agenda and set of activities.

This is true when the motivation is to come to grips with history — as in Bangladesh, where oral history research is underway to document the massive



number of rapes by the Pakistan army during the 1971 Bangladesh war. It is true when the drive is to secure a place for women in the post-conflict settlement decisionmaking phase, as in Northern Ireland. In Somalia, women have responded to the protracted civil war and associated state collapse by creating numerous civil society groups to deal with displacement and migration, and to promote reconciliation through inter-clan communication. In South Africa, women's groups have been spurred by rising levels of local and domestic violence to investigate the links between this type of violence and the prolonged internal conflict in their country. In the face of persistent ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, Sinhala, and Tamil women are spearheading an empirical research effort to determine how men and women perceive "security" there, focusing in particular on the role of gender in their views. One important question in the Sri Lankan endeavor is whether there are differences in viewpoints about the state as the provider of security versus the perpetrator of violence. In the refugee camps in Pakistan, women's organizations and researchers are engaged in fieldwork to assess and document how the needs of Afghan refugee women differ from their male counterparts, and to fashion appropriate strategies to help them.

In the process of responding to the myriad problems facing these regions, grassroots women's organizations and other non-governmental institutions are increasingly raising issues that have fallen outside traditional "security" analysis, but that are conceptually compatible within a broader human security paradigm. These include cross-border trafficking of women, the threat of the spread of AIDS, environmental degradation, economic instability, and the drug trade. Women's organizations are becoming so actively involved because they see that the impact of these threats to human security is especially skewed along gender lines, and that the role of redressing the erosion of security, at the household level in particular, falls almost entirely on women.

For instance, the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s and 1990s in many parts of the world are affecting women disproportionately, with obvious implications for economic security. Women also tend to play a key role in crisis management for populations threatened by environmental degradation. For example, in India, the Chipko women's movement of the 1970s, which aimed at protecting local livelihoods, became well-known for its "tree hugging" environmental strategies. Elsewhere in India, in the aftermath of Union Carbide's Bhopal gas disaster, Hindu and Muslim women led the formation of an umbrella organization for the gas victims, a group which has remained cohesive for more than 16 years. Again in South Asia, pressure from below for a convention on preventing and combating cross-border trafficking of women and children is having some success at the level of the most important regional organization, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

While the transnational nature of these problems demands coordinated action by the affected states, these issues tend to be relegated to the bottom of national priorities, fall prey to bureaucratic ineptitude, or vanish between the cracks due to

the way foreign policy issues are analyzed and categorized. The emphasis on "hard" areas of military security means that states often sideline "soft" human security problems. The human security approach creates a conceptual space that allows these types of issues to move to the center of analysis. However, a specifically gendered security framework is the only way to ensure that human security issues end up there, since they remain quite loose in their theoretical and substantive objectives.

Thus the human security and gendered security frameworks can intersect in important ways. This idea is best captured by the underlying argument of many feminist analyses that various forms of military, economic, and ecological insecurities are linked to unequal gender relations. Along this line, some feminist approaches to international security provide important points of departure for understanding the military, economic, and ecological insecurities that lie at the heart of human security issues. For example, some see the relationship between protectors and protected as dependent on gender inequalities. Others note that a militarized view of security privileges masculine characteristics and elevates men to a higher status by virtue of their role as security providers. Studies of economic insecurities have revealed similar patterns of gender inequality in the world economy, with the result that a larger share of the world's wealth and of the benefits of economic development flows to men. In addition, the traditional association of women with nature, with men in a higher position than both women and nature, reflects an exploitative attitude toward nature that is characteristic of our era and that contributes to our current ecological insecurities.<sup>4</sup>

### **Making Theory Work**

A major challenge is to bring the theoretical insights gained by critical international relations scholars together with the rich data and grassroots work being generated. In this endeavor, one of the questions that will inevitably arise is how to address existing structures of state and society. Indeed, this has led to disagreement over whether we should be working for a wholesale restructuring of the biased and masculinized national and international system, or trying to work within the system despite its faults.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the theory-centered scholarship usually found in the U.S. academy, much outside empirical work responds directly to situations in need of urgent attention. Under such conditions, these women activists and researchers have to cope with the world as it is given, rather than as they would like it to be, and they cannot afford to wait for the world to change. This issue also becomes highly pertinent when the discussion is between scholars who are providing a theoretical critique and foreign policy practitioners who are in a position to influence policy outcomes and who are sympathetic to the critique. This issue also emerges between women in the Western and non-Western worlds.

To briefly illustrate, the mothers' movements against "disappearances" of their children began with ordinary women appropriating motherhood as a symbol

in order to cultivate a safe space from which to challenge repression and violence, whether in Argentina or in Sri Lanka. However, some feminists have pointed out that relying on such imagery could ultimately perpetuate patriarchal social scripts, and that the movement could be relegated to a narrow non-political realm, despite its highly political and military context. The implication is that women are treading on unstable ground when they rely on organizing principles such as motherhood because these feed into existing biases. Once the conflict is over, such principles offer no persuasive rationale for women's continuing political involvement. While the feminist insight into this dilemma is vital, in certain cultural and political contexts, this type of mobilization may be the most powerful vehicle through which women can address the immediate tragedy of losing children to military violence. Indeed, this type of mobilization by mothers has already led to the formation of 21 groups in 11 different countries.<sup>6</sup> This example points to just one of the difficulties that can arise when a theoretical enterprise does not easily accommodate facts on the ground.

Similarly, a gendered approach to security privileges the category of gender, often implicitly assuming that gendered relations may be universalized. However, it does not capture women's myriad identities, including culture, class, nationality, and religion. These are all important determinants of people's identities and priorities. Especially in conflict-ridden areas, gender may well be subsumed under other categories that are driving the broader conflict. Thus the proposition of forming alliances between women from communities engaged in conflict, for example, may be seen as a logical corollary through a feminist lens on security, but in practice, it might be full of pitfalls for the women involved for a variety of reasons. These include power differentials between communities or ethnic groups, or the danger of being branded a traitor to one's own community.<sup>7</sup> For women in developing countries, any analysis of international security is likely to be incomplete without a consideration of the power differences that exist between states as well. Given the hierarchical international system, poorer countries remain vulnerable to political economy and military pressures. Along with gender, these international characteristics define the reality of most women in the developing world.

Culture is yet another mediating force which needs to be taken into account. In demystifying the masculinist underpinnings of realism, the feminist critics have relied on what is arguably a Western representation of masculinity. For example, if we take the central notion of autonomy in neorealist doctrine, it has been suggested that neorealism has followed liberalism's view of male identity embedded in notions of naturally free men.<sup>8</sup> While this is in accord with Western philosophy, it is not clear that it holds up in less "liberal" societies.

The scope for opening up the traditional frameworks for analyzing security is immense, but it is essential that new understandings have widespread legitimacy as well as policy relevance for them to make a difference within the contexts that really matter.<sup>9</sup> While overarching theoretical approaches may be intellectually satisfying, it is far more likely that bottom-up theory-building rooted in women's

diverse experiences will produce insights and results which are truly enduring.

*The views expressed are the author's own and do not represent the views of the U.S. Institute of Peace.*

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## Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> See for example, Baldwin, David. 1999. *The Concept of Security. Review of International Studies*, 23; Boer, Leen, and Ad Koekkoek. Development and Human Security. *Third World Quarterly* 15:3; and Suhrke, Astri. Human Security and the Interests of the States. *Security Dialogue* 30:3.
- <sup>2</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross. 2001. *The Impact of Armed Conflict on Women*. 6 March.
- <sup>3</sup> The highly theoretical orientation of this enterprise may be gleaned from such leading works as Peterson, V. Spike, ed. 1992. *Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner.
- <sup>4</sup> Tickner, J. Ann. 1992. *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*. Columbia University Press, pp. 128-129. Tickner provides one of the most convincing arguments linking gender and these wider insecurities.
- <sup>5</sup> South Asian Women in International Relations: Building Cooperative Networks. Presented at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, India. 30-31 July 1998. In an international workshop on gender and security organized by the author in India in 1998, this issue led to vigorous debate.
- <sup>6</sup> Ramsey-Marshall, Donna. 2000. *Women in War and Peace: Grassroots Peacebuilding*. *Peaceworks* 34:22.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 14, where it is noted that issues such as power differentials between communities and the fear of being accused of being traitorous to your own community serve as serious obstacles to coalition-building along purely gender lines.
- <sup>8</sup> Two theorists who elucidate notions of autonomy and obligation are Hirschmann, Nancy. 1999. Freedom, Recognition and Obligations: A Feminist Approach to Political Theory. *American Political Science Review* 83; and Sylvester, Christine. 1999. Feminists and Realists View Autonomy and Obligation in International Relations. In *Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory*, edited by V. Spike Peterson. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner.
- <sup>9</sup> One of the most promising efforts in this regard is the Women Waging Peace project launched by the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard University in 1999.

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## Comparable Worth Policy: Opportunities for Gender and Racial Equity

by Elizabeth A. Sherman, PhD

Almost 40 years after the landmark 1963 Equal Pay Act, which required equal pay for workers doing the same jobs, women across the country still register concern about pay disparities between men and women. The issue has become more salient over the past 20 years or so with the marked increase in the numbers of women in the workforce, the severe social and economic problems facing many single-mothers, and the centrality of women's wages to almost all family incomes.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the topic of pay equity, so central to women's economic well-being, generates little more than political lip service despite the fact that equal pay for equal work consistently ranks near the top among issues of concern to women nationally.

Problems of pay equity stem not so much from intentional bias against women holding essentially the same jobs as their male counterparts, as from the difficulty of effecting significant changes in a sex-segregated labor market. According to a 1998 study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than half of all women were employed in only two occupational categories: technical, sales, and administrative support, or service work.<sup>2</sup> For women of color, this sex-segregation plays out in even more drastic ways. Taking into account race and ethnicity, African American women earned 67 percent, Hispanic women earned 56 percent, and white women earned 78 percent of the wages that white men earned in 1998.<sup>3</sup>

Not surprisingly, millions of individuals are either tracked or trapped in occupations still related to traditional gender roles in service or support occupations. For example, workers in car sales, truck driving, and construction are traditionally men; and women predominantly fill positions such as secretary, social worker, or home health aide. Even when compensation relies heavily on gratuities — tips for hotel baggage handlers versus maids who clean the rooms — it becomes obvious how women can be relegated to second tier, lower-paying jobs based largely on gender and race.

Comparable worth policies aim to bring about an increase in women's wages by acting on the premise that certain categories of jobs are poorly paid simply because historically they have become identified as "women's work." Comparable worth argues that differences in pay among jobs should exist based on differences in skill, experience, and responsibility, not because certain kinds of jobs are linked to gender or race.

Granted, women's wages have advanced since the 1970s, when "59 cents for every man's dollar" was a popular protest slogan, to an average today of about 74

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cents.<sup>4</sup> But some of women's wage gains are illusory, deriving in part from the real declines in men's earnings and in part from the impact of labor shortages in certain occupations like nursing that have bid up wages. Among lower paid occupations largely held by women, however, like home health aides, food service workers, and childcare workers — all areas where demand is high and growing — wage levels remain low. Comparable worth re-evaluates entire job categories, taking account of skill demands, complexity, degree of responsibility, and dexterity so that workers would be evaluated on equal footing.

### **Comparable Worth as a Political Initiative**

As a political strategy aimed at ensuring equal pay for work of equal value, comparable worth generated considerable enthusiasm among women's organizations and trade unions in the 1980s. These groups propelled comparable worth forward as a promising initiative aimed at correcting some of the entrenched economic problems plaguing America's working women.

Comparable worth seemed to move the debate beyond bumper-sticker solutions like equal pay for equal work toward a debate about what "equal work" really means. The Equal Pay Act, on the books since 1963, benefits women only when they are performing the same jobs as their male counterparts, which means that most jobs don't fall under the purview of that law. However, the reality of an overwhelmingly sex-segregated labor market, where the majority of women do not work in exactly the same jobs as men, was hardly touched by equal-pay policy. Comparable worth, it was hoped, would address the deficiencies inherent in equal-pay laws, and alter compensation systems across the country to reflect the equal worth of women's jobs, not their artificial devaluation based on gender norms.

Two decades ago, the women's movement projected a sense of political dynamism and intellectual ferment. Women's organizations and unions were beginning to regroup and take up new initiatives after the failure of the national Equal Rights Amendment. At the same time, organizations dedicated to issues of concern to low-wage women and women of color were articulating their anger and frustration with the women's movement regarding the long-standing marginalization of their voices and concerns. The focus on middle-class white women's issues and the advancement of such women in business, universities, and political leadership seemed largely irrelevant to the day-to-day experiences of many women's lives.

The 1980s witnessed an outpouring of writing and activism that placed the ideas and political reality of women of color at the center of analysis. In particular, black women's studies across a range of disciplines had emerged as a powerful intellectual force dedicated to illuminating the reality of black women's history, culture, and status.<sup>5</sup> In her widely read book, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, Bell Hooks excoriated white feminism for its exclusionary

worldview, its focus on sexual liberation, and its resistance to taking up the long-standing problems of racial and class exploitation through social revolution.<sup>6</sup> In politics and scholarship, the women's movement was perilously fraught with internal contradictions based on race, class, sexuality, and ideology. Comparable worth aims to address the racial and class discrimination that women face by virtue of the "invisible" functioning of the labor market and in so doing, raises the pay scales of female-dominated jobs to reflect their true value.

### **Economic Pressures on Women**

At the same time, women were urged through a combination of business needs, higher levels of education, and changes in child-raising patterns to succeed at work and achieve economic independence, while at the same time, fulfilling family obligations. Poor women, however — especially single mothers — faced daunting challenges given the cutbacks in social supports and limited job opportunities. For women doing low-wage work without a second breadwinner, wages could simply not stretch to cover family expenses without some form of government aid. Millions found themselves faced with economic vulnerability, as government programs were being retooled and downscaled.

Poverty relief policies were under fire despite the fact that U.S. tax and government support policies designed to lift the poor, non-elderly out of poverty compare unfavorably with most other industrialized countries. While American policy has been practically negligible in affecting poverty, other countries have recorded substantial progress. For example, several advanced industrialized countries reduced poverty by significant percentages (the U.K. by 46.1 percent, Canada by 20.1 percent, and Germany by 36.4 percent) between 1980 and 1989.<sup>7</sup> American policy has focused not so much on eliminating poverty per se as on moving women "from welfare to work" even though most entry-level, service jobs for women were low paid and hardly sufficient to cover family costs. If women were going to be working "no matter what," then comparable worth, it was hoped, would have the potential to raise the incomes of millions of working women by changing the compensation system itself. As a political project, it offered the prospect of bridging the race and class divisions that kept feminists of disparate ethnic, racial, and class backgrounds from working together on common issues.

Some of the attraction of comparable worth initiatives derived from the decentralized nature of many efforts. Projects could be locally based, laws could be codified at the state or municipal levels, contractual language could be inserted into union-management collective bargaining agreements to rectify historical wage and salary imbalances. In all these cases, activists, scholars, and journalists could chronicle and evaluate the process and the outcome, or be part of its development and unfolding consequences. In her landmark study, *Doing Comparable Worth: Gender, Class, and Pay Equity*, sociologist Joan Acker used her own experience as a participant in a comparable worth project involving Oregon state

employees to explore the complicated theoretical and pragmatic problems posed by comparable worth. Her book charts the successes and obstacles of a multifaceted endeavor and explores the intrinsic connections between gender and class that made the Oregon effort so problematic.<sup>8</sup> She cautions that comparable worth projects are fraught with structural impediments — meaning that the wage system itself and the social and cultural patterns that undergird it, are strongly resistant to change. It was this reality that she sought to present in her complex and unvarnished account.

As Acker put it: “Observing an attempt to raise those low wages through intervention in wage setting, which is what comparable worth efforts do, should give some insights into the process, and thus into the ways that class and gender are linked and reproduced.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Political Prospects for Comparable Worth**

Because of the persistence of sexual segregation in American labor markets, many economists and women’s rights advocates again are calling for some form of comparable worth as a way to increase women’s wages in certain occupations where women tend to be concentrated. The proposed remedy for wage disparities based on comparable worth is a system whereby jobs are evaluated across a range of criteria such as skill level, responsibility, degree of effort, etc. — and rated accordingly. Using this system, jobs that are primarily “male” might be rated on these measures and compared to a typically “female” job — and likely found to be essentially equal. Employers would then have to reconfigure their pay scales to reflect the higher valuations placed on the women’s occupations. Although critics claim such a system would be burdensome to employers and government alike, advocates maintain that a calculus of comparable worth remains the only viable solution for significantly raising women’s wages in the aggregate.

Unfortunately, as a practical device for achieving pay equity, comparable worth efforts face numerous roadblocks, including legal setbacks related to problems assessing the “equal worth” of various job categories. As a policy, government involvement in setting wage rates goes against the grain of deeply-held capitalist values by challenging the rights of employers to define and assign value to various types of work. And comparable worth has faced the skepticism of public officials reluctant to interfere in the presumed impartiality of market forces. The conservative ethos in particular finds fault with government mandates affecting the economy, which are viewed as wrong-headed interventions into the market and threatening to the freedom of employers.

At the national level, attempts to introduce legislation in Congress to advance comparable worth have been met with disparagement from critics about its workability, and sometimes, with outright ridicule. Even though empirical studies of women’s and men’s wages across all age and demographic groups still show a persistent wage gap, the Senate Republican Policy Committee claimed last year



that the difference is caused by women choosing to take lower-paid jobs chiefly for family reasons so they can work closer to home or have more flexible hours.<sup>10</sup> They argued against legislation to allow women who suffer wage discrimination to sue for damages, as victims of race-based discrimination may do under current law, asserting that younger workers face fewer problems and that federal law is unnecessary.

On the other hand, polls show that most Americans support government action when necessary to prevent discrimination. Rep. Tom Harkin has introduced the Fair Pay Act, which would provide equal pay for women in jobs of comparable skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions.<sup>11</sup> According to supporters of policies in favor of greater pay equality, the theme of the Civil Rights movement — Freedom! — meant freedom not only from oppression, including market oppression, but the freedom to achieve positive ends.<sup>12</sup> The 2000 *Ask a Working Woman Survey* from the AFL-CIO found the following: “Equal Pay is still the [number one] policy issue for working women. When it comes to their legislative priorities, working women cite stronger equal-pay laws more than any other issue: 87 percent say it is important, and 51 percent say it is very important.”<sup>13</sup> Also, the Center for Policy Alternative’s and Lifetime Television’s *Women’s Voices 2000* survey found that women and men across party lines believe that wage discrimination exists and they strongly support solutions to the disparities. Nearly three-quarters of women and two-thirds of men believe that women are paid less than men for equivalent work. Seventy-five percent of women and 62 percent of men also said they believe it is “very important” to adopt policies to address equal pay.<sup>14</sup>

### **African American Women and Comparable Worth**

Of particular importance for considerations of comparable worth is the continuing racial as well as gender wage disparity in the economy. Studies show the gap is more acute for African American women whose wages, on average, lag behind white income earners. Figures from the 1998 Current Population Survey show black women who worked full time earned wages that were only 85 percent of the wages of black men, 85 percent of the wages of white women, and 65 percent of the wages of white men who were similarly employed.<sup>15</sup> According to a U.S. Department of Labor report in 1997 entitled *Black Women in the Labor Force*, nearly half (3.7 million) of all African American families were headed by women in 1996, and of those female-headed households, half were living in poverty. In fact, African American women were nearly three times as likely to live in poverty and twice as likely to be unemployed as white women.<sup>16</sup>

Figures from the AFL-CIO’s Women and Work Department show significant income disparities between men and women. Their study found that the race factor compounds the problem of the average wage differentials. In 1999 the AFL-CIO and the Institute for Women’s Policy Research published *Equal Pay for Working*

*Families*, which found that African American women continue to deal with the problems of low wages, earning on average just \$369 per week. This full-time wage rate, however, is only \$46 less than black men who average earnings of \$415 per week. The low wages reflect, among other things, historically rooted and systemic disadvantages that people of color continue to face in the labor market. When compared with *all* men (rather than just with black men) the wage gap for black women is almost five times greater, or a difference of \$210 per week.<sup>17</sup> The report pointed out that when all racial groups are combined, full-time women workers lag behind men in wages, earning just 74.4 percent of what men earn on a weekly basis. White women earn 73.2 percent of what white men earn, while black women earn 88.9 percent of what black men earn. However, black women earn just 63.7 percent of what all men, on average, earn. Wage disparities such as these are more explicable when we look at how black women are located in female-dominated jobs.

Table 1: Ten Leading Occupations for Employed Black Women, 1996  
(numbers in thousands)

| Occupation                                      | Employed |
|---|----------|
| 1. Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants     | 536      |
| 2. Cashiers                                     | 359      |
| 3. Secretaries                                  | 290      |
| 4. Supervisors, personal services               | 268      |
| 5. Retail sales workers (for example, cashiers) | 191      |
| 6. Janitors and cleaners                        | 176      |
| 7. Cooks  | 160      |
| 8. Maids  | 158      |
| 9. Registered nurses                            | 157      |
| 10. Elementary school teachers                  | 151      |
| 11. Social workers                              | 151      |

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statics. *Current Population Survey*. 1996 Annual Average. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

As the following table illustrates, black women tend to be employed in the service occupations that historically have paid lower wages than, for example, manufacturing jobs.

In each of these occupations, black women are over-represented — and these kinds of jobs, for the most part, pay low wages and often lack medical benefits.

Such income deficits are often the result not only of racial disparities, but also of historic patterns of gender discrimination that relegate women to the lower rungs of the economic ladder. Thus, the double bind of sex and race operates economically and politically in particularly insidious forms. Not only do African American women face lifetime penalties based on the combined effects of race, gender, and, more often than not, low income, they also must deal with continuing cultural patterns that associate women primarily with home and hearth. Labor markets still operate in ways that relegate many women into jobs that reflect their nurturing capacities, rather than placing them in dynamic positions of power in the world of work. Social and cultural barriers still make it hard for women, and harder still for women of color, to take on the role of manager, expert, leader, or entrepreneur.

One area of work, however, where women of color have been able to overcome those built-in, societal limitations on their potential for high and rising wages is in the public sector. Higher education combined with government service probably represents the most effective means of increasing personal incomes. The expansion of government programs can have a significant, beneficial effect on the wages and benefits of women of color. Not only do such programs provide "non-income" benefits, they also expand public sector employment in the agencies that administer these benefits. As Richard B. Freeman, writing for the National Bureau of Economic Research, has pointed out:

In the United States, public sector workers have distinct characteristics. They are more likely to be female, well educated, older, and non-white, and to work in selected white-collar occupations that range from public school teacher, to clerical worker, to police officer, to judge and legislator.<sup>18</sup>

### **Comparable Worth at the State Level**

Comparable worth remains a promising, albeit controversial, strategy at the state level, where legislators are taking the lead in setting employment and workplace policy.<sup>19</sup> States are attacking controversial issues like electronic monitoring of workers, combating domestic violence, and raising wage levels using pioneering concepts like comparable worth. As a political strategy, comparable worth has the advantage of bringing women of disparate backgrounds together around an issue with concrete benefits for large numbers of women, as well as potential for legislative victory in state politics. States may be more willing to address economic issues affecting women than the federal government because more women serve as state legislators. According to the Center for American Women and Politics, in 2001, 22.4 percent of state legislators are women while women fill only 13.5 percent of U.S. Congressional seats.<sup>20</sup>

In fact, states have moved on their own in lieu of a federal law to introduce initiatives that advance comparable worth forward. More than three-quarters of

the states are active on the issue of equal pay through their legislatures. While much of the legislative activity involves wage studies and provisions for filing complaints, some state legislatures are pursuing comparable worth as an effective policy.<sup>21</sup> For example, Massachusetts has a law in the books prohibiting private or public sector wage discrimination for "work of comparable character."

The Massachusetts law was first tested in a lengthy court battle drawn out between 1991 and 1998 involving a class action suit. The largely female school cafeteria workers of Everett, Mass., claimed that their \$4.95-\$6.85 per hour pay rates were unfairly low and discriminatory when compared to the mostly male school janitors making \$11.64-\$12.73 per hour. Initially the court ruled in favor of the women cafeteria workers, but a series of appeals by the town eventually overturned the judgment. The ultimate ruling maintained that the two jobs were essentially not comparable — i.e., that the two types of jobs could not be compared in any meaningful way.<sup>22</sup>

The vagueness of the law's wording gave wide latitude for judicial interpretation, a problem that the plaintiffs' attorneys brought to the attention of the state's lawmakers. In response, women legislators introduced a bill to amend the comparable work statute so that it takes specific account of "the comparability of two positions according to comparable skill, effort, responsibilities, and working conditions between employees of the opposite sex." The bill followed on the work of a 1995 Commission on Comparable Work and moves in the direction of laws already passed in other states.

For instance, Minnesota's 1982 pay-equity law mandates that city, county, and state governments must address issues of comparable worth in setting their pay scales. The system relies on a rating scale, constructed and overseen by a special state bureaucracy, that takes account of the knowledge, skills, and effort required of various public sector jobs. The workability of the law over the past 18 years testifies to the fact that private sector employers could adopt similar systems if need be.

Maine boasts the most long-lived comparable worth law in the United States, having adopted it in 1965. The statute requires simply that public and private employers pay equal wages for comparable work. The law's effectiveness is undercut, however, by the lack of an enforcement mechanism; there is little policing of the state's workplaces to ensure compliance, which could put real teeth into the law. These two examples point out the challenges ahead for laws to include both private and public employers and for enforcement mechanisms to insure that sanctions exist for non-compliance. If state and federal policies are ever to make headway in pay equity for women, legislators will have to craft comparable worth policies that take account of the current experiments in this area, as well as remedy the problems related to specificity of legal terms to the perceived weaknesses of the laws in terms of enforcement.

## Conclusion

The comparable worth option as an instrument for women's economic advancement holds promise as a mechanism to address problems of gender equity in general, and for the economic situation of African American women in particular. The best argument for legal grievances based on workplace discrimination is that women as a class present a claim against the traditions built into the structure of the labor market. Comparable worth policies not only address the barriers to women's well-being, they also have the added advantage of creating political consciousness and action by and for women.

