

THE IMPACT OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC OFFICE

RESHAPING
THE AGENDA:
WOMEN
IN STATE
LEGISLATURES

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
RUTGERS

CENTER FOR THE AMERICAN WOMAN AND POLITICS

*Reshaping the Agenda:
Women in State Legislatures*

Reshaping the Agenda: Women in State Legislatures

Report Written by

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Contents

Preface	ix
Advisory Committee	xi
About CAWP	xiii
Introduction	1
Why Expect Women Officeholders to Have a Distinctive Impact?	3
Factors That May Affect the Extent to Which Women Have a Distinctive Impact	5
The Study	6
This Report	8
Chapter 1: Gender Differences in Attitudes on Public Policy Issues	11
Impressions of Legislators: Women Make a Difference	11
Gender Differences in Policy Attitudes	13
Factors Affecting Attitudes: A Look at Individual Characteristics	19
Do women have different policy views from men because women are more likely to be liberals?	19
Do women have different policy views than men because they are more often feminists?	20
Do women have different policy views than men because they are connected to women's groups?	21
Do differences in women's and men's roles in the workforce contribute to gender differences in policy attitudes?	23
The effects of seniority and age: Will gender differences in policy views last?	26
Constraints on Differences in Attitudes: A Look at the Political Environment	28
Do women have different policy views than men because they more often represent liberal districts?	28
Does the proportion of women in the legislature affect gender differences in attitudes?	29
Can women be political insiders and still have policy views that differ from those of men?	30
Does professionalism of the legislature affect gender differences in attitudes about public policy issues?	33
Do women's caucuses or other policy-centered informal	

meetings of women legislators play a role in encouraging gender differences in attitudes?	34
Summary	35
Chapter 2: Gender Differences in Action on Women's Rights Legislation	
Introduction	37
Gender Differences in Work on Women's Rights Legislation	38
Factors Affecting Activity on Women's Rights Bills: A Look at Individual Characteristics	41
Are women more likely than men to work on women's rights bills because women are more likely to be liberals?	41
Are women more likely than men to work on women's rights bills because they are more often feminists?	42
Are women more likely than men to work on women's rights bills because they are connected to women's groups?	44
The effects of age and seniority in the legislature: Will gender differences in work on women's rights bills last?	45
Constraints on Women's Rights Bill Activity: A Look at the Political Environment	47
Are women more likely than men to work on women's rights bills because of the districts they represent?	47
Does the proportion of women in the legislature affect activity on women's rights bills?	48
Can women be political insiders and still work on legislation to help women?	49
Do women's caucuses or other policy-centered meetings of women legislators facilitate work on women's rights bills?	49
The Fate of Women's Rights Bills	51
Summary	51
Chapter 3: Gender Differences in Legislative Agendas	53
Introduction	53
A Look at the Priorities of Female and Male Lawmakers: Do Women Make a Difference?	54
Factors Affecting Priorities: A Look at Individual Characteristics	59
Do women have different priorities than men because women are more likely to be liberals?	59
Do women have different priorities from men because they more often are feminists?	61
Do women have different priorities from men because they are connected to women's groups?	62
Do differences in women's and men's roles in the workforce contribute to gender differences in priorities?	64

Are gender differences in priorities due to motherhood?	66
The effects of seniority and age: Will gender differences in priorities last?	67
Constraints on Differences in Priorities: A Look at Political Environment	67
Do women have different priorities than men because they more often represent liberal districts?	67
Does the proportion of women holding office influence priorities?	68
Can women be political insiders and still have priorities that differ from those of men?	69
Does professionalism of the legislature affect gender differences in priorities?	70
Do women's caucuses or other policy-centered meetings of women legislators play a role in encouraging gender differences in priorities?	70
The Fate of Legislative Priorities	71
Summary	73
Chapter 4: Impact on Process	75
Introduction	75
Sources of Support in Achieving Legislative Priorities	76
Have Women Made a Difference in Access to the Legislature?	79
Leadership Styles	83
Collegial Relationships between Women and Men Lawmakers	86
Bringing Women Into Public Office	89
Summary	90
Conclusion: Reshaping the Agenda	91
Maximizing Impact: The Role of Individual Characteristics	94
Maximizing Impact: The Importance of Connections to Women's Organizations	95
Men Who Are Helping to Reshape the Agenda	96
The Effect of the Political Environment on Women's Impact	97
Questions Remain	98
Appendix	
Policy Views	101
Measures of Impact on Policy	102
Measures of Impact on Process	105
Measures of Factors that Can Affect Impact	107
Number of Cases	112
Publications	123

Preface

The Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) has spent two decades charting and analyzing women's changing status as leaders in public office.

Incremental progress has characterized a generation of change, with women slowly and steadily making gains as elected and appointed officials. As the numbers grew, so did interest in whether women's presence counted for more than numbers. The questions kept coming up: "Do women make a difference?" "What sorts of differences?" "Under what circumstances or conditions?" Interest focused especially on public policy — the substance of policy, the relative importance of various issues, the process of making policy, the institutions which develop public policy. Do women political leaders have a distinctive impact in the policymaking arena?

As it had done previously, the Charles H. Revson Foundation expressed the interest and provided the critical support which allowed CAWP to launch a new area of investigation about women's changing political participation. With a generous grant from Revson, CAWP designed *The Impact of Women in Public Office*, the first large-scale research project to ask and begin answering the early questions about the implications of women's presence in political leadership. A three-volume series presents the results of this research. Volume One, entitled *Reshaping the Agenda: Women in State Legislatures*, is the report from a large, systematic study of state legislators undertaken by CAWP. Volume Two, entitled *Gender and Policymaking: Studies of Women in Public Office*, presents the collected reports of eleven studies of women officials in a variety of offices; these small studies were conducted independently by scholars across the country working under grants awarded by CAWP. Volume Three summarizes the findings from the overall research project; it is entitled *The Impact of Women in Public Office: An Overview*.

CAWP is very grateful for the opportunity to continue building its knowledge and understanding of women's participation in U. S. electoral politics. We are especially proud to issue the first systematic, empirical evidence and scholarly assessments of women's distinctive impact in public office. As is always the case, questions beget more questions, and a little information whets the appetite for more knowledge and greater comprehension. Furthermore, since the nature and extent of women's political leadership remain dynamic — steadily changing, growing, evolving — today's inquiries can at best provide conditional answers. We at CAWP will consider this research project a success if it serves both to increase today's understanding of *and* tomorrow's curiosity for fuller and richer information about how women and men working together can improve the leadership of our public world.

The Charles H. Revson Foundation has sustained its singular encouragement and critical support for work about women and politics for over a decade. President Eli Evans and Vice President Lisa Goldberg have an unusually strong understanding of the centrality of questions and challenges surrounding women's changing political roles. They know that this is not a topic for a day, but rather a long-term test for the quality of the democracy. They also understand the importance of the relationship between research and

activism. In addition to everything else, we are grateful for their flexibility and tolerance with the pace of scholarly research. Everyone at CAWP is very proud and gratified to have the Charles H. Revson Foundation's continuing interest and support.

Individual members of a distinguished advisory committee of political practitioners and scholars (names of advisory committee members are listed on page immediately following this preface) offered expert advice and enthusiastic interest throughout the project, especially in evaluating proposals and selecting grant recipients for the studies reported in Volume 2, *Gender and Policymaking*. Our team of colleagues at CAWP was invaluable in carrying out this project. Many and special thanks to Katherine Kleeman, Lucy Baruch, Debbie Walsh and Joan Crowley. We called on their expertise and diverse skills, and we counted on their steady willingness to pitch in at whatever level and for whatever tasks required attention — and we were never disappointed. A number of students helped in a variety of ways; we are grateful for their interest and for the very able assistance provided by Carrie Calvo and graduate students Deirdre Condit, Barbara Crow, Joe Cammarano and Patrick Murray. Karen Gronberg and Ella Taylor deserve special thanks as the graduate assistants who helped with the data analysis for the CAWP study. Our thanks to Eagleton Institute and CAWP staff members Martha Casisa, Pat Michaels and Edith Saks for contributing in many ways, from secretarial support to graphics design and layout to proofreading. Over the course of the project, we called on any number of people for technical assistance and advice; among them Kamala Brush, Bill Cibes, Kelly Griffin, Jeanne Kennedy, Roland King, Amy Melvin, Hannele Rubin, Mark Schulman and Kathy Stanwick were especially generous with their time and expertise. Finally, special thanks for their help and valuable insights at critical moments to Alan Rosenthal, Director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics, and Cliff Zukin, Associate Professor at the Institute.

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About CAWP

The Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) is a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. CAWP is a leading authority in its field and a respected bridge between the academic and political worlds.

Before CAWP was founded in 1971, no organization or educational institution was compiling information about women in government and politics or studying and monitoring the status and prospects of those women. Today, CAWP has taken on the multiple roles of catalyst and resource, provider of data and analyses, interpreter and guide. CAWP raises and responds to emerging issues, working daily with women leaders as well as journalists, scholars, students, women's groups, governmental agencies, civic organizations and political parties.

Major CAWP Programs and Activities

- **Clearinghouse about Women in Politics and Government:** Responding to hundreds of calls and letters each year from people seeking information about women in politics, the Center not only answers factual questions, but also helps to frame and define issues. CAWP staff members often make public speeches and appear on television and radio; they are frequently cited in academic research and in the press.
- **Data Bank on Women in Public Office:** Since 1975 CAWP has collected data on women candidates and elected women serving in municipal, county, state legislative, statewide and federal offices. Information from the computerized data bank has been used to publish directories and fact sheets on women in elective and appointive office. In addition to current data — such as the number and percentage of women officeholders serving at each level, state-by-state rankings and party identification — the fact sheets include historical information about women in office. Mailing lists and labels from CAWP's data bank may be purchased.
- **Program for Women State Legislators:** Since its founding, the Center has maintained a special interest in women lawmakers, convening national meetings for them to discuss public policies and political processes. Special programs have focused on women in legislative leadership and women's legislative caucuses. The program also undertakes research and collects and disseminates information about the backgrounds, issue interests, status and impact of women state legislators. CAWP collaborates regularly with women legislators' national and state organizations and networks.

- **Subscriber Information Service and Newsletter:** CAWP sends subscribers three packets every year; each contains the Center's newsletter, *CAWP News & Notes*, as well as fact sheets, reports, reprints of articles and other timely information.
- **Research about Women's Political Participation:** Several CAWP staff members are actively engaged in scholarly research and their work reaches the larger academic community through publications and presentations. In addition, CAWP is a leading source of information and assistance for researchers examining women's participation in politics. The Center acts both as a catalyst for research on certain important aspects of women's political participation and as a resource for scholars pursuing their own projects. The Center also initiates research on other questions of particular interest to women, such as the impact of the abortion issue on electoral politics.
- **National Surveys of Elected and Appointed Women:** CAWP's nationwide surveys have provided much-needed information for practitioners and scholars. Current research focuses on the impact of women in public office. Other studies have examined the factors that affect women's entry into elective and appointive office at various levels of government, career paths of women municipal managers, women as candidates and women appointed to state boards and commissions.
- **Liaison between Academic and Political Communities:** Through conferences, consultations, publications and presentations at meetings, CAWP fosters communication between scholars and political practitioners, helping each group to understand and utilize the work of the other.
- **Grants Program:** From time to time, CAWP requests proposals and offers awards to stimulate and support individual writing and research about women's participation in American politics. A group of research grant recipients selected in 1988 is studying "The Impact of Women in Public Office." Topics examined by scholars and writers in 1974 and 1976 grants programs were: "The Nature and Political Impact of Women's Voluntary Activities"; and "Women and Local Government."
- **Conferences and Seminars:** Meetings and symposia convened by CAWP have included: national conferences for women state legislators; a conference for leaders of organizations of women public officials; consultations with leaders of women's political action committees and state organizations for elected women; workshops on lobbying and campaign skills; and seminars with women public leaders conducted in conjunction with CAWP's research programs. Special educational programs have been presented for Hispanic women moving into leadership and for young leaders, scholars and journalists from Canada and Europe. The Center also organized a seminar about women in international leadership in cooperation with Douglass College, the women's college at Rutgers University.

- **Programs for College and High School Students:** In 1991 CAWP launched a four-year series of summer institutes and campus-based projects about politics and public leadership for college women and their advisors. The Center has also been instrumental in founding, developing and administering the Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN), a consortium of women's colleges working together to prepare young women for public leadership. CAWP and PLEN are collaborating on the summer institutes and on research about public leadership programs for students around the country. CAWP also offers student internships at the Center and at CAWP conferences and seminars.
- **Consulting Services:** CAWP tailors programs to offer its expertise to groups with specialized needs and interests. Recent examples have included leadership training for Hispanic women and seminars about women in American leadership for international visitors.
- **Cooperative Activities with Other Units of Rutgers University:** CAWP and Douglass College frequently work jointly on programs of mutual interest. The Center also works in partnership with other Rutgers units including the Institute for Research on Women, the Women's Studies Program, the Associate Alumnae of Douglass College, the Center for Global Issues and Women's Leadership and the Department of Political Science.
- **Library — Specialized Collection about Women in Public Life:** CAWP's unique library on Women in American Politics, which is open to the public, includes several hundred volumes, as well as more than 100 periodicals and thousands of clippings, articles and unpublished papers.
- **Books, Monographs, Reports, Fact Sheets, Documentary Film:** CAWP's work has resulted in the publication of books, monographs, fact sheets, bibliographies and reports on women's participation in American politics. Fact sheets containing current and historical information about women in public office are issued regularly. CAWP also produced *Not One of the Boys*, a 60-minute film examining the progress women are making and the obstacles they encounter after more than a decade of increased involvement in political life. The film appeared on the PBS series *Frontline* in 1984 and is available for sale or rental from CAWP.

Eagleton Institute of Politics

Since its founding in 1956, the Eagleton Institute has built a national reputation for its graduate fellowship program and for its research and public service activities in the field of American politics. The Institute houses three major centers (CAWP; the Center for Public Interest Polling; and the Center for Policy Research in Education) and a number of special programs about American public policy and the political process.

Introduction

For more than fifteen years the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) has conducted research aimed at understanding the status, problems and contributions of women public officials. CAWP's earliest work, conducted throughout the 1970s, attempted to document the existence among elective officeholders of "political women" — their numbers, their backgrounds and their perceptions of themselves within the political environment.¹ In the early 1980s, CAWP turned its research attention to the question of why so few women hold public office, expanding its focus to include political appointees at state and federal levels as well as elective officials. With funding provided by the Charles H. Revson Foundation, CAWP conducted the most comprehensive research ever undertaken on women's routes into public office, examining the factors that inhibit and facilitate their entry into elective and appointive positions.²

Now, in new research, once again sponsored by the Charles H. Revson Foundation and reported in this series — *The Impact of Women in Public Office* — the Center for the American Woman and Politics begins to answer a frequently asked question about women public officials: *what difference does their presence in office make?* The research discussed in this series provides the first systematic and comprehensive analysis of the effects of gender differences on public policy and political institutions.

The significance of the question addressed by this research is abundantly clear. Proponents of increased representation for women can and do argue for the election or

¹See, for example: Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, *Political Woman*, New York: Basic Books, 1974; Marilyn Johnson and Kathy Stanwick, *Profile of Women Holding Office*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1976; Marilyn Johnson and Susan Carroll, *Profile of Women Holding Office II*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1978.

²Kathy A. Stanwick and Katherine E. Kleeman, *Women Make a Difference*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983; Susan J. Carroll and Wendy S. Strimling, *Women's Routes to Elective Office: A Comparison with Men's*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983; Susan J. Carroll and Barbara Geiger-Parker, *Women Appointed to the Carter Administration: A Comparison with Men*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983; Susan J. Carroll and Barbara Geiger-Parker, *Women Appointed to State Government: A Comparison with All State Appointees*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983; Katherine E. Kleeman, *Women's PACs*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983; Kathy A. Stanwick, *Political Women Tell What It Takes*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983; Kathy A. Stanwick, *Getting Women Appointed: New Jersey's Bipartisan Coalition*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1984; Wendy S. Strimling, *Elected Women Organize: Statewide Associations*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1986.

appointment of more women public officials as a matter of justice and equity. They assert that democratic principles require that all citizens regardless of gender should have an equal opportunity to participate in politics. Many question the quality of representation in a nation where women are half of the citizens, but a small minority of officeholders. However, their arguments become more compelling if, in fact, women officeholders bring to office important perspectives and priorities that are currently underrepresented in the policymaking process.

Moreover, the simple reality is that the numbers of women who serve in public office have increased and will continue to increase. Although women are still far from parity with men in officeholding, the numbers of women holding office at most levels of government have increased with each subsequent election during the past two decades.³ For example, while women still constitute only 18.3 percent of state legislators nationally, the number of women serving in state legislatures increased from 344 in 1971 to 908 in 1981 to 1365 in 1991.⁴ Barring major changes in our system of electoral politics, there is every reason to expect that this trend of incremental, but steady, increases will continue throughout the 1990s and into the next century. As more and more women move into public office, it is critically important that we understand what the consequences are likely to be both for public policy and the political process.

Just as the increasing numbers of women serving in public office have made questions about women's impact more important than ever before, so too has this increase made research focusing on these questions more possible than ever before. Prior to recent years there were too few women serving at most levels of government to provide a fair assessment of whether and how they might be making a difference. So long as women were mere tokens struggling for survival in institutions that were unaccustomed to their presence, it seemed unlikely that any except the most exceptional women would be able to have much of a distinctive impact. Now, however, women are present in sufficient numbers at various levels of office in various locales to expect that if, in fact, women are likely to have a distinctive impact on public policy or the political process, that impact might begin to be evident.

³ Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), "Women in Elective Office 1991," New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), National Information Bank on Women in Public Office, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1991. The major exception to this pattern is in Congress where the number of women serving as representatives and senators fluctuated between fifteen and twenty throughout the 1970s and seemed to remain stable at about twenty-three to twenty-five throughout most of the 1980s. However, the number of women serving in Congress reached an all-time high of thirty-one in the 101st Congress (1989-1991) and remained at thirty-one in 1991 (including one non-voting delegate from Washington, D.C.). Many observers expect the pattern of incremental increases in the number of women to be evident in Congress in coming years. See Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), "Women in the U.S. Congress 1991," New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), National Information Bank on Women in Public Office, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1991.

⁴ Center for the American Woman and Politics, "Women in State Legislatures 1991," New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), National Information Bank on Women in Public Office, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1991.

Why Expect Women Officeholders to Have a Distinctive Impact?

Previous research findings, contemporary theoretical work on differences between women and men and recent political trends and developments all point to the expectation that women public officials in the aggregate would have a distinctive impact on public policy and the political process.

Suggestive evidence that women in public office make a difference emerged from CAWP's research in the early 1980s on *Bringing More Women Into Public Office*. Research on elective officials at various levels of office, cabinet and subcabinet appointees in the Carter administration and appointed state cabinet-level officials suggested that women bring into office both new and different perspectives on public policy and a commitment to paving the way for still more women leaders.⁵ That research found that women officials have different attitudes from men on several important public policy issues. The gap between women and men in office was most pronounced on women's issues, although it was present on other types of issues as well. Within both parties and across various self-identified ideological groups (i.e., liberals, moderates and conservatives), women elective officeholders and political appointees were generally more liberal and more feminist than their male counterparts in their views on public policy issues such as the role of the private sector in solving our economic problems, the death penalty, the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion. Moreover, the research found that women public officials made special efforts to insure that other women would follow in their footsteps. Women officeholders often spoke with groups of women to stress the importance of political involvement, made special efforts to hire women as staff, met with individual women to share their political knowledge, actively sought out and promoted women in making appointments and lent their names and prestige to efforts undertaken by others on behalf of women.

The writings of various contemporary American theorists in Women's Studies also point to the expectation that women public officials may have a distinctive impact. "Difference" theorists such as Nancy Chodorow, Carol Gilligan and Sara Ruddick identify varying aspects of women's and men's psycho-social development as the source of gender differences.⁶ Chodorow, for example, stresses psychodynamic processes of

⁵See all reports in Note 2 above, but especially Stanwick and Kleeman, *Women Make a Difference*.

⁶Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, Berkeley: University of California, 1978; Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982; Sara Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking," *Feminist Studies* 6 (1980): 342-367. See also Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminist Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984; Mary O'Brien, *The Politics of Reproduction*, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981; Joan C. Tronto, "Beyond Gender Difference to a Theory of Care," *Signs* 12 (1987): 644-663. Difference theorists have been criticized as insufficiently attentive to the diversity that exists among women of different cultures, classes, races, ethnicities, and sexual orientations both in American society and cross-culturally. Women officeholders, who tend disproportionately to be middle-class or upper middle-class and white, are less diverse than the American population as a whole and probably more closely resemble the women upon whose experience these theories are based. Nevertheless, one should not expect the tendencies described by difference theorists to be true of all women officeholders.

identity formation in early childhood, Gilligan analyzes women's moral development and reasoning, and Ruddick focuses on the social practice of mothering. Although there are important areas of disagreement among difference theorists, their work collectively suggests that women in comparison with men are more relational, have a greater sense of connection with others, are more empathic and caring and are less likely to think in terms of rights and more likely to think in terms of responsibilities.

Finally, contemporary political developments suggest that women in public office might have an impact distinctive from that of men. The influence of the women's movement on the consciousness of American women is one important development. Over the past two decades the women's movement has emphasized that women have interests, concerns and priorities that sometimes differ from those of men and that women's interests, concerns and priorities are equally as important as those of men. While many American women still shy away from the label "feminist," and while many women disagree with parts of the feminist agenda, women's recognition of the fact that their interests are not identical to those of men is far greater now than it was two decades ago, largely as a result of the influence of the women's movement.

The fact that women have increasingly come to see their political interests as distinct from those of men is evident in the development of the so-called "gender gap" in public opinion and voting behavior over the past decade. In each of the three presidential elections held in the 1980s, 6 to 9 percent fewer women than men voted for the Republican candidate. In addition, the gender gap was also evident in many statewide races throughout the 1980s, with women usually casting their votes disproportionately for Democratic candidates but sometimes giving their votes disproportionately to Republican candidates who appealed to women voters on the issues. Recent public opinion polls have also shown a gender gap on a variety of public policy issues. Compared with men, women in the general population are: less militaristic on issues of war and peace; more often opposed to the death penalty; more likely to favor gun control; more likely to favor measures to protect the environment; more supportive of programs to help the economically disadvantaged; more supportive of efforts to achieve racial equality; and more likely to favor laws to regulate and control various social vices (e.g., drugs, gambling, pornography).⁷ Given the existence of a gender gap in political preferences among the general public, one might well expect to find a similar gender gap in the policy-related behavior, priorities and initiatives of officeholders.

⁷Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), "The Gender Gap in Presidential Voting: 1980-1988," New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), National Information Bank on Women in Public Office, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1989.

Factors That May Affect the Extent to Which Women Have a Distinctive Impact

Despite the above reasons for expecting women officeholders in the aggregate to have a distinctive impact, there are reasons to expect that women's impact will not be evident among all women or in all situations. Skeptics often point to examples of political women whom they perceive as *not* having had a distinctive gender-related impact — women who, they argue, have acted "just like men." Perhaps the most visible and commonly cited examples are Margaret Thatcher and Indira Gandhi. The existence of women leaders both abroad and in the United States whose actions seem unaffected by gender calls our attention to the possible role of both individual characteristics and situational constraints in influencing the extent to which women public officials might make a difference.

As past research by CAWP and by others has demonstrated, women who hold public office are not monolithic. They differ not only from men but also among themselves in their backgrounds, their political ideologies and their perceptions of their roles as public officeholders. These individual differences among officeholders are likely to affect the extent to which they have a distinctive gender-related impact on public policy and the political process. Consequently, while one might expect to find evidence of women making a difference in the aggregate, it would be unrealistic to expect gender to influence the behavior of every woman officeholder. Variation among women in impact is to be expected.

Similarly, certain types of political situations are likely to be more or less conducive to the expression of gender differences in impact. Variation in impact can be expected, for example, to be affected by the extent to which the process for selecting officeholders is centralized or decentralized as well as by the values of those who do the selecting. Many people, including party influentials, funders and voters, are involved in the selection of elected officials. In contrast, the selection of political appointees is more centralized. This gives those who select political appointees more potential for control over the types of women who become appointed officials; their values may lead them to choose women who will make no attempt to make a difference or, perhaps in some cases, to select women who are likely to try to have a gender-related impact.

Even though the values of selectors are less important in electoral politics because of the decentralized nature of the selection process, their values, nevertheless, may still affect impact. For example, compared to those women representing liberal constituencies, women who are elected by and represent conservative constituencies might differ in their impact, both in terms of what they might choose to do and in terms of what their constituents might permit them to do.

Characteristics of the institutions in which public officials serve also may affect the extent to which women in those institutions make a difference. Where institutional pressures, norms or leadership discourage women from behaving differently from their male colleagues, women may be less likely to have a distinctive impact. Where women

officeholders are able to work together informally or are organized into a formal caucus, women may be more likely to make a difference.

Thus, while there are good reasons to expect to find that women public officials in the aggregate will have a distinctive impact, there also are good reasons to expect variations in impact both among women and across different officeholding situations.

The Study

To assess whether and how women officeholders are making a difference in public policy and in political institutions more generally, the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) pursued a dual research strategy. First, CAWP awarded grants to scholars from across the nation to study whether women officeholders make a difference. These projects were selected to provide an in-depth look at women's impact in particular environments. Their research reports, which examine elected and appointed women's impact at the local, state and national levels of government and in the legislative, executive and judicial branches, are compiled in a separate volume in this series entitled *Gender and Policymaking: Studies of Women in Office*. Second, CAWP undertook its own research project to provide a systematic, broader overview of the question of whether women make a difference. The CAWP study, which focused on the impact of women state legislators, is the subject of this report.

We decided to concentrate on the impact of women in state legislatures for several reasons. First, CAWP has a long history of working with and studying women state legislators. Over the past two decades, CAWP has held numerous conferences and has conducted several studies that have focused on women serving in the state legislatures.⁸

⁸Center for the American Woman and Politics, *Women in Legislative Leadership: Report from a Conference*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1986; Kathy A. Stanwick and Katherine E. Kleeman, *Women Make a Difference*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983; Susan J. Carroll and Wendy S. Strimling, *Women's Routes to Elective Office: A Comparison with Men's*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983; Center for the American Woman and Politics, *Women State Legislators: Report from a Conference*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1982; Marilyn Johnson and Susan J. Carroll, *Profile of Women Holding Office II*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1978; Marilyn Johnson and Kathy A. Stanwick, *Profile of Women Holding Office*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1976; Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, *Political Woman*, New York, NY: Basic Books, 1974; Center for the American Woman and Politics, *Women State Legislators: Report from a Conference* New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1973. Conferences held by CAWP include: Forum for Women State Legislators (1991); A New Decade of Leadership: A Regional Forum for Women State Legislators (1990); Forum for Newly Elected Women State Legislators (1989); Forum for Women State Legislators (1987); Conference for Women in Legislative Leadership (1985);

Second, substantial numbers of women serve in state legislatures, and this is the highest level of government where so many women serve. At the time of the interviews in 1988, the 1175 women legislators comprised 15.8 percent of lawmakers. As of August 1991, 1365 women served as legislators, constituting 18.3 percent of officeholders at this level.⁹

Third, state legislatures vary in numerous ways. For example, women's proportions within these lawmaking bodies range from a high of 34.4 percent in Arizona to a low of 2.8 percent in Louisiana. Such variations among legislatures make them interesting laboratories for assessing whether and how institutional factors affect the likelihood that women officeholders will have a distinctive impact.

Finally, we chose to focus on state legislatures because they play important roles in the political system. State legislatures are important stepping stones to higher office, with ten of the thirty-one women currently serving in the U.S. Congress having previously served in their states' legislatures. Furthermore, the policy relevance of state legislatures has increased in the past decade, as the federal government has shifted to the states the responsibility of addressing an increasingly greater share of social problems. State legislators must choose whether or not to accept this responsibility and how to finance new programs out of state coffers. State legislatures, then, clearly are one type of government institution where women could have an important impact on policy.

During the summer of 1988, CAWP conducted a nationwide survey of state legislators. Four samples of legislators were drawn: (1) the population of all women state senators (n=228); (2) a systematic sample of one-half of women state representatives (n=474);¹⁰ (3) a systematic sample of male state senators (n=228); and (4) a systematic sample of male state representatives (n=474). The number of men sampled from each state house or senate was proportional to the number of women serving in that state chamber. This was to ensure that we actually compared women and men who served in similar political circumstances, rather than comparing women and men from states with very different political and legislative environments.

A telephone interview of approximately one-half hour was attempted with each of the legislators, resulting in the following response rates: 86 percent for female senators; 87 percent for female representatives; 60 percent for male senators; and 73 percent for male representatives. Respondents and nonrespondents did not differ substantially from one another with regard to party affiliation, the one variable for which we have data for all lawmakers sampled.

Most of the analysis presented in this report combines responses of state representatives and senators of the same sex, presenting the data separately only when

Forum for Women State Legislators (1983); Conference for Women State Legislators (1982); Conference for Women State Legislators (1972).

⁹Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), "Women in State Legislatures 1991," New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), National Information Data Bank on Women in Public Office, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1991.

¹⁰We use the term "representative" throughout this report to refer to members of a state's lower chamber; in some states these officials are actually called "delegate" or "assemblyperson."

there are substantial differences between lawmakers in the two chambers. Because our sample included all women senators, but only one-half of all women representatives, we statistically weighted the data to ensure that our findings were representative of all women state legislators in the United States.

To bring our statistical results to life, we include in this report insights from women lawmakers. The quotes are drawn from a variety of sources: comments made on CAWP-sponsored panels; unstructured telephone interviews with women legislators; and a focus group held in 1987 to aid in survey development. The quotes were collected between 1987 and 1991.

This Report

This report examines two basic questions: 1) Has the increased presence of women in public office made a difference in public policy? and 2) Are processes within government institutions different because more women now hold office?

Chapters 1 through 3 address the policy question. In Chapter 1 we discuss legislators' impressions of the impact of women's increased presence on public policy, and we compare female and male legislators' attitudes on eight public policy issues ranging from abortion to the ability of the private sector to solve economic problems. In Chapter 2 we examine who works on bills aimed at helping women — bills that reflect the spirit of a feminist policy agenda and that we call women's rights bills. Chapter 3 focuses on the top priorities of women and men lawmakers to see whether women may be changing or expanding the legislative agenda.

In addition to comparing the attitudes and behaviors of women and men legislators in each of these chapters, we also compare policy attitudes and actions of African-American women and white women. Women of color face the dual challenge of overcoming discrimination against their racial or cultural group as well as discrimination based on sex. As officeholders, they carry the official or unofficial, desired or undesired, responsibility of speaking for their racial or ethnic communities and for women in the predominantly white male world of the legislature.

Because the vast majority of legislators — male or female — are Caucasian, our sample included too few Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans or other minorities for

analysis.¹¹ However, there were adequate numbers of African-American women (thirty-three) for some statistical comparisons with their white female colleagues.

We go beyond the general question of whether women and men differ in policy impact and attitudes to examine the role that individual characteristics and environmental factors play in inhibiting or facilitating the expression of gender differences. Do gender differences occur within parties? When we compare women and men who share similar ideological labels (e.g., moderate) or who respond similarly when asked if they identify with the label feminist, do we find differences between women's and men's actions and attitudes? Do memberships in women's groups, campaign endorsements by women's groups, occupation, parental status, age or seniority affect the expression of gender differences among lawmakers?

We also examine whether environmental factors affect the likelihood that women and men lawmakers' attitudes and actions will diverge. Do we find a gender gap among lawmakers who represent similar types of districts or who are political insiders? Does the professionalism of the legislature affect the likelihood that women will have a distinctive impact? Can women make a difference where they are present only in token numbers? Does the presence of a women's caucus facilitate the expression of gender differences within the legislature?