The economic participation of women in the paid labor force provides many benefits, both financial and psychological. A job can be its own reward, can enhance a woman's sense of efficacy and can reduce gender bias within the family as women gain greater say in family decisions. Furthermore, as Amartya Sen has noted in *Development As Freedom*, the participation of women in the workforce enhances women's status and independence and is one of the most powerful influences on changes in gender relations within households, and, as we have seen, can become a major influence for social change in general.<sup>23</sup> For too long, however, women's pay scales and employment opportunities have been limited by the operation of labor markets that relegate women to the lower-rung, lower-paid "women's work" of society.

To say that labor markets are sex-segregated is to utilize the language of economists to name an age-old problem. Even in 21st century America, there is women's work and there is men's work, and much of the occupational order (some estimates claim by at least 75 percent) remains stubbornly divided along gender lines. Pay equity, whether women and men are receiving equal pay for equal, or comparable, work gets to the heart of what government policy for women and men should be about: equality, justice, opportunity, security. From the perspective of gender politics, comparable worth deserves a resurgence of political and policy action because it uniquely addresses issues of class and race and minimizes the ideological divisions that often afflict feminist coalitions.

To the extent that policymakers adopt a proactive stance to these entrenched patterns of exclusion, women will achieve higher wages and the attendant psychological benefits that economic advancement offers. In addition, for women of color, the net gains in personal as well as community empowerment in the face of years of systemic discrimination provide an added and urgent incentive for action.

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## Women Waging Peace

by Swanee Hunt and Cristina Posa

*You cannot end wars simply by declaring peace. "Inclusive security" rests on the principle that fundamental social changes are necessary to prevent renewed hostilities. Women have proven time and again their unique ability to bridge seemingly insurmountable divides. So why are they not at the negotiating table?*

Allowing men who plan wars to plan peace is a bad habit. International negotiators and policymakers can break that habit by including peace promoters, not just warriors, at the negotiating table. More often than not, those peace promoters are women. Certainly, some extraordinary men have changed the course of history with their peacemaking; likewise, a few belligerent women have made it to the top of the political ladder or, at the grass-roots level, have taken the roles of suicide bombers or soldiers. Exceptions aside, however, women are often the most powerful voices for moderation in times of conflict. While most men come to the negotiating table directly from the war room and battlefield, women usually arrive straight out of civil activism and — take a deep breath — family care.

Yet, traditional thinking about war and peace has either ignored women or has regarded them as victims. This oversight has cost the world dearly. The wars of the last decade have gripped the public conscience largely because civilians were not merely caught in the crossfire; they were targeted, deliberately and brutally, by military strategists. Just as warfare has become "inclusive" — with civilians' deaths more common than soldiers' — so too must our approach toward ending conflict. Today, the goal is not simply the absence of war, but the creation of sustainable peace by fostering fundamental societal changes. Women are crucial to this effort since they are often at the center of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), popular protests, electoral referendums, and other citizen-empowering movements whose influence has grown with the global spread of democracy.

In this respect, the United States and other countries could take a lesson from Canada, whose innovative "human security" initiative — making human beings and their communities, rather than states, its point of reference — focuses on safety and protection, particularly of the most vulnerable segments of a population.

The concept of "inclusive security," a diverse, citizen-driven approach to global stability, emphasizes women's agency rather than vulnerability. Rather than gender fairness, this concept is driven by efficiency: An inclusive security approach expands the array of tools available to police, military, and diplomatic structures by enabling collaboration with ongoing local efforts to achieve peace.

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Every effort to bridge divides, even if unsuccessful, has value, both in lessons learned and links to be later built. Local actors with crucial experience resolving conflicts, organizing political movements, managing relief efforts, or working with military forces bring that expertise to the ongoing peace process.

International organizations are slowly recognizing the indispensable role that women play in preventing war and sustaining peace. On 31 October 1997, the United Nations Security Council issued Resolution 1325 urging the secretary-general to expand the role of women in UN field-based operations, especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights workers, and humanitarian personnel. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is working to move women off of the "gender" sidelines and into the everyday activities of the organization — particularly in the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which has been useful in monitoring elections and human rights throughout Europe and the former Soviet Union. Last November the European Parliament passed a hard-hitting resolution calling on European Union members (and the European Commission and UN Security Council) to promote the equal participation of women in diplomatic conflict resolution, to ensure that women fill at least 40 percent of all reconciliation, peacekeeping, peace-enforcement, peace-building, and conflict-prevention posts; and to support the creation and strengthening of NGOs (including women's organizations) that focus on conflict prevention, peace building, and post-conflict reconstruction.

But such strides by international organizations have done little to correct the deplorable extent to which local women have been relegated to the margins of police, military, and diplomatic efforts. Consider that Bosnian women were not invited to participate in the Dayton talks, even though during the war 40 women's associations remained organized and active across ethnic lines. Not surprisingly, this exclusion has subsequently characterized — and undermined — the implementation of the Dayton Accord. During a 1997 trip to Bosnia, U.S. President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and National Security Advisor Samuel Berger had a miserable meeting with intransigent politicians elected under the ethnic-based requirements of Dayton. During the same period, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton engaged a dozen women from across the country who shared story after story of their courageous and remarkably effective work to restore their communities. At the end of the day, a grim Berger faced the press, offering no encouraging word from the meetings with the political dinosaurs. The first lady's meeting with the energetic women activists was never mentioned.

We can ignore women's work as peacemakers, or we can harness its full force across a wide range of activities relevant to the security sphere: Bridging the divide between groups in conflict, influencing local security forces, collaborating with international organizations, and seeking political office.

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## **Bridging the Divide**

The idea of women as peacemakers is not political correctness run amok. Social science research supports the stereotype of women as generally more collaborative than men, and thus more inclined toward consensus and compromise. Ironically, women's status as second-class citizens is a source of empowerment, as it has made women adept at finding innovative ways to cope with problems. Because women are not ensconced within the mainstream, those in power consider them less threatening, allowing women to work unimpeded and "below the radar screen." Since they usually have not been behind a rifle, women, in contrast to men, have less psychological distance to reach across a conflict line. (They are often more accepted on the "other side" because it is assumed that they did not do any of the actual killing.) Women often choose an identity, notably that of mother, which cuts across international borders and ethnic enclaves. Given their roles as family nurturers, women have a huge investment in the stability of their communities. And since women know their communities, they can predict the acceptance of peace initiatives, or even broker agreements in their own neighborhoods.

As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan remarked to the Security Council in October 2000: "For generations, women have served as peace educators, both in their families and their societies, and have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls." Women have been able to bridge the divide even in situations where leaders have deemed conflict resolution futile in the face of so-called intractable ethnic hatreds. Striking examples of women making the impossible possible come from Sudan, a country splintered by 46 years of civil war. In the south, women working together in the New Sudan Council of Churches conducted their own version of shuttle diplomacy — perhaps without the panache of jetting between capitals — and organized the Wunlit tribal summit in February 1999 to bring an end to bloody hostilities between the Dinka and Nuer peoples. As a result, the Wunlit Covenant guaranteed peace between the Dinka and the Nuer, who agreed to share rights to water, fishing, and grazing land, key points of disagreement. The covenant also returned prisoners and guaranteed freedom of movement for members of both tribes.

On another continent, women have bridged the seemingly insurmountable divide between India and Pakistan by organizing huge rallies to unite citizens from both countries. Since 1994 the Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy has worked to overcome the hysterics of the nationalist media and jingoist governing elites by holding annual conventions where Indians and Pakistanis can affirm their shared histories, forge networks, and act together on specific initiatives. In 1995, for instance, activists joined forces on behalf of fishers and their children who were languishing in each side's jails because they had strayed across maritime boundaries. As a result, the adversarial governments released the prisoners and their boats.

In addition to laying the foundation for broader accords by tackling the smaller, everyday problems that keep people apart, women have also taken the initiative in drafting principles for comprehensive settlements. The platform of Jerusalem Link, a federation of Palestinian and Israeli women's groups, served as a blueprint for negotiations over the final status of Jerusalem during the Oslo process. Former President Clinton, the week of the failed Camp David talks in July 2000, remarked simply: "If we'd had women at Camp David, we'd have an agreement."

Sometimes conflict resolution requires unshackling the media. Journalists can either nourish a fair and tolerant vision of society or feed the public's poisonous, one-sided, and untruthful accounts of the "news" that stimulate violent conflict. Supreme Allied Commander of Europe Wesley Clark understood this when he ordered NATO to bomb transmitters in Kosovo to prevent the Milosevic media machine from spewing ever-more inflammatory rhetoric. One of the founders of the independent Kosovo radio station RTV-21 realized that there were "many instances of male colleagues reporting with anger, which served to raise the tensions rather than lower them." As a result, RTV-21 now runs workshops in radio, print, and TV journalism to cultivate a core of female journalists with a non-inflammatory style. The OSCE and the BBC, which train promising local journalists in Kosovo and Bosnia, would do well to seek out women, who generally bring with them a reputation for moderation in unstable situations.

### **Influencing Security Forces**

The influence of women on warriors dates back to the ancient Greek play *Lysistrata*. Borrowing from that play's story line, former South African President Nelson Mandela, at last summer's Arusha peace talks on the conflict in Burundi, suggested that if Burundian men began fighting again, their women should withhold "conjugal rights" (like cooking, he added).

Women can also act as a valuable interface between their countries' security forces (police and military) and the public, especially in cases when rapid response is necessary to head off violence. Women in Northern Ireland, for example, have helped calm the often deadly "marching season" by facilitating mediations between unionists and nationalists. The women bring together key members of each community, many of whom are released prisoners, as mediators to calm tensions. This circle of mediators works with local police throughout the marching season, meeting quietly and maintaining contacts on a 24-hour basis. This intervention provides a powerful extension of the limited tools of the local police and security forces.

Likewise, an early goal of the Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace was to meet and talk with the military leaders of the various rebel armies. These contacts secured women's access to areas controlled by the revolutionary movements, a critical variable in the success or failure of humanitarian efforts in war zones.

Women have also worked with the military to search for missing people, a common element in the cycle of violence. In Colombia, for example, women were so persistent in their demands for information regarding 150 people abducted from a church in 1999 that the army eventually gave them space on the military base for an information and strategy center. The military worked alongside the women and their families trying to track down the missing people. In short, through moral suasion, local women often have influence where outsiders, such as international human rights agencies, do not.

That influence may have allowed a female investigative reporter like Maria Cristina Caballero to go where a man could not go, venturing on horseback alone eight hours into the jungle to tape a four-hour interview with the head of the paramilitary forces in Colombia. She also interviewed another guerilla leader and published an award-winning comparison of the transcripts, showing where the two mortal enemies shared the same vision. "This [was] bigger than a story," she later said. "This [was] hope for peace." Risking their lives to move back and forth across the divide, women like Caballero perform work that is just as important for regional stabilization as the grandest Plan Colombia.

### **Joining Forces**

Given the nature of "inclusive" war, security forces are increasingly called upon to ensure the safe passage of humanitarian relief across conflict zones. Women serve as indispensable contacts between civilians, warring parties, and relief organizations. Without women's knowledge of the local scene, the mandate of the military to support NGOs would often be severely hindered, if not impossible.

In rebel-controlled areas of Sudan, women have worked closely with humanitarian organizations to prevent food from being diverted from those who need it most. According to Catherine Loria Duku Jeremano of Oxfam: "The normal pattern was to hand out relief to the men, who were then expected to take it home to be distributed to their family. Many of the men, however, did what they pleased with the food they received: Either selling it directly, often in exchange for alcohol, or giving food to the wives they favored." Sudanese women worked closely with tribal chiefs and relief organizations to establish a system allowing women to pick up the food for their families, despite contrary cultural norms.

In Pristina, Kosovo, Vjosa Dobruna, a pediatric neurologist and human rights leader, is now the joint administrator for civil society for the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). In September 2000, at the request of NATO, she organized a multiethnic strategic planning session to integrate women throughout UNMIK. Before that gathering, women who had played very significant roles in their communities felt shunned by the international organizations that descended on Kosovo following the bombing campaign. Vjosa's conference pulled them back into the mainstream, bringing international players into the conference to hear

from local women what stabilizing measures they were planning, rather than the other way around. There, as in Bosnia, the OSCE has created a quota system for elected office, mandating that women comprise one-third of each party's candidate list; leaders like Vjosa helped turn that policy into reality.

In addition to helping aid organizations find better ways to distribute relief or helping the UN and OSCE implement their ambitious mandates, women also work closely with these organizations to locate and exchange prisoners of war. As the peace processes in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, and the Middle East illustrate, a deadlock on the exchange and release of prisoners can be a major obstacle to achieving a final settlement. Women activists in Armenia and Azerbaijan have worked closely with the International Helsinki Citizens Assembly and the OSCE for the release of hostages in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, where hundreds of thousands of people have been killed. In fact, these women's knowledge of the local players and the situation on the ground would make them indispensable in peace negotiations to end this 13-year-old conflict.

### **Reaching for Political Office**

In 1976, women organizers in Northern Ireland won the Nobel Peace Prize for their nonsectarian public demonstrations. Two decades later, Northern Irish women are showing how diligently women must still work not only to ensure a place at the negotiating table but also to sustain peace by reaching critical mass in political office. In 1996, peace activists Monica McWilliams (now a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly) and May Blood (now a member of the House of Lords) were told that only leaders of the top ten political parties — all men — would be included in the peace talks. With only six weeks to organize, McWilliams and Blood gathered 10,000 signatures to create a new political party (the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, or NIWC) and got themselves on the ballot. They were voted into the top ten and earned a place at the table.

The NIWC's efforts paid off. The women drafted key clauses of the Good Friday Agreement regarding the importance of mixed housing, the particular difficulties of young people, and the need for resources to address these problems. The NIWC also lobbied for the early release and reintegration of political prisoners in order to combat social exclusion and pushed for a comprehensive review of the police service so that all members of society would accept it. Clearly, the women's prior work with individuals and families affected by "the Troubles" enabled them to formulate such salient contributions to the agreement. In the subsequent public referendum on the Good Friday Agreement, Mo Mowlam, then British secretary of state for Northern Ireland, attributed the overwhelming success of the YES Campaign to the NIWC's persistent canvassing and lobbying.

Women in the former Yugoslavia are also stepping forward to wrest the reins of political control from extremists (including women, such as ultranationalist

Bosnian Serb president Biljana Plavsic) who destroyed their country. Last December, Zorica Trifunovic, founding member of Women in Black (an antiwar group formed in Belgrade in October 1991), led a meeting that united 90 women leaders of pro-democracy political campaigns across the former Yugoslavia. According to polling by the National Democratic Institute, the grassroots, get-out-the-vote work of Vox Femina (a local group that participated in the December meeting) convinced hesitant women to vote for change; those votes contributed to the margin that ousted President Slobodan Milosevic.

Sometimes women make the transition from protesters to politicians. Several Argentine leaders of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo movement, formed in the 1970s to protest the "disappearances" of their children at the hands of the military regime, have now been elected to political office. And in Russia, the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers — a protest group founded in 1989 demanding their sons' rights amid cruel conditions in the Russian military — has grown into a powerful organization with 300 chapters and official political status. This past January, U.S. Ambassador to Moscow Jim Collins described the committee as a significant factor in countering the most aggressive voices promoting military force in Chechnya. Similar mothers' groups have sprung up across the former Soviet Union and beyond — including the Mothers of Tienanmen Square. International security forces and diplomats could find no better allies than these mobilized mothers, who are tackling the toughest, most hardened hostilities.

### **You've Come a Long Way, Maybe**

Common sense dictates that women should be central to peacemaking, where they can bring their experience in conflict resolution to bear. Yet despite all of the instances where women have been able to play a role in peace negotiations, women remain relegated to the sidelines. Part of the problem is structural: Even though more and more women are legislators and soldiers, under-representation persists in the highest levels of political and military hierarchies. The presidents, prime ministers, party leaders, cabinet secretaries, and generals who typically negotiate peace settlements are overwhelmingly men. There is also a psychological barrier that precludes women from sitting in on negotiations: Waging war is still thought of as a "man's job." As such, the task of stopping war often is delegated to men (although if we could begin to think about the process not in terms of stopping war but promoting peace, women would emerge as the more logical choice). But the key reason behind women's marginalization may be that everyone recognizes just how good women are at forging peace. A UN official once stated that, in Africa, women are often excluded from negotiating teams because the war leaders "are afraid the women will compromise" and give away too much.

Some encouraging signs of change, however, are emerging. Rwandan president Paul Kagame, dismayed at his difficulty in attracting international aid to his

genocide-ravaged country, recently distinguished Rwanda from the prevailing image of brutality in central Africa by appointing three women to his negotiating team for the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In an unusually healthy tit-for-tat, the Ugandans responded by immediately appointing a woman to their team.

Will those women make a difference? Negotiators sometimes worry that having women participate in the discussion may change the tone of the meeting. They're right: a British participant in the Northern Ireland peace talks insightfully noted that when the parties became bogged down by abstract issues and past offenses, "the women would come and talk about their loved ones, their bereavement, their children, and their hopes for the future." These deeply personal comments, rather than being a diversion, helped keep the talks focused. The women's experiences reminded the parties that security for all citizens was what really mattered.

The role of women as peacemakers can be expanded in many ways. Mediators can and should insist on gender balance among negotiators to ensure a peace plan that is workable at the community level. Cultural barriers can be overcome if high-level visitors require that a critical mass (usually, at least one-third) of the local interlocutors be women (and not simply present as wives). When drafting principles for negotiation, diplomats should determine whether existing women's groups have already agreed upon key conflict-bridging principles, and whether their approach can serve as a basis for general negotiations.

Moreover, to foster a larger pool of potential peacemakers, embassies in conflict areas should broaden their regular contact with local women leaders and sponsor women in training programs, both at home and abroad. Governments can also do their part by providing information technology and training to women activists through private and public partnerships. Internet communication allows women peace builders to network among themselves, as well as exchange tactics and strategies with their global counterparts.

"Women understood the cost of the war and were genuinely interested in peace," recalls retired Admiral Jonathan Howe, reflecting on his experience leading the UN mission in Somalia in the early 1990s. "They'd had it with their warrior husbands. They were a force willing to say enough is enough. The men were sitting around talking and chewing *qat*, while the women were working away. They were such a positive force. . . . You have to look at all elements in society and be ready to tap into those that will be constructive."

Lasting peace must be homegrown. Inclusive security helps police forces, military leaders, and diplomats do their jobs more effectively by creating coalitions with the people most invested in stability and most adept at building peace. Women working on the ground are eager to join forces. Just let them in.

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## Labor Market Legislation That Protects Women: Creating Opportunities or Obstacles?

by Yana van der Meulen Rodgers, PhD, and Joseph E. Zveglich, Jr., PhD

### Introduction

Gender-related legislation in the labor market has generally evolved from regulations that focus on safeguarding women's family responsibilities and ensuring their physical security, to more neutral provisions that promote equal pay and equal opportunities for women and men in the workplace. Legislation specifically designed to protect female workers first appeared in the early 1840s, when Great Britain prohibited women from working in mines and restricted their nighttime work. Within the next five decades, other European countries followed with legislation to restrict women from nighttime work, long working days, and hazardous working environments.<sup>1</sup> During this period, occupational bans and working-hour restrictions for women were often supplemented by mandatory maternity leave.

By the mid-1900s, a number of industrialized countries had revoked their occupational bans and working-hour restrictions for women as opposition to the discriminatory nature of the measures grew. Critics argued that the protective policies hampered women's ability to compete with men for some high-paying occupations, thus exacerbating women's concentration in relatively low-paying jobs. As a result, legislative efforts shifted from the protection of women to the promotion of workplace equality between men and women. Such measures include equal-pay clauses and equal-opportunity measures in employment. Although these measures are still controversial in terms of their effectiveness in raising women's relative earnings and in reducing occupational segregation, they are found in a growing number of industrialized and developing countries. In contrast to the reduction in countries imposing working-hour restrictions on women, legislation mandating maternity benefits has continued to spread. Legal innovations in maternity leave legislation during the 20th century have included employment guarantees and a move away from compulsory leaves to optional leaves. Moving into the 21st century, a growing number of countries are legislating more gender-neutral types of benefits, such as parental leave, alongside their existing maternity leave benefits.

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Protective measures for female workers may satisfy social objectives, but they also entail economic costs. Restrictions on women's night work and overtime hours limit the capability of firms to operate extra shifts, and firm-financed maternity benefits act like a tax on the employment of women. In response to these regulations, firms may reduce women's wages or substitute away from female workers. Protective legislation can entail negative effects that are particularly severe in developing countries, such as crowding women out of formal sector employment or encouraging firms to engage in outright discriminatory practices, such as requiring pre-employment pregnancy tests. Women will also change their labor supply depending on how much the mandates constrain their working-hour options and how much they value the benefits. The direction of predicted changes in labor market outcomes depends on the relative magnitudes of these supply and demand changes. Because the theory does not provide clear guidance on predicted outcomes, the impact of protective measures largely becomes an empirical issue. This study offers a theoretical context for understanding the effects of protective measures, and it presents empirical evidence for a range of industrialized and developing countries.

### **Restrictions on Working Hours**

Working-hour restrictions for female workers date back to the mid-1800s in Europe and the United States. Such restrictions were once justified by the need to reduce the danger that women faced when they traveled to and from work late at night, and the need to have working women spend more time at home. In 1919, the newly founded International Labour Office (ILO) adopted provisions on women's working hours among its first conventions. Although working-hour restrictions are no longer as prevalent or strictly enforced among industrialized countries, they have become widespread in developing countries. Night-work prohibitions, which constrain the time of day when workers can be employed, are relatively more common than overtime limits, which constrain the total number of hours that workers may work within a day. The severity of both types of legislation varies considerably across countries.

To model the impact of working-hour restrictions, Landes (1980) develops a simple competitive labor-market framework with two groups of workers, females and males. The labor supply of each type of worker depends on the average working hours of the group, which is an increasing function of the wage rate, and the number of individuals from the group choosing to work, which is an increasing function of the wage rate times average working hours. On the demand side, workers are assumed to be perfect substitutes in production — with the implication that wages are the same for both groups — and total labor demand is a decreasing function of the wage rate.<sup>2</sup> The equilibrium in this static labor-market model occurs where the aggregate supply of labor, which is the sum of total working hours across all paid employees, equals the aggregate demand for labor by firms.

A working-hour restriction imposed on female workers decreases women's average working hours through two channels. First, women's supply of working hours becomes inelastic with respect to the wage if women were working at night or working overtime prior to the imposition of the restrictions. Second, the decline in women's average hours creates a shortage of women workers, putting pressure on the wage to increase. Firms will substitute hours worked by men for those worked by women to bring the market back into equilibrium. Since the wage level increases but women's average working hours fall, the predicted impact of the legislation on women's employment is ambiguous. Landes (1980) argues that under plausible parameter estimates for the United States in the early 1900s, women's labor supply would decline following the imposition of an overtime limit. However, Goldin (1988) argues that women with family responsibilities who value day shifts and shorter working hours might choose to join the labor force, causing female employment to rise instead.

Empirical findings in Landes and Goldin match their respective theoretical predictions. Landes finds that the United States' early maximum-hours legislation had a negative effect on women's working hours and their employment share in manufacturing. Goldin, using the revised specification and new information on hours of work, finds a much smaller effect on hours worked and no change in women's employment share in manufacturing. Women actually increased their employment share in sales, another covered sector. Further empirical work on working-hour restrictions with differential coverage across gender is scant, particularly for developing countries, although Zveglic and Rodgers (2001) quantifies the impact of a night-work prohibition and overtime limits for women contained in Taiwan's 1984 Labor Standards Law. Differential coverage of the law across industrial sectors and demographic groups provides the opportunity to distinguish the impact of the working-hour restrictions from other concurrent changes in the economy. The regulations had a significant negative impact on both women's actual hours worked and employment rate. These effects did not occur until after 1987, when the government created a viable enforcement structure. The result provides a stark reminder that, particularly in developing countries, institutional reforms may be necessary to provide the incentive for agents to respond to legal changes that otherwise lack credibility.

### **Maternity Benefits & Parental Leave**

Maternity leave provisions first appeared around the same time as working-hour restrictions, with similar justifications, and were also among the ILO's first conventions. Provisions in today's industrialized countries are generally consistent with the ILO standard of a 12-week paid maternity leave and protection against dismissal during the leave period, except that leave in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States is unpaid. For countries with paid leave, social insurance systems generally finance the workers' compensation. Virtually all of

today's developing countries provide paid maternity benefits, with a typical leave duration of at least 12 weeks and greater variation across regions in whether the leaves are financed by public funds or directly by employers. Parental leave policies, which allow both men and women to take leave from work to care for their children, are relatively less common among developing countries. Although meant to be gender neutral, in practice parental leaves affect men and women differently since women are relatively more likely to take advantage of the policy. For example, in most European countries women take almost all the parental leaves.<sup>3</sup>

In a simple static model of the introduction of mandated maternity leave, the mandate acts as a tax on the employment of young women when employers bear the full cost of providing the benefit. Firms reduce their wage offers to eligible women by the amount of the expected cost of complying with the mandate, in effect reducing their relative demand for women workers. The expected cost to the firm includes the actual costs that would be incurred — such as wage payments to the beneficiary, administration costs, and payments to temporary replacement workers — and the probability that their female workers take maternity leave. If the government covers the cost of the wage payments to the beneficiary, then the reduction in demand for young women workers will be less. On the supply side, Summers (1989) notes that workers who value the benefit will accept a lower wage offer for a given quantity of labor supplied. The value that women place on maternity benefits depends first on the direct level of compensation and duration of the leave. Women may also value the employment guarantees that generally accompany maternity benefits legislation. Job-protected maternity leaves help women to maintain favorable job matches and to avoid search costs from seeking alternative employment.

In this static analysis, the overall effect on women's employment depends on the relative value that firms and beneficiaries place on maternity leave. When workers value the benefits less than the cost to employers, female employment will fall. When workers value the expected benefits more than the cost to employers, female employment will rise. An increase in employment could be due to more women entering into the labor market before having a child in order to gain qualification for maternity benefits, to women returning to work more quickly than they would have in the absence of coverage, or simply to an accounting anomaly if women on leave remain classified as employed.<sup>4</sup> Women who are already employed may increase their working hours before taking maternity leave since the compensation package during the leave is often based on total previous earnings. In some instances, women who were working part time prior to having a child may choose to raise their working hours in order to satisfy the eligibility criteria. However, maternity leave benefits could result in a negative effect on total hours if women move to fewer working hours in order to make more time for child rearing. The static analysis predicts an unambiguous decline in the average wages of young women after maternity leave is introduced.

Dynamic considerations may counteract the short-run restrictive effects of maternity benefits on labor demand. Waldfogel (1998) argues that maternity leave raises the probability that women will remain in the labor force and return to their former employer after childbirth. By strengthening women's attachment to the labor force and increasing their investment in firm-specific experience and training, a job-protected maternity leave can enhance the productivity of female workers. In this case, one might observe higher wage offers from firms over time, possibly large enough to overcome the initial pecuniary cost of maternity benefits. On the other hand, job-protected leaves may encourage women to take more time off from work than they would have taken in the absence of leave coverage. To the degree that extended leaves disrupt women's continuous job experience and cause their skills to deteriorate, employers' wage offers will fall.<sup>5</sup>

Empirical evidence on the labor market effects of maternity and parental leaves is mixed for industrialized countries and sparse for developing countries. Studies have generally found positive employment effects — although not always significant — in industrialized economies. The wage effect is more controversial depending on voluntary or mandated provision of maternity leave benefits. Research on maternity benefits that are provided voluntarily by firms, as reviewed in Waldfogel (1998), tends to find a positive wage effect for women who use maternity leave to retain their employment status during the childbirth period. The wage premium is attributed to maintaining employment continuity with the same firm over the period of childbirth. However, this positive wage effect might simply reflect a non-random selection of more productive and stable female workers into jobs that offer maternity leave. Also, firms that pay higher wages may be more likely to voluntarily provide maternity leave coverage. In contrast, mandated leave benefits may not entail these selection issues.

Research on mandated maternity benefits generally finds that wage changes for female workers following the mandate are either inconsequential or negative. The magnitude of wage losses depends on the wage compensation rate, leave duration, and the degree to which costs are financed by the government. When the mandate in the United States took the form of requiring company-provided medical insurance to cover the medical costs of childbirth, young women's wages fell by up to 5 percent, while their total labor supply did not change.<sup>6</sup> For mandated maternity leave in the United States, Waldfogel (1999) finds that the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act has a mildly positive employment effect and a negligible wage effect for women. The lack of a wage effect may be due to the relatively low cost imposed on employers, as the leave is uncompensated and of short duration.

Compared with the United States, leave mandates in Europe specify longer duration and compensation rates that approach 100 percent. Empirical evidence for nine Western European economies in Ruhm (1998) indicates that extended parental leaves which last nine months cause women's relative wages to fall by about 3 percent while raising the fraction of women who are employed by around 4 percent. Shorter leaves of three months have a similar employment effect but

very little effect on wages. The lack of a wage effect for short leaves is probably explained by the low cost of leave benefits to employers, since parental leaves in most European countries are financed by payroll taxes and general revenues.

Developing country case studies point to the importance of institutions for enforcing the labor legislation.<sup>7</sup> In Taiwan, the enactment of the maternity leave provisions in the 1984 Labor Standards Law led to an increase in young women's relative supply of labor, with a larger expansion coming after the establishment of a credible enforcement mechanism.<sup>8</sup> The effect on wages, however, was not statistically significant. Changes in Costa Rican legislation to lengthen maternity leave duration had little impact on wages and employment until after a new enforcement mechanism was created.<sup>9</sup> Unlike the other cases discussed, women's employment did not significantly change in Costa Rica, even with improved enforcement and stricter penalties on firms that violated the law, but women's wages did decline.

### **Employment and Pay Policies**

In an effort to improve women's relative earnings and labor market status, most countries have adopted policies that promote equal treatment in the workplace. "Equal pay for equal work" clauses require employers to provide equal pay for workers performing the same job with equal efficiency, regardless of gender. While ostensibly to promote equality in the workplace, equal-pay measures originally arose from union pressure to protect men's wages from an influx of lower-paid women workers.<sup>10</sup> Of the protective measures for women, legislation regarding the type of work that women can do has had the most profound evolution. Early legislation barred women from specific occupations or work environments that were deemed too hazardous for women, such as working underground or using dangerous machinery.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, more recent legislation has aimed to provide women greater access to occupations and training opportunities. Both equal-pay and equal-opportunity measures can improve women's labor market outcomes by eliminating wage and employment discrimination against women, rather than singling them out for special treatment.

In a perfectly competitive labor market, if women work in jobs that contain within-job-cell pay inequities, then equal-pay legislation should raise the wages of women relative to men with similar qualifications. The relative pay increase for women may come at the cost of employment losses. If employment is demand-determined after a large enough shock to wages, then implementation of an equal-pay clause is predicted to cause a decrease in women's relative employment. An equal-pay clause can also change the impact that other protective measures for female workers have on the labor market. The clause limits firms' ability to lower female wages relative to male wages in response to a labor market shock, such as the imposition of firm-financed maternity benefits. If employers cannot work around the restrictions, the equal-pay clause acts as a price floor on women's relative wages, such that women's wages are no longer free to fully adjust down-

ward. In the face of such wage rigidity, the change in relative labor costs from providing maternity leave will induce firms to substitute male workers for female workers, or to substitute capital for labor. The end result is a female labor surplus at the wage floor.

In theory, if equal-opportunity measures are effective in reducing discrimination against women in male-dominated occupations, the demand for female labor will increase as firms hire more women at any given wage. On the supply side, the creation of new job opportunities will encourage some women to shift occupations and other women to join the labor force. However, there could be a negative short-run effect on female labor supply if women choose to temporarily exit the labor force in order to acquire sufficient skills for the new positions. In the longer run, the employment effect should be positive as women complete the desired amount of education and training and re-enter the labor market. Women's relative wages should rise if the legislation succeeds in reducing women's concentration in relatively low-paying occupations. As occupational segregation declines, an equal-pay clause may in turn become more important in boosting women's relative earnings.<sup>12</sup> Because men might also face discrimination in such female-dominated jobs as nursing, childcare provision, and secretarial work, equal opportunity measures could in principle be used to assist men in obtaining traditionally female occupations. This approach would help to further reduce occupational segregation, provide a broader support base for the policy, and help to combat gender stereotypes in the workforce.<sup>13</sup>

In practice, equal-pay legislation has mixed success in improving women's relative wages. Equal pay tends to have more success in countries such as Australia, Britain, and Canada, where collective bargaining is common and differential pay rates by gender are legislated but relatively easy to change.<sup>14</sup> Equal pay has less impact in countries such as the United States, where the wage-setting mechanism is more decentralized. Furthermore, enforcement has proven to be a major obstacle, particularly in developing countries that do not have sufficient resources to create viable enforcement methods. For developing countries, published evidence for equal-pay policies is much more limited but seems to point in the direction of little to no impact. For example, Cohen and House (1993) use urban sector data from Sudan to argue that equal-pay legislation has been ineffective in closing the gender earnings gap, as occupational segregation — rather than pay discrimination — appears to be the main culprit behind persistent wage differentials. For equal opportunity measures, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of this type of legislation is inconclusive, largely because of methodological difficulties in separating their effect from other concurrent changes.<sup>15</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This study has examined the effects of various protective measures on women's employment, wages, and hours worked. Empirical evidence from a

range of industrialized and developing countries generally supports the predictions from a competitive labor market model. In particular, working-hour restrictions translate directly into a reduction in women's actual hours worked. The employment effect depends on the degree to which women value shorter workdays. A growing body of evidence attributes positive employment effects to maternity benefits, while women's wages have changed in different directions depending on productivity gains for women and the extent to which firms must finance maternity leave mandates. Empirical evidence for the third type of legislation discussed — measures for equal pay and equal opportunity — is generally indicative of implementation and enforcement shortcomings.

Labor market legislation that constrains women more than men in their working hours — historically imposed on female workers to ensure their physical safety and to protect family life — can hinder women's progress towards equity in the labor market. The measures contribute to the exacerbation of occupational segregation by sex, as some employers become resistant to hiring women who have less flexible working-hour options. A maternity leave mandate — also historically motivated by the need to safeguard women's family responsibilities — constitutes an alternative protective measure that does support women's efforts to remain and advance in the labor market. Job-protected maternity benefits promote women's attachment to the labor force and increase their firm-specific human capital. Women appear to value not just the financial benefits but also the employment guarantee that accompany their benefits. Although maternity leave legislation is widespread among developing countries, available evidence indicates that a significant number of women are either not covered by maternity leave benefits, unaware they are entitled to leave benefits, or employed in covered firms that fail to comply with the legislation. As a policy priority, maternity leave benefits need to be provided to a broader range of female workers by removing exemptions, promoting awareness of leave availability, and increasing enforcement.

Given that women worldwide are often more constrained than men from participating in the labor market or in higher-status occupations, labor market policies need to focus on alleviating constraints and creating new job opportunities for women. Government initiatives to promote equal opportunity in the workforce help women to obtain non-traditional occupations by ending discriminatory employment practices based on sex and marital status. Although this type of legislation is becoming more prevalent among developing countries, enforcement remains problematic. In numerous countries, women continue to face a considerable glass ceiling in administrative and supervisory positions, despite gains in their education and the enactment of equal-opportunity legislation. Ensuring equal treatment for male and female workers will strengthen women's economic status and generate efficiency gains for the entire economy.

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## **Endnotes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Wikander, Kessler-Harris, and Lewis (1995) provide a detailed overview of the early history of protective labor legislation in Europe, the United States, and Australia. Goldin (1990) provides more recent insight into the evolution of these policies in the United States.
- <sup>2</sup> Relaxing the assumption of perfect substitutability of workers in production does not change the fundamental predictions of the model with respect to women's labor supply effects. See Zveglic and Rodgers (2001) for a more detailed discussion.
- <sup>3</sup> Ruhm 1998.
- <sup>4</sup> Ruhm 1998; Klerman and Leibowitz 1997.
- <sup>5</sup> Ruhm 1998.
- <sup>6</sup> Gruber 1994; Kane 1998.
- <sup>7</sup> In addition to institutional support, raising worker's awareness of their rights is important to increase compliance. See, for example, Bernasek and Gallaway (1997) regarding employer financed maternity leave in Malaysia and World Bank (1995) for a survey of garment workers in Bangladesh.
- <sup>8</sup> Zveglic and Rodgers 2001.
- <sup>9</sup> Gindling and Crummett 1997.
- <sup>10</sup> Goldin 1990.
- <sup>11</sup> Wikander, Kessler-Harris, and Lewis 1995.
- <sup>12</sup> Blau, Ferber, and Winkler 1998.
- <sup>13</sup> Anker 1998.
- <sup>14</sup> Tzannatos 1999.
- <sup>15</sup> Blau, Ferber, and Winkler (1998) review the literature on the effectiveness of equal-pay and equal-opportunity legislation in industrialized countries.

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## **Women Working for Pay or Profit in Oaxaca de Juárez, Mexico, 1987-1992: Integration, Marginalization, or Exploitation?**

by Elizabeth Weiling, Mary Winter, Earl W. Morris, and Arthur D. Murphy

Working for pay or profit (gainful employment) by multiple household members has become a fact of life for many Mexican families. Evidence from studies of household economic behavior indicates that the ability to mobilize multiple workers permits low-income families to achieve improved levels of well-being.<sup>1</sup> That literature suggests that households consciously attempt to add workers to the household to maintain or improve well-being. The second worker is usually the adult female and she is likely to be engaged in the informal sector where earnings are lower and less stable than in the formal sector (Roberts 1990). Although female employment in developing countries has been the focus of a great deal of discussion and research, with a few exceptions, the phenomenon has not been examined longitudinally using household data (Tanski 1994).

The purposes of this paper are to explain the employment of women who are heads or co-heads of households living in a sample of dwelling units in Oaxaca de Juárez, a secondary city of Mexico, at two different points in time; to differentiate participants in the formal sector from those in the informal sector; and to assess the effects of formal or informal sector participation on egalitarianism of sex role attitudes. Analyses are performed of the relationships within each sample and of changes between the two time periods. The first analysis focuses on the effects of three sets of independent variables: 1) the woman's human resources, 2) the structure of her household, and 3) other household resources, on two dependent variables: a) whether the female is currently earning income through wage work or self employment, and b) her sector of employment (formal or informal). Data analyses are interpreted at both the household level and the aggregate level, in which the evidence is examined in light of the theories of integration, marginalization, and exploitation. The paper is structured as follows:

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- Following Malhotra and DeGraff (1997), the distinction is made between *labor force participation*, which includes both employed persons and those unemployed but seeking employment, and *working for pay or profit*, which includes only individuals who are actually engaged in income-producing activities.<sup>2</sup>
- Mexico's recent economic history and that of Oaxaca de Juárez, the setting for this study;
- Research methods;
- Empirical analyses; and
- Interpretations and conclusions.

## The Employment of Women

*According to the integration thesis, development liberates women by involving them in their society's political economy. In the marginalization thesis, capitalist development makes women peripheral to socially valued roles and resources. In terms of the exploitation thesis, capitalism creates a female proletariat supplying low-wage labor for accumulating capital.*<sup>3</sup>

### *Working for Pay or Profit*

**Alternative perspectives on the effects of economic development.** In developing countries, economic development is often synonymous with industrialization, in that the latter is the route to the former. As noted by Standing (1989), industrialization has been accompanied by striking increases in the number of women in the labor force in many societies. Much of the conceptual literature focusing on this phenomenon in developing countries has been concerned with the impact of industrialization on the lives of women. Three competing structural theories have characterized the discussion.<sup>4</sup>

The *integration* perspective, supported by modernization theorists, suggests that the greater number of job opportunities for women resulting from industrialization leads to greater labor force participation by women, which, in turn, leads to greater economic and political equality with men.<sup>5</sup> Further, industrialization is seen as a means to liberate women from precapitalist societies where women are destined to endure the hardships of a rigid gender division of labor and are otherwise subjugated in noninfluential positions under patriarchal systems, with limited choices over their productive and reproductive lives.<sup>6</sup> Capitalist industrialization promises to introduce technological advances to women that increase their choices regarding fertility, jobs, and education, which may ultimately result in greater gender equality and autonomy for women.<sup>7</sup>

The *marginalization* perspective, supported by developmentalist theorists, is in direct opposition to that of the integration perspective. The marginalization view posits that the capitalist version of industrialization has destroyed the reciprocal

gender division of labor that made both men and women integral contributors to the subsistence production system that characterized precapitalist societies. Not only are women relegated to domestic and subsistence modes of production, their lower levels of education and the patriarchal attitudes of society constrain women's participation in economic roles, relegating them to household roles. When forced into income-generating activities by the need for increased household income, they are participants in the informal economic sector rather than the formal sector.<sup>8</sup>

The *exploitation* approach focuses on the detrimental outcomes for women working under the capitalist system. Women are seen, first, as economically dependent domestic workers whose management of the households of male laborers assures a stable (male) workforce, and, second, as surplus wage labor that can go into and out of the labor force as needed.<sup>9</sup> When they work for pay, their jobs are extensions of their household roles. Exploitation is further accentuated by the capitalist focus on nuclear families, which perpetuates patriarchy and dichotomizes the gender division of labor (Tiano 1994). Safa (1995, 37) adds that the exploitation of women in the labor force is often justified because of the belief that women's salaries are "supplementary to the primary male breadwinner."

All three perspectives suggest that economic development and industrialization in capitalistic societies lead to an increase in the number of women working for pay or profit. If women are working in the formal sector, they stand to gain economic independence and higher status, thus supporting the integration hypothesis. If, however, such jobs are only in the informal sector, development has led to marginalization. If working for pay or profit temporarily, assumed periodically by women whose main job is that of "housewife," or if the work is merely an extension of the woman's household duties, women are being exploited. Marginalization or exploitation will leave women worse off in relative status than they were in subsistence economies. Hypotheses derived from these structural theories are appropriately tested through comparative analyses either 1) between societies,<sup>10</sup> 2) within a society at two or more time points,<sup>11</sup> or between two different groups within the same society.<sup>12, 13, 14</sup>

**Household adjustment and adaptation.** The theoretical framework for examining household behavior in this paper is termed *household adjustment and adaptation*.<sup>15</sup> The theory suggests that two external forces impinge on the household: *cultural forces*, in the form of norms and values for judging the various life domains (housing, food, leisure time, and the like), and *social forces*, in the form of structures that constrain the household's behavior in trying to meet those norms. At any particular moment, the household is likely to have one or more domains within which there are unmet needs as defined by the confrontation of current conditions with norms and values. The household has two options for responding to unmet needs: 1) adjustment, understood as routine meeting of household needs by making changes in elements of the household's environment, and 2) adaptation, defined as changing norms and/or changing constraints by making alterations in the household structure, organization, and/or orientations to well-being. If the constraint is one of material resources, potential actions would

focus on the reallocation of current resources or improvement of human resources to generate additional income. If it can be assumed that one of the impacts of development is an increase in the opportunities for additional household members to find paid employment, then factors that differentiate women who become employed from those who do not should be found in individual and household variables that affect the need for additional income.

**Empirical findings.** Household and individual characteristics associated with entry into gainful employment can be divided into three groups that could be seen as fostering or inhibiting such participation: the level of human resources possessed by the individual, the structure of her household, and the other resources available to her household. Individual and household-level analyses from different parts of the world have shown that, to some degree, each of the three classes of variables is related to labor force participation by women:

- Women with high levels of *human resources*, as indicated by high levels of education, many years of work experience, good health, and having migrated, are likely to be in the labor force.<sup>16, 17</sup>
- *Household structure*, as indicated by marital status, living in an extended family, and the number and ages of children, may facilitate or constrain the ability to work for pay or profit and may determine the sector of the labor force in which the woman works. Although some analyses have been limited to married women<sup>18</sup> and others to single women,<sup>19</sup> in studies in which marital status is a variable, women currently single<sup>20</sup> and women who are unmarried household heads<sup>21</sup> are more likely to be generating income than their married counterparts.
- The impact of *other household resources* such as employment and income earned by other workers in the household also has been demonstrated empirically. Most analyses have focused on married women and have used data about their spouses.<sup>22</sup> In general, in developing countries, the higher the income earned by other household members, the less likely the woman is to be working for pay or profit. The inference is that low income of the household gives rise to a household's need for the woman to enter the labor force.

In most of the world, the woman is responsible for household management: food procurement and preparation, laundry, and childcare. Hence the number and ages of the children in the household provide a measure of the labor intensity of her household responsibilities, and living in an extended (as opposed to nuclear) family is an indication of the potential availability of assistance with household responsibilities. Analyses employing measures of household composition have found that such variables affect the probability of gainful employment.<sup>23</sup>

### *Employment sector*

Although there have been recent refinements and extensions,<sup>24</sup> participation in economic activities in developing countries has traditionally been divided into

two groups: those activities that are included in the formal sector and those in the informal sector. The formal sector refers to activities that are characterized by steady employment in the production or service sectors, regular income and some minimum level of benefits. In addition, the formal sector generally conforms to tax and labor laws and other state ordinances in regulated, high-growth, dynamic enterprises using considerable physical, human, and financial capital.<sup>25</sup>

By contrast, the term "informal economic sector" has been defined by the International Labor Organization as income-generating activities that are characterized by ease of entry, reliance on indigenous resources, family ownership and labor in the enterprises, small-scale of operations, labor-intensive technology, reliance on skills acquired outside of the formal educational system, and unregulated and competitive markets.<sup>26</sup> Informal sector activities are often ignored in government data gathering and planning; they frequently are not enumerated in employment statistics nor is the income generated by such activities included in measures of economic activity — the gross national product, for example (Sethurman 1976).<sup>27</sup>

Some informal sector activities are clearly cyclical, becoming more prominent during national recessions and receding during better times, suggesting that such employment is a response to household needs rather than to structural changes in the position of women. Other informal activities are stable and linked directly to formal economic activities.<sup>28</sup> Expansion is not without cost; as Roberts (1990) notes, the informal sector "makes available a broad and flexible set of income opportunities that enable the poor to survive, but the money gained is so low that the expenditure of considerable time and effort is required to earn enough for subsistence. . ." (39).

Findings from research comparing formal and informal sector participants have indicated that education, age, and household composition are key factors that differentiate between the two sectors. Women with high levels of education (in relative terms) are likely to be in the formal sector, while those with low levels of education are in the informal sector or not employed at all.<sup>29</sup> Older women tend to be in the informal sector, whereas younger women are likely to be in the formal sector.<sup>30</sup> Women with young children (infants, toddlers, and preschoolers) are less likely to be working for pay or profit than those without young children; if they are employed, they are likely to be in the informal sector.<sup>31</sup> If it is assumed that work for pay in the informal sector is inferior to work in the formal sector in prestige and in returns to time, which is an assumption that is not without its critics, then, being able to distinguish formal sector workers from informal ones facilitates testing of hypotheses about integration, marginalization, or exploitation of women in developing economies.<sup>32</sup>

## **The Setting**

In this study, women who are heads or co-heads of households in the city of Oaxaca de Juárez, Mexico, are compared at two different points in time, early

1987 and early 1992. The volatility of the Mexican economy at those times and the enduring characteristics of the city of Oaxaca provide the setting for this study.

### *The Mexican Economy*

*La Crisis* of the 1980s resulted in a change in the Mexican economy, from a dominance of formal sector job opportunities, characterized by employment-related benefits, to heavy reliance on informal sector work.<sup>33</sup> By the early 1990s, the government's efforts at restructuring slowed the drop in the value of the peso. Wages and prices stabilized, fending off further drastic reductions in the standard of living for the majority of the population. In response, most households intensified their labor significantly in order to make ends meet. Women entered the labor force in record numbers. Those entering the labor force were not educated women looking for an outlet for their training. Rather, they were spouses who were forced to go to work to help the family purchase food and other essentials.<sup>34</sup>

### *Oaxaca de Juárez*

The metropolitan area of Oaxaca de Juárez, capital of the state of Oaxaca, has a population of about 300,000 inhabitants and is located 500 kilometers southeast of Mexico City in a broad valley surrounded on all sides by steep mountains that have served to isolate the city from the rest of Mexico and the world.<sup>35</sup> The city's principal economic activities center around the state and federal governments, tourism, and commerce; there is currently little industry and no heavy industry.

The limited access has been both a blessing and a curse.<sup>36</sup> Although Oaxaca has not participated fully in the economic boom enjoyed by such northern industrial cities as Monterrey and San Luis Potosí, neither have its residents experienced the extreme troughs of economic recession. The city has not been totally insulated from the problems of the national economy, however. Substantial changes have occurred in the city's labor market: In 1977, more than 60 percent of the households had at least one member in the formal sector. By 1987, less than 40 percent were in that sector (defined as having access to benefits such as health insurance through the employment of at least one of its members).<sup>37</sup>

The data for this study were gathered during some of the most volatile times in recent Mexican economic history: the first three months of 1987, shortly after the collapse of the oil prices, and during the first three months of 1992, when the country was, seemingly, well on the way to recovery. The data provide a unique opportunity to examine family adaptation to macroeconomic conditions that are largely beyond their control and to draw conclusions about the effects of working for pay or profit by women on their roles in society.

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## Methods

### *Research Design*

The research presented here is based on the testing of hypotheses at two levels: 1) disaggregate analysis at the household level, and 2) aggregate analysis at the level of the city. Hypotheses about the influences of multiple variables on the income generation behavior of women at two different time points, 1987 and 1992, are examined with disaggregated data. Aggregate longitudinal data are used to test hypotheses emanating from structural theories about integration, marginalization, and exploitation accompanying economic change. Thus, the two-sample design of the research permits interpretation of the findings in terms of 1) household behavior theory oriented to the findings at each of the two points and changes between those points, and 2) structural theories oriented to aggregate changes between time points. The determinants of female employment in terms of household and individual characteristics and changes in those characteristics can be understood in terms of household theory. Aggregate changes in employment and types of employment of women between time points can be clarified in terms of the integration, marginalization, and exploitation perspectives.

### *Hypotheses*

At the household level the general hypothesis is that the more severe the current household economic situation for the family, the more likely the woman is to be working for pay or profit. Also, the greater her personal human resources, the more likely she is to be working in the formal sector. Further, working for pay or profit would lead her to report egalitarian sex role attitudes.

The structural hypotheses are less clear cut. An absolute *decrease* in working for pay or profit between 1987 and 1992 could be interpreted as exploitation, because the role of women in the economy is as temporary workers. In a strong economy with an abundance of good jobs for male breadwinners, exploited women would revert to their primary roles of housewives.

An increase between 1987 and 1992 in women working for pay or profit in the formal sector would clearly support the integration hypothesis. Movement from the formal sector to the informal sector would clearly support marginalization. But what about movement into working for pay or profit from not working for pay or profit, regardless of the sector of employment in which the woman entered? Tiano (1994) suggests that such movement would be evidence of either marginalization, as women find only the informal sector open to them, or exploitation, if the work is an extension of her household duties. Yet her own analysis found that women often entered the informal sector first and then moved to the formal sector, rather than entering the formal sector initially. Indeed, findings by Safa (1995) and Horton (1999) suggest that any increase in employment,



regardless of sector, is evidence of integration, because of the opportunities that come with such employment.

Perhaps the way to distinguish between exploitation, marginalization, and integration when women are entering the informal sector is the change in reported attitudes toward gender roles. In addition to the impact of income generation by the woman on the household's monetary resources, there is some indication in studies by Tiano and Rosen that working for pay or profit has an effect on her attitudes toward gender roles.<sup>38</sup> If economic change leads to the integration of women, increased employment would be accompanied by changes toward more egalitarian attitudes of women toward sex roles; if there is no corresponding change in sex role attitudes, then marginalization or exploitation are appropriate conclusions. (See Appendix A: Method and Research Design)

## **Empirical Analyses**

### *Changes between 1987 and 1992*

Changes between 1987 and 1992 were initially assessed by comparing the 1987 distribution of working for pay or profit to the 1992 distribution and the mean value of the sex role scale in 1987 to that of 1992 (Table 1, see page 56), the means and proportions of the independent variables (Table 2, see page 57), and the zero-order correlations among all variables (Tables 3 and 4, see pages 58-59). In 1987, 40 percent of the women were generating some form of cash income; by 1992, half of the respondents worked for pay or profit (Table 1). The ten-percentage-point difference between the percentage of women working for pay or profit in 1987 and in 1992 represents a 25 percent increase. Among the women working for pay, the percentage in the formal sector grew slightly from 11 percent to 13 percent. The percentage of women working in the informal sector, however, increased from 29 percent in 1987 to 38 percent in 1992; therefore, the majority of the increase in employment was absorbed in the informal sector.