Chapter 4 looks at women's impact on legislative processes by examining whether women make a difference in who is involved in the policymaking process, in access to the legislature, in political leadership, in collegial relations and in support for women candidates.

¹¹As of August 1991, of the 1365 women state legislators serving nationwide, 161, or 11.8 percent, were women of color. Thirty-two were senators and 129 were representatives; all but three were Democrats. African-American women held 124 seats in state legislatures; all but one were Democrats. Asian/Pacific Islander women held seventeen seats in state legislatures; all but one were Democrats. Hispanic women held fifteen seats in state legislatures; all were Democrats. Native American women held five seats in state legislatures; all but one were Democrats. See Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), "Women of Color in Elective Office 1991," New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1991.

Chapter 1: Gender Differences in Attitudes on Public Policy Issues

Majorities of both women and men legislators believe that the increased presence of women in public office is making a difference in:

- the extent to which legislators consider how legislation will affect women as a group
- expenditure priorities for the state
- the number of bills passed dealing specifically with the problems faced by women

In response to eight questions about public policy, women legislators' attitudes were generally more feminist and liberal than the attitudes of their male colleagues. There was also a gender gap among women and men of similar ideologies (e.g., conservative, moderate or liberal). Furthermore, among those who represented districts with similar ideological views, women were more feminist and liberal in their policy views than their male colleagues. These same gender differences occurred among "political insiders" as well as among those who were not insiders.

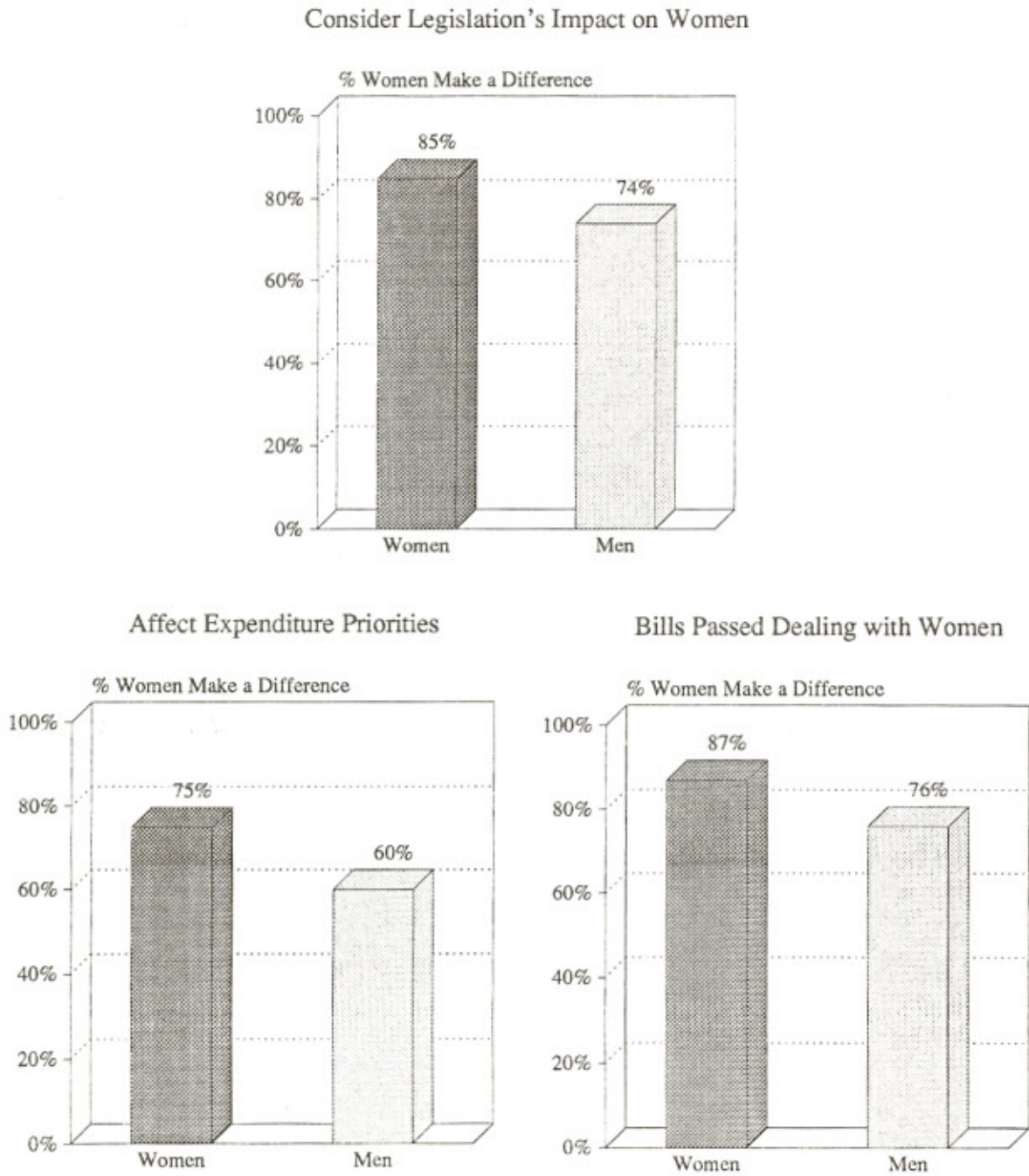
Impressions of Legislators: Women Make a Difference

Legislators believe that the increased presence of women in public office *is* making a difference in public policy (Figure 1). Regardless of party affiliation, region, race, length of service, age, ideology, feminist identification, professionalism of the legislature, the proportion of women serving in the chamber or whether they were in the upper or the lower house, majorities of both women and men agreed that the increased presence of women in the legislatures has made a difference in:

- the extent to which legislators consider how legislation will affect women as a group
- expenditure priorities for the state
- the number of bills passed dealing specifically with the problems faced by women¹

¹See Appendix for full text of question wording. In these three questions, respondents were presented with the following alternatives: "a lot of difference," "some difference" and "very little difference." If volunteered by the respondent, "no difference" and "don't know" also were accepted. Figure 1 illustrates the percentage who responded that women had made either "a lot of difference" or "some difference."

Figure 1: Female and Male Lawmakers' Views about the Impact of Women Legislators on Policy



In the words of a former state legislator who went on to hold higher office:

Clearly women bring a different experience into the legislative process than men do.... They see things differently. They generally have different backgrounds professionally. I think they bring...[a]...viewpoint into the legislature that's different and has changed dramatically a number of the issues in our legislature over the last fifteen years. Their influence...even began to be dramatic in places like tax law.... Child care in the tax laws, as an example, was just seen very differently by males and females on the revenue committee, when we finally had women on the revenue committee.... It was amazing how many things were just seen from a male perspective as they looked at the assumption that every household had a mother and a father and three children.... And tax law worked that way.

Gender Differences in Policy Attitudes

The perception among legislators that women's presence in state legislatures has made a difference is supported by differences in women's and men's attitudes on public policy issues. These differences emerged when we sought legislators' opinions on eight issues:

- the ability of the private sector to solve economic problems
- the death penalty
- government provision of child care services
- nuclear power
- parental consent for minors' abortions
- increasing state and local taxes for social services
- the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)
- prohibiting abortion in most cases²

Using legislators' responses to questions about these issues, we created two summary indexes of their policy attitudes. The first, the *General Policy Index*, was based on responses to all eight policy questions, with high scorers giving the largest number of

²See Appendix for full text of question wording.

liberal responses on the eight issue questions.³ Scores were categorized as low (0-4), medium (5-6) or high (7-8) in support of liberal policies.

The second measure, the *Feminist Policy Index*, used the responses to questions on the ERA, parental consent and prohibiting abortion. For the Feminist Policy Index, we counted the number of times each legislator's issue preferences were in agreement with the positions of the major national feminist organizations (e.g., National Organization for Women and National Women's Political Caucus) and categorized lawmakers' scores as low (0), medium (1-2) or high (3) in support of feminist policies.

A fuller list of policies that have been of special concern to feminist groups would have included child care issues, issues of economic and educational equity, comparable worth and wage discrimination, family health and domestic violence, equal employment and credit policies, the representation of women in public office and others. However, we chose to use responses to questions about the ERA and abortion rights for our Feminist Policy Index because these have been central mobilizing issues for the United States women's movement from the 1970s into the 1990s. They are the issues most likely to be used as litmus tests for candidate endorsements by women's political action committees (PACs), and, among all the issues, these two have been the "lightning rods" around which feminist activists have organized, recruited supporters, raised money, lobbied government and applied pressure to the political process.

More women than men expressed feminist policy views on the three issues comprising the Feminist Policy Index. Women were more likely to support passage of the ERA, to oppose parental consent for abortion and to oppose prohibiting abortion (Figure 2).

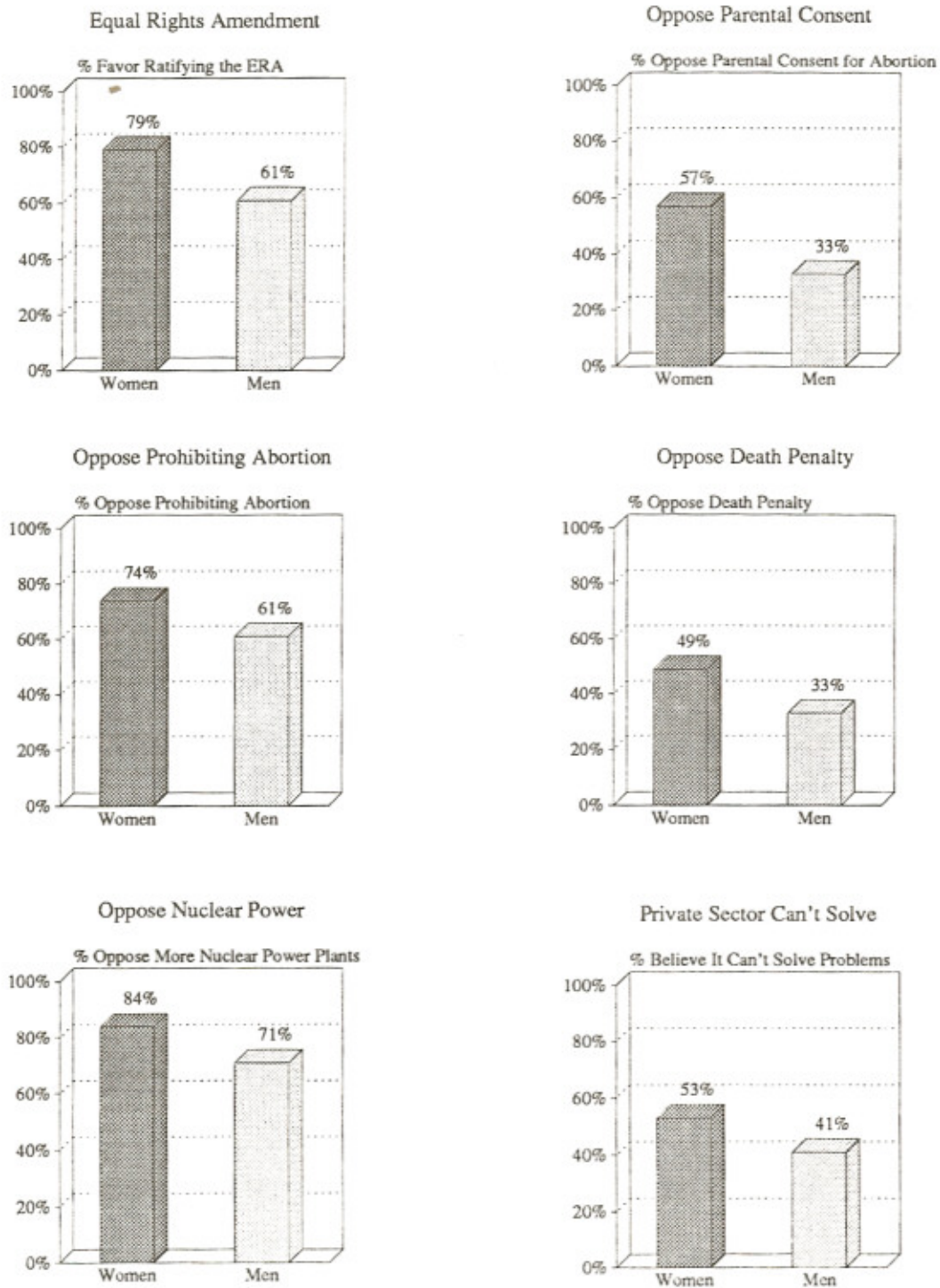
Women legislators also expressed more liberal attitudes on policies not usually thought of as "women's issues": they were less convinced than their male colleagues of the private sector's ability to solve economic problems, more likely to oppose the death penalty and more likely to oppose construction of additional nuclear power plants to address their states' future energy needs. Indeed, the gender gaps on these three issues were about as large as on the issue of prohibiting abortion.

However, female and male legislators expressed similar views about government provision of child care and increased taxes for social services. Seventy-one percent of women and 68 percent of the men agreed that government-subsidized child care should be provided; 61 percent of women and 59 percent of men favored increasing taxes to compensate for cuts in social services. Preferences on these two issues seemed to be influenced more by party philosophy about the appropriate role of government than by gender, with Democrats of both genders more supportive of each of these policies than Republicans of either gender.

The Feminist Policy Index and the General Policy Index summarized the gender differences in policy attitudes. Half of women legislators, but only a quarter of the men,

³In this analysis, a liberal policy position was defined as one advocated by the more progressive wing of the Democratic party. This position favors increased taxes to fund social services, government provision of child care and passage of the ERA. This position opposes the death penalty, the notion that the unregulated private sector can solve our economic problems, more nuclear power plants, parental consent for minors and prohibiting abortion.

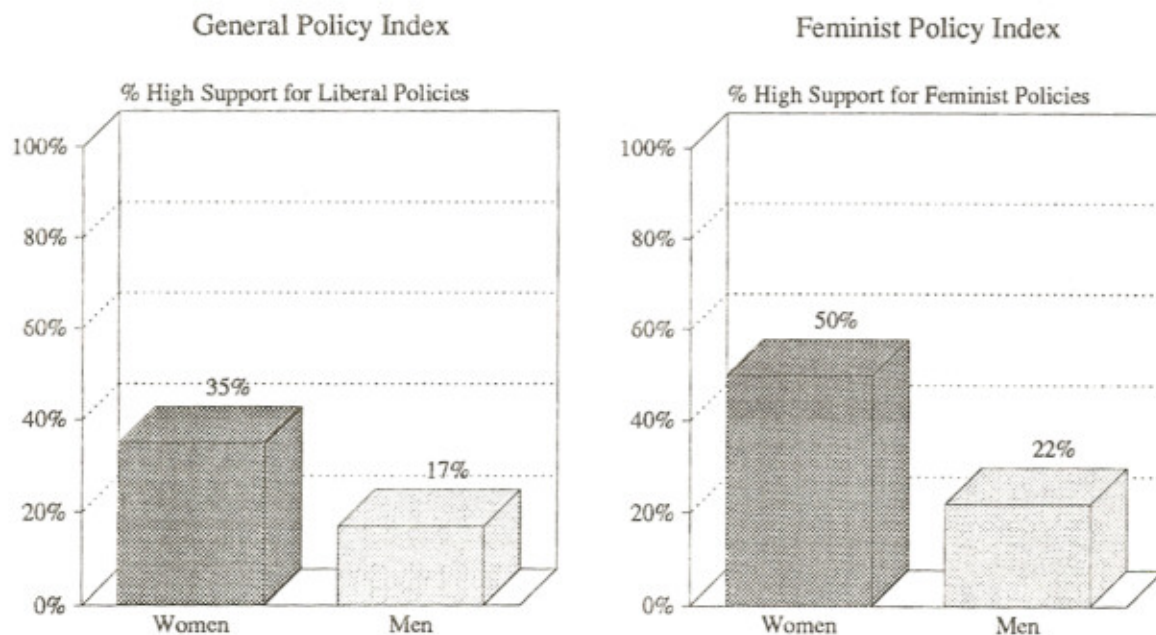
Figure 2: Female and Male Lawmakers' Policy Attitudes



scored high (supportive of feminist policy stands) on the Feminist Policy Index (Figure 3). Similarly, about one out of three women, but only one out of six men, scored high in support for liberal policies on the General Policy Index.⁴ Although attitude divergence does not guarantee behavior difference, women's more feminist and more liberal attitudes suggest that women's increased presence in legislatures (as well as in other public offices) has the *potential* to make a substantial difference in the outcome of floor votes and committee votes on a variety of issues. With gaps such as these in policy preferences, it is not surprising that both male and female lawmakers alike see women as making a difference in policy.

Gender differences in public policy attitudes were not confined to one party. Partisanship influenced policy attitudes, but women in each party brought to legislative policymaking different perspectives than did male colleagues within their party. First, proportionately more Democratic and Republican women scored high on the Feminist Policy Index than did male colleagues of the same party (Figure 4). Nonetheless, both gender and party influenced policy attitudes. Democratic women were the most likely to score high on the Feminist Policy Index, with three out of five doing so. Republican women and Democratic men tied for second place, with only about one out of three

Figure 3: Female and Male Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies



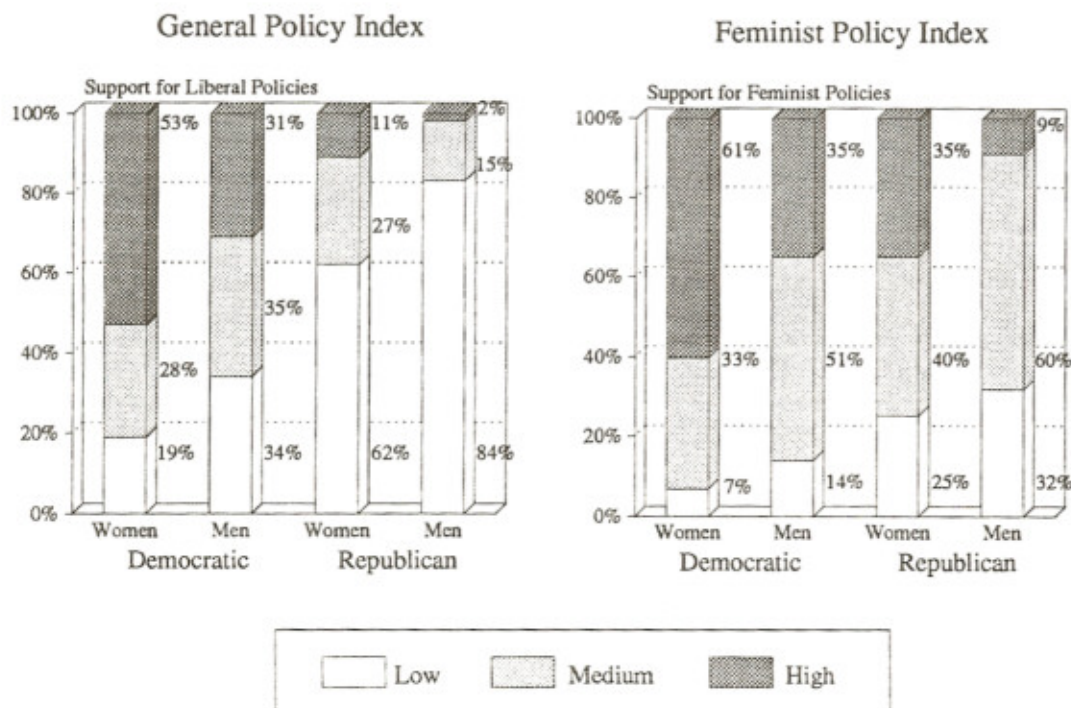
⁴A policy index based only on items not included in the Feminist Policy Index (i.e., the ability of the private sector to solve economic problems, the death penalty, government provision of child care services, nuclear power and increased taxes for social services) produced results similar to those of the General Policy Index. Because the results from the two indexes were similar, only the results of analysis based on the General Policy Index are presented.

scoring high in feminist attitudes. Republican men were far behind, with fewer than one out of ten having high scores on the Feminist Policy Index.

Second, on the General Policy Index, Democratic women were more likely than Democratic men to score high in support of liberal attitudes (53 percent vs. 31 percent). The same pattern emerged within the more conservative Republican party, where Republican women were less likely to score low in support of liberal policies than their male colleagues (62 percent vs. 84 percent).

White women and African-American women differed in their attitudes on some of the policy questions. African-American women were much less supportive of the death penalty than their white female colleagues (34 percent vs. 53 percent). African-American women were unanimous in their support for government-subsidized child care, while only two out of three white women supported this type of program. African-American women were more likely than white women to agree that state and local taxes should be raised to support social services (75 percent vs. 60 percent) and that the ERA should be passed (92 percent vs. 78 percent). None of the African-American women we interviewed thought that abortion should be prohibited, although about one out of four white women did. Both African-American and white women disagreed that more nuclear power plants should be built and opposed parental consent for minors' abortions. In addition, both

Figure 4: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies Given Party Affiliation

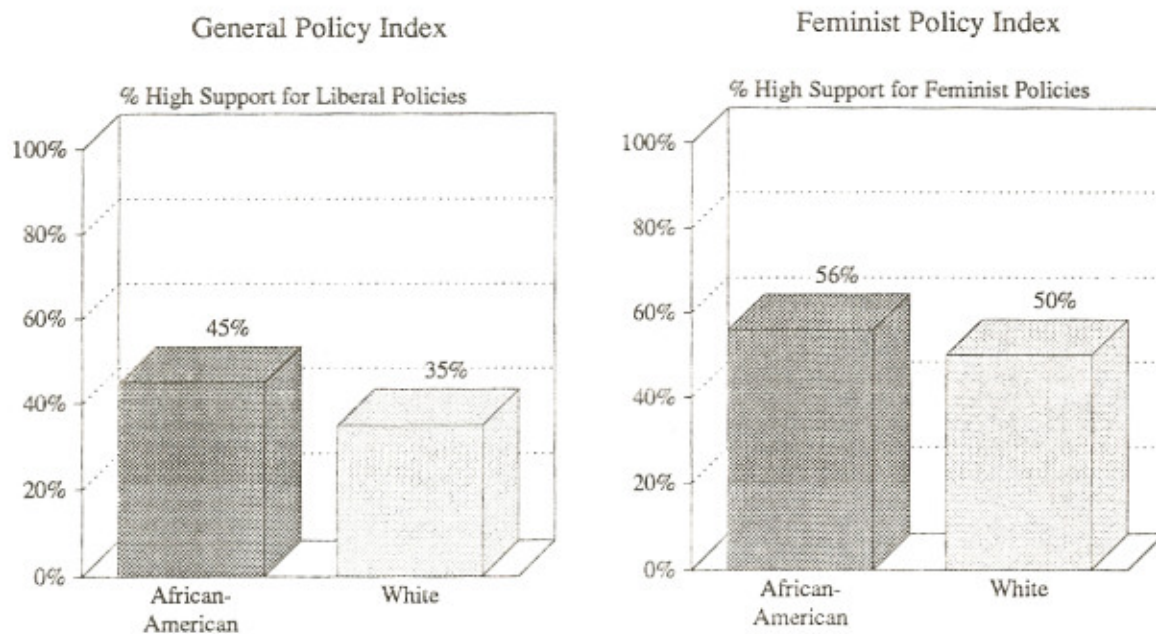


groups of women tended to disagree with the idea that the private sector could solve economic problems.⁵

Overall, African-American women were more likely than their white female colleagues to score high in support of liberal policies on the General Policy Index and were slightly more likely to score high on the Feminist Policy Index (Figure 5).

In addition to race, other variables can intervene as well to make women legislators' views more or less similar to men's. Women do not all share the same views and they do not all operate in identical political environments. Individual characteristics (e.g., political ideology) and differences in the political environment (e.g., the proportion of women in the legislature) are likely to affect the extent to which women lawmakers and their male colleagues differ. Nevertheless, the overall pattern of differences between women and men indicates that women's attitudes should predispose them to have a distinctive impact in a variety of public policy areas.

Figure 5: African-American and White Women Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies



⁵It should be noted that all of the African-American women we interviewed were Democrats. The racial differences among women overall were not replicated among Democratic women. Both African-American and white Democratic women had similar views on the issues with the following exceptions: 1) African-American women were somewhat more confident than other Democratic women of the private sector's ability to solve economic problems and 2) they were somewhat more positive in their attitudes toward nuclear power than their white female colleagues.

Factors Affecting Attitudes: A Look at Individual Characteristics

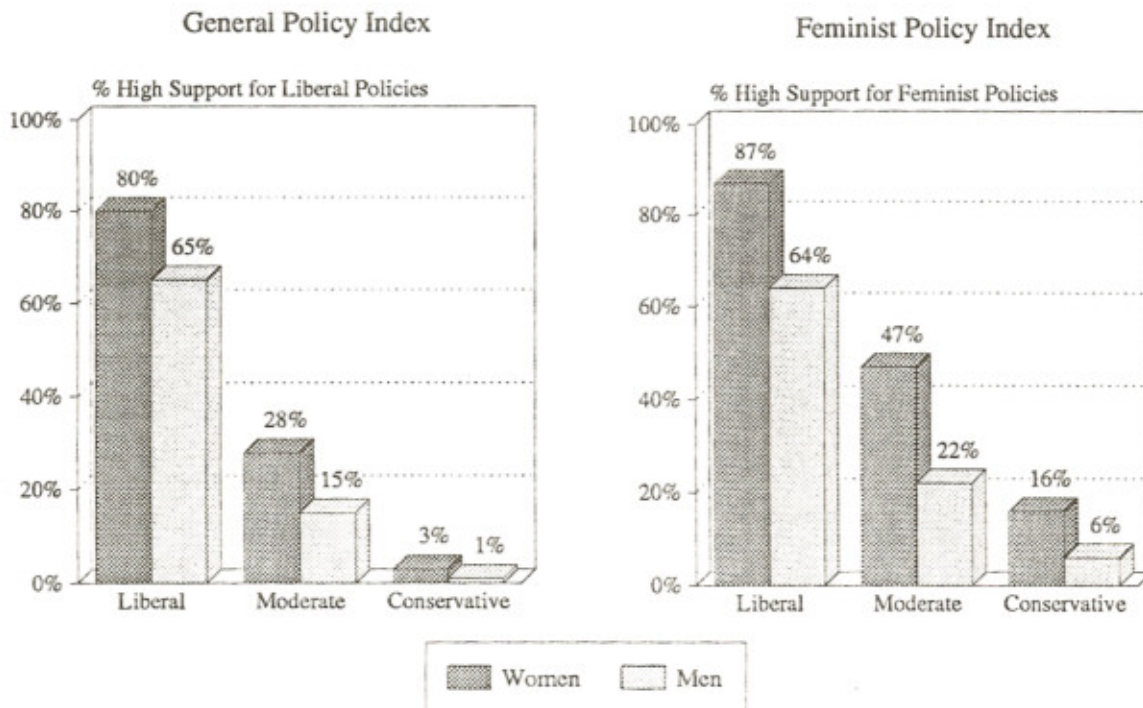
Do women have different policy views from men because women are more likely to be liberals?

Women lawmakers were more likely than men to identify themselves as liberals (27 percent vs. 14 percent), and self-labeled liberals did score higher on both the General Policy Index and the Feminist Policy Index than did self-labeled moderates and conservatives. Therefore, women legislators' greater tendency to label themselves as liberals could contribute to the gender differences in attitudes.

While self-identified ideology did help to account for some of the difference between policy attitudes of women and men, it was not the only factor. Even when women and men shared the same ideological label, women were more supportive of feminist policy positions on the Feminist Policy Index and more supportive of liberal policy attitudes on the General Policy Index (Figure 6). Among conservatives, the largest difference occurred at the low end of the scale (not shown), with 75 percent of the women but 89 percent of the men scoring low in support of liberal policies.

Thus, when compared to male officeholders who share their general political philosophy, women officeholders — regardless of whether they are conservative, liberal

Figure 6: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies Given Political Ideology



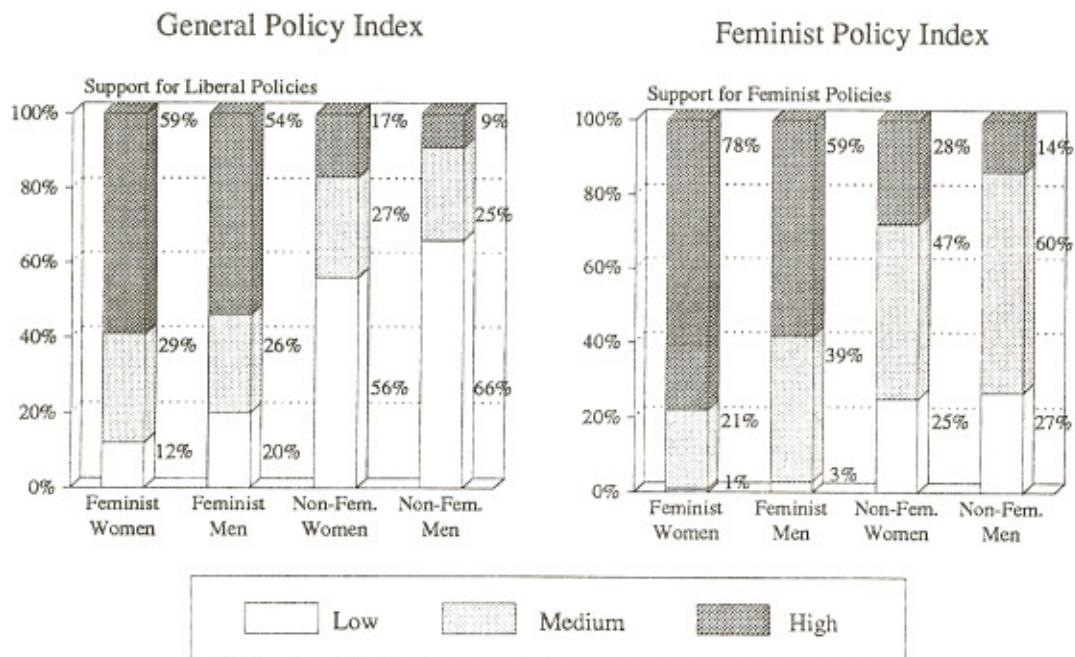
or moderate — have the potential to bring different perspectives on policy into the legislative arena. All other things being equal, if a district consistently tends to elect lawmakers cut from the same ideological cloth, electing a woman rather than a man may affect the direction of public policy.

Do women have different policy views than men because they are more often feminists?

As might be expected, more women than men legislators identified themselves as feminists (45 percent vs. 20 percent). Self-labeled feminists among both women and men were more likely than non-feminist women and men to score high on the Feminist Policy Index and the General Policy Index, reflecting greater agreement with stands espoused by feminist organizations and with more liberal public policy positions (Figure 7).

However, even after we take feminist identification into account, some gender differences in attitudes remain, particularly on the Feminist Policy Index. The proportion of women feminists scoring high on the Feminist Policy Index exceeded that of men feminists by almost 20 percentage points. Similarly, there was a 14-point gender gap among non-feminists scoring high on the index.

Figure 7: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies among Feminists and Non-Feminists



One reason that women, regardless of whether they identify themselves as feminists, may be more supportive of feminist policies than men is that women more commonly experience gender-based discrimination. Here is a dramatic illustration of an incident that led one woman legislator to change her views from anti-ERA to pro-ERA:

When I was first running for office...I started out anti-ERA and ran that way for a couple of elections. But I was at a shopping center and I introduced myself to a couple. I said, "I'm [name], running for office and hope you'll consider... voting for me. And this man said, "I wouldn't vote for you because you're a woman." Now this man was not my father's age.... He was my son's age! And when I realized that a young person could feel this way, I just flipped. It was a shock to me because I always felt that I had no need for the ERA, [and that] what I had not accomplished was [not accomplished] because I was just lazy.

Thus, experiences in their daily lives as women may make even those women who reject the feminist label more likely to support feminist policies than men who do not consider themselves feminists.

Do women have different policy views than men because they are connected to women's groups?