### *Table 1*

We can interpret the results from Table 1 as follows:

- When the comparison is limited to women working for pay or profit (Table 1, second section), there is no difference in the distribution by sector. In each year, approximately one-fourth of the women working for pay or profit were in the formal sector, with three-fourths in the informal sector.
- Reported sex role attitudes became slightly (but significantly) more egalitarian between 1987 and 1992 (Table 1, third section). The mean for sex role attitudes was 15.9 in 1987 and 16.6 in 1992, an increase of 1.5 points in the scale, a difference that is statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

Table 2

Differences in the independent variables between 1987 and 1992 may offer clues to the changes in employment (Table 2):

- In 1987, the mean age was 39.78, almost identical to the mean age in 1992, 39.79, a similarity caused by weighting the 1992 data according to the 1987 age distribution.
- The mean number of years of formal education increased slightly but significantly, from 5.45 in 1987 to 5.65 in 1992.
- Most women reported their health status as "fair" or "good" both years, although the mean health rating was significantly lower in 1992 than in 1987.
- In 1987, 75 percent of the women were born outside of the city of Oaxaca; in 1992, 64 percent of the respondents were born outside of the city of

Table 1: Working for Pay or Profit, 1987-1992\*

| 1. Working Status of All Women in Sample      | 1987  | 1992  |                               |
|---|-------|-------|-------------------------------|
| Not working for pay or profit                 | 59.9  | 49.1  | df=2<br>Chisq=12.5<br>p=0.002 |
| Informal sector                               | 29.4  | 39.0  |                               |
| Formal sector                                 | 10.7  | 13.0  |                               |
|   | (581) | (480) |                               |
| 2. Sector of Those Working for Pay or Profit  |       |       | df=1<br>Chisq=0.08<br>p=0.773 |
| Informal sector                               | 73.4  | 74.5  |                               |
| Formal sector                                 | 26.6  | 25.5  |                               |
|   | (233) | (245) |                               |
| 3. Sex Role Attitudes for All Women in Sample |       |       | df=1059<br>T=3.00<br>p=0.003  |
| Mean  | 15.9  | 16.6  |                               |
| Standard deviation                            | 3.5   | 3.7   |                               |
| Range   | 6-25  | 5-25  |                               |
|   | (581) | (480) |                               |

\*1992 data weighted by 1987 age distribution.

Oaxaca, indicating that the new sample members are more likely to have been born in the city than those they replaced.

- With the exception of the number of infants, significantly fewer in 1992 than in 1987, there are no differences in the variables assessing household composition.<sup>39</sup> The mean number of *other* household members in paid employment is higher in 1992 (1.49) than in 1987 (1.44), but the difference is not significant. In other words, if there is an additional household member working for pay or profit, it is very likely to be the principal woman in the household who found or created employment for herself.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations for All Test Variables 1987 and 1992 (weighted)

| Variable   | 1987<br>(n=581) |        |        | 1992<br>(weighted,<br>n=480) |        |         |
|--|-----------------|--------|--------|------------------------------|--------|---------|
|  | Mean            | S.D.   | Range  | Mean                         | S.D.   | Range   |
| Age  | 39.78           | 13.54  | 16-97  | 39.79                        | 13.54  | 16-97   |
| Education <sup>a</sup>   | 5.45            | 4.67   | 0-21   | 6.14                         | 4.44   | 0-22    |
| Health <sup>a</sup>  | 2.55            | 0.58   | 1-4    | 2.32                         | 0.67   | 1-4     |
| Immigrant to city <sup>b</sup>   | 0.75            | 0.43   | 0-1    | 0.64                         | 0.48   | 0-1     |
| Single   | 0.16            | 0.36   | 0-1    | 0.18                         | 0.38   | 0-1     |
| Free union   | 0.12            | 0.33   | 0-1    | 0.10                         | 0.30   | 0-1     |
| Nuclear family   | 0.71            | 0.46   | 0-1    | 0.70                         | 0.46   | 0-1     |
| Number of infants (<1 year old)  | 0.17            | 0.39   | 0-2    | 0.11                         | 0.32   | 0-2     |
| Number of toddlers (1-2)   | 0.24            | 0.45   | 0-2    | 0.23                         | 0.48   | 0-2     |
| Number of preschoolers (3-5)   | 0.39            | 0.61   | 0-2    | 0.37                         | 0.59   | 0-3     |
| Number of other workers  | 1.44            | 0.98   | 0-8    | 1.49                         | 1.17   | 0-7     |
| Monthly income from other householdmembers (1000s of pesos) <sup>a</sup> | 137.99          | 138.21 | 4-1500 | 270.88                       | 244.66 | 10-2232 |

<sup>a</sup> Difference between 1987 and 1992 significant, two-tailed t-test, independent samples, p<0.05

<sup>b</sup> Difference between 1987 and 1992 significant, chi-square test, p<0.05

Table 3: Zero-Order Correlation Coefficients, 1987 (n=581)

| Variable                  | 2                | 3                 | 4                 | 5                 | 6                 | 7                 | 8                 | 9                 | 10                | 11                | 12                | 13                | 14                | 15                | 16                |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Working                | .42 <sup>b</sup> | .79 <sup>b</sup>  | .02               | .14 <sup>b</sup>  | -.02              | .07               | .23 <sup>b</sup>  | .04               | .06               | -.06              | -.04              | -.03              | -.11 <sup>a</sup> | -.18 <sup>b</sup> | .06               |
| 2. Formal sector          |                  | -.22 <sup>b</sup> | -.14 <sup>b</sup> | .50 <sup>b</sup>  | .10 <sup>a</sup>  | .04               | .01               | -.03              | -.04              | -.08              | .02               | .01               | -.13 <sup>b</sup> | -.05              | .23 <sup>b</sup>  |
| 3. Informal sector        |                  |                   | .11 <sup>a</sup>  | -.19 <sup>b</sup> | -.10 <sup>a</sup> | .05               | -.25 <sup>b</sup> | .07               | -.04              | -.01              | -.06              | -.05              | -.03              | -.16 <sup>b</sup> | -.09 <sup>a</sup> |
| 4. Age                    |                  |                   |                   | -.36 <sup>b</sup> | -.20 <sup>b</sup> | .03               | .31 <sup>b</sup>  | -.13 <sup>b</sup> | -.25 <sup>b</sup> | -.18 <sup>b</sup> | -.24 <sup>b</sup> | -.26 <sup>b</sup> | .23 <sup>b</sup>  | .01               | -.26 <sup>b</sup> |
| 5. Education              |                  |                   |                   |                   | .22 <sup>b</sup>  | -.15 <sup>b</sup> | -.18 <sup>b</sup> | -.06              | .08               | .00               | .08               | .05               | -.20 <sup>b</sup> | .13 <sup>b</sup>  | .48 <sup>b</sup>  |
| 6. Health                 |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   | -.04              | -.09 <sup>a</sup> | -.01              | .14 <sup>b</sup>  | .07               | .00               | .02               | -.15 <sup>b</sup> | -.02              | .11 <sup>a</sup>  |
| 7. Immigrant              |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | -.04              | .04               | -.07              | -.02              | .03               | -.03              | .08               | .00               | -.10 <sup>a</sup> |
| 8. Single                 |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | -.16 <sup>b</sup> | -.17 <sup>b</sup> | -.01              | -.05              | -.07              | -.11 <sup>a</sup> | -.17 <sup>b</sup> | -.11 <sup>a</sup> |
| 9. Free union             |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | -.00              | .03               | .04               | .04               | .03               | -.06              | -.10 <sup>a</sup> |
| 10. Nuclear family        |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | -.16 <sup>b</sup> | -.12 <sup>b</sup> | -.03              | -.33 <sup>b</sup> | -.04              | .08               |
| 11. Infants               |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | .10 <sup>a</sup>  | .10 <sup>a</sup>  | .08               | .03               | -.01              |
| 12. Toddlers              |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | .16 <sup>b</sup>  | .00               | -.04              | .01               |
| 13. Preschoolers          |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | .05               | .04               | .08               |
| 14. Other workers         |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | .26 <sup>b</sup>  | -.15 <sup>b</sup> |
| 15. Corrected income      |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | .10 <sup>a</sup>  |
| 16. Egalitarian attitudes |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |

<sup>a</sup> Significant,  $p < 0.05$

<sup>b</sup> Significant,  $p < 0.01$

Table 4: Zero-Order Correlation Coefficients, 1992 (weighted, n=480)

| Variable                  | 2    | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9     | 10    | 11    | 12    | 13    | 14    | 15    | 16    |
|---------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Working                | .38b | .77b  | -.07  | .17b  | .04   | .03   | .15b  | .04   | -.02  | .01   | -.04  | -.07  | -.08  | -.10a | .12a  |
| 2. Formal sector          |      | -.30b | .04   | .40b  | .04   | -.03  | .01   | -.04  | .02   | .01   | -.08  | -.07  | -.11a | .02   | .21b  |
| 3. Informal sector        |      |       | -.10a | -.10a | .01   | .06   | .14b  | .07   | -.04  | .01   | .02   | -.02  | -.01  | -.11a | -.02  |
| 4. Age                    |      |       |       | -.35b | -.27b | .16b  | .26b  | -.11a | -.21b | -.28b | -.23b | -.19b | .28b  | .15b  | -.26b |
| 5. Education              |      |       |       |       | .30b  | -.25b | -.09a | -.07  | .11a  | .07   | .03   | -.03  | -.26b | .16b  | .49b  |
| 6. Health                 |      |       |       |       |       | -.09a | -.07  | -.03  | .09a  | .01   | -.03  | -.01  | -.14b | .06   | .11a  |
| 7. Immigrant              |      |       |       |       |       |       | .03   | .11a  | -.08  | -.10a | -.04  | -.05  | .06   | -.02  | -.23b |
| 8. Single                 |      |       |       |       |       |       |       | -.15b | -.17b | -.10a | -.03  | -.10a | -.12a | -.21b | -.03  |
| 9. Free union             |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | .01   | .05   | .04   | .04   | -.04  | -.01  | -.08  |
| 10. Nuclear family        |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | .04   | -.03  | .00   | -.34b | -.13b | .11a  |
| 11. Infants               |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | -.04  | .12a  | -.09a | -.04  | .03   |
| 12. Toddlers              |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | .01   | -.02  | -.03  | -.04  |
| 13. Preschoolers          |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | -.02  | -.03  | -.01  |
| 14. Other workers         |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | .46b  | -.12a |
| 15. Corrected income      |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | .09a  |
| 16. Egalitarian attitudes |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |

<sup>a</sup> Significant,  $p < 0.05$

<sup>b</sup> Significant,  $p < 0.01$

Table 5: Full and Reduced Logistic Regressions of Working for Pay or Profit, 1987 and 1992 (weighted)

| Variable                | 1987 (n=581) |         |               |         | 1992 (n=480) |         |               |         |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------|---------------|---------|--------------|---------|---------------|---------|
|                         | Full Model   |         | Reduced Model |         | Full Model   |         | Reduced Model |         |
|                         | B            | Sig.    | B             | Sig.    | B            | Sig.    | B             | Sig.    |
| Age                     | 0.173        | 0.001   | 0.183         | 0.001   | 0.083        | 0.079   | 0.095         | 0.028   |
| Age squared             | -0.002       | 0.001   | -0.002        | 0.001   | -0.001       | 0.042   | -0.001        | 0.019   |
| Education               | 0.138        | 0.001   | 0.136         | 0.001   | 0.115        | 0.001   | 0.093         | 0.001   |
| Health                  | -0.127       | 0.447   |               |         | -0.052       | 0.740   |               |         |
| Immigrant               | 0.604        | 0.008   | 0.620         | 0.006   | 0.323        | 0.128   |               |         |
| Single                  | 1.615        | 0.001   | 1.677         | 0.001   | 1.077        | 0.001   | 1.013         | 0.001   |
| Free union              | 0.686        | 0.014   | 0.708         | 0.011   | 0.553        | 0.094   |               |         |
| Nuclear family          | -0.370       | 0.120   |               |         | -0.173       | 0.466   |               |         |
| Infants                 | -0.296       | 0.258   |               |         | 0.093        | 0.766   |               |         |
| Toddlers                | -0.230       | 0.315   |               |         | -0.193       | 0.359   |               |         |
| Preschoolers            | -0.019       | 0.905   |               |         | -0.190       | 0.259   |               |         |
| Other workers           | -0.012       | 0.922   |               |         | 0.073        | 0.503   |               |         |
| Corrected income        | -0.006       | 0.001   | -0.006        | 0.001   | -0.001       | -0.025  | -0.001        | 0.035   |
| Constant                | -3.935       | 0.001   | -5.036        | 0.001   | -1.938       | 0.084   | -2.157        | 0.016   |
| -2 log likelihood $X^2$ |              | 782.524 |               | 782.524 |              | 665.501 |               | 665.501 |
| Model $X^2$             |              | 113.798 |               | 109.071 |              | 48.897  |               | 39.531  |
| Degrees of freedom      |              | 13      |               | 7       |              | 13      |               | 5       |
| Pseudo $R^2$            |              | 0.145   |               | 0.139   |              | 0.074   |               | 0.059   |
| % correctly classified  |              | 70.740  |               | 71.256  |              | 62.083  |               | 60.000  |

Table 6: Full and Reduced Logistic Regressions of Participation in the in the Formal Sector, 1987 and 1992 (weighted)

| Variable                | 1987 (n=233) |         |               |         | 1992 (n=245) |         |               |         |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------|---------------|---------|--------------|---------|---------------|---------|
|                         | Full Model   |         | Reduced Model |         | Full Model   |         | Reduced Model |         |
|                         | B            | Sig.    | B             | Sig.    | B            | Sig.    | B             | Sig.    |
| Age                     | 0.267        | 0.120   | 0.121         | 0.428   | 0.344        | 0.003   | 0.333         | 0.002   |
| Age squared             | -0.005       | 0.050   | -0.003        | 0.225   | -0.003       | 0.018   | -0.003        | 0.012   |
| Education               | 0.426        | 0.001   | 0.385         | 0.001   | 0.330        | 0.001   | 0.312         | 0.001   |
| Health                  | 0.582        | 0.172   |               |         | -0.156       | 0.621   |               |         |
| Immigrant               | 0.765        | 0.145   |               |         | 0.105        | 0.795   |               |         |
| Single                  | 0.695        | 0.294   |               |         | -0.184       | 0.735   |               |         |
| Free union              | -0.090       | 0.902   |               |         | -0.700       | 0.361   |               |         |
| Nuclear family          | -1.001       | 0.064   |               |         | -0.057       | 0.904   |               |         |
| Infants                 | -1.170       | 0.054   | -0.908        | 0.107   | 1.705        | 0.011   | 1.446         | 0.020   |
| Toddlers                | -0.145       | 0.789   |               |         | -0.675       | 0.249   |               |         |
| Preschoolers            | 0.148        | 0.690   |               |         | 0.057        | 0.878   |               |         |
| Other workers           | -0.681       | 0.112   |               |         | -0.193       | 0.411   |               |         |
| Corrected income        | -0.001       | 0.701   |               |         | -0.001       | 0.297   |               |         |
| Constant                | -8.265       | 0.025   | -4.945        | 0.076   | -11.192      | 0.001   | -11.730       | 0.001   |
| -2 log likelihood $X^2$ |              | 269.970 |               | 269.970 |              | 277.394 |               | 277.394 |
| Model $X^2$             |              | 137.265 |               | 124.847 |              | 91.410  |               | 85.198  |
| Degrees of freedom      |              | 13      |               | 4       |              | 13      |               | 4       |
| Pseudo $R^2$            |              | 0.508   |               | 0.462   |              | 0.330   |               | 0.307   |
| % correctly classified  |              | 87.983  |               | 86.695  |              | 86.122  |               | 85.714  |

- The mean of monthly income (in constant "old" pesos, i.e., corrected by the Consumer Price Index(CPI)) almost doubled, from 137,988 pesos in 1987 to 270,879 pesos in 1992.

In reference to the bullet above, although on the surface, the increase in mean of monthly income is dramatic, the relationship between corrected income in 1987 and that in 1992 is not straightforward.<sup>40</sup> For example, the change in the peso relative to the dollar (1000 pesos=\$1 in 1987; 3000 pesos=\$1 in 1992) left Oaxacan households worse off in relative terms in 1992 than in 1987 because the average total monthly income of the other members of her household was the equivalent of about \$140 in 1987 and about \$80 in 1992. The implication is that the CPI may not be adequate for correcting changes in the purchasing power of the peso.

### *Tables 3 and 4*

The comparison of the zero-order correlation coefficient matrices for both years (Tables 3 and 4, see pages 58-59) reveals that the bivariate relationships between working for pay or profit and the independent variables both years are more or less the same in direction and significance, but that the coefficients themselves are of lesser magnitude in 1992 than in 1987. The lone exception to this statement is the relationship between sex role attitudes and working for pay or profit. In 1987, the correlation coefficient for this relationship is an insignificant 0.06; in 1992, the correlation coefficient is 0.12, significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

The bivariate relationships between the independent variables and sector participation in the two years are also in the same direction and at the same level of significance (Tables 3 and 4), with the 1987 relationships somewhat stronger with two important exceptions. In 1987, the correlation coefficient between participation in the formal sector and age was negative and significant, indicating that the older the woman, the less likely she was to be in the formal sector. In 1992, the correlation coefficient between age and formal sector participation was not significant. In 1987, the correlation between age and participation in the informal sector was significant and positive — the mirror image of the relationship between age and formal sector participation: The older the woman, the more likely she was to be participating in the informal sector. The reverse is true in 1992, as indicated by a significant *negative* correlation between age and participation in the informal sector. In 1992, the younger the woman, the *more* likely she was to be participating in the informal sector, perhaps an indication that the informal sector is seen as an opportunity to gain a foothold into the labor force, with possibilities for advancement at a later date.

### *Working for Pay or Profit*

Variables significant in both models are age, age squared, education, and a binary variable indicating that she is single, as opposed to married, all positively related, and corrected household income, which is negative. The relationships in



the model may be interpreted as indicating the strength and direction of the relationship when other variables are controlled. In other words, when education is controlled, age has a significant effect on working for pay or profit (see Appendix B: Working for Pay or Profit). Conversely, when age is controlled, the higher the level of education, the more likely the woman is to be working for pay or profit. Thus, higher levels of human resources, as measured by age and education, but not by health status, increase the probability that the woman will be employed. The negative relationship of age squared indicates that the relationship between working for pay and profit is curvilinear. Prior to age 40, the older the woman, the more likely she is to be working for pay or profit; after age 40, the older the woman, the less likely she is to be employed. The probability of being gainfully employed rises to a peak about age 40, slackens slowly to age 64 and then declines rapidly.

High levels of need increase the probability that the woman will be earning income in each of the analyses. Single women and those living in households with low levels of income from other members of the household are likely to be generating income. In the 1987 model, women living in a free union are more likely than married women to be employed, as are immigrants to the city, who may have migrated for the express purpose of finding employment. None of the other household structure variables (besides marital status) are significant in the multivariate equation. The presence of young children does not affect working for pay or profit, nor does living in an extended family.

### *Employment in the Formal Sector*

The analyses of participation in the formal sector are limited to women who are gainfully employed: 233 women in 1987 and 245 women in 1992. The models predicting working in the formal sector are considerably stronger than those predicting working outside the home, with the 1987 model stronger than the 1992 model (Table 6, see page 61). *Based on these analyses, there can be little question* about the most important determinant of work in the formal sector: Both models show the overwhelming influence of education, with women with higher levels of education more likely to be in the formal sector than women with lower levels of education. In 1987 in the full model, women with infants are more likely to be in the informal sector than in the formal sector, suggesting that women with an infant continue to work at their informal sector jobs, perhaps because it is fairly easy to take a sleeping infant on one's back to the food stand, to the home of one's employers, or to the market. The relationship is not significant at  $p < 0.05$  in the reduced model, however. The relationship between number of infants and formal sector participation is positive in 1992 in the full and reduced models, indicating that women with infants are more likely to be in the formal sector than the informal sector. One potential explanation for this finding is that childcare for infants was more readily available in 1992 than in 1987.

The curvilinear relationship between age and participation in the formal sector is similar to that noted between age and working for pay or profit (Table 5, see page 60), with formal sector participation increasing rapidly with age up to age 40, and then declining gradually with age. In the analysis of formal sector participation in 1987, neither age nor age squared is significant at  $p < 0.05$  in the reduced model but the two variables taken together are significant.

### *The Effect of Working for Pay or Profit on Sex Role Attitudes*

Although by no means a definitive measure, one indication of integration at the individual level is the development of sex role attitudes that are egalitarian rather than traditional. If working for pay or profit is related to more egalitarian attitudes, then it can be concluded that working for pay or profit contributes to the integration of women into the society. If, on the other hand, there is no relationship between working for pay or profit and sex role attitudes, it can be concluded that women are being marginalized or exploited. When age of the woman is controlled, women working for pay or profit in 1992 report more egalitarian sex roles attitudes than those not working for pay or profit (Table 7); there is, however, no relationship between working for pay or profit and sex role attitudes in 1987.

## **Interpretation**

### *Household Level Adaptation*

There can be little question of the support these analyses offer for the theory of household adjustment and adaptation. Households are adapting to negative changes in the macroeconomic conditions in Mexico and in Oaxaca by having additional members working for pay or profit. As with motivation for income generation worldwide, it is clear from the analyses that the primary motivation for working for pay or profit in Oaxaca in 1987 and 1992 is need. Women who are working outside the home are those who need the income, however meager, that their employment provides. If the total income from the other members of her household is low, she is likely to be working for pay, either in the informal or the formal sector. Women who are single or, in 1987, in less secure unions than formal marriage, are generating income, perhaps as their sole source of support. If the need is great, they are working, regardless of the presence of young children and the absence of extended family to care for them.

Her human resources facilitate her entry into income-generating activities and determine her sector of employment. Among women less than age 40, the woman's age, the proxy for experience in this analysis, promotes working for pay or profit, as does a high level of education. And if she is working for pay or profit, her educational level is the ticket to a better job.

Table 7: Regression of Sex Role Attitudes  
on Sector and Age, 1987 and 1992 (weighted)

| Variable                | 1987 (n=581) |        |        |        | 1992 (n=480) |        |        |        |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------------|--------|--------|--------|
|                         | B            | beta   | T      | Sig. T | B            | beta   | T      | Sig. T |
| Age*                    | -0.004       | 0.018  | -0.084 | 0.933  | 0.143        | 0.523  | 2.117  | 0.035  |
| Age squared*            | -0.000       | -0.248 | -1.187 | 0.236  | -0.002       | -0.783 | -3.168 | 0.002  |
| Working                 | 0.432        | 0.061  | 1.520  | 0.129  | 0.706        | 0.096  | 2.202  | 0.028  |
| Year                    | —            | —      | —      | —      | —            | —      | —      | —      |
| Constant                | 17.169       |        | 15.563 | 0.000  | 14.816       |        | 10.690 | 0.000  |
| R <sup>2</sup>          |              | 0.074  |        |        |              | 0.095  |        |        |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> |              | 0.069  |        |        |              | 0.090  |        |        |
| Degrees of freedom      |              | 3&577  |        |        |              | 3&476  |        |        |
| F-ratio                 |              | 15.436 |        |        |              | 16.754 |        |        |
| P                       |              | <0.001 |        |        |              | <0.001 |        |        |

\*Age and age squared are treated as a block. Even if one or both have insignificant coefficients the pair of variables combined has a significant quadratic effect.

The fact that health was not significant in any of the models perhaps occurs because of the correlation between age and health in both 1987 and 1992. A second interpretation is that, with age and education controlled, women will be working for pay or profit regardless of their health. Because the receipt of benefits, including health benefits, was used to classify women into either the formal or the informal sector, an earlier study hypothesized that the causal order was the reverse: Participation in the formal sector and the corresponding receipt of benefits would be a determinant of higher levels of health. Analyses of the 1987 data did not support that hypothesis, nor did subsequent analyses of the 1992 data.<sup>41</sup>

### *The Alternative Structural Hypotheses*

Drawing conclusions about which of the structural hypotheses — integration, marginalization, or exploitation — best characterizes women's participation in remunerative activities in Oaxaca de Juarez is not as straightforward as the conclusions about the household-level reasons for participation. The findings that are relevant are, first, that there has been an absolute increase in the percentage of women working for pay or profit, such that, by 1992, almost half of the women in the sample were employed. Second, the informal sector experienced the greater increase, although there was a slight increase in formal sector participation, as well. Some of the increase in the latter may have been the result of women in the informal sector shifting to the formal sector. Without a strict panel analysis, however, that determination cannot be made. A third finding is that there was a significant increase in egalitarian attitudes between 1987 and 1992, and lastly,

working for pay or profit is significantly related to egalitarian sex role attitudes in 1992, but not in 1987. Although the causal order is unclear (do egalitarian sex role attitudes lead to working for pay or profit, or vice versa?), there can be no doubt that, by 1992, women working for pay or profit were much less likely to espouse traditional sex roles than in 1987.

## Conclusions

Safa (1995) and Horton (1999) suggest that participation in any remunerative activity offers improvement in the lives of women, because access to monetary resources permits access to family planning, education, healthcare, and other goods and services essential to attaining an increased quality of life. Our findings offer further support for this conclusion. While some may argue that marginalization or exploitation is occurring because women are largely relegated to informal sector activities, and, in fact, most of the increase between the two years occurred in that sector, the relationship between working for pay or profit and sex role attitudes belies both conclusions. Women in 1992, far from being marginalized or exploited, are seeing their roles as less traditional overall, and as less traditional than those not working for pay or profit. These findings, taken together, point to support for the integration hypothesis and suggest that women are increasingly seeing themselves as full participants in the social and economic fabrics of their families and communities.