Previous CAWP studies found that women's organizations are important channels for the advancement of women in politics. They play a role in recruiting candidates and in supporting candidates and officeholders in various ways.⁶ One woman legislator (who won by a very narrow margin) enthusiastically discussed the importance of support from women's groups in her campaign:

I am grateful, extremely grateful, for the women's groups that helped me, for the women's groups that always support me and give the money they can. I have to say that a lot of women's groups don't have a lot of money and they make up for it in the amount of mailings they stuff, the stamps they lick, the poll workers that they are. They make up for it many times over.

As other research suggests, ties to women's groups may remind women working in predominantly male institutions of their responsibility to be mindful of women's interests and perspectives.⁷

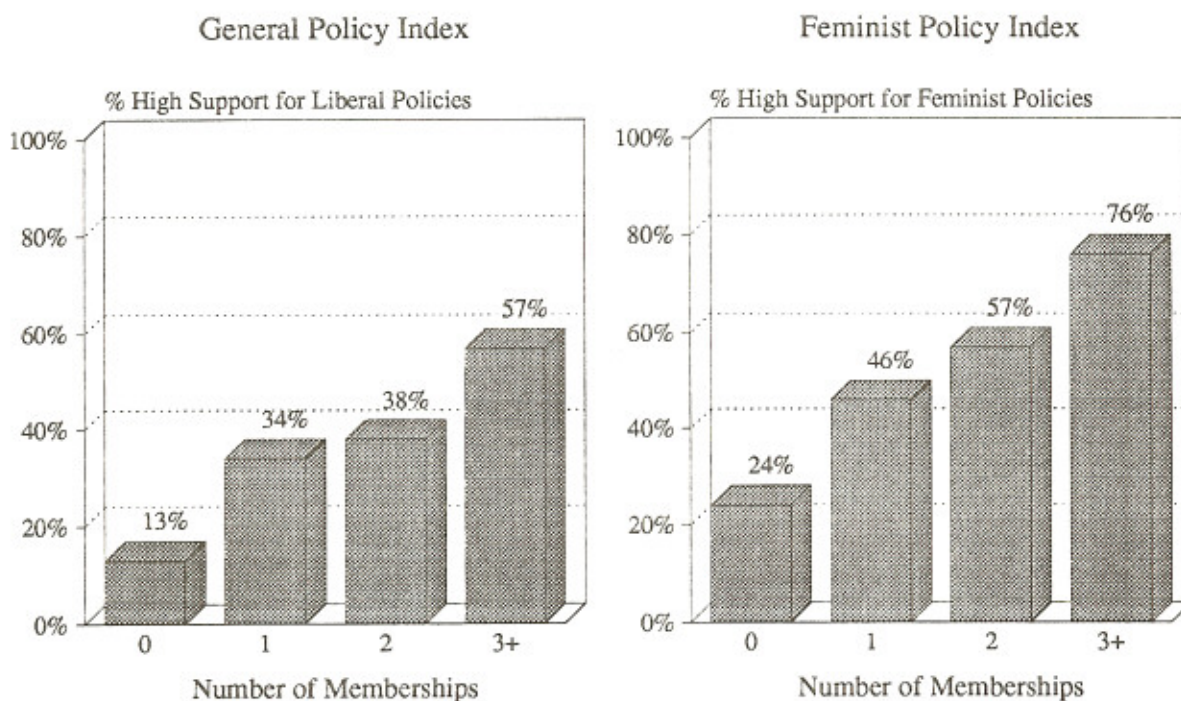
⁶Susan J. Carroll and Wendy S. Strimling, *Women's Routes to Elective Office: A Comparison with Men's*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983.

⁷Susan J. Carroll, "Women State Legislators, Women's Organizations, and the Representation of Women's Culture in the United States," in *Women Transforming Politics: Worldwide Struggles for Empowerment*, Edited by Jill M. Bystydzienski, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming.

Indeed, our data reveal that legislators more closely connected to the women's community are more likely than other legislators to support feminist policy perspectives. This pattern holds regardless of whether we measure connections with the women's community in terms of: 1) memberships in feminist or other women's organizations (specifically, the League of Women Voters [LWV], the American Association of University Women [AAUW], the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs [BPW], the National Organization for Women [NOW], the Women's Political Caucus [WPC] and feminist groups other than NOW or the WPC);⁸ or 2) campaign endorsements by NOW, the WPC or some other women's organization.⁹

The more women's groups to which a woman legislator belonged, the more likely she was to support feminist policy positions on the Feminist Policy Index or liberal policies on the General Policy Index (Figure 8).¹⁰ Women who held no memberships in

Figure 8: Women Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies
Given Membership in Major Women's Groups



⁸Only women legislators were asked about membership in these groups since these groups' memberships are primarily female.

⁹These endorsements need not have been from feminist organizations and indeed could have been from opponents of feminism such as the Eagle Forum or Concerned Women of America.

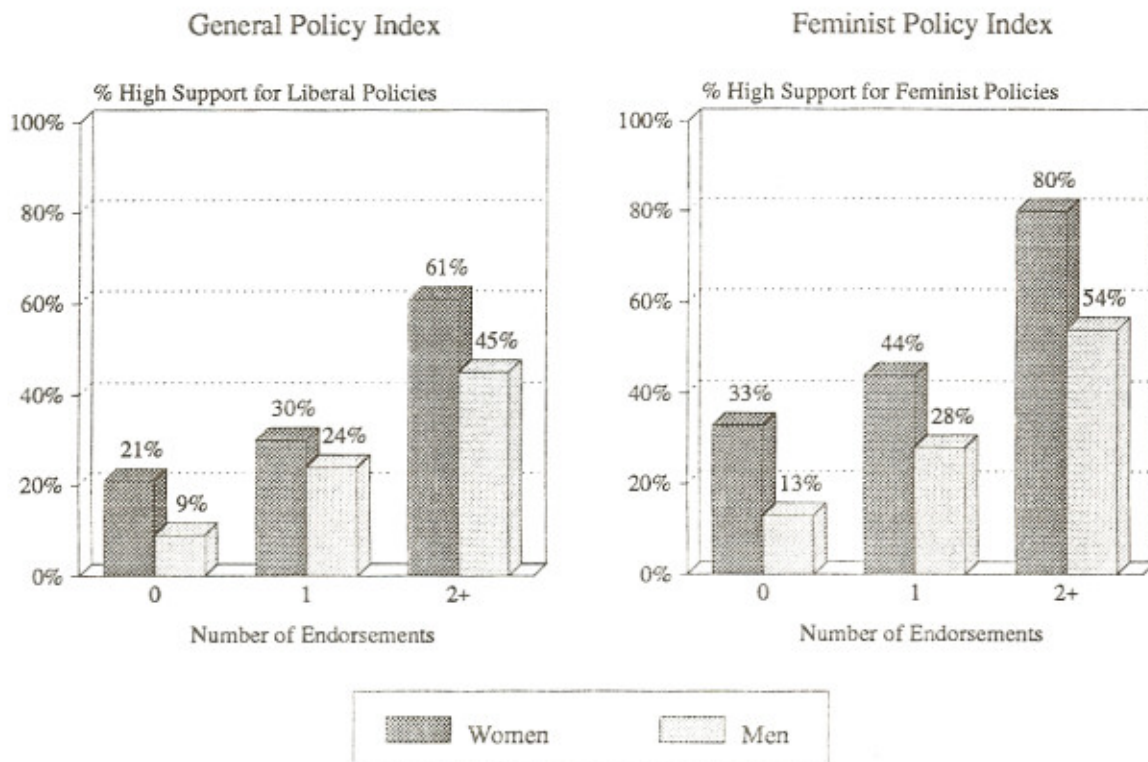
¹⁰If we considered separately membership in traditional women's groups (BPW, AAUW and LWV) only and feminist groups (NOW, WPC and other feminist groups) only, the results were similar in that members were more feminist than nonmembers. The difference was that the more feminist groups a legislator belonged to, the more feminist/liberal her policy attitudes. However, when it came to memberships in traditional women's groups, the number of group memberships did not matter as long as the legislator belonged to at least one group; in this case, the biggest difference was between members and nonmembers.

women's groups took stands on both policy indexes similar to the stands of male legislators as a whole.

Of course, we cannot tell from these responses whether women's groups encourage women to develop more feminist views, whether they encourage women to adhere to these views once in office or whether women who are more sympathetic to feminist policy stands are more inclined to join these groups. But regardless of the cause, women who bring a different perspective to public office are likely to be connected to such organizations.

Whether or not a legislator belongs to one of these women's organizations gives us a hint about whether she approves of an organization's policy goals and about what she believes to be important. Conversely, campaign endorsements are a clear stamp of a group's approval of a candidate's positions. Two patterns emerged when we looked at the policy attitude profiles of women and men who received endorsements from women's groups. First, the more endorsements received, the more likely women and men were to take feminist positions or liberal positions on the policy indexes. This is not surprising considering that feminist groups such as WPC and NOW consider some of these issues prior to endorsing. However, the second pattern is more surprising in light

Figure 9: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies Given Endorsements by Women's Groups



of this screening process: among those with equal numbers of endorsements from women's groups, women legislators were more likely than men to score high on each of the policy scales (Figure 9). This means that at any given level of support by women's groups, the women endorsed by these groups were more likely to express feminist and liberal views on the issues included in our study.

Do differences in women's and men's roles in the workforce contribute to gender differences in policy attitudes?

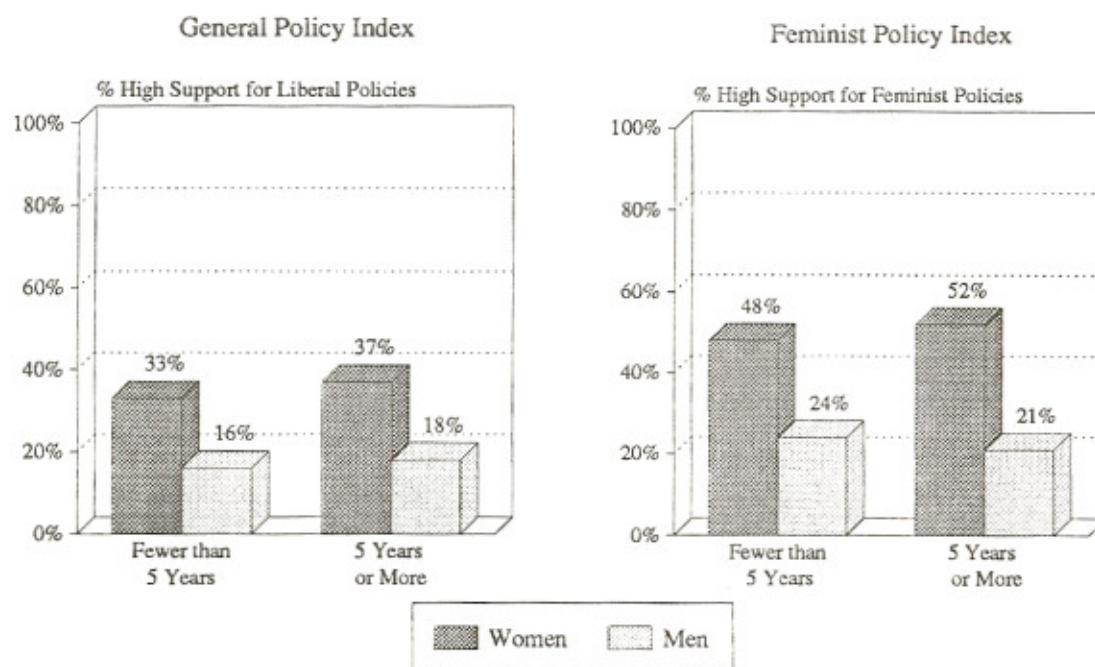
In reflecting on why women might make a difference in public office, women lawmakers frequently point to gender differences in occupational experiences. Women legislators often suggest that their experiences as nurses, teachers or social workers have given them different perspectives than their male colleagues who are lawyers or who come from other traditionally male fields. However, we found that women in traditionally male occupations were slightly *more* supportive of feminist policy positions on the Feminist Policy Index than women in traditionally female professions.

Figure 10: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies
Given Type of Occupation



Despite this slight variation among women, occupational background had little effect on the potential for women to have a distinctive policy impact. Small differences in the policy attitudes of women based on occupational type were overshadowed by the substantial differences between women and men sharing occupational backgrounds in traditionally male fields (Figure 10).¹¹ Compared to their male counterparts, women legislators in traditionally male occupations were about three times as likely as men to score high (liberal) on the General Policy Index (42 percent vs. 15 percent) and were more than twice as likely do so on the Feminist Policy Index (51 percent vs. 22 percent).¹² Among those from traditionally female occupations, women and the very small group of men (only forty-one in our sample) expressed comparatively similar policy attitudes. Our findings suggest that even as more women enter occupations that once were the domain of men, the attitudes of women and men who serve in public office will continue to differ.

Figure 11: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies Given Seniority



¹¹For purposes of analysis, this section excludes those jobs that are not clearly gender linked.

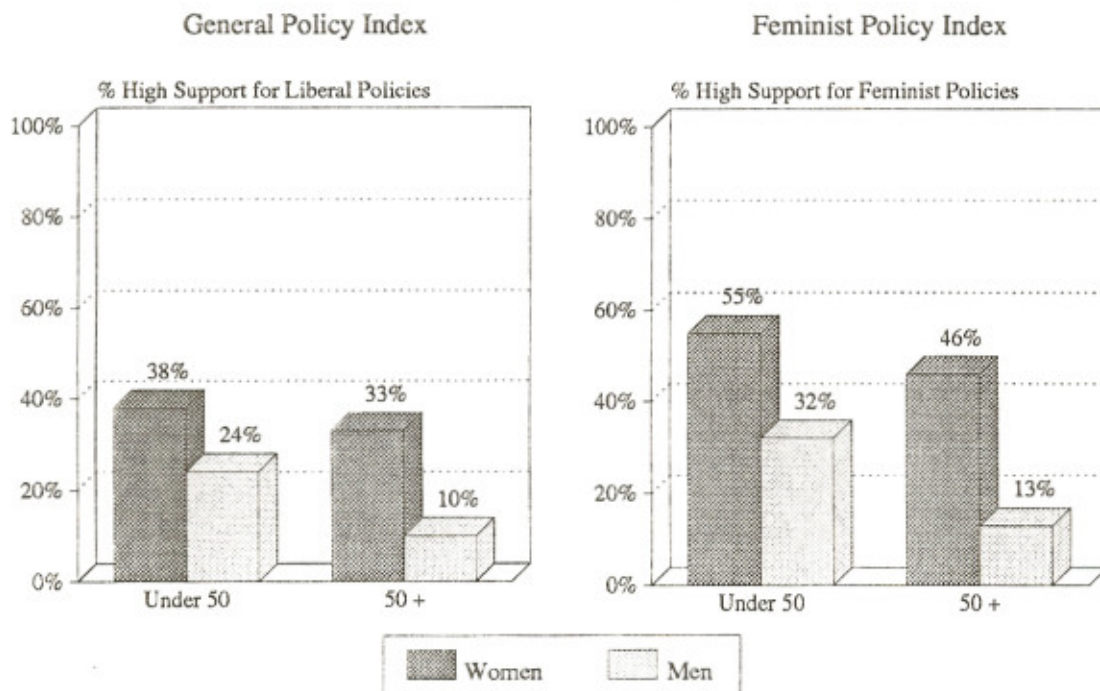
¹²Much attention has been focused on attorneys within the legislature. In our survey, men were more likely than women to have this occupation. Will the increased entry of women into the legal profession mean that women attorneys who later choose a political career have views similar to those of their male colleagues? Our data suggest not. On the Feminist Policy Index, 74 percent of the women attorneys, but only 33 percent of the men attorneys, scored high in support of feminist policies. Similarly, 55 percent of women attorneys, but only 21 percent of men, scored high in support of liberal policies on the General Policy Index.

The effects of seniority and age: Will gender differences in policy views last?