*Data for this study are from two related projects, "A Decade of Change in Oaxaca, 1977-1987," and "Households in Oaxaca and Mexico's Crisis," both funded by the U. S. National Science Foundation. Additional funding for the first project was received from the World Food Institute, the Graduate College, the Department of Family Environment, and the College of Home Economics at Iowa State University. The second and third authors were on Faculty Improvement Leaves from Iowa State University at the time the data were gathered. Additional funding for the second project was received from the Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel and the College of Human Ecology, University of Minnesota, and the Department of Human Development and Family Studies and the College of Family and Consumer Sciences, Iowa State University. The second author was on Faculty Improvement Leave from Iowa State University when the second wave of data were gathered. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 1996 Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology and the 1996 Annual Meeting of the National Council on Family Relations.*

## Appendix A: Method and Research Design

### I. The Sample

#### 1987

- More than 600 households in the city of Oaxaca de Juárez, Mexico, were interviewed in 1987 as a part of the project "A Decade of Change in Oaxaca, 1977-1987," funded by the National Science Foundation.
- The sample for the 1987 study was a two-stage cluster sample of the city:
  - In the first stage, 16 percent of the city blocks from each of the 54 fiscal districts in the city were randomly selected.
  - The second stage was a systematic sample of the approximately 3,600 households living on the blocks selected.
- Interviews were conducted with the female household head, defined as the principal woman in a couple-headed household or a woman who is the sole household head. Data were gathered through hour-long face-to-face interviews conducted by Mexican interviewers who had received ten hours of training prior to the interviewing.
- A total of 581 households had complete information on the data used in these analyses.

#### 1992

- Data from the second project, "Households in Oaxaca and Mexico's Crisis," also funded by the National Science Foundation, were gathered during the first five months of 1992 by re-interviewing persons living at the addresses from which interviews were obtained in 1987.
- A total of 480 interviews were completed in 1992.
- More than three-fourths of the 1992 sample (363 women) were women interviewed in 1987; the remainder were women who had moved to the address after 1987.

#### *Note on Samples:*

Although a portion of the two samples constitutes a panel, panel analyses were not performed because including the 116 respondents who moved to the sample dwellings between 1987 and 1992 makes the sample more representative of the city than the panel alone, a factor needed to draw conclusions in regard to the structural hypotheses. Comparative analyses of the 1987 and 1992 data along with comparisons to census data suggest that using the two data sets in parallel analyses is appropriate for providing representative samples of the city as it existed in 1987 except for the distribution by age. The 1992 sample is older than

a representative sample should be. Therefore, in all analyses the 1992 sample is weighted by the 1987 age distribution, classified in five-year age groupings, to make it more representative. Although areas built up between 1987 and 1992 are, of course, not included, the 1992 sample, when weighted, does not differ importantly from the population according to the 1990 census.

## II. The Dependent Variables

Three dependent variables are analyzed in each of the data sets:

1. A binary variable indicating whether the woman is *working for pay* (coded 1) in either the formal or informal economic sector;
2. A binary variable indicating whether the woman is working in the *formal or informal economic sector*. [NOTE: Although there has been much discussion of the definition of the formal sector worldwide, Eckstein (1967) has argued persuasively that the differentiation between the formal sector and the informal sector in Latin America is appropriately based on the receipt of job-related benefits, the procedure followed in this study.]
3. A variable, *egalitarian attitudes*, which is the sum of responses to five different statements regarding the roles of men and women.

### Statements:

- “The man has the right to be the one who rules in the family, and the women is obliged to obey him.”
- “In most cases of family life, it is the man who should make the important decisions.”
- “There are certain types of jobs appropriate for men and others that are appropriate for women; one should not do the work that pertains to the other.”
- “It is perfectly all right that men go out by themselves whenever they want.”
- “The man has more of a right to deceive his wife than she does to deceive him.”

### Response Coding For Each Statement:

| Response           | Coding |
|--------------------|--------|
| Strongly Agreed    | 1      |
| Agreed             | 2      |
| Indifferent        | 3      |
| Disagreed          | 4      |
| Strongly Disagreed | 5      |

The higher the score, the more egalitarian the attitudes. The reliability coefficients for 1987 and 1992 for the scales are 0.67 and 0.73, respectively, indicating moderate, but acceptable, reliability.

### III. Independent Variables

The independent variables assess

1. The woman's human resources,
2. The structure of her household, and
3. Other household resources.

#### *Measures of Independent Variables:*

##### **1. Woman's Human Resources:**

*Age:* Assessed as of 1 January 1987 or 1 January 1992, and based on her year of birth. It is used as a proxy for work experience. Although older women could have relatively limited experience working for pay, the reverse is not true for younger women, for whom long years of work experience would not be possible. Because of the strong possibility of a curvilinear relationship of the dependent variables to age, the square of age is included in addition to age itself. Quadratic analysis of the effects of independent variables requires the inclusion of both the variable and its square to detect quadratic curvilinearity. In all multivariate analyses in this paper, the pair of age variables together has significant quadratic effects. The relative sizes of coefficients and their signs describe the shape of the curve. Both variables must be included even if one or even both have coefficients that appear to be insignificant because it is the pair that describes the curvilinearity;

*Education:* The number of years of formal schooling completed;

*Health Status:* The assessment by the woman of the status of her health. She was asked to rate her health as poor (coded 1), fair (coded 2), good (coded 3), or excellent (coded 4).

*Migration to the city:* *Immigrant to the city* is a binary variable coded 1 if the woman was born outside of the city of Oaxaca.

##### **2. Household Structure**

*Marital status:* Marital status is represented by three binary variables, *single* (including never married, divorced, widowed, and separated), *free union* (mate present), and *married* (husband present). The binary variable representing married is omitted from the logistic regression analyses, a step required by the nature of statistical regression with exhaustive, mutually exclusive sets of binary variables;

*Numbers of young children:* Counts of the numbers of *infants* (less than 1 year of age), *toddlers* (1-2 years of age) and *preschoolers* (3-5 years of age) assess household constraints in the form of small children needing care; and

*Living in a nuclear family:* *Nuclear family* is a binary variable indicating that the family includes a single individual as head or a couple and her (their)

children, if any; there are no other adult generations (parents, siblings, adult children of the head) co-resident with the family. This variable indicates the potential for live-in childcare in the form of potential caregivers in the extended family

### 3. Other Household Resources:

*Number of other workers:* The number of household members working for pay outside the home, excluding the woman. If she is not working outside the home, this variable is equal to the total number of workers in the household; and

*Corrected income:* The total monthly income of the household, excluding the income (if any) of the woman. The variable is expressed in "old pesos," before the Mexican government lopped three zeros off the peso in 1994 to make "new pesos." In addition, the Mexican equivalent of the Consumer Price Index was used to control for inflation by converting 1992 pesos to 1987 pesos.

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## Appendix B: Working for Pay or Profit

### Dependent Binary Variable in the First Two Analyses:

Was the principal woman gainfully employed?

0("no")

1("yes")

### *Technique: Logistic Regression*

NOTE: Ordinary least squares regression techniques are inappropriate because the scale of the variables is limited to two categories.

To create the most parsimonious model, the full model containing all variables was run first, the variables not significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level were removed, and the reduced model was then run with only the remaining variables. As expected, the reduced models are not as strong as the full models, as assessed by the pseudo  $R^2$ s (computed by dividing the model  $X^2$  by the  $-2 \log$  likelihood  $X^2$ ).

### *Findings:*

The model predicting working for pay or profit (Table 5) is stronger in 1987 than in 1992, as seen by the model  $X^2$ , the pseudo  $R^2$ , and the percentage correctly classified, although both models are significant at  $p < 0.0001$ .



## Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Binder and Scrogin 1999; Fleck and Sorrentino 1994; Gonzalez de la Rocha 1991; Levin, Ruel, Morris, Maxwell, Armar-Klemesu, and Ahiadeke 1999; Murphy and Selby 1981, 1985; Hackenberg, Murphy, and Selby 1984; Stepick, Murphy, Morris, and Winter Forthcoming; Wydick 1999.
- <sup>2</sup> *Working outside the home* is not appropriate terminology because many women (especially those in the informal sector) are gainfully employed inside their dwellings (for example, a tortilla maker or childcare-giver) (Anker 1983; Benería 1992).
- <sup>3</sup> Tiano 1994, 37.
- <sup>4</sup> Tiano 1986, 1994.
- <sup>5</sup> Acevedo 1990; Drapper 1985; Nash and Safa 1986; Tiano 1990; Webster 1990.
- <sup>6</sup> Tiano 1994.
- <sup>7</sup> Analyses by Safa (1995) of women workers in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico, suggest that entry into the industrial labor force, even at the lowest rung of the ladder, leads to integration, particularly if the woman earns more than the man in the household. That working for pay has been prompted by increases in the education of women and by state-sponsored family planning programs (Safa 1995, 170) has only served to reinforce the advancement of women in the three locations.
- <sup>8</sup> Acevedo 1990; Tiano 1994, 39.
- <sup>9</sup> Fernandez-Kelly 1983; Fuentes and Ehrenreich 1984; Grown and Sebstad 1989; Tiano 1994; Tiano and Ruiz 1987.
- <sup>10</sup> c.f. Billet 1993; Hahm 1991; Schultz 1990; Tiano 1990.
- <sup>11</sup> Tanski 1994.
- <sup>12</sup> Tiano 1994.
- <sup>13</sup> Although the usefulness of Horton's and Tiano's studies in offering conceptual frameworks for explaining social change is the topic of continuing debate, it is clear that none of the structural theories are particularly useful in explaining the decisions of individual women or classes of women to seek remunerative work either at single time points or longitudinally. Rather, such research should focus on household behavior and its determinants because the decision to engage in a particular household economic activity is made within the context of household resources and demands. Nevertheless, aggregate changes in the variables of interest between time points can be clarified by reference to the three structural perspectives.
- <sup>14</sup> Tiano's 1994 study was designed to examine the competing hypotheses of integration and exploitation. Although thorough in her analyses of the differences among her three groups, Tiano's sample size is small (194 cases), not randomly selected, and not structured in a manner that would permit an assessment of the marginalization hypothesis because all participants were employed in the formal sector, either in industry or in service positions. Tiano's conclusions were based on the relationships among the woman's age, marital status, education, and fertility. Her analysis of the work histories of the women belies this conclusion, however, because it is clear that working for pay or profit by the majority of her sample was not a temporary state.

Furthermore, many in her sample had advanced in types of employment, suggesting that *any* employment holds potential for integration, if not immediately, perhaps in future positions. In her analysis of aggregate data, Horton (1999) reaches similar conclusions: The increase in labor force participation by women, their gradual shift to white-collar occupations, and their increase in pay relative to men offers evidence of integration rather than marginalization or exploitation.

- 15 Morris 1998; Morris and Winter 1978; Morris, Winter, Whiteford, and Randall 1990; Winter and Morris 1998.
- 16 Behrman and Wolfe 1984; Brinton, Lee and Parish 1995; Danes, Winter and Whiteford 1987; Hill 1983; Malhotra and DeGraff 1997; Tiefenthaler 1994.
- 17 In their analysis of single women in Sri Lanka, Malhotra and DeGraff (1997) showed that, although women with high levels of education are more likely to be in the labor force, they are more likely to be unemployed than women with low levels of education. The importance of health, as measured by nutritional status, and of migrant status was demonstrated by Behrman and Wolfe (1984) in their analysis of household data from Nicaragua. Although no explanation is suggested for the significance of migrant status, one interpretation is that it may be a proxy for motivation, because women who migrate often are highly motivated to search for better lives.
- 18 Brinton, Lee, and Parish 1995; Hill 1983.
- 19 Malhotra and DeGraff 1997.
- 20 Behrman and Wolfe 1984.
- 21 Adams 1991.
- 22 Hill 1983; Brinton, Lee, and Parish 1995.
- 23 Brinton, Lee, and Parish 1995; Danes, Winter, and Whiteford 1987; Behrman and Wolfe 1984; Hill 1983; Tiefenthaler 1994.
- 24 House 1984; Ranis and Stewart 1999; Tiefenthaler 1994; Yamada 1996.
- 25 Grown and Sebstad 1989.
- 26 Bromley 1978; Grown and Sebstad 1989. Such activities have also been termed "unorganized" (Harriss 1978), "traditional" (Hart 1973), "self-employed" (Hart 1973), "petty commodity" (Davies 1979), and "marginal" (Uzzell 1980).
- 27 Although recognized as economic activities, it is difficult to obtain reliable statistics about work in the informal sector, and there is wide variation in the income received from informal sector activities. For the majority, however, the income generated by such activities is usually lower and less stable than that generated by activities in the "formal," "modern," "wage-earning" sector of the economy.
- 28 The industrial homework done by the women in Mexico City, for example, was a service supplied to large multinational corporations who subcontracted part of the manufacturing process to women who could combine family responsibilities with income-generating activities.
- 29 Danes, Winter, and Whiteford 1987; Hill 1983; Tiefenthaler 1994.
- 30 Danes, Winter, and Whiteford 1987.
- 31 Danes, Winter, and Whiteford 1987; Hill 1983; Tiefenthaler 1994.
- 32 Ibrahim 1989; Murphy 1990; Standing 1989; Yamada 1996.

- <sup>33</sup> The collapse of the price of oil in the fall of 1986 precipitated what Mexicans called *La Crisis*. Real wages for most of working Mexicans dropped significantly during this period (Murphy 1991, 2).
- <sup>34</sup> Households with able-bodied workers urged them to go to the United States to find work. Today remittances are a major source of income for the city and state.
- <sup>35</sup> Even the new toll road between Mexico City and Oaxaca, opened in the mid-1990s, has not appreciably decreased the travel time between Mexico City and Oaxaca because the road is constantly being repaired, causing long waits for reconstruction activities.
- <sup>36</sup> Murphy and Stepick 1991.
- <sup>37</sup> Murphy, French, Rees, Morris, and Winter 1990.
- <sup>38</sup> Rosen 1982; Tiano 1994, 117.
- <sup>39</sup> In both years, less than one-fifth were single, and about 10 percent were living in free unions (defined as cohabiting outside legal marriage), and more than two-thirds lived in nuclear family households in both years. The means of all three of the variables assessing the presence of small children are lower in 1992 than in 1987, but only the difference in the number of infants is significant.
- <sup>40</sup> Stepick, Murphy, Morris, and Winter Forthcoming.
- <sup>41</sup> Winter, Morris, and Murphy 1993, 1995.

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## Economic Development is Important to Women's Development

by Hattie Babbitt

Work, money, and power — always complicated issues, but even more complicated in an era of globalization. Policymakers in the United States need to see that to make globalization work for the benefit of all people of all nations, more women must be deeply involved in it.

It is important for women and girls to be involved as entrepreneurs and decisionmakers both for reasons of equity and because when women and girls have better health, education, and employment opportunities, they become engines of economic growth in their countries.

Some Americans think of our helping developing countries as simply giving something away — and thereby taking something from our own people. In fact we are not only doing the humane thing by helping, we are furthering our national interests. Countries with stable, participatory civil societies and with goods to trade are far better positioned to help themselves and to trade with us. They are better positioned to catch the brass ring of globalization.

United States' help often comes in the form of the support of micro-enterprise programs, vehicles for the poor to enter productive society. These programs work in Latin America, in Asia, in Africa, and in the countries of the former Soviet Union. They work because they put credit in the hands of enterprising people for whom credit has previously been an impossible dream. Small loans enable borrowers to get the raw materials (fabrics for clothes to make, ingredients for food to sell) that allow them to enter the marketplace. As they demonstrate their creditworthiness, the loan amounts increase and they can move into production of larger quantities, a cart for more efficient distribution, or an assistant to help with both. The economic empowerment of women reinforces the political power of previously marginalized members of society.

In our own hemisphere, the Miami Summit Plan of Action gave a clear statement of common objectives: "It is essential to strengthen policies and programs that improve and broaden the participation of women in all spheres of economic life and that improve their access to the basic resources needed for the full exercise of fundamental rights."

In El Salvador, women from all walks of life are critical actors in both expanding economic activity and in assuming political leadership. In their own way, each group of women has made a contribution to the consolidation of democracy, to the expansion of economic opportunity, and to the rule of law.

Two village banks in a small rural community outside San Salvador tell the micro-credit story — in both, the majority of the bank members are women. The loans they have received are all used for commercial activities — to produce arte-

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sanias or papusas for sale. The borrowers now have independent businesses with independent sources of income to support their families and independent spirits to support their hope for an even better tomorrow.

In El Salvador and around the world we have seen that micro-enterprise programs work: Low-income people can be good credit risks. Micro-enterprise programs incorporate incentives that motivate people to repay and substitute for conventional collateral. Inter-client cooperation and trust are important sources of learning and encouragement for clients, as well as a basis for broader community action. Around the world, women constitute 85 percent of USAID's (United States Agency for International Development) micro-loan clients, and repayment rates are often above 95 percent. The programs work best where both credit and savings services are included — asset accumulation is an important path out of poverty and savings can be used to increase business equity.

These women and women like them in countries all over the globe have been helped by programs sponsored by USAID, an important legacy of the Marshall Plan. In 1947 when Secretary of State George Marshall announced the plan for rebuilding war torn Europe, he said, "our policy is . . . against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos, so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist." Marshall was talking about American ideals, but he was also talking about America's interest in a peaceful, prosperous, democratic world. We are still guided by those principles, and by the Point Four program that expanded U.S. foreign aid to include developing countries. Hunger, poverty, desperation, and the marginalization of millions do not create a global climate in the best interests of the United States.

To look once again to our near neighbors in Latin America, a number of USAID field missions have placed special emphasis on women's participation in elections, local and national government, labor rights, justice sector reform, and human rights issues. They have done this with the understanding that for women to fully participate in democracy they must develop the skills of democracy — how to mobilize support, articulate concerns, and build successful coalitions.

The USAID Women in Politics Program has sponsored regional workshops in Colombia and Mexico to help train women candidates in organizing effective political campaigns and to train Central American civic leaders in advocacy techniques. Another regional workshop brought together government and non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders to share solutions to improve women's coalition building, involvement in political parties, and participation in local government as an entry point into public life. Still another program worked with justice sector officials and NGOs to educate decisionmakers about the practical applications of the new anti-violence family law, which seeks to reduce family violence. So, as a majority of bank members in a rural community in El Salvador become women, so too on the political side, women will serve in key positions in the Salvadoran government, the judiciary and elected office.

George Marshall and his contemporaries knew that helping postwar Europe alleviate poverty and desperation was the right thing to do and the smart thing to do. Helping developing countries do the same now in an ever-smaller, globalized world is too. And empowering women is fundamental to a more equitable, peaceful, prosperous world.

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## Women as Political Candidates

by Mickey Edwards

The impact of this journal will depend in part on where those who read it choose to place their emphasis in the title. If it is read as a journal concerned with public policy issues that fall within the general heading of "women's issues," its value is likely to be limited. If it is read, instead, as a journal about public policy broadly defined but directed toward an audience of women readers, it may serve a very useful purpose.

This distinction matters because one might claim, with reasonable justification, that the inclination of some women candidates to ask for public support on the basis of gender, and not on the basis of ideology or party affiliation, has restricted the ability of women to claim an increased role in public policy decisionmaking. Some women candidates argue for the validity of one or more of the following propositions:

- That women are better qualified than men to deal with some of the issues on which legislators or public executives must make policy decisions.
- That women are as qualified as men to make those decisions and, because there are so few women represented in public office, that it is important to add a female perspective to the deliberations.
- That some issues are specifically "women's issues," and women, not men, should make those decisions.
- That it is not fair to exclude women from the making of public policy.

When Joseph Kennedy announced his retirement from the United States House of Representatives, creating a hotly contested eight-way Democratic primary for the seat earlier held by both John F. Kennedy and Tip O'Neill, six men and two women joined the race. One of the two women, Susan Tracy, who had earlier been both a state legislator and a prominent city official in Boston, ran her campaign not as a blue-collar progressive, without drawing attention to her gender. The other female candidate, another former state legislator named Marjorie Clapprod, who had been the Democratic Party's nominee for lieutenant governor and later a radio talk show host, ran an intensely gender-specific campaign. Tracy's campaign never got off the ground, largely because the former Boston mayor she had served, Ray Flynn, also entered the race, draining Tracy's neighborhood support. Clapprod, on the other hand, who was much better known and financed, seemed a formidable candidate. But while open about her liberal politics (this was in one of the few Congressional districts in the nation in which it was still considered an advantage to be "liberal"), Clapprod returned again and again to the same theme: Massachusetts had an all-

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male Congressional delegation, and it was time for a woman. She finished far back in the field, trailing candidates with lesser credentials and lower name recognition.

Consider on the other hand some successful female candidates. Maria Cantwell recently defeated incumbent Senator Slade Gorton in Washington state, where the high-tech industries have become a major economic force. Ms. Cantwell was closely identified with that industry — a principal employer of both women and men. In the Senate, Ms. Cantwell joins Barbara Mikulski, a pugnacious, tough-talking denizen of Baltimore's ethnic inner-city neighborhoods. Ms. Mikulski, who previously served in the House, has this in common with Ms. Cantwell: She is the voice not of women, but of Marylanders.

Just as women have long been willing to vote for men, there is ample evidence that voters generally, obviously including many men, are quite willing to vote for female candidates for high public office. There is considerably less evidence that either men or most women will vote for women simply because they are women.

It is true that women have made substantial gains in entering the pool of decisionmakers. There are more women in Congress today than ever before. There are women governors, women lieutenant governors, women mayors, women serving as the chief officials of state legislatures. Yet public policy decisionmaking remains, for the most part, a man's world. Even on decisions many women consider themselves best suited to make — decisions about abortion, child care, employment equity — the majority of decisions in the majority of jurisdictions are still made by men.

Those who wish to improve women's ability to affect such decisions might ask, in Chernyshevsky's famous phrase from one of the first openly feminist novels, "What Is To Be Done?"

The answer is that women must run as men do. That is, they must offer more than gender as a rationale for their candidacy. They must determine what issues are uppermost in the minds of the men and women they seek to represent. Who are the voters? What are their aspirations? What policies most affect them on a personal level? Are there large pockets of younger voters with school-age children, most likely to care about the quality of public school education? Large pockets of senior voters, most concerned about the cost of healthcare and their dwindling savings? Large numbers of fisheries workers, concerned about the impact of international fishing compacts? Large numbers of hospital employees, brewery workers, wheat farmers?

The essence of political campaigning is to blend one's own passions with an astute awareness of the real concerns of the electorate. With that in mind, one can readily see that only a fairly small number of voters are likely to choose a representative — somebody charged with making decisions that will affect their lives — because "it's fair," or because a candidate has focused on an issue about which the candidate has a particularly high degree of interest.

Politics is not about candidates; it's about voters. It's not about a candidate's ambitions, but about a voter's aspirations. Thus the real key to achieving parity in the public market is for women to set aside, in a political sense, the concept of their womanhood, and to focus instead on their roles as citizens of a community, sharing the broad interests and concerns of that community.

Here, then, a quick primer on how women may affect public policy:

- 1. Run for office.** The evidence changes from election to election, but it is generally true that women who run for office have as high a likelihood of winning election as men do. But far fewer women than men enter the political arena. Organizations such as Emily's List, which offers funding for women candidates, serve an important purpose in encouraging women to believe that a successful candidacy is possible. In the long run, no amount of feminist hand-wringing or advocacy is likely to achieve as much as simple concentration on recruiting and encouraging women candidates. Nor is it necessary to limit the search: In that Massachusetts race to succeed Joseph Kennedy, Clapprood's supporters urged Tracy to quit the race, arguing that she was "splitting the women's vote." But "the women's vote" — that is, the number of voters who will vote for a woman simply because she is a woman — is not much of a base to protect. The greater the number of women in the game, the greater is the number of potential winners.
- 2. Raise money.** Despite the popular misconceptions bred by advocates of new campaign finance rules, money is not the deciding factor in most elections. As long as a candidate has sufficient money to get her message to the voters, it is organization — the work of grassroots volunteers — that will determine election outcomes. But despite evidence that women control much of the disposable national income, women remain notoriously poor fund raisers and campaign contributors, both in frequency of giving and size of contributions. Candidates generally raise at least the early money of their campaigns from people they know: Those women who are sufficiently active in public life to consider a campaign for elected office will likely know many other women who would make up the early Rolodex file of potential contributors. But if the women on that list are not inclined to contribute to political campaigns, or inclined to contribute only in small amounts, women candidates will begin behind the curve. Changing the contributing habits of women is essential to increasing the number of women in high office.
- 3. Identify issues.** Speak the voters' language. Consider the development of a campaign theme as a tripod, three legs coming together to a point. One leg represents the candidate's own principles and beliefs — the issues she cares about and how she feels about those issues. The second leg represents the views and concerns and interests of the voters as determined by polls, focus groups, census, and employment information. The third leg represents the opponent's views. The key is to focus on the place where the legs

come together: The place where the candidate's views agree with the interests, concerns, and positions of the voters, and where her opponent's views do not. That place, where the candidate is in sync with the voters and the opponent is out of sync with them, will determine the issues to be highlighted in the campaign's themes, in public speeches, and in advertising. This is not to suggest, or even to imply, that a candidate should ever be untrue to her own beliefs. But she should be selective in determining which of those beliefs should dominate the campaign.

- 4. Learn to target.** There is no such thing as a "constituency," at least not one larger than a single family. In every electoral district there are a multiplicity of constituencies. There are housewives and professional women; dentists and police officers; truck drivers and college students; the elderly and harried mothers, rushing their children to the local childcare center. There are real estate agents, veterinarians, schoolteachers, military veterans, Jews, Asians, African Americans. A candidate should never take one position before one group and a different position on the same issue before another group; she should, however, attempt to address each group in terms of its own concerns. She can do this in small group meetings, in targeted mailings, in radio commercials designed to be broadcast on specific radio stations (the demographics of a station's listening audience are readily available). A candidate cannot possibly persuade a majority of more than 600,000 voters (in a congressional district) to vote for her. She can, however, persuade this group, and that group, and another group, and still another, to vote for her, just as she can only win one precinct at a time.
- 5. Get over the belief that some issues belong to women.** It is obviously true that some issues disproportionately affect women. But all of society's citizens have a legitimate concern in the public policies of the community. Women have, or are denied, abortions, but many such decisions affect prospective fathers as well. Women more often raise children as single parents, but many men are single parents too. Many men are impacted, just as women are, by the availability or lack of childcare. In two-income families, men are impacted if their wives are denied fair pay and promotion. If an enemy force launches missiles at the United States, men too will die. If we spend too much on our national defense, men who receive welfare or unemployment benefits may suffer. Men and women differ in many ways, but not in terms of their citizenship: There are few "men-only" or "women-only" issues. Success in the political arena depends on the ability to address entire communities, not separate segments of those communities.

Perhaps some will see this as a harsh assessment. I admit it does seem to say that, to some extent, the exclusion of women from the policymaking process has been their own fault. Clearly it is not only that. There are men who are hesitant to vote for women — and there are also women who are hesitant to vote for women. Because women have been systematically excluded from many high-level posi-

tions in the business and professional worlds, there are fewer women rubbing shoulders with the big earner, and thus with potential big contributors. The hurdles are higher for women. But that does not excuse ineptitude in the political arena by either men or women. A man who believes strongly in the need to return to the gold standard, or in making beer the official national drink, or in demanding the right to a government-subsidized vasectomy, may proclaim his platform but is unlikely to be elected on it. He must, instead, learn specific techniques, from identifying potential supporters to getting them to the polls, and understand those constituent concerns that will increase the chances of electoral victory. Women must do the same thing.

America is changing. Women are properly demanding their place at the tables where public policies are established, and those seats are available. That is a welcome and long-overdue development in the political world. What matters now is whether a sufficient number of women are willing to master the means of getting there.



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## Where Are the Women in Public Policy Cases?<sup>1</sup>

by Sally J. Kenney, PhD

### Feminism and Policy Schools

In my sixth year on the faculty of a policy school, I am still struggling to make sense of their many anomalies and contradictions. Social policy holds a central place in research and teaching,<sup>2</sup> yet it coexists with the burgeoning feminist scholarship on welfare as two non-intersecting tracks. Policy schools arose amidst the upheavals of the 1960s, yet they operate as if there has not been a worldwide women's movement. They favor an interdisciplinary approach to policy analysis, yet remain largely untouched by one of the most successful interdisciplinary projects of the last thirty years — women's studies. Unlike their student bodies, the faculties of policy schools are still male dominated. And most of the women faculty members do not conduct research on gender. While women's caucuses in political science and other disciplines celebrate 30-year anniversaries, the Association of Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) Women's Caucus has only just formed. Policy schools as a group have been behind the disciplines in integrating women, gender, and feminist analysis into their curricula, in part because they are dominated by economists, one of the last social science disciplines to be impacted by feminist analysis.

At the Humphrey Institute, Professor Barbara Nelson and Ambassador Arvonne Fraser founded the Center on Women and Public Policy in 1985; developed a concentration in women and public policy for master's students; and conducted research on women's international human rights, comparable worth, and women's political participation. We have added new foci: women and the law, feminist economics, and feminist social movements.<sup>3</sup> Yet our analysis of the 52 top-ranked public affairs graduate programs by *U.S. News and World Report* revealed that only six have women and public policy centers or programs.<sup>4</sup> Only five have women and public policy or related concentrations.<sup>5</sup> Of the public affairs schools that do not offer concentrations or centers, only six programs even offer a single course in women and public policy.<sup>6</sup>

As a relative newcomer to the policy school world, I have been puzzled by why public policy as an enterprise, if not a discipline, has been even slower than the discipline of political science as a whole to embrace feminist scholarship and curriculum. I approached public policy through the political science subfields of public law, women, and politics, and comparative politics. As one who studies

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discrimination law and policy, I am naturally skeptical about what law and society scholars call the disjuncture between “law on the books” and “law in action” — what policy analysts would call implementation failure. As a feminist, I am interested in how public policies have constructed women, how they have shaped women’s lives, and how feminists have tried to harness the state to promote social change. But I had never formally studied the public policy canon within political science or more broadly. What little I knew about the public policy world when I took up my post in 1995 derived from my spouse who had a master’s of public policy from the Kennedy School of Government. While I was hired to direct the Center on Women and Public Policy and staff the women and public policy concentration, I was also (as one of the few political scientists on the faculty) assigned responsibility for teaching the core course on the politics of the policy process. I faced, as case writers would say, a daunting challenge.

It was immediately clear to me that dissecting competing paradigms, mastering arcane jargon, and exploring theoretical debates among leading political scientists that appealed to political science doctoral students would hold little interest for prospective practitioners who lacked a background in political science. Although I had used the Socratic method to teach legal cases, I was initially hesitant to use public policy cases. Did not cases just hide their narrative closer under the cloak of pretended neutrality? Was not putting students in the role of policymakers silly — a public policy version of “you make the call” seen on televised football games with instant replay? Was not teaching with cases inefficient — taking hours to extract the theoretical argument that scholarly journals conveniently displayed in the first sentence of the abstract? Or worse than inefficient, was not teaching with cases merely teaching by storytelling and anecdote rather than questing for general principles?

Two features of case learning did appeal to me — their accessibility and their ability to promote class discussion. I needed to reach students from varied academic backgrounds and I have always believed that you have to talk to learn. Furthermore, my new colleagues all seemed to use cases, and I was eager to adapt. I enrolled in a case training at my debut appearance at APPAM. My search for cases was disappointing — a finding that intrigued me. Virtually no teaching cases existed of feminist organizations of the kind I was familiar with from the academic case study literature in sociology, history, and political science.<sup>7</sup> Such works pondered whether the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues should expand its membership to include men.<sup>8</sup> Should the rape crisis center take state money if it meant greater state control?<sup>9</sup> How could the battered women’s shelter reconcile demands for professionalization with competing demands that the work be done by survivors?<sup>10</sup> How could Jane, the underground abortion service, function as an egalitarian collective if only a few women performed the abortions and thereby held all the power?<sup>11</sup> How did feminist international lawyers expand the human rights frame to encompass violence against women?<sup>12</sup> How could women activists work outside of the dominant political

party?<sup>13</sup> Did the maternalist frame of social reformers lead inevitably to classist and racist public policies?<sup>14</sup> How can feminists separate reproductive freedom from racist eugenics?<sup>15</sup>

In a critique of the case genre,<sup>16</sup> Chetkovich and Kirp analyze the top ten best-selling cases that include three cases in which gender is a central component. This 30 percent number is not representative of the universe of cases as a whole. According to our best estimates, the Kennedy School of Government has 1,800 cases of which 13 have a female protagonist and 14 raise women's issues, and a number are historical. Others deal with employment discrimination (principally sexual harassment), and others are about management of programs offering services to women, such as operating a maternity center or treating cocaine-addicted mothers. The University of Washington's Electronic Hallway has several cases that may raise some issues of gender-based challenges to women managers' authority (a total of 14 cases with female protagonists) and one that raises some gender issues on women and development in Nepal. The Harvard Business School has 7,500 cases of which at least 48 have female protagonists and 26 are about women's issues (sexual harassment and employment discrimination, the Women's NBA, RU486, etc.). The University of Virginia's Darden School of Business has 1,700 cases of which 123 have a woman protagonist and two are about women's issues.

Some cases with a female protagonist contain subterranean gender issues ripe for analysis (along the lines of April Glaspie causes the Gulf War<sup>17</sup>), but the gender issues are subtle, would take time and skill to unearth, and would detract from the exploration of other public policy issues. I ordered the Kennedy School of Government Case, "Tailhook: The Navy Response,"<sup>18</sup> which looked promising. It would supplement my international relations materials, pair well with the organizational focus supported by readings by Graham Allison<sup>19</sup> and James Wilson,<sup>20</sup> and address questions of regulation and implementation in a policy area I knew a lot about — employment discrimination and sexual harassment. The case deftly reveals the contrast in the standard operating procedures of the Naval Investigation Service and Naval Inspector General, perfectly illustrating both Allison and Wilson's arguments about organizations and bureaucracy. By situating the issue of sexual harassment and sexism within an organizational context, the case shows how organizational capacity, rather than merely will or attitudes, constrains managers and makes addressing the problem so difficult.

### **Existing Cases Frame Policy Issues Posing Women as the Policy Problem**

Despite the many virtues of the case, a limitation became immediately apparent. Because the case centers on the challenges faced by managers, the central problem for the protagonist becomes women rather than discrimination. The Tailhook case laudably assumes that Lieutenant Paula Coughlin is telling the

truth about her sexual assault by “the gauntlet” of male aviators. At one point, however, the author hints at what should have been done. The narrative subtly suggests that Coughlin’s boss should have said something along the lines of “we’re never going to find the culprit and looking for him will do a lot of damage. But we can make sure that this never happens again.” The idea that a single commander could eliminate sex-based violence in such a large organization through the force of will, of course, is laughable, (as is the proposition that organizations that not only condoned but facilitated such behavior would reverse years of practice because of the horror of one woman’s complaint). But the lesson remains that Coughlin would have been less of a “troublemaker” when going to the media, resulting in the firing of high-level officials, if her superiors had appeared to have taken her complaint seriously. The complaint of sexual harassment becomes the management problem rather than sexism and sexual harassment itself.

A starker example comes from business cases, and we should recall that the genre of decision cases originates in the Harvard Business School. By taking the CEO’s point of view, the controversial issue of breast implants becomes a management problem of marketing and presentation.<sup>21</sup> Dow must figure out what to do about complaints from sales reps that plastic surgeons who fondle the implants at conventions recoil when the implants ooze silicone, leaving a slimy residue on hands and in the carrying cases. The leaking of the implants presents a problem of presentation and marketing rather than flagging that the implants may leak inside women’s bodies. The company must also decide how to quell the escalating concerns of company scientists about safety. Ultimately, of course, the manager’s problem is how to avoid liability and the ensuing falling stock prices. The case never addresses how to protect women’s health. Framing women and public policy issues exclusively as management problems erases women’s concerns and perspectives, thereby reproducing the very devaluation of women that having a token case about women was presumably meant to rectify.

Even in the single case about a feminist organization, the Kennedy School of Government’s case on Emily’s List,<sup>22</sup> frames the issue problematically. The case positions Emily’s List, not the National Rifle Association, the pharmaceutical industry, or big tobacco, as opposed to reform — despite the fact that Emily’s List does not lobby the women it helps elect once they are in office. Although the case does a good job of describing the formation of the organization and its activities, it ends with a clearly stated and patronizing conclusion that its founder, Ellen Malcolm, all the staff and consultants, and the women who support it are deeply misguided about how to elect more women to Congress. They should join Common Cause in outlawing bundling of campaign contributions rather than work with the system.<sup>23</sup> The case departs from case-writing conventions by stating the moral of the fable rather than leaving the analysis for the reader to supply. Emily’s List is not only a dangerous impediment to reform, but it does not even know itself how to best achieve its goals.

## Unearthing Troubling Assumptions in Non-Gender Cases

Problematic framing of gender issues is evident in cases without a female protagonist or women's issue. "Finding Black Parents: One Church, One Child" tells the story of Illinois' innovative attempt to find permanent homes for black children languishing in foster care. Gender, as always, is present, but because the gender issues are submerged, opportunities for a gender analysis are squandered. Who are the mothers whose parental rights have been terminated? Whose daily lives are changed most when ministers pressure lower middle-class black couples to adopt children, men or women? Even if one were to leave aside such "quibbles" on the grounds that gender may not always be the primary issue, bracketing or excising gender from the analysis has important policy consequences.

Gender analysis begins with noticing small things and expands to an interrogation of the absences and silences of the text. Women enter this case not as biological mothers whose rights are terminated or as black women desperate to adopt, but as white social workers. Women are the problem — they are obstacles to the success of the program. A few grumble about the sexism of male ministers. They resent being told they cannot wear pants to meetings, they bristle at being ordered to fetch coffee and "genuflect" to male ministers' egos, and they do not like having to work evenings and weekends. The narrative presents these concerns as illegitimate (rather than, perhaps as the latter complaint may be, dictated by their own parenting responsibilities) and ultimately racist, leading to an inability to place black children. The case offers many valuable lessons: That the institutions and strengths of the black community must be harnessed to solve problems, that bureaucracies staffed by members of one group will find working with "others" more difficult than if members of the served population are integrated into the bureaucracy, that racial stereotypes about fitness preclude solving this problem, that it is hard to get people to do things differently, and that governors' economic concerns can sometimes be harnessed to serve social concerns.

Pointing to gender is not feminist nitpicking but crucial to policy analysis. By constructing the concerns of white women social workers as mere speed bumps on the road to policy success for innovative managers barreling forward, and, I might add, similarly constructing the problem of race as merely a problem of mistaken assumptions (lower middle-class black families are unfit) rather than the result of deep-rooted structural patterns, the case misses the opportunity to anticipate future implementation problems due to race and gender that are likely to arise as public/non-profit partnerships become more prevalent. In an odd way, by trying to highlight race, and showcase the successful overcoming of a race-based problem — placing black children, race and racism are re-suppressed, as is gender. Both "Tailhook" and "Finding Black Parents" are useful cases. But a careful analysis of race and gender in these cases suggests that policy problems cannot be solved by treating race and gender as asides. Putting race and gender at the center of the policy analysis radically shifts how we think about the problem and the solution.

## **Policy Is Driven by a Lone Decisionmaker Who Is Not Part of a Web of Connection**

Like the business cases they emulate, policy cases posit a lone decisionmaker (CEO) who must choose among alternatives and then impose a solution. To work their magic, particularly for adult learners who may have little preparation time, cases have to be short. Students with different backgrounds and abilities must all be able to "inhabit" the case quickly and on a somewhat equal footing. In order for the identification to occur, with or without role-play, there must be a hero and a few characters.

One solution that I have argued elsewhere<sup>24</sup> is to teach against the case. For example, the case "A Towering Dilemma" on first read appears to demand that park manager Deborah Ligget simply conduct her own policy analysis and impose a solution. As the discussion develops, however, the case soon generates a discussion about process — which needs to be at the table, as opposed to whose interests Ligget must accommodate. The case supports the conclusion that the lone decisionmaker cannot impose a sustainable solution on the parties; rather, she will need to initiate an inclusive process to secure consensus.

In teaching the case, my first objective would be to undermine the conception of the policy process as one where the lone policy analyst chooses and then executes. Further analysis of the actual controversy reveals that the courts stepped in to impose a different solution.<sup>25</sup> I would then try to foster a discussion of the different arenas of conflicts, to show how moving to the legal arena reframes the policy questions with significant consequences. One could also envision using the case to discuss leadership, contrasting the stereotypical leadership styles of the macho male "command and control" model versus a more inclusive consensus model. While I am quite skeptical of much of the essentialism and poor empirics of much of the women and leadership literature, I find it unlikely to be an accident that the lone decisionmaker model emerges in a male-dominated domain.<sup>26</sup>

Yet presenting policy questions as problems facing individual protagonists, cases necessarily frame gender questions in ways that may well impede feminist insights. In "Sexploitation? Sex Tourism in Cuba,"<sup>27</sup> Mary Geske and Michael Clancy, political scientists who teach international relations (IR), sought to rectify deficiencies in the Pew Case Studies in International Affairs. The database of 248 cases had no cases on women, gender, or feminism (the case on Margaret Thatcher's demise within her party appears to have no gender analysis).

Feminist scholars in IR have recently challenged the conclusion that, because few women have been heads of state or secretaries of state and defense, gender analysis, while perhaps helpful in understanding social policy, has nothing to offer IR. Rather than asking whether women diplomats or heads of state are less hawkish than men (the ubiquitous different-voice frame that feminists have routinely criticized), scholars such as Cynthia Enloe have simply asked, Where are the women? They are prostitutes servicing military bases, maids in large tourist

hotels, workers on banana plantations and textile factories, consumers, and tourists. International relations is not just about wars, although feminists have analyzed rape as a weapon of war and prostitution military bases generate. Women are both workers and consumers in a world economy radically structured by gender. Gender analysis thus can illuminate security policy and international political economy in important ways. Yet international relations has been one of the last subfields of political science to entertain gender analysis.

Geske and Clancy presented their case at an APSA panel on case teaching in 1998 and have now substantially revised it. They provide the historical context of Cuba's economy and place prostitution within the world economic order (although they do not fully reflect the breadth of feminist writing and activism on this topic). They document the rise in sex-tourism to Cuba. The earlier draft, in my view, supports the reader in placing the blame for the sexual exploitation of Cuban women on men from Western developed countries who travel to buy women who are cheaper, more compliant, and more "exotic" because of the racialization of Latin women. Tour operators who explicitly organize tours and market them accordingly, as well as those who encourage tourism for Third World development are additional potential villains. The first version has no single protagonist, a "no no" for a decision-forcing case. The case offers one example of international organizing to prevent the sexual exploitation of children as a possible way forward but also shows the economic constraints under which Cuban officials operate. As revised, however, the central characters are Cuban officials. The question posed is whether Cuban governmental policy should be allowed to continue to market and sell Cuban women to tourists — to build on what economists would call its comparative advantage, cheap sex — or suffer even more severe economic consequences.

The case skillfully demonstrates how prostitution is produced, not only by intentional governmental policy, but also by the world economic system, rather than merely resulting from the "free choices" of women and men. The imperative to have a single protagonist (Cuban governmental officials), however, ultimately distorts our understanding of the issue by inflating the agency of the Cubans and by leaving the other characters off stage, implicitly exonerating them. The revised version may have a single identifiable decisionmaker whose unhappy alternatives may generate student discussion, but the price of conformity to the formula is too high. Our understanding of prostitution in the world economic order has been diminished as a result.

### **Cases Are Not Neutral**

Cases, contrary to their journalistic aspirations of objectivity and neutrality and the injunction to avoid editorializing, contain hidden positions. Policy schools, perhaps because they arose out of a desire to bring science, good evidence, and analysis to public problems, are often even less willing to talk about

positionality than the disciplines, hiding behind “best practices,” “what works,” and “common sense.” Identification of the implicit messages and assumptions in cases, governmental reports, or social science journal articles requires skill — a skill we want our students to acquire.

### **A Bottom-up Rather than Top-down Approach**

Cases that center on the apex of a governmental agency and leave out the organizational, historical, and structural context, also neglect social movements and the constitutive aspects of politics. Two of my favorite cases are not decision cases at all; one has many named characters, the other none. “The Case for Redress Against Japanese Americans” brilliantly documents how a broad social movement changed how people thought about internment.<sup>28</sup> As new institutionalists would lead us to expect,<sup>29</sup> players did not enter the arena with fixed, fully formed preferences but changed how they thought about the world through political engagement. The YWCA case shows how black women organized themselves separately to change the mission of the YWCA to add “eliminate racism” to its mission of “empower women and girls.”<sup>30</sup> Their separatism enabled the institution to integrate. Interest group analysis fails to explain both cases — how do minority groups persuade the majority to see the world their way? To accept the unjustness of internment and the importance of eliminating racism? The contest is not primarily about power, numbers, bargaining, and interest, but about persuasion, framing, and construction. Both cases are retrospective. Neither has a single protagonist who narrates and drives the action. Neither offers a specific single tough decision for students to sink their teeth into.

Feminist scholars have, by and large, rejected a narrow definition of politics and taken a bottom-up rather than top-down approach to politics. For example, as Geske and Clancy do with Cuban prostitutes, feminists tend to start with the women affected by policies as important theorists of how the world works. Feminists more often focus on leaders drawn from everyday life, rather than constructing history as the moves in a game played by men. Furthermore, early second wave feminists in the United States pronounced that there are no personal solutions to social problems, only accommodations. Rather than trying to figure out the perfect retort to silence the sexual harasser, or the right clothes to wear to break through the glass ceiling or to avoid sexual assault, feminists tend to favor large, structural changes and collective action. While we do want to disseminate “what works” and applaud successful experiments, it would be misguided to believe that a naval officer is going to “solve” sexism or racism or even create an oasis of non-discrimination through his individual actions and good intentions alone. One can learn from approaches and strategies, but it would be a mistake to think managers or policy analysts could read a ten-page case and find the magic bullet. Rather, one hopes that a lesson students take away from the case is the complexity of the issues.



## The Center on Women and Public Policy's Case Study Program

Operating on the assumption that it is easier to teach feminists how to write cases than it is to teach case writers how to think like a feminist, the Center on Women and Public Policy embarked on a project to produce case studies in the summer of 2000, pulling together scholars, activists, and extension educators from many different disciplinary backgrounds. All of us were intrigued by Chetkovich and Kirp's critique of the lone decisionmaker model. Feminists tend to recognize social change as the work of many rather than of one charismatic leader. And we already subscribed to an understanding of politics as constitutive.

We produced eight cases that should be available on our Web site in 2001, and we hope that the Electronic Hallway will distribute some. A professor of rhetoric prepared a case on how direct entry (or lay) midwives in Minnesota strategized about how to secure the benefits of state licensing without having to give up procedures they routinely performed under the radar of legal and medical control. An historian described Emily's List's quandary over whether to endorse Geraldine Ferraro or Elizabeth Holzman for the 1992 U.S. Senate race in New York. A political scientist looked at how feminist activists joined in coalition to secure the appointment of the first woman to the Minnesota Supreme Court in 1977. The business manager of the Minnesota Women's Press recounted the drama of how a bank officer's refusal to allow them to make good on their promise to distribute profits to low-waged workers nearly led to the demise of the enterprise. A sociologist described how the deadlock over a development plan for Morocco, which included divorce reform, polarized French-speaking elite women reformers from Arabic-speaking fundamentalist women, dividing those who had previously found some common ground. An extension educator recounted how African American settlement house workers leveraged their networks of white supporters to advance the educational careers of African American women in times of strict segregation. A professor in public health narrated the trauma and subsequent litigation arising when the management of a home for developmentally disabled adults refused to respond to repeated sexual assaults of women caretakers. And a women's studies professor and creative writer analyzed how two rural women transgressed traditional gender roles to develop legal expertise necessary to prevent farm foreclosures in rural Minnesota.

As the program grows, we will continue to educate university teachers about case teaching, tell the untold stories of women and feminist social movements, bring the insights of practitioners to scholars and vice versa, improve practice and build capacity in feminist organizations, and integrate women, gender, and feminism in case teaching. As we progress, we suspect that we will continue to be ambivalent about the case genre as it exists in practice as well as in its ideal form. Our cases will no doubt continue to violate some case-writing conventions.

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## **Conclusion**

Cases have many virtues. Through story telling, cases present lessons of public policymaking, bringing to life the dilemmas faced by real people. They convey the wisdom to be gleaned from successes and failures, compensate somewhat for the lack of experience on the part of students, and facilitate vigorous participation and engagement by students as well as critical thinking. Cases help to breathe life into theory by showing its relevance even for students who are practically oriented and just want the "tools." Nevertheless, these stories, when read carefully, reveal the underlying theoretical orientations of the case writers. Cases, like the policy schools that produced them, have almost completely ignored women's issues. Yet even when they are not directly about women's issues, or even if the protagonists are not women, cases contain powerful messages about gender — messages feminists dispute. The cases I analyzed frame women, rather than sexism, as the problem facing managers. In other cases, women's concerns, often presented unsympathetically are obstacles to be swept away. In others, women are the misguided obstacles to reform. By focusing on a lone decision-maker, cases sideline women's concerns as irrelevant. Other times, focusing on a single decision point obscures the causes of women's oppression. Forcing episodes into the narrative structure of the case may distort our understanding of social movements, social and economic structures, and human agency, as well as spotlight individual leaders rather than collectivities. The goal of the Center on Women and Public Policy's case project is to avoid these shortcomings while still capitalizing on the pedagogical value of the case.

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## **Endnotes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Thanks to Jessica Webster for her research assistance. And special thanks to John Boehrer who has taught me so much about case teaching, and teaching and learning in general, and who has offered enormous support to our case-writing project.
- <sup>2</sup> Although social policy is listed as one of 29 possible areas of interest on the APPAM membership form, gender and public policy was only just added as a result of my suggestion.
- <sup>3</sup> [www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/wpp/](http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/wpp/)
- <sup>4</sup> University of Minnesota (Center on Women and Public Policy), SUNY Albany (Center for Women in Government), University of Maryland (Women in International Security), Rutgers University (Center for the American Woman and Politics, Center for Women's Global Leadership, and Institute for Women's Leadership), Harvard University (Women and Public Policy Program), and American University (Women and Politics Institute).

- <sup>5</sup> University of Minnesota, Humphrey Institute (Women and Public Policy), George Washington University (Gender and Social Policy), SUNY Albany (Women and Policy), University of Colorado, Denver (The Domestic Violence Program), and Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government (Women and Public Policy).
- <sup>6</sup> Princeton University (Gender and Development, Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights), University of Michigan (Women and Employment), Virginia Tech (Women, Environment, and Development), Georgetown University (Race, Gender and the Job Market, Maternal and Child Health), Johns Hopkins University (Gender, Justice, and Social Policy, Seminar on Women and Work), University of Virginia (Gender Politics).
- <sup>7</sup> For an excellent collection of essays and a comprehensive bibliography, see Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin. 1995. *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*. Philadelphia: Temple.
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- 21 Lawrence, Anne T. 1993. Dow Corning and the Silicone Breast Plant Implant Controversy. *Case Research Journal*, 87-112.
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- 23 This harsh evaluation is ironic given that in the United States, analysts, pundits, and even social scientists have long regularly scolded feminists for being radical, utopian, and unwilling to compromise.
- 24 Using the Master's Tools to Dismantle the Master's House: Can we harness the virtues of case teaching? Forthcoming. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.
- 25 See Burton, Lloyd, and David Ruppert. 1999. Bear's Lodge or Devils Tower: Intercultural Relations, Legal Pluralism, and the Management of Sacred Sites on Public Lands. *Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy* 8(2):201-247.
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## **Building Bridges to Family-Supporting Jobs**

by Hilary C. Pennington and Marlene B. Seltzer

Women with low levels of formal education and income face extremely difficult challenges in today's labor market. Disproportionately concentrated in jobs at the bottom rung of the labor market, they find few routes into new work that can support a family. A recent study by the Education Testing Service, using 1998 data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, found that 53 percent of female workers who worked consistently over a five-year period still earned less than \$25,000 at the end of the five years, compared to only 19 percent of male workers who worked consistently over the same period. Women are much more likely than men to remain in the ranks of the working poor.<sup>1</sup>

The challenge is particularly acute for women leaving welfare and entering the labor market. These women face multiple barriers to employment. As many as one-third of them have children under the age of three. At least 42 percent lack a high school diploma. Three out of ten have never held a job for longer than six months. A sizable minority have physical and other learning disabilities that make work difficult. In addition, they face other, non-skill barriers to employment, including inadequate transportation to where jobs are located, a lack of daycare resources, and inexperience in strategies for finding suitable employment. The effects of these employment barriers are magnified when we consider that, for the most part, the jobs they enter as they move off of welfare pay very low wages. The hourly wage for most jobs that former welfare recipients hold is between \$5.50 and \$7.00 per hour, compared to the average hourly wage for the primary worker in working poor families of \$7.55, and the \$16.67 average hourly wage for the primary worker in non-poor families.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, while welfare reform is moving many women out of dependence on public assistance and into work, it is not moving them and their families out of poverty. Reaching self-sufficiency requires a level of income beyond the reach of many. The Economic Policy Institute calculates that an employed single-parent family with two young children — the typical family that receives welfare — needs an income between \$20,000 and \$35,000 to meet its basic needs (this includes expenditures for food, housing, transportation, healthcare, childcare, taxes, and other necessities) — a value about twice the federal poverty line.