The length of time a woman serves in office might affect her potential to make a difference in policy. On the one hand, longer years of service could turn a woman into "one of the boys," resocializing her to be less supportive of feminist policy perspectives. Making a difference would be the task of the female novice. On the other hand, longer years of service could make it easier to make a difference. Seniority can bring status within the institution and security on election day, allowing a woman freedom to express views different from those of her male colleagues; this certainly would bode well for her potential to make a difference to continue into the future.

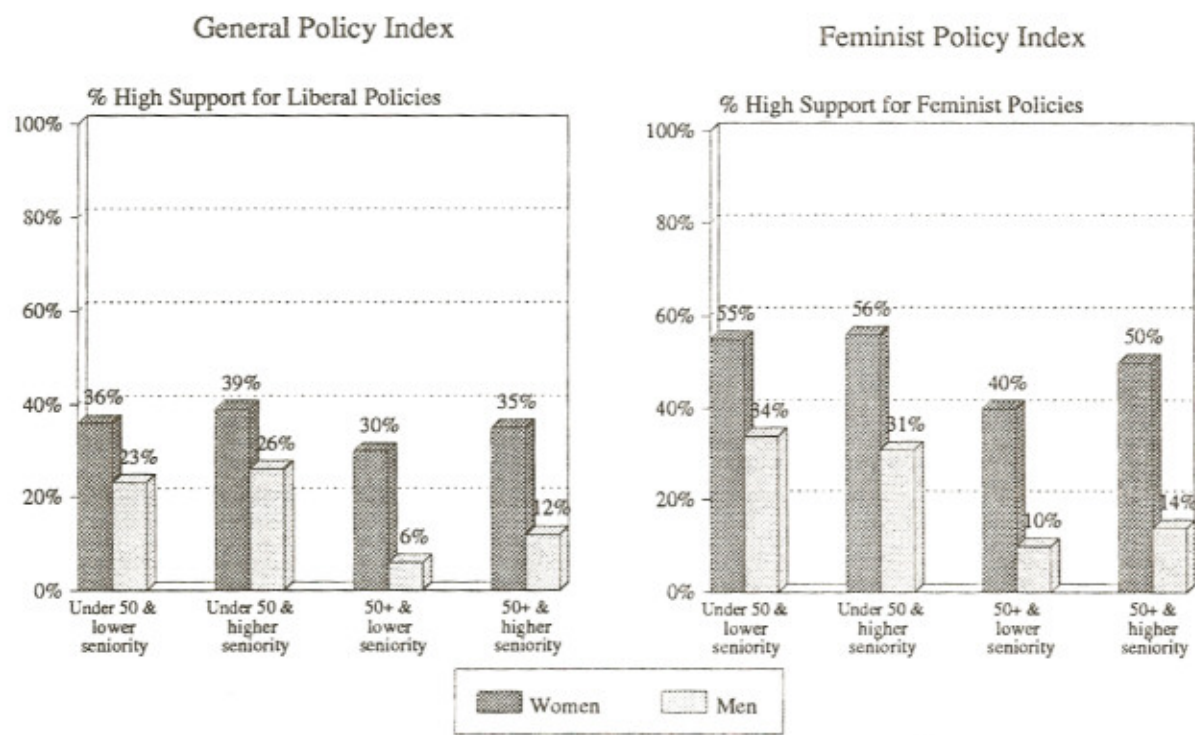
Comparing scores on the Feminist Policy Index and the General Policy Index, we found that: 1) women with lower seniority (fewer than five years experience) and those with higher seniority expressed similar attitudes about policy, providing no evidence that newcomers have any more or less potential to make a difference, and 2) women were more supportive of feminist and liberal policy positions than were men of equivalent seniority (Figure 11). These patterns suggest that women will continue to have the potential to make a difference in the foreseeable future as they achieve greater seniority within the legislature.

Figure 12a: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies Given Age



While seniority seems not to affect attitudes significantly, age differences do seem to be important. These may reflect generational differences in socialization regarding women's roles and in acceptance of public (government) involvement in issues once thought to be solely the responsibility of the individual or the family. However, in any age bracket in our study, women were more likely than men of comparable ages to express feminist or liberal policy preferences on the indexes (Figure 12a). This gender gap in attitudes was greater among older legislators because younger men showed more support for feminist policy positions than older men. The slight narrowing of the gender gap was due to age and not seniority. Older men, regardless of seniority, were less supportive of feminist and liberal policies than younger men (Figure 12b). Despite the increased support for these policies among younger men, women still had substantially and consistently more feminist and more liberal views.

Figure 12b: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies
Given Age and Seniority



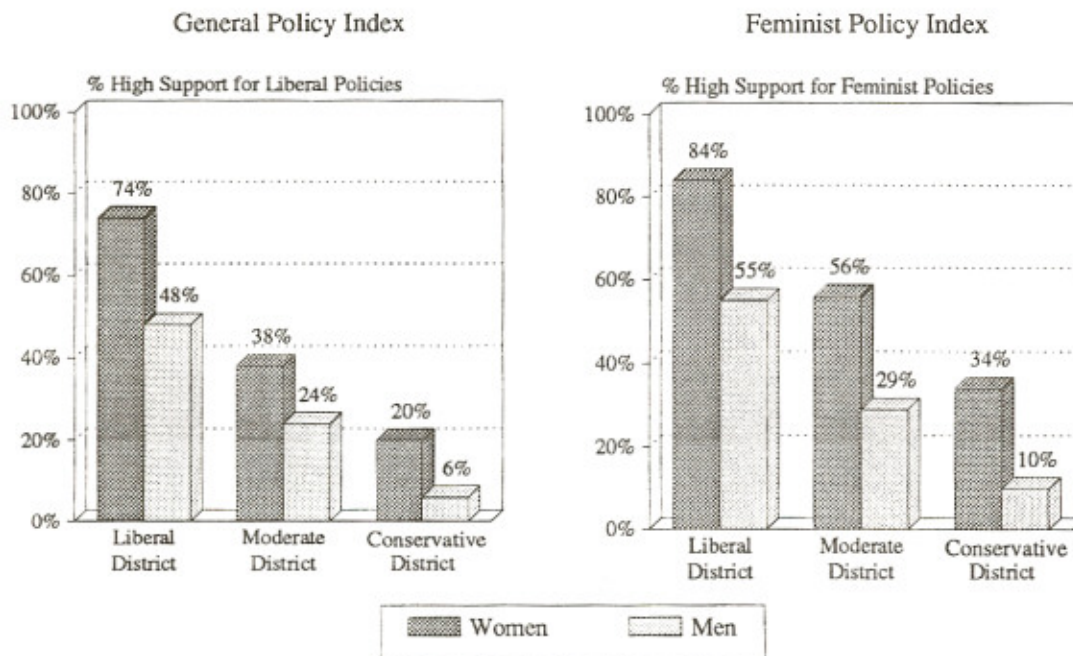
Constraints on Differences in Attitudes: A Look at the Political Environment

Do women have different policy views than men because they more often represent liberal districts?

Voters in a district have the final word on who will represent them. The district's ideology is one indicator of the constituency pressure elected officials might feel in responding to policies and the electoral screening they have undergone to attain office. Therefore, we asked legislators to describe their district as liberal, moderate or conservative.¹³

Women from liberal, moderate and conservative districts were more likely than men from the same type of districts to express liberal attitudes on the General Policy Index and feminist views on the Feminist Policy Index (Figure 13). Although there were some variations between the patterns on the two indexes, women from liberal districts were the most likely to score high in support of liberal and feminist policies, followed by men

Figure 13: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies
Given Type of District Ideology



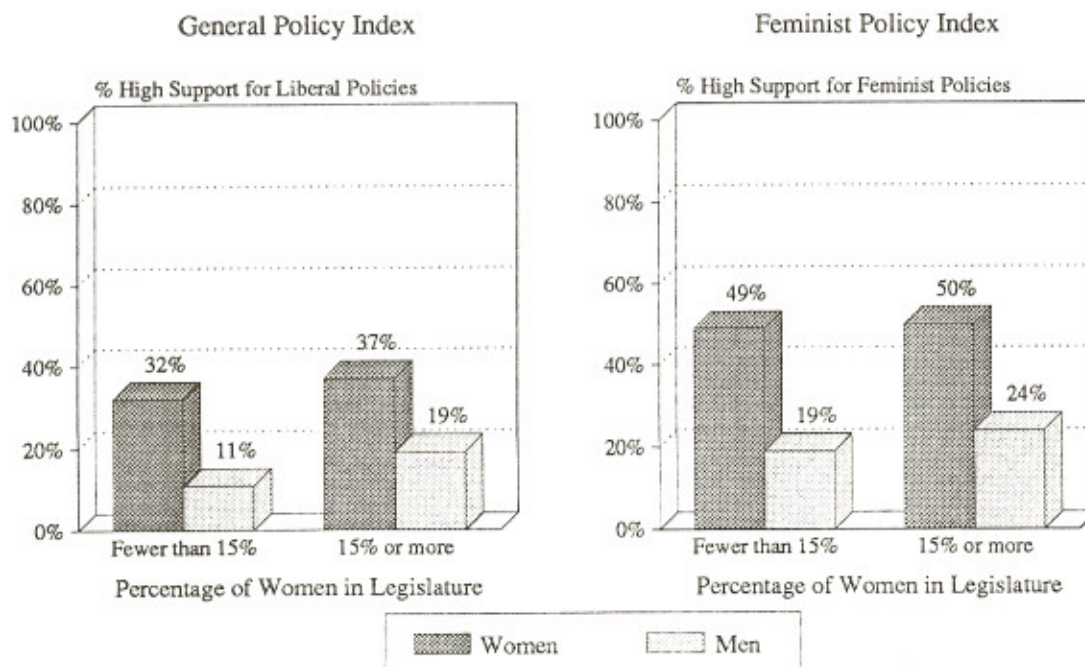
¹³Legislators were asked the following question: On most political issues, would you characterize the majority of voters in your district as very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal or very liberal? Based on responses, districts were categorized as conservative, moderate or liberal. Slightly more women than men came from liberal districts (10 percent vs. 5 percent) and somewhat fewer women than men came from conservative districts (39 percent vs. 47 percent).

from liberal districts and women from moderate districts. Men from conservative districts were the least supportive of liberal and feminist positions on these indexes. On specific policy items, there were some variations in the gender gap among representatives from similar districts; nevertheless, despite these variations, our data show that when voters choose a woman rather than a man, they are increasing the likelihood that their representative will support more feminist and more liberal policy perspectives. This is true regardless of whether the district is liberal, moderate or conservative.

Does the proportion of women in the legislature affect gender differences in attitudes?

Whether women are present only in token numbers or constitute a significant proportion of members in the legislature does not seem to affect their attitudes or those of their male colleagues. Our data show that regardless of whether women lawmakers comprised a higher proportion (15 percent or more) of the chamber or a lower proportion (fewer than 15 percent), women legislators were more likely than their male

Figure 14: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies Given Percentage of Women in the Legislature



colleagues to support feminist policy positions on our Feminist Policy Index and liberal stands on our General Policy Index (Figure 14).¹⁴ In both cases, the gender gap in attitudinal support for the feminist positions was close to 20 percentage points (or higher), suggesting that women have the potential to make a difference regardless of their proportions among officeholders.

Of course, when women are present in greater numbers, they may feel more comfortable turning these attitudes into action. As one woman legislator explained:

When there were very few women in the legislature and those few women were strong feminists and they spoke out on these issues, the men and some of the newspapers said, "That woman, there she goes again on those issues." But as more and more women were elected, we...became a group to be dealt with, and suddenly [we] were not those women on those issues again, but [on] really important matters.... Our issues became bona fide...issues they [the men] wanted in on.

Can women be political insiders and still have policy views that differ from those of men?

To get things done most effectively within state legislatures, it may help to be an insider either by virtue of formal status or via the informal status given to a legislator who is considered "one of the boys." This can present a dilemma for women. If the only legislators accepted are those who are carbon copies of the power holders, women may have to choose between making a difference and being an insider. As one female legislator explained:

The women are becoming more like the men because they're as opportunistic as the men now. When I went into the legislature, women stuck their necks out, cut their own necks off, stuck themselves in the heart to get an issue through. They don't do that anymore. They now say, "I can be speaker if I play my cards right, and I'll play my cards right and I'll get there."

However, it is also possible that once women are accepted, they may have greater freedom to pursue their policy interests. To examine the effect of being an insider on gender differences in attitudes, we used two different measures of insider status: 1) whether legislators identified with the label "political party insider," and 2) whether they

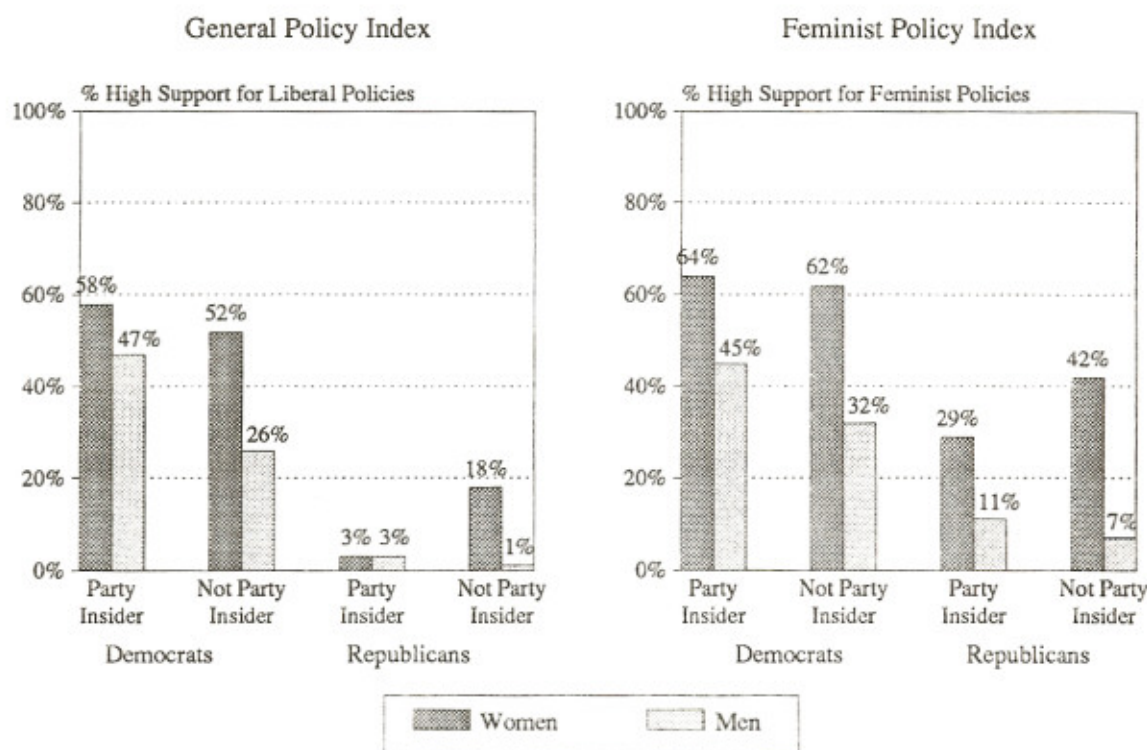
¹⁴The 15 percent mark is based on Rosabeth Moss Kanter's demarcation between institutions where women are tokens and where they are not. (See Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, New York: Basic Books, 1979.) However, similar patterns occurred when we compared chambers with fewer than 10 percent, 10 percent to 19 percent and 20 percent or more women members.

currently held an official leadership position such as a committee chair, speaker, majority/minority leader or whip or assistant majority/minority leader or whip.¹⁵

Comparing the attitudes of self-labeled political party insiders and non-insiders on the two policy indexes (Figure 15), three patterns emerged: 1) regardless of self-labeled party insider status, women were usually more likely than their male colleagues of the same party to support liberal and feminist policy positions on these indexes; 2) among Democratic women, party insiders scored as high on both the Feminist Policy Index and the General Policy Index as those who did not consider themselves party insiders; and 3) Republican women who were self-labeled party insiders were less supportive of feminist and liberal policies on the indexes than other Republican women (although they remained more feminist in policy views than their male counterparts).