How can we help people, especially women, advance from a first job at the low end of the labor market into "second tier" jobs that pay better? What combination of supports and opportunities do low-income women need for advancement in today's labor market? How do we structure organizations and public

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*Hilary C. Pennington is the vice chairman and CEO and Marlene B. Seltzer is the president of Jobs for the Future. Their organization is involved with initiatives working around the country to help design and implement effective strategies for welfare recipients to obtain family-supporting jobs. A major part of these initiatives is to work with whole communities to bring them together to learn from each other in an effort to improve the nation's learning and working experience.*

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policy to give women these supports? Jobs for the Future (JFF), a national public policy and demonstration organization, focuses on connecting people to opportunity in the changing economy. JFF both studies and tests new models for education and career advancement for low-income workers and young people.

Our experience in the field over the past two decades points to two critical issues that need addressing:

- **Public policy and state and local practices do not adequately support what we know works best in moving women into family-supporting employment.** An extensive body of research demonstrates that successful programs emphasize advancement, rather than retention (i.e., instead of placing women in readily accessible jobs, they focus on helping them progress to consistently better jobs). Successful programs place women in the highest quality, first jobs available, giving them access to broad-based skills, as well as occupation-specific training, helping them navigate non-work barriers to training, and providing post-placement support once women are employed. Such programs are not the one-shot, short-term interventions that characterize most welfare-to-work programs. A wide gap looms between what we know and how we construct public policy and public resources.
- **Despite all the innovative activity in job development, few programs have the capacity to expand to the scale required.** In part, this is because most programs are not designed to meet the needs of employers in a way that creates recurring demand for their services. And in part, it is because effective programs are not designed for scale. They tend to be run by undercapitalized, small, community organizations and are almost exclusively local in their reach.

In this article, we share some insights on these issues, based on our experience with many different programs such as Workforce Innovative Network (WINS),<sup>3</sup> Welfare to Work,<sup>4</sup> and the Casey Jobs Initiative.<sup>5</sup> We start by reviewing the characteristics of several best-practice programs for helping women advance in the labor market and close with a description of a new venture being launched by JFF in partnership with entrepreneur Jeff Jablow.

## Best Practice Programs

The models profiled here include a range of organizational forms — varying from an employer-based program, to a program run by a community college, to a partnership between a community-based organization and large financial-service corporations.

- **Cessna Aircraft Company** in Wichita, Kans., trains welfare recipients to work as sheet metal assemblers at their plant in the 21st Street Training Program. As described in the publication *Working to Learn*,<sup>6</sup> trainees are employed by Cessna, working from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for \$7.50 per hour.

After the first phase of training (about six weeks), trainees work on actual airplane parts and the hourly wage goes up to \$8.30 per hour. Training graduates get a raise to \$10.38 per hour and are transferred to the main production facilities. From the outset, participants also work with a Cessna "support services counselor." In addition, Cessna offers benefits that greatly improve retention by providing women with support for childcare and housing. It has an on-site daycare center and six units of transitional housing on the 21st Street campus (supported in part with public funds).

- **The Advanced Technology Program (ATP) of Oakland Community College** was started in 1995 to serve welfare recipients. According to *Working to Learn*,<sup>6</sup> "Training cycles are 20 weeks, five days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Each cycle is custom-designed for major, local area information technology employers, who hire graduates in jobs paying between \$18,000 and \$25,000. To qualify for training, participants must be employed 25 hours a week at jobs (most of which are unrelated to training) that they find for themselves or through their Work First Job Clubs. During the last four weeks, part of the trainees' time is spent in paid internships with the participating employer. Oakland Community College also relies on a network of community-based agencies that provide support services for trainees."<sup>7</sup>
- **The Private Industry Partnership (PIP) Program of Wildcat Service Corporation**, a non-profit, social service agency in New York City, has partnered with Citigroup and other large financial service employers to help women move from public assistance into jobs that pay an average starting salary of \$25,000. The PIP program is demand-driven and employer-oriented, performing a service — providing prescreened, well-trained individuals at a price and quality competitive with private-sector placement firms. Eight companies now participate in the PIP, including Morgan Stanley Dean Witter and the ad agency McCann-Erickson, as well as Salomon Smith Barney.

Three times a year, about 150 of Wildcat's most skilled public-assistance clients enter the PIP program. Over the following 16 weeks — the pre-employment portion of the program — the participants alternate between a week of classroom training and a week of subsidized employment, where they perform jobs similar to those for which they are preparing. Public funding provides money to pay them minimum wage for the work. At the end of this period, Wildcat refers candidates to employers for the final decisions about which candidates to accept as interns.

A work-site internship constitutes the PIP's second 16-week segment. Participating employers treat the interns like other employees: If someone is not working out, she returns to Wildcat. But Wildcat tries to ensure that it indeed provides a valuable product: competent personnel for hard-to-fill vacancies. Thus, Wildcat case managers ensure that prospective interns



have solved housing, childcare, and other problems. During the internships, Wildcat staff stay in touch with the employers to anticipate issues that could undermine job performance. Some employers provide additional supports to help interns understand and function in their firms. For example, Salomon Smith Barney offers a workshop on receiving and using performance feedback — particularly supervisors' first appraisals.

At the end of the training, participants can compete for permanent jobs. For example, Citigroup hires approximately 100 people per year through the PIP. It hires some interns directly; some interns get other jobs at other Citigroup companies; and others return to Wildcat for more skill development. The retention rate for PIP graduates at Citigroup has been extraordinarily high: Ninety percent of those hired by Salomon Smith Barney still work there after three years.

PIP staff and the employers meet three times a year to discuss business developments that might affect the instruction. For example, in the fall of 1997, during the merger that formed Salomon Smith Barney, the firm's customers called so often to ask about how the change would affect them that the firm decided to open a customer service center. Wildcat shifted training to focus on skills needed for the center and, within a few months, provided about 20 of its 30 employees.

Prior to launching the PIP program, Wildcat used a more traditional approach to job training and placement. A comparison of the outcomes before and after launching PIP's more demand-oriented approach is telling (see table below).

Table 1: Wildcat's Improved Performance  
1995-2000

**Wildcat Services — 1995**

- 65 percent placement rate
- \$14,000 annual income
- 55 percent employment retention after six month
- Annual revenues — \$8 million

**Wildcat Services Today**

- 85 percent placement rate
- \$28,000 annual income
- 90 percent employment retention after five years
- Annual revenues — \$60 million

Several important lessons emerge across these examples. First, the quality of the jobs that women receive matters greatly to their prospects for retention, as well as advancement to higher-skilled, better-paying positions. The successful programs profiled here find the best jobs clients can possibly fill and train them

to succeed at those jobs and in the company's work environment. In addition, these programs ensure that women receive the support services, especially child-care, that allow them to retain employment.

Yet, despite their impressive successes, these programs remain small, and it has proven very difficult to replicate them in other places. Which brings us to the second set of questions posed at the beginning of this article: How do we structure organizations and public policies to give women the opportunities and supports they need? The final section of this article describes JFF's efforts to address these questions.

### **Necessary Changes in Organizational Structures and Public Policy**

**Origin LLC.** Early in 2001, Jobs for the Future decided to step off the sidelines and into the trenches by partnering with Jeff Jablow, the founder of PIP, to design a new organization capable of expanding to significant scale nationally. JFF, a non-profit, public policy organization, is taking this step for three reasons:

- 1) We believe it is important to counteract the conventional belief about people who are poor by creating ventures that demonstrate how poor people are able to succeed in jobs that require advanced thinking skills;
- 2) We want to test whether a demand-driven model using commercial, market-based practices can grow more quickly than traditional attempts to replicate non-profit operations; and
- 3) We want to test whether partnerships between local, community-based organizations and a national organization with strong relationships to multi-site employers can strengthen the capacity of community-based programs to connect their low-income clients to high-quality jobs.

In pursuit of these objectives, Jablow and Jobs for the Future have formed a new company, Origin LLC. Origin will train new job entrants for information technology-related jobs that can be filled by adults without a college education after a moderate training period. Origin will also provide skills training and upgrading services to incumbent workers, leveraging both government and corporate training dollars. Origin chose the information technology industry because of the sector's well-paying jobs and growing demand for qualified workers. Of an estimated 1.6 million information technology (IT) openings in 2000, half will go unfilled. Yet, 40 percent could be filled by those with less than an associates degree (two-year degree).

### **Services**

Origin will reverse the typical sequence of most employment programs. It will start by helping employers identify business problems they could solve through improved human resource practices. Origin will then offer job preparation customized to those employers' needs. It will produce highly focused refer-

rals to help firms lower recruitment-to-hire ratios, reduce turnover, and secure better-prepared job candidates.

A large IT outsourcing company for example, does not have enough college-trained and experienced IT support specialists to fill its entry-level PC support and help desk positions. This firm is willing to reexamine its recruitment and hiring practices. Origin analyzes the actual job requirements for these entry-level positions and determines which positions can be filled by non-college graduates who complete a customized training program designed by Origin.

### **Strategy for Partnerships and Expansion**

By establishing up to eight New York sites, and sites in at least five other large cities, Origin can secure multi-city job orders from large corporate customers. Origin can then partner with community-based organizations in different cities, the vast majority of whom have only limited capacity to effectively market their clients to potential employers and secure corporate job orders.

Franchise and licensing arrangements will ensure scale and effectiveness. By offering a “brand identity,” supported by a sophisticated national sales and marketing operation, the ability to serve multi-site employers, training methods and curricula that match employer demand, and expertise in leveraging public funding streams, Origin can strengthen the capacity of non-profit organizations and public agencies to deliver high-quality training while relieving them of the burden of job placement. It is pre- and post-employment services, we argue, that add value for corporate customers and increase wages and job quality the most for low-income women.

### **Public Policies**

Models like Origin LLC are important, yet they are not enough if women trapped at the bottom of the labor market are to receive the help they need — they must be accompanied by new public policies. Especially important is a set of public policies that incorporate what we know about women’s needs if they are to advance to family-supporting careers. Such policies, for example, would improve women’s access to postsecondary education and promote the development of progressive and modular models for training and skill certification. Moreover, public policy should support the “intermediary organizations” that can provide, coordinate, and advocate for the diverse pre-placement and post-placement services that make it possible for low-skill women to advance to and succeed in middle class jobs.<sup>7</sup>

Like Origin LCC, tomorrow’s model for helping low-wage women advance in the labor market will be as employer-centered as it is worker-centered. Whereas today’s service model focuses on outreach, counseling, case management, advocacy, and referral — all of which are worker-centered and all of which are necessary — tomorrow’s will begin by engaging employers. It will move into high gear

with an assessment of the kinds of jobs those employers need to fill, then provide women with specific training focused on the skills needed for those jobs. And it will promote women's success at the workplace and in the labor market with on-the-job support and advanced training and education after the first placement. These next-generation strategies are the kind America needs to accelerate low-income women's moves from poverty to the jobs they deserve.

*For more information on public policies that would help low-wage workers advance in employment and earnings, see *Low Wage Workers in Today's Economy: Strategies for Productivity and Opportunity*, at [www.jff.org/whatsnew.html](http://www.jff.org/whatsnew.html).*

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### Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Carnevale, Anthony P., and Stephen J. Rose. Forthcoming. Low-Earners: Who Are They? Do They Have a Way Out? In *Low Wage Workers in the New Economy*, edited by Richard Kazis and Marc S. Miller. Urban Institute Press.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Workforce Innovation Networks (WINs) is a joint project between Jobs for the Future, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce whose purpose is to create new partnerships that address the workforce development needs of businesses and communities.
- <sup>4</sup> Future @ Work: A Welfare-to-Work Urban Technical Resources Initiative is a joint project between Jobs for the Future and Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation to help ten large urban communities design and implement effective strategies to help welfare recipients obtain family-supporting jobs.
- <sup>5</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation Jobs Initiative program provides funding and support for community-based initiatives in six cities in order to help young, low-income workers find meaningful jobs and to identify national employment and training models.
- <sup>6</sup> Stillman, Joseph. 1999. *Working to Learn — Skill Development Under Work First*. Working Ventures — A Publication of Public/Private Ventures, p. 12.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.

# Kennedy School Review 2001

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## **Global Conversation Highlights New Era in Women's Leadership**

by Melodie Jackson

Susan Bird had a vision — to engage a million women around the world in an ongoing conversation about how they might maximize their leadership skills in today's changing corporate environment. That vision led to the creation of Women.future and its signature "MainEvent."

Following the success of last year's inaugural event, MainEvent 2001 brought together top women business leaders and visionaries to participate in a one-day conversation on strengthening the impact of women in business. The 5 April event was telecast by satellite from Sony Recording Studios in New York City to corporate boardrooms, movie theatres, and universities in hundreds of cities around the world.

The *Women's Policy Journal* interviewed Susan Bird about the event, her view on women's leadership styles, and the new era for women in business.

### **What inspired you to launch Women.future?**

For years, I have been a member of the Committee of 200, an incredible group of women business leaders. For several years, the committee has conducted outreach programs to graduate schools. Committee members would go spend a day with students and describe their job positions or responsibilities to provide role models for real people. These encounters were great but terribly inefficient because these students were already on their way to becoming great leaders.

I know that there was a mass of people out there who would love to have exposure to these great women but would never have the opportunity. I was doing a lot of public speaking at the time and went to an event that was linked via satellite. Most of the speakers were men. Afterwards, several of us talked about the possibility of holding a similar discussion with women. We decided there's never been a better time with technology to bring a group of women leaders together.

I talked to the head of Women.com and asked them to create a Web site, got a business print partner, and then got a call from Holly Sargent saying the Kennedy School of Government would like to be involved. It all just began to come together. We officially launched Women.future in December 1998.

### **What is Women.future's mission?**

To increase the number of women leaders around the world, specifically in business. Our dream is to engage a million people in a global conversation about women in business. The more people we involve in the discussion, the more

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*Susan Bird is an experienced business leader who launched Women.future in December 1998. Bird worked for IBM; practiced law with Pillsbury, Madison, and Sutro; built her own real estate firm; and founded a CD-ROM-based marketing company. She is a member of the International Women's Forum and the Women's Leadership Board at Harvard, and is a founding member of the Committee of 200.*

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rapidly progress occurs. The idea here is not really to instruct people, but rather to engage them in conversation.

**The theme for this year's event is "The World of Business: A New Era."**

**What led you to select it?**

We're continually struck by the speed with which the world has become connected by the Internet. Ever since we started Women.future, things have rapidly changed. In the beginning we sent out snail mail. Now we do everything on the Web. That underscores the fact that we have moved quickly to a world that not only makes this possible, but it changes the rules of business everywhere. Every business has the potential to be global. Leadership in the world of the Internet increasingly requires a non-hierarchical, inclusive approach.

**How did this year's event differ from last year's?**

This year's event differs in that it is bigger and more international. We have four European sites this year instead of two, and are planning a road show that will go to Asia and Australia. Most of this year's speakers are new because we thought it was important to show that there are a lot of really incredible women running things. We've also asked a lot more men to join us. Those who participated last year said they got a lot out of the dialogue and I think they offered a lot, so we wanted to increase their role.

**What do you expect to come out of MainEvent 2001?**

Our goal is to begin a conversation. There is something truly awesome about being a part of a conversation that you know is taking place simultaneously around the world. On a personal level, when you see and interact with people who are not so much exemplifying success but exemplifying an ability to be effective on both the professional and personal fronts, it informs, surprises, and inspires. That's what I expect.

**Who would you encourage to participate?**

Everyone who is interested in leadership — men, women, students, professionals. It's for people who care about how you run things and those who care about what is happening in organizations in this new era of work.

**How many different locations around the world participated in MainEvent 2001?**

Thanks to our relationship with PBS, we will be on more than 100 campuses across the nation and at another 50 locations around the world. This will all be followed by our road show, which will take MainEvent to Tokyo, Hong Kong, Sydney, and Singapore. The team that produced and directed MainEvent will edit down the program to 90 minutes of material that will be used to jumpstart conversations during our road show.

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**Are there other events or services outside MainEvent that Women.future provides?**

We are planning a series of Web-casts in conjunction with the Kennedy School that will explore the role of women in different industries and sectors of the economy. We did the first one this fall on women lawyers and the ways in which they are changing the face of law. I moderated an hour-long discussion among four female lawyers — two based in Paris and two in New York. We plan to continue the series and are currently looking for sponsors.

We have also been asked to create an e-learning segment out of the Main-Event content, which we are doing with the Tom Peters Company. We created a CD-ROM out of last year's event and are looking at distributing it to schools around the world.

In addition to our efforts, PBS has created a half-hour documentary about Women.future using footage from MainEvent 2001.

**There was a time when women had to adopt male characteristics to be successful. Now, women's leadership styles are being appreciated in their own right. In your opinion, what has brought about this shift? And what impact do you see it having on the business community?**

Learning to work in a man's world is really passé. It's now learning to work in a world that's new to all of us. It requires learning how to arrange a new set of rules and be open-minded and inclusive about what they will look like.

I think the change has to do with numbers. The more people that look like you, the more disparate views and cultures are appreciated. You can see that in a company where women take more leadership roles, it changes the company. I think women have always had the multiplicity of lives (home, family, work). They are now bringing about changes in their companies that take into account this multiplicity and the result is a better work environment for both women and men, and, in some cases, greater efficiency for the company.

A business colleague of mine tells a story about a young woman who came into his office and challenged the billable hour policy, saying "What it's saying to me is that the company places a higher value on me working slower. If I can get my work done more efficiently and spend the remaining time with my children, doesn't that benefit all of us?" Company management discussed her comment and agreed she was right. This is just another example of how this work/life balance has been pushed in business by women and men have benefited.

Ted Childs, head of diversity at IBM, put it perfectly in a recent article in *Fast Company*.

He notes that it isn't about diversity anymore; it's about business and what makes sense. No matter what gender or management style has gotten us to this point, the more we recognize that we have to reinvent ourselves because everything is changing, the more effective we'll be.



**Given this new era, how can companies take advantage of differing leadership styles?**

I think the key is to recognize that they are all valuable, to figure out how to make room for them, and how to exploit them. The questions businesses should be asking are, "Where can we get the best talent we can get," and, "How can we take advantage of the multiplicity of talents out there?"

**Which leadership qualities do you see as being most effective in the future?**

I think the ones that most reflect the way the Web functions. Leadership styles that reinforce non-hierarchical and inclusive functions will be the most needed and most successful. There is a real demand by new entries into the workforce to do work that matters and to have a life that matters. Companies like Schwab that are open to these changes will be the most successful at developing the kind of leadership that is future focused.

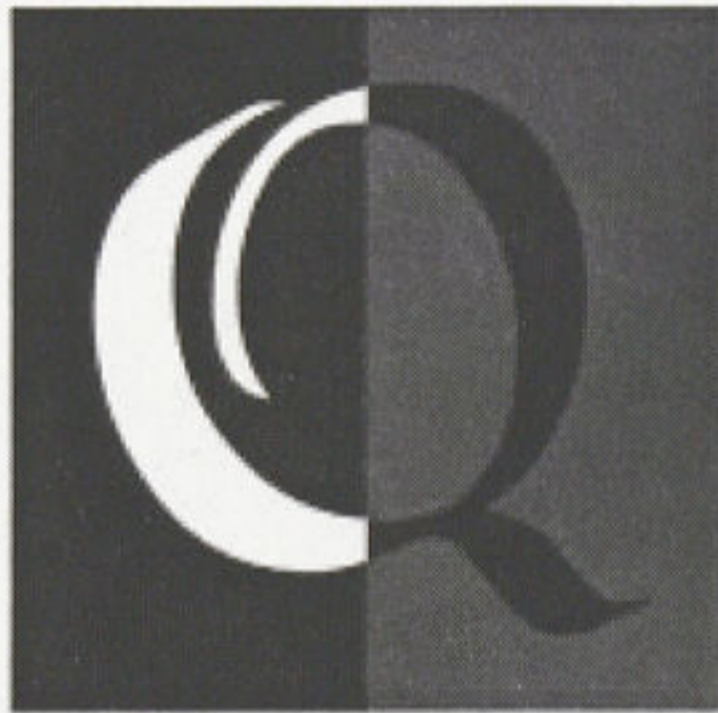
**Does a glass ceiling still exist?**

I've never been sure of what that term actually means. But I do believe there are industries and cultures in which it is difficult for women to move beyond a certain level. This is just a matter of time and exposure because the more women there are in leadership roles, the more there will be.

**In your opinion, what are the most important women's policy initiatives that need to be pursued?**

Instead of what we can get government to do, I am more interested in the other side of that. If you recognize that the biggest problems people face are bigger than any one country can deal with and that many issues span across borders, then we have to look beyond traditional solutions. Governments simply can't do it anymore. We must look to the private sector. There are now more women leading businesses that have a voice in how these things get solved. I'm more interested in exploring how companies with women at the helm will look at the issues that face the world differently. Will they make decisions about social issues differently than traditionally male-run companies have? I don't know the answer. But I find it fascinating to look at.

In the forward of his new book, David Gergen talks about the fact that the time is now for women leaders in government. He points out that we've got more women in business, so how come we don't have more women in government? What I'm curious about is finding a place where people can come together to really grapple with and solve some of these issues.



## **The Journal of Sexual Orientation and Public Policy at Harvard**

Q, The Journal of Sexual Orientation and Public Policy at Harvard, will be releasing its first issue this spring.

Q is a non-partisan academic forum for original public policy scholarship related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Q also considers broader public policy issues facing gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons, such as race and class. A non-partisan publication, we make every effort to address these issues from an international perspective.

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## **Women Seen and Heard: Speaking in a Public Voice** by Lois Phillips, PhD, and Anita Perez Ferguson, MA

### **Book Summary**

The purpose of *Women Seen and Heard: Speaking in a Public Voice* is to encourage both reticent and assertive women to speak in public with greater confidence. As increasing numbers of women move into formerly male roles, they soon realize that they need to speak to groups and audiences if they are to succeed, whether as professionals, businesswomen, advocates, policy proponents, leaders of local volunteer groups, or candidates for public office.

Dramatic shifts in the U.S. demography that reflect immigration and migration point to new and emerging issues that affect the status of women from different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. As a result, diverse women, speaking both as individuals and as representatives, need to be seen and heard at every level of ongoing and new policy debates dealing with such areas as housing, safety, social security, reproductive choice, healthcare research, childcare, and educational opportunity and advancement in the context of today's high-tech, global economy. At the beginning of this new century, when some believe that all battles have been won and that they can have it all, the book provides a historical context for understanding that many battles for women's full equality remain to be fought at the podium.

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*Lois Phillips, BA, speech communication, and PhD in education, is a management and strategic planning consultant who, as part of her practice, speaks at conferences and trains executives, managers, and politicians in public speaking. Her doctoral thesis dealt with gender differences in public speaking, which ultimately became the basis for Women Seen and Heard: Speaking in a Public Voice. Dr. Phillips, who produced Mother, Daughter, Choices for The Girls Club, also produced and hosted two cable television shows about women's issues, and co-hosted a public radio talk show about arts, culture, and current events in southern California. A member of Betty Friedan's Think Tank on Gender and Public Policy at USC's School of Management, she has won local awards for her work in affirmative action, community leadership, and commitment to education.*

*Anita Perez Ferguson, MA, management, and MA, counseling psychology, is immediate past president of the National Women's Political Caucus. She twice received the Democratic nomination for the U.S. House of Representatives, and made history as the first Hispanic woman in California to run. As a result of her 1992 bid, she gained a national reputation for running a well-organized grassroots campaign. Her recent professional experience includes serving as National Director of Training and Education at the Democratic National Committee and member of the Health and Human Services Clinton Transition Team. She has spoken to audiences in the United States, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe, and has given presentations at the Kennedy School of Government, the American Political Science Association, the League of Women Voters, International Platform Association, and national conventions of the National Women's Political Caucus. She has an appointment to the Woodrow Wilson School of Government's Fellows Program.*

In spite of dramatic changes in women's roles, research has found that audiences remain skeptical about women's ability to play top executive leadership roles, thereby allowing women a smaller margin of error when they are given a chance to speak as leaders. The woman speaker, then, has a formidable task at the podium: She is not only seeking to capture and retain the audience's attention as a speaker, but also to gain their confidence in her capacity for leadership. Because male voices have historically been "the voice of authority," men start with credibility as leaders and only lose that if they are ineffectual speakers. As a result, at the podium, credibility is men's to lose and women's to win.

*Women Seen and Heard: Speaking in a Public Voice* is dedicated to women who want to develop a public voice, and to others who have found theirs. The authors have interviewed successful women leaders who must speak in public as a function of their leadership roles. Readers will be exposed to "lessons learned" by the speakers as a result of trial and error and with help from mentors, role models, and observations. Themes of the interviews are reflected in chapters that include "Women's Historical Role Models," "Early Influences," "Authenticity: Be Who You Are," and "Moving from the Subjective to the Strategic." These lessons became the basis for the worksheets that follow each chapter, thus allowing readers to develop an assortment of stories, anecdotes, statistics, and PowerPoint slides for possible persuasive presentations they might deliver in the future. The authors have used these worksheets as the basis for training programs for women managers and executives. Excerpts from excellent persuasive speeches delivered by diverse women who are advocates, activists, and elected or appointed officials appear throughout each chapter. *Women Seen and Heard* was designed to be a supplement to a college text as well as appeal to lay readers.