Perhaps as a result of the shift to the right during the 1980s, Republican women who, because of their attitudes, have the greatest potential to shift policy in a more liberal and feminist direction are less likely to feel comfortable within their party than are those who express less support for feminist policy positions. How this might have come

Figure 15: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies Given Political Party Insider Status



¹⁵Because of the different ideological leanings of the two major parties, we examined insider status separately for Democrats and Republicans. See Appendix for question wording and procedure for constructing both of these measures.

about was seen differently by different women. One Republican woman viewed it more as the fault of progressive Republican women who feel like outsiders in their party:

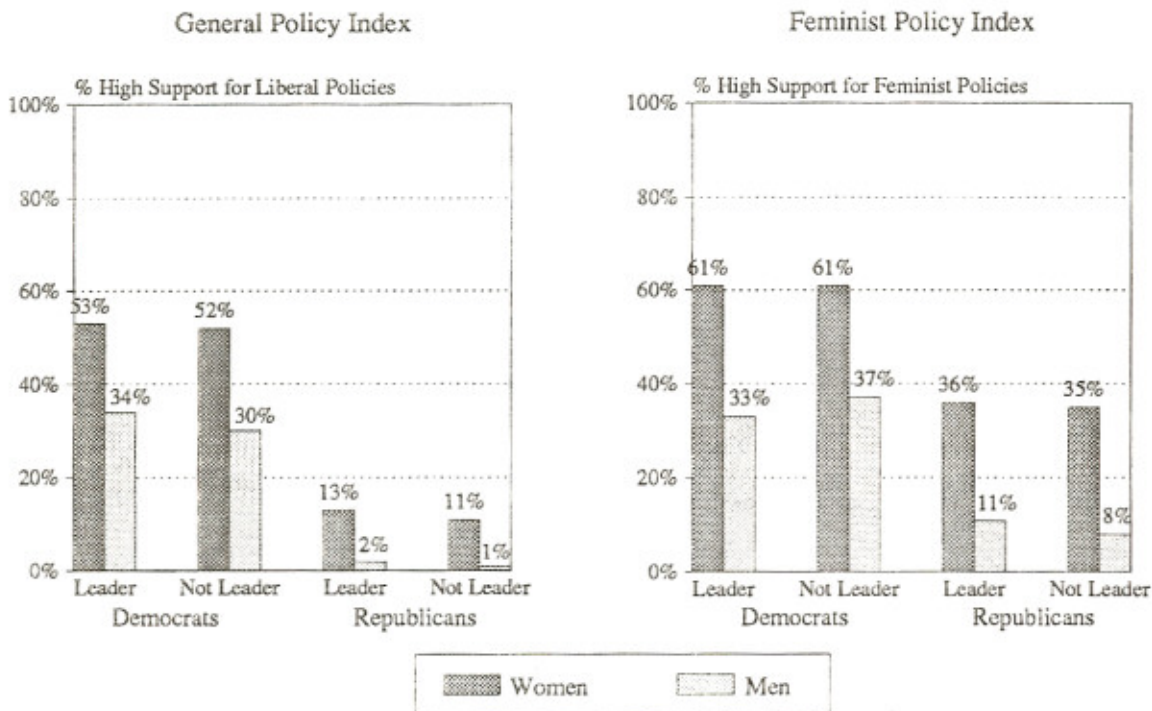
[Feminist Republican women face] some problem, I guess, to the extent that they let it bother them that someone...that is brainstorming with them over an election agenda is not pro-choice. But I refuse to do that.

Another Republican woman was more troubled by her personal experiences and suggested the patterns were due to the way the Republican party treated women moderates:

I'm uncomfortable in state conventions, for example, because I am the minority, [unlike]...conservative Republican women.... It's very maddening to go to those meetings and be ignored or laughed at. It's very upsetting to me.... I prefer not to subject myself to those kinds of rhetoric and so I don't attend as regularly as I might, because I come away angry.... I just don't go often.

The story is slightly different when it comes to legislative insider status. Within both parties, women legislative leaders expressed policy preferences similar to those of other women in their party who were not leaders (Figure 16). Furthermore, women, regardless

Figure 16: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies Given Legislative Leadership Status



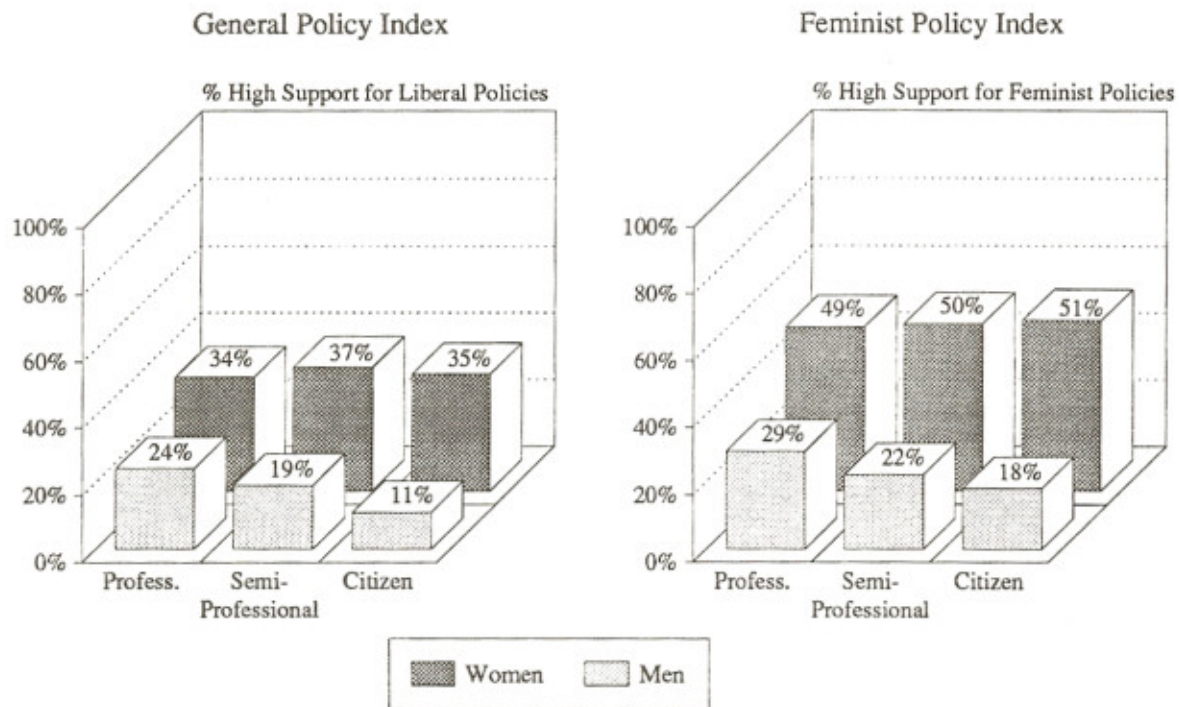
of leader status, were more supportive of liberal and feminist policy positions than male legislative leaders of the same party.

Thus, for Democratic women, being an insider had no effect on policy attitudes. For Republicans, the effect differed depending on how we defined "insider." Republican women who considered themselves political party insiders were less inclined to be supportive of feminist and liberal policies than other Republican women. Yet there were few attitude differences between Republican women whether they were or were not legislative leaders.

Does professionalism of the legislature affect gender differences in attitudes about public policy issues?

The more a legislative position approaches a full-time job, with compensation and support staff, the more attractive the legislature is to potential candidates and the greater the professionalism of the legislature by some standards.¹⁶

Figure 17: Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies Given Professionalism of Legislature



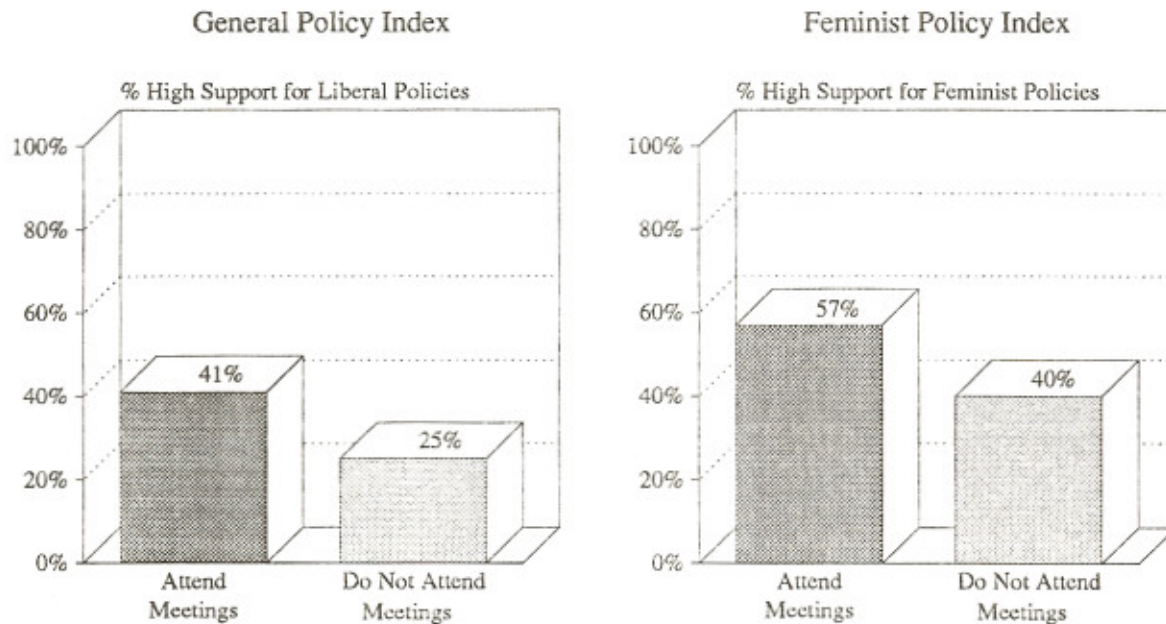
¹⁶Definitions of what constitutes a professional legislature vary. Due to the lack of contemporary measures, we constructed a professionalism scale based on salary, with high-salary states defined as professional and low-salary states defined as citizen legislatures. See Appendix for list of states assigned to each category.

When we compared women's and men's attitudes across three categories of institutions (professional, semiprofessional and citizen), the greatest differences between women and men were in the semiprofessional and citizen legislatures (Figure 17). The reason, however, had nothing to do with variations in attitudes among the women, who expressed similar attitudes across all three categories of institutions. Rather, men in professional legislatures were more supportive of feminist and liberal policies than other male legislators. As a result, the gender gap was smaller in professional institutions. In light of this, the important question becomes whether women in citizen legislatures will have adequate time, staff and collegial support to translate their policy attitudes into action.

Do women's caucuses or other policy-centered informal meetings of women legislators play a role in encouraging gender differences in attitudes?

As we have stated, women generally were more likely than men to express high levels of support for feminist policy stands. However, among women, those who attended formal caucuses or informal meetings of women lawmakers were more likely than non-attenders to express high support for feminist policy preferences on the Feminist

Figure 18: Women Lawmakers' Attitudes about Policies Given Formal/Informal Women's Caucus Attendance



Policy Index and for liberal attitudes on the General Policy Index (Figure 18).¹⁷ It is not clear whether the explanation for this difference is that these meetings raised women lawmakers' feminist consciousness or that women whose views were more feminist were more likely to attend these meetings. However, for whatever reason, women who attended differed more from men in their policy views than women who chose not to attend such meetings or who served in legislatures where women did not meet together.

Summary

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that women officeholders can make a difference in public policy. Majorities of women and men in legislatures say that the increased presence of women in public office is making a difference in increasing the awareness of how legislation will affect women, in expenditure priorities for the state and in the number of bills addressing the problems faced by women that are passed.

When we compare the policy attitudes of female and male legislators, we find evidence that explains why lawmakers say legislative policy is different because women are there. Women are more supportive of feminist positions on the ERA and abortion and are more liberal on issues not usually considered gender related. The differences between women's and men's attitudes certainly support lawmakers' subjective impressions that women are making a difference in policy.

These gender differences in attitudes remain regardless of similarities in age, seniority or feminist identification. Likewise, women's attitudes are more feminist and more liberal than men's even when they share similar ideologies, party affiliations, connections with women's groups or traditionally male occupations. Women's attitudes are more feminist and liberal than men's even when they represent similar districts, consider themselves political party insiders or hold legislative leadership positions. Furthermore, women's and men's attitudes differ regardless of the proportion of women in the legislative chamber or the legislature's level of professionalism. However, among women, those who attend women's caucuses or other formal or informal gatherings of women lawmakers are more supportive of feminist and liberal policy views than women who do not attend such meetings.

The gender gap in legislators' policy attitudes, along with legislators' impressions that women are making a difference, suggests that women will have a distinctive impact in public office. The next two chapters of this report focus on legislators' actions on bills dealing with women's rights and on their legislative priorities. We examine additional evidence to discover whether and in what ways the record demonstrates that women are making a difference in public policy.

¹⁷See Appendix for discussion of caucus measures.

Chapter 2: Gender Differences in Action on Women's Rights Legislation

To see whether gender differences in attitudes were accompanied by gender differences in policy actions, we compared female and male legislators' work on bills aimed specifically at helping women, or "women's rights bills" as we call them. We found that women were much more likely than men to have worked on "women's rights bills."

- This was true even after taking into account public policy views, political ideology, feminist identification, age, seniority, district ideology, proportion of women colleagues in the legislature and whether the legislator was a political insider.
- African-American women were more likely than white women to have worked on women's rights bills.
- Women lawmakers who attended formal women's caucus meetings or other policy-oriented meetings of women lawmakers were more likely than non-attenders to have worked on women's rights bills.

Introduction

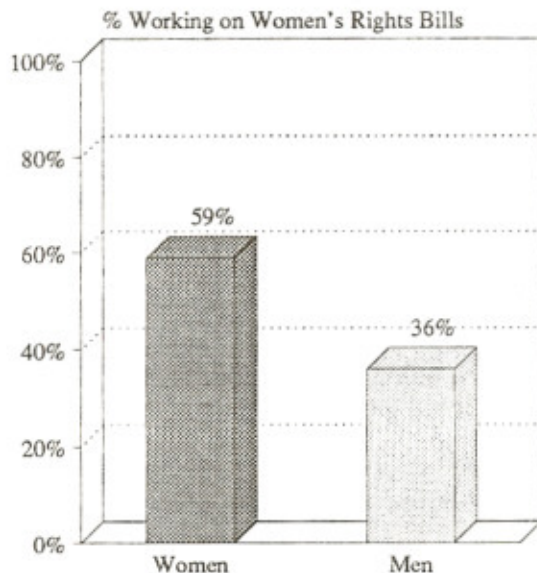
To see whether gender differences in attitudes are accompanied by gender differences in policy actions, we compared female and male legislators' work on bills aimed specifically at helping women. To measure this type of activity, we asked legislators the following questions:

Of all the bills that you have worked on during this session, are there any where the bill itself, or specific provisions of the bill, were intended to help women in particular? [If yes] Can you describe in one sentence what the most important of these bills did for women?¹

¹These questions measured activity in only one session — the 1988 or most recent session — and, as such, provide a snapshot rather than a long-term view of activity. While this snapshot of activity is not a perfect measure of individual legislators' records on women's rights legislation, the probability of subgroups of legislators having worked on women's rights bills should be captured in this snapshot. If respondents did not describe what the bill did for women, they were deleted from further analysis, as were those responding "don't know" or who did not answer the initial question. This was true of 2.6 percent of the women and 4.8 percent of the men. Bills mentioned that did not relate to women specifically (e.g., bills aimed at children, the elderly, etc.) were considered invalid and the responses were recorded as "no." About 5.6 percent of women's and 5.4 percent of men's responses were of this type. This reclassification had little effect on the relative likelihood that various subgroups had worked on a women's rights bill, although it slightly reduced the number reporting such activity.

This legislation, which we called a *women's rights bill*,² did not have to be a top priority, nor did the legislators have to have sponsored it — they just had to recall having *worked* on it. Women's rights bills were considered to be those that dealt specifically with issues of direct concern to women generally (e.g., legislation concerning rape, teen pregnancy or women's health) or in terms of their special concerns as wage earners (e.g., pay equity), mothers balancing home and work (e.g., maternity leave, day care) or marital partners (e.g., domestic violence, spousal retirement benefits, division of property in divorce).