*An excerpt from the forthcoming Women Seen and Heard: Speaking in a Public Voice begins on page 115.*

**Excerpt from *Women Seen and Heard: Speaking in a Public Voice***  
by Lois Phillips, PhD, and Anita Perez Ferguson, MA

*(Anticipated Publication in 2002)*

**Women of Color Need to Succeed as Public Speakers**

A democratic society deserves and demands that diverse voices participate in policy debates and discussions. In our multicultural and ethnically diverse world, it is critical to our future that women of color are seen and heard as leaders and spokespersons. The U.S. population has experienced a substantial increase in the number of women who represent greater racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, but will these demographic shifts be considered when policy debates and discussions occur? As long as we continue to see disparity in educational levels, household incomes and leadership positions for women in our communities, it is critical that women of color become and remain vocal, taking leadership and public positions on policy matters that might remedy these imbalances.

Women of color can also add a fresh, new voice to analyses of social, economic, educational, and political problems that affect both women and people of color. They can discuss local, regional, and national problems — and the consequences of not solving a problem — with personal experiences, anecdotal material, and cultural examples that transcend statistics and might otherwise be ignored by male decisionmakers. Experience and exposure to women of different backgrounds can enhance, complement, and enrich the audience members' life experiences. Diversity is another word for enrichment; business leaders like Daisy Exposito believe that it is “the driving force in shaping today's America.”<sup>1</sup>

Research by the State Department's Interagency on Women describes how shifting demographics have created new issues that are emerging for women of color of every age and circumstance throughout the world.<sup>2</sup> The diversity of women has become an increasingly complicated phenomenon due to the immigration of people from Latin America, South America, and Mexico, as well as Southeast Asia and Eastern and Southern Europe. In general, women of color are significantly behind Caucasian women with regard to opportunities to work in non-traditional jobs, access to higher education and business advancement, and opportunities to enjoy a broader array of lifestyle choices.

Nearly 25 percent of all American women are of color. Ten million girls — 8 percent of the total female population — were born outside the United States. Nearly 50 percent of Hispanic women and 80 percent of Asian American women between the ages of 18 and 64 are immigrants. There is an increase in the number of women without a fundamental knowledge of English. Spanish is the first language for most of the four million women — 3 percent of all U.S. women — who live in linguistic isolation where no one over the age of 13 speaks English fluently. Who will represent their needs when broad social policy decisions are made?<sup>3</sup>

Women in general, and women of color in particular, have been invisible as a result of the institutionalization of power in patriarchal societies. As diverse women expand upon the traditional roles to include new social, occupational, professional, and political roles, however, it is appropriate that they speak up in a range of public settings and, when they do, succeed as public speakers. This is no simple assignment because men have traditionally been seen and heard as the voice of authority. However, there are eloquent and articulate women of color who have learned to bridge the culture-gaps that exist between them and their audience.

### **Why Women of Color Need to Speak Up**

In spite of the challenges they face in gaining public recognition for the many roles they play, women of color have made enormous contributions to society for many generations, balancing full-time responsibilities for their families with participation in the workforce. Countless religious, educational, cultural, and social organizations have benefited from the dedication and service of women of color. In speaking about their dedication, speakers often refer to the community-based activism and philanthropic work of their mothers and grandmothers as a source of inspiration. Speakers have been known to relate family anecdotes to the topic at hand as a way of emphasizing how their personal journey toward current positions and policy perspectives began with their family roots.

As a general rule, the men in minority communities hold the leadership positions and craft policies regarding these communities. In many instances, the very organizations that represent our racial and ethnic communities, including our public educational institutions, consistently promote men over women. Lisa Sullivan, community activist, founder and president of LISTEN Inc., lends her observations about the African American community: “. . . for a long time in our community the women organized, and the men led. Now black women who historically have done the organizing are crossing over into leadership.”<sup>4</sup> One way that women can become more visible in their organizations is to develop their power as public speakers.

The fact that the woman speaker of color is an outsider can be reframed as positive. The outsider asks questions that insiders may wish to avoid. Thomasine Parott was discouraged with the way things were being done in her union: “The same old way by the same old people and their friends and relatives.” She started going to the meetings but understood very little about what was going on. She began to raise questions and ask for clarification of the issues, stirring up the interest of other employees as well as her own. Another union member commented on Parott’s election as the union’s first black and female vice president:

I didn’t really know her, but heard about her and that she would stand up to The Man. I found out her stuff was honest. . . . That’s what made me vote for her. . . . Some people won’t rock the boat, but she will and if everybody falls off, if there’s nothing left but wind in her sail, she’ll stand tall.<sup>5</sup>

Speaking can reflect every level of activism, from advocating for civil rights to communicating families' and neighbors' concerns to city councils. Success can happen when activists organize effectively to document and present problems to school board officials, as Padres Unidos did in Colorado. Dolores Obregon, a soft-spoken, middle-aged mother of five recalls:

Like so many others, I used to feel uncomfortable about standing up to a teacher or principal. I thought they were the educated ones who knew best. Since I got involved with Padres, I realized that I know what's best for my children.<sup>6</sup>

While grassroots activists fight for the issues from the bottom up, more liberal groups fight for their rights from the top down. For example, breaking through "the glass ceiling" is very important to women seeking success in corporate America or professional life; however, it is not an important issue for many women of color who support their families on minimum wage or through temporary and/or part-time jobs with no benefits.

Inequities in the workplace due to gender have been well documented by the U.S. Department of Labor — from the Department of Wage and Hour Investigations that has a backlog of sweatshop labor infractions to the Glass Ceiling Commission report that verifies struggles for women attempting to move up the corporate ladder. Study after study shows that women in general have lower incomes for the same type of preparation and work when compared to their male counterparts, and women of color are paid even less than their Caucasian female peers. Policymakers, who will ideally be hearing from diverse stakeholders, must address these inequities.

Even where there is access, there is not necessarily success. "Doors are open, but minds are closed," reports Pamela Newkirk in a recent article in *The Washington Post*.<sup>7</sup> Newkirk's description of the challenges of black journalists in a majority white media world also reflects the depth of challenge that women of color face even after they have climbed up a rung or two on the corporate ladder or achieved community leadership. The general public often credits those who are quoted in the media as being experts; whether they are or not, it is important that more women in general and women of color in particular ultimately become perceived as their own spokespersons, advocates, and experts. This requires seizing opportunities to speak up at forums and commission hearings, participating in task forces and ad hoc committees, and contributing to local, national, and international policy debates. If the speaker is trying to change social policy at the local level, she is going to need to raise money for her candidates or herself, influence people to join coalitions, and mobilize neighbors to attend city council meetings — all of which require effective public speaking.

In "Lessons from Gifted Women of Color," researcher Margie Kitano notes that women of color tend to employ a range of common coping strategies in their movement toward public leadership.<sup>8</sup> The most common approach used by

women speakers from a minority community involves the art of reframing the issue from the speaker's point of view. This is followed by the strategy of proposing positive action and, finally, accepting the value of the audience's point of view before they have a chance to accept or reject the speaker. Most of Kitano's examples of problem-solving strategies are applicable to speech-development and can be found in speeches by African American women leaders such as the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, Professor Lani Guinier, and advocate Marion Wright Edelman, all of whom are excellent speakers and role models. One sociologist explains that Jordan's "choice of words and her dramatic style of speaking made her a national star. . . . It was an inspiring thing to hear — the absolute, clarification, unambiguous sense of moral righteousness."<sup>9</sup>

### **Myths and Assumptions about Women of Color**

When the speaker is a person of color, she is shouldering the history and perceptions of our American experiment. When the woman speaker stands before a primarily male or white audience, she joins other women leaders who are breaking new ground. Women of color may believe that they have left their parents' cultural identity behind, or they may celebrate their heritage and at the same time feel that it has little impact on their public voice. But when a general audience is skeptical about the speaker's credentials, credibility, and ability to connect to the mainstream culture (or the audience's culture), that speaker must plan for the possibility of audience bias or prejudice.

When it comes to credibility, there is little margin of error for the woman speaker in our society, and even less for the speaker who is a woman of color. Credentials aside, it is likely that what people think about first is that she is "different" based on the speaker's race, culture, or ethnicity. The speaker's presentation style may be judged more critically and by a different set of expectations and conventional standards. Listeners may not even realize how many critical filters they are using that distract them from paying full attention to the message. The speaker must be aware of this possibility when she prepares her remarks so that she can be clear, direct, well informed, well organized, and non-defensive. Knowing it is necessary to gain the audience's confidence in her competence can add to what is already a common fear of public speaking.

Stereotypes are deeply ingrained and remain pervasive in our society, if only found at the level of an individual's subconscious, but they can lead listeners to jump to conclusions about the speaker and where she is coming from, both literally and figuratively. The truth of the matter is that it is hard to grasp the complexity of our interracial, intercultural society. After all, how can the black woman facing us be an Indian or a Sephardim? Appearances can be deceiving, and given cultural complexities, yesterday's judgments will be even less accurate than they were the day before. Legislative aide Priya Dayananda, who hopes to run for Congress someday, reminded us about this complexity of our lives when she said in



an interview that she felt the gap between her views and those, say, of a Punjabi or Hindu Indian American. An audience could make assumptions about her, but her background defies stereotypes. Dayananda, who described herself as an Indian Christian, said, "I will also celebrate Diwali, Eid, Jain, and Sikh holidays. That has been my upbringing." If she runs for Congress, she says she will do so as "Priya" and not "Priya, the Indian American."<sup>10</sup>

## Managing Stereotypical Expectations

An audience perceives a woman of color differently from how it perceives her Caucasian counterparts, and these perceptions may initially distance the audience from the speaker. There is no simple formula to make an audience feel comfortable with a speaker. It is neither necessary nor desirable to change the substance of a woman's character or ignore her background in order for her to make a confident and compelling public presentation. How to navigate around those initial perceptions of difference and judgment that may be an obstacle to communication must be considered from a strategic perspective. Given her background, what position does the audience expect her to take, and does she, in fact, hold this position? Is she willing to compromise her short-term goals to achieve her long-term goals? How does she convey that she is more than a single-issue spokesperson and that she can see "the big picture" and find common ground with her audience? Whatever she chooses to do may disappoint or surprise some, many, or all of the listeners.

Aside from the podium, being in any situation in which she is out of context can place a woman of color at risk. Anita Perez Ferguson recalls what happened to Congresswoman Carrie Meek (Florida), who is African American, during her first weeks at the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

She was excited about her new responsibilities and just a little anxious, so she decided to go to the office on Saturday. Because the Congress was not in session, she had dressed casually and entered the building with the throngs of weekend tourists. As she entered the elevator closest to her office she received some resistance from the operator. "This elevator is reserved for members only," the employee, also an African American, stated politely. There ensued a 15-minute confrontation during which the security guards were called in to assist until Representative Meek could prove her status as a duly elected member of the U.S. Congress.

If a member of Congress had her authority challenged simply because she was an African American woman, it is likely that any woman of color in a leadership role will have her authority challenged, whether or not as explicitly as in this telling incident.

Politically correct expectations for women, as well as discriminatory ones, can also backfire. For example, when the audience assumes that a speaker was

chosen to be on a panel simply because she is a woman of color, neither the audience nor the speaker can do their best work. In such a case, eyes are open but ears and minds are closed. The audience may only grudgingly accept that woman's assignment to the panel, and the substance of her presentation can be undervalued in the process. In this or in any case, being prepared by thoroughly knowing the material and the audience will be especially important.

Incorrect assumptions often made about the speaker who happens to be a woman of color can be wholly inaccurate and undermine her ability to establish credibility as a leader, as the voice of authority. These include assumptions about her education, her customs or religious beliefs, a lack of exposure to the arts, or a background of poverty with a resulting inability to relate to mainstream issues. These stereotypes are obstacles to making personal contact and establishing good communication. Assuming that the audience is operating — even subconsciously — under any of these inaccurate misperceptions, the speaker needs to challenge their stereotypical assumptions in those first few minutes by the way in which she presents herself and introduces her material. The speaker must quickly let the audience see her for the person that she is. The memorable speaker is someone who is a unique individual, someone who is hard to label. When giving testimony, the speaker would do well to describe her educational background and/or those practical real-world accomplishments that complement, supplement, or compensate for a lack of formal and advanced academic degrees. There is nothing wrong with having earned an advanced degree from “the school of hard knocks.”

The speaker must place her issue within a larger social context so that diverse listeners can relate to it. A speaker who wants to win an audience's favor must help the audience by quickly drawing a connection between her topic, product, or cause and the listeners' needs, concerns, and goals. To do this, she needs to overcome the possible perception of insurmountable differences that separate her from the diverse, homogeneous, or white male audience. The speaker must ask herself: *How am I like members of my audience? What concerns do we share? What do we have in common?*

The effective speaker is self-disclosing in a way that engenders respect. She is unafraid to let the audience see her as someone who plays many roles in the family and in society: a doctor who is also a daughter, a lawyer who is also a mother, or a community activist who is a daughter, mother, and union leader. In some ways the woman of color is a unique individual. In some ways she is like some or all women who share her cultural background. In some ways, the woman of color is every woman, capable of inspiring diverse women and men to follow her lead.

### **Challenges Create Champions and Role Models for Every Woman**

Women of color do have historical role models who spoke up for justice and democracy for all women, but often this information is not included in textbooks

or presented in mainstream media. Women who had the courage to speak up are role models for all women because they sought to improve society in a non-violent way. Reading the few examples of brilliant speeches given by women in earlier centuries continues to be inspiring, and many of their ideas remain fresh even today.<sup>11</sup> By observing confident speakers who are women of color, we can learn what delivery styles and strategies work most effectively. Oprah Winfrey, African American television personality and media executive, is a role model and source of inspiration to contemporary women. In spite of her phenomenal success, Winfrey presents herself humbly, aware of women like Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and Fannie Lou Hamer who paved the way for her ability to live her dreams. In a commencement speech delivered at Wellesley, Winfrey described the origins of her life journey:

When I was a little girl [in] Mississippi, growing up on the farm [with] only Buckwheat as a role model, watching my grandmother boil clothes in a big, iron pot through the screen door, because we didn't have a washing machine and made everything we had. I watched her and realized somehow inside myself, in the spirit of myself, that although this was segregated Mississippi and I was "colored" and female, that my life could be bigger, greater than what I saw. I remember being four or five years old, I certainly couldn't articulate it, but it was a feeling and a feeling that I allowed myself to follow.<sup>12</sup>

Successful speakers believe that "authenticity," or being who you are, is a key to delivering effective presentations. If this is true, then women of color may find that being authentic in terms of their cultural, racial, or ethnic identity presents a special challenge in the process of connecting with the audience. If appearance and conformity set a standard for early acceptance and identification, then women of color are immediately on the other side of that barrier when they look different from their audience.

How does the speaker overcome the biases that can become barriers to making contact? One way to overcome the possible separation from the audience is to construct a gracious introduction that draws upon similar interests with the audience members. A gentle bit of humor will put her audience at ease. For example, speaking about nutrition at a formal dinner of the local chamber of commerce, a former agricultural worker who became a businesswoman might say:

This is the first time I've ever been to a country club, so I brought along a few of my friends to give me courage. I was thinking of them as we had our meal. My friend Hilda picks the kind of lettuce that we had in our salad. Yolanda packs the strawberries that were in our dessert. And my cousin Dolores in Columbia helps grow the coffee that we are enjoying now. All four of us are as concerned with the quality and safety of the food we provide for our families, as are all of you. So I'm glad you invited me to talk with you today about nutrition.

Another barrier to establishing contact may stem from a particular culture's directives to women — and sometimes to men — about social courtesies, attitudes toward authority and older people, and how to gesture or look at people. Research tells us that non-verbal communication and body language convey about 55 percent or more of the message than do the speaker's words.<sup>13</sup> In some cultures, hand gestures may be considered aggressive and can also be misunderstood. Eye contact may or may not be a sign of respect in diverse cultures. The American culture values eye contact and directness, accepts the propensity for turning up the volume in an argument, and expects forceful gestures that underlie hard-hitting points.

Public speaking has historically been a masculine act. Therefore, women from different cultural and ethnic traditions may be caught in a double bind when they engage in public speaking because of the way they have learned to use or avoid gestures, to speak quietly, avoid eye contact, and shirk from engaging in an argument in favor of maintaining respectful relationships. Traits such as modesty, respect for authority and one's elders, and listening rather than speaking can inhibit women from learning to fully and forcefully express ideas and opinions at the podium. The speaker's cultural heritage and audience's preferences for a style of speech should be considered without feeling compromised, but only the speaker can sort out these dilemmas for herself. There is no "one-size-fits-all" formula to help women of color plan and deliver an effective presentation to homogenous or multicultural audiences.

Anita Perez Ferguson has often begun her presentations on diversity issues by jokingly correcting the person who introduced her and giving the audience her full name: "Anita Maria Perez de Gonzalez Ferguson." For dramatic emphasis, she adds the slightest pause before saying "...Ferguson." This gives the speaker an opportunity to make the audience smile and put them at ease as she explains that "what we are really here to talk about is not the abstract concept of 'diversity' as it relates to affirmative action programs or fears about quotas, but rather to changes in our population and workforce brought about by families in transition — families like those represented by me and you."

The Honorable Alexis Herman was the first African American to serve as U.S. secretary of labor. She uses self-disclosure to express her passionate conviction for her work when she explains:

I was raised by a single mother who rose from an eternity of odd jobs to complete her college education and fulfill her life's dream of becoming a teacher. My father beat the odds by becoming a pioneer in business and politics at a time when there were few opportunities for African Americans in the South. At home, in school, and at church, I learned that, after family and faith, the most sacred thing in our lives is the work we do. . . . For all of us, our work affirms our humanity, and allows us to make our own unique contribution to the world.<sup>14</sup>

## One Size Does Not Fit All

In speaking as leaders, women of color must be mindful of drawing upon connections with their audience. The basis of those connections can be the speaker's unique and extraordinary experiences in the context of her particular cultural heritage. In addition, her personality, including a sense of humor, and sources of inspiration will affect how she approaches speaking to a given group. Television producer and journalist Cristina Saralegui began a breast cancer awareness project targeting Hispanic women because the culture of modesty required a new approach. She has addressed gay issues targeting Hispanic teens. She wants to speak about controversial issues in ways that are relevant to her culture. In an interview, she said, "What I try to do is play down the differences. We're all parents, and we have the same problems. I try to appeal to the common denominator . . . everyone is in this together."<sup>15</sup>

Many women who speak frequently on a national stage advise: *Be passionate about your issue. Find ways to relate to the audience as your own person.* This means that the speaker who is a woman of color can feel confident telling the stories only she can tell, referring to her cultural heritage as the source of new insights about common problems — whether about business productivity in the global marketplace or solutions that plague society at large. The more comfortable the speaker is in giving a voice to her own cultural, racial, or ethnic identity and life experience, the more likely it is that she will become both the message and the messenger of hope for the new century.

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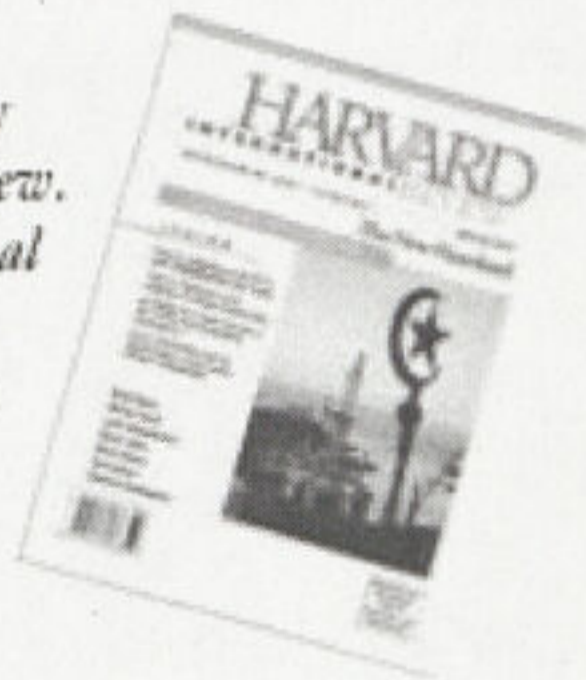
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## Women's Achievements

- **First Woman Vice Chairman of NAACP**  
On 27 February 2001, Roslyn McCallister Brock, 35, was named youngest and first female vice chairman of the NAACP Board Of Directors. (Source: [www.naacp.com](http://www.naacp.com))
- **First Woman Governor of Massachusetts**  
In April 2001, Gov. Jane Swift was sworn in as the first woman governor of the state of Massachusetts. Due to give birth to twins this summer, she is also the first U.S. governor to be pregnant in office. (Source: [www.boston.com](http://www.boston.com))
- **Women Constitute the U.S. Voting Majority**  
Women have been the voting majority in every major U.S. election since 1964, and women voters decided the 1996 presidential election with the largest gender gap in American history. (Source: [www.women.com](http://www.women.com))
- **More Women Officers in the U.S. Military**  
Since 1973, when the male draft ended and the All Volunteer Force began, the percentage of women among U.S. military personnel has surged from 1.6 percent in 1973 to 10.8 percent in 1989. Today more than 229,000 women serve on active duty in the military services of the Department of Defense: the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. About 15 percent of these women are officers; this is about the same percentage as that of military men overall. (Source: [eserver.org/feminism/women-in-the-military.txt](http://eserver.org/feminism/women-in-the-military.txt))
- **Girl Power!**  
Isa Cucinotta, co-curator of Movies for Kids, which is presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center, has chosen "Girl Power! Adventures with Girls," as the theme for its third annual festival. The festival runs from March-June 2001, showing a medley of classic, contemporary, and even foreign films — all with powerful girl protagonists, many selected by their kid curators. (Source: *Ms. Magazine*, April 2001)
- **Women Unite against Female Genital Mutilation**  
In 1996, Egypt's FGM Task Force, composed of about 80 activist groups united by a commitment to eliminate the practice of female genital mutilation, helped to pass a law criminalizing the practice. And throughout Egypt, where 97 percent of women who have been married have undergone female genital mutilation, a recent survey showed a 10 percent



increase in the number of people opposing the practice. (*Source: Ms. Magazine, April 2001*)

- **Rosie the Riveter Memorialized**

More than half a century after Rosie the Riveter first appeared as the symbol of the six million women working in defense and other industries during World War II, the Rosies are receiving national thanks and recognition. In mid-October, more than 2,000 well-wishers gathered in Richmond, Calif., to applaud the now white-haired riveters, truck drivers, childcare workers, nurses, drafters, and plumbers who helped drive the U.S. war effort. About 200 former Rosies were on hand for the dedication of a memorial in their honor — a 441-foot walkway with sculptural elements, leading to a San Francisco Bay lookout. (*Source: Ms. Magazine, March 2001*)

- **Women around the World Unite against Inequity**

On 8 March 2001, women in 59 countries participated in the Global Women's Strike 2001, to protest the growing inequities of women's work. Mothers, asylum seekers, female prostitutes, pensioners, and women with disabilities joined to speak out against injustices. (*Source: Ms. Magazine, Tuesday, March 2001*)

- **More Women in Corporate Officer Positions**

More than 40 percent of corporate offices of four Fortune 500 companies are now women, reports the 2000 *Catalyst Census of Women Corporate Officers and Top Earners*. This represents a 100 percent increase over 1995 findings. Ten percent of Fortune 500 companies have women holding a quarter or more of corporate officer titles, twice the number since 1995, when Catalyst began measuring this data. (*Source: www.catalystwomen.org*)

- **Women Make Strides In Family/Career Balance**

Catalyst studies report that “. . . even though working mothers may reduce career involvement for a period of time — with the support of the right company — career advancement does not have to get sidelined,” said Marcia Brumit Kropf, vice president of Research and Information Services. In a 1998 Catalyst study, (*Two Careers, One Marriage*), 83 percent of men and 83 percent of women report they have taken advantage of flexible work arrangements offered by employers. Work/life balance is increasingly seen as an “employee issue” and not just a “women's issue.” (*Source: www.catalystwomen.org*)

- **Women Make Gains in U.S. Labor Force Participation**  
In 1980, 42.6 percent of total labor force participants were women. As of 1999, 46.5 percent of total labor force participants are women. By 2008 the number of minorities and women participating in the labor force is projected to jump to 70 percent. (Source: [www.catalystwomen.org](http://www.catalystwomen.org), from Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Projections from Current Population Survey, 1988-1998*)
- **U.S. Women of Color in Corporate Management**  
Latest census data of women corporate officers show that women of color comprise 1.3 percent of corporate officers in Fortune 500 companies and 1.9 percent of board directors in Fortune 1000 companies. (Source: *1999 Census of Women Corporate Officers and Top Earners and 1999 Census of Women Board Directors of the Fortune 1000*, [www.catalystwomen.org](http://www.catalystwomen.org))
- **Increase in U.S. Women Entrepreneurs**  
In 1977 the number of women-owned firms was less than 800,000. By 1987 that number increased to 4.1 million. Latest data reports that today the number of women-owned firms is 9.1 million. (Source: *National Foundation for Women Business Owners, 1999*, [www.catalystwomen.org](http://www.catalystwomen.org))
- **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 45th Session**  
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women commemorates 45 years in the UN General Assembly this year. The convention defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. (Source: [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/))

# Call for Papers

*Women's Policy Journal of Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government (WPJ)*, accepts unsolicited articles year round and is currently accepting submissions for **Volume II**, to be published in May 2002. Submissions for Volume II are due by 1 December 2001.

*WPJ* is an annual, non-partisan scholarly review published by graduate students at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. *WPJ*'s mission is to educate and provide leadership that improves the quality of public policies affecting women. In so doing, *WPJ* hopes to further the economic, social, and political empowerment of women.

*WPJ* is interested in manuscripts that emphasize the relationship between policymaking and the political, social, and economic environments affecting women in the United States and internationally. Original research and analysis that propose innovative policy direction will be given highest publishing priority. A peer-review process is used to select submissions for each year's publication. The review process is conducted through blind readings of all submissions — the author's name will not be disclosed to reviewers unless the article is selected for publishing.

## Submission Guidelines

To be eligible for the editorial review, an article must satisfy the following requirements:

- Articles must be original and unpublished.
- Articles should be 15-25 double-spaced pages, 12-point font.
- Articles should be formatted on any version of Microsoft Word.
- Citations should be formatted according to the guidelines in the Chicago Manual of Style.

In addition, *WPJ* requests that all authors submit the following:

- a cover letter with the author's name, address, daytime phone number, and a brief biography;
- five hard copies of the article;
- a copy of the article on 3.5 IBM disk; and
- a 100-word abstract.

Please refer any inquiries to [wpjh@ksg.harvard.edu](mailto:wpjh@ksg.harvard.edu)

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