Figure 19a: Female and Male Lawmakers' Work on Women's Rights Bills



Gender Differences in Work on Women's Rights Legislation

In confirmation of legislators' impressions that women lawmakers make a difference (Chapter 1), women officeholders *are* making a difference in public policy by ensuring that greater governmental attention is focused on the special problems that women face in our society. Fifty-nine percent of women but only 36 percent of their male colleagues had worked on a women's rights bill in the most recent session (Figure 19a). Women's greater tendency to have worked on women's rights bills occurred within

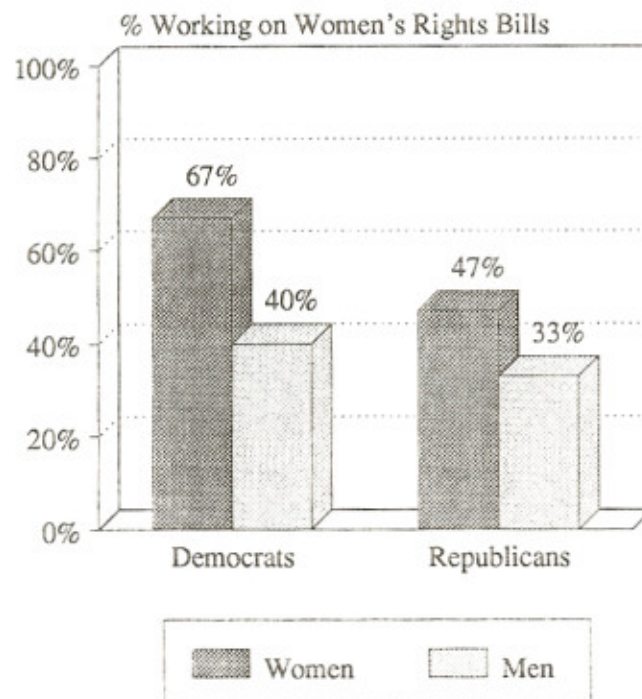
²We chose to call these bills "women's rights bills" because they appeared to be consistent with the major policy goals of the contemporary women's movement as set forth in the statements of purpose of organizations such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), and the former Women's Equity Action League (WEAL). They also appeared to be consistent with the agenda for the future established by delegates elected to the government-sponsored National Women's Conference held in Houston, Texas in November 1977 (see *The Spirit of Houston: The First National Women's Conference, An Official Report to the President, the Congress and the People of the United States*, Washington, D.C.: National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, March 1978.) However, it is important to emphasize that not all legislators who worked on the legislation we call "women's rights bills" did so with the intent of advancing the cause of feminism. Some legislators undoubtedly worked on these bills because they viewed them as beneficial to women in general or to their women constituents in particular, not because they saw them as part of a larger feminist agenda. While bills that seemed consistent with feminist goals were included in the category "women's rights bills" even if the legislator who worked on a particular bill may not have viewed it as feminist in intent, bills that seemed anti-feminist in intent were excluded. Only 1.2 percent of women and 1.4 percent of men had anti-feminist bills.

each party (Figure 19b), which supports the notion that the presence of women in office can and does alter the legislative agenda. If fewer women held public office, less attention would be paid to the special concerns of women; if more women held legislative office, the legislature might be more attuned to women's problems and to the government's role in responding to those problems.

Even though women have been a minority of legislators, their advocacy of these issues may have influenced their male colleagues to take more seriously the problems women face. One woman lawmaker observed:

They [men] were not tuned in to child care, spousal abuse, rape and all of that stuff. Here we [women] came along and we said, "You know, these are your children, these are your mothers, your wives. If you are *not* going to take care of them, we *are* going to take care of them." And there were a lot of locker room jokes [but] now they come around begging for money for another spouse abuse center in their area.

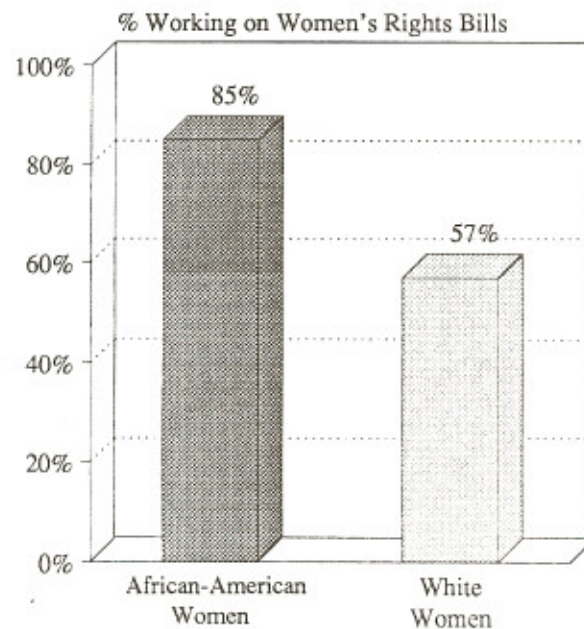
Figure 19b: Work on Women's Rights Bills
Given Lawmakers' Political Party



Despite a gender difference in work on women's rights bills, not all women had worked on legislation to help women and some were more likely than others to have done so. In particular, African-American women were especially active in working on women's rights bills, with more than four out of five reporting such work, compared to fewer than three out of five white women (Figure 20). African-American women had worked on a variety of women's rights bills, but were particularly active in working to curb domestic violence (with 21 percent reporting this, compared with 7 percent of white woman legislators). African-American women legislators, all of whom were Democrats, were more likely to have worked on women's rights bills than white Democratic women legislators. Thus, even after taking partisanship into consideration, African-American women legislators were doing more than white women to help women.

The remainder of this chapter explores both individual characteristics and factors in the political environment that might affect the likelihood that lawmakers are working on women's rights bills. It will be shown that, even after these factors are taken into account, women lawmakers remain more likely than male lawmakers to have worked on legislation aimed at helping women.

Figure 20:
African-American and White Women
Lawmakers' Work on Women's Rights Bills



Factors Affecting Activity on Women's Rights Bills: A Look at Individual Characteristics

Are women more likely than men to work on women's rights bills because women are more likely to be liberals?

Our analysis employed two different measures of ideology: self-description as liberal, moderate or conservative; and the legislator's score on the General Policy Index, which was derived from answers to eight questions concerning public policy. Based on either measure, liberals among women and men were more likely than conservatives to have worked on a women's rights bill.

However, within each ideological category, women were more likely than men to have worked on a bill aimed at helping women (Figure 21). In other words, self-defined conservative women were more likely to have worked on a women's rights bill than conservative men, and self-defined liberal women were more likely than liberal men to have done so.

Figure 21: Work on Women's Rights Bills Given Lawmakers' Political Ideology

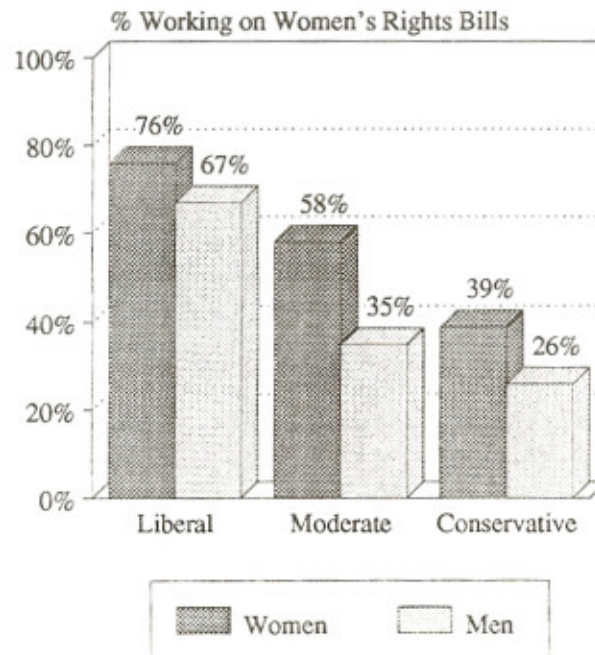
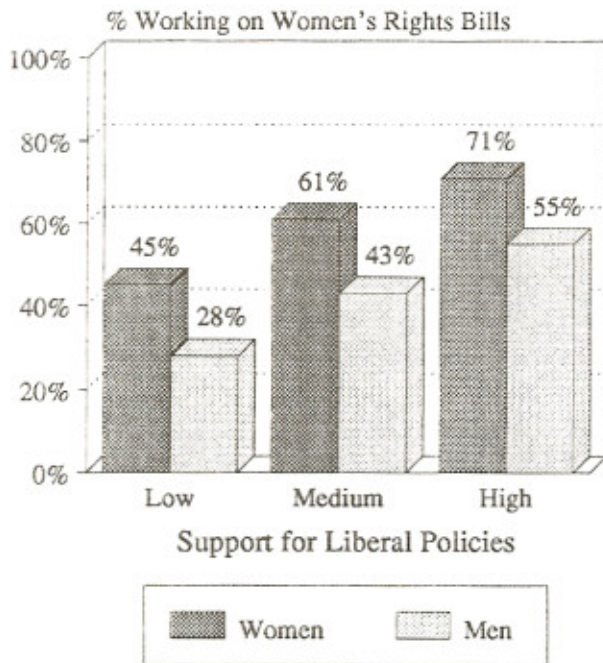


Figure 22: Lawmakers' Work on Women's Rights Bills Given Attitudes on General Policy Index



Similar patterns appeared when we used scores on the General Policy Index to measure ideology. For women and men having similar policy attitudes, it was the women who were more likely to report having worked on a women's rights bill (Figure 22). In fact, at each point on the index, women outpaced like-minded men in their women's rights bill activity.

Thus, whether ideology is determined directly by self-definition or derived indirectly from policy preferences, the conclusion is clear: women of all ideological perspectives are more active in striving to help women than are men with similar ideologies. In so doing, women officeholders are making a difference in public policies that concern women.

Are women more likely than men to work on women's rights bills because they are more often feminists?

Both feminist identification *and* being a woman increased the likelihood that individuals had worked on bills aimed at helping women. About three out of four self-labeled feminist women had worked on a women's rights bill in the most recent session, compared with approximately one out of two non-feminist women and feminist men and one out of three non-feminist men (Figure 23).

Similar patterns occurred when we used policy attitudes on the Feminist Policy Index (Figure 24). When women and men legislators shared similar views on feminist policies, it was the women who were more likely to have followed up their statements with *action*. The gender gap in women's rights bill activity was particularly pronounced among those scoring medium and high in terms of support on the Feminist Policy Index.

For those concerned about making policies more attuned to the problems facing women in society, our findings suggest the importance of bringing into public office more women and more feminist men. In particular, they highlight the importance of bringing more feminist women into office.

Figure 23:
Work on Women's Rights Bills among
Feminist and Non-Feminist Lawmakers

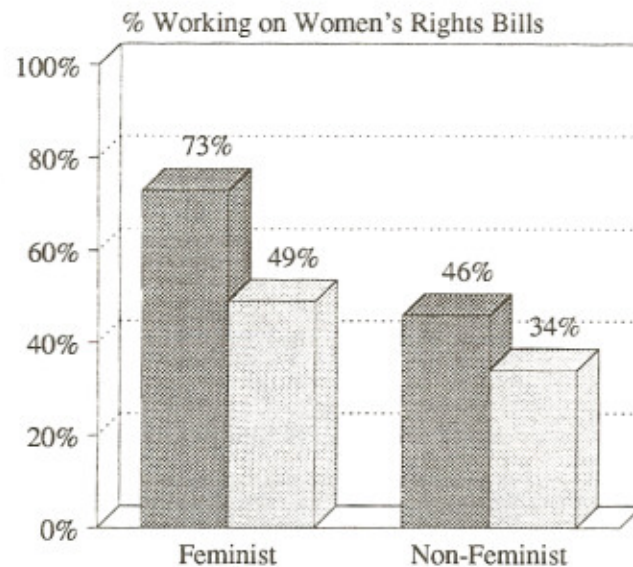
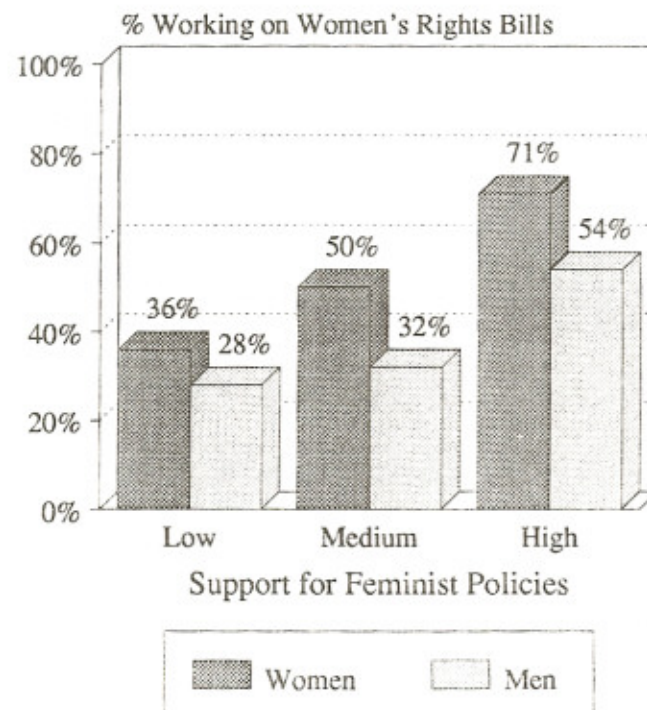


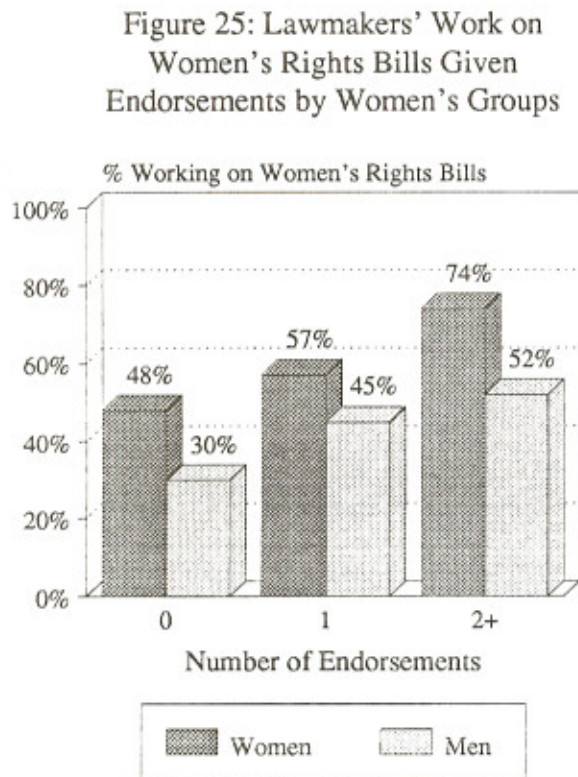
Figure 24: Lawmakers' Work on
Women's Rights Bills Given Attitudes
on Feminist Policy Index



Are women more likely than men to work on women's rights bills because they are connected to women's groups?

Legislators who were more closely connected with women's groups were more likely to have worked on women's rights legislation. This was true whether we defined connections in terms of campaign endorsements or memberships.³

The more endorsements from women's groups that male and female candidates received, the more likely they were to have worked on a women's rights bill (Figure 25).⁴ Nevertheless, gender remained important. Among women and men with equal numbers of endorsements from women's groups, women were more likely to have worked on a bill aimed at helping women. Furthermore, women with no endorsements from women's groups were almost as likely as men with two or more endorsements to have worked on a bill aimed at helping women.



Additionally, the more women's groups to which a woman legislator belonged, the more likely she was to have worked on a women's rights bill in the most recent session (Figure 26).⁵ Women who were not members of any women's groups were slightly more likely than male legislators as a whole to have worked on a bill aimed at helping women (41 percent of these women vs. 36 percent of men having done so).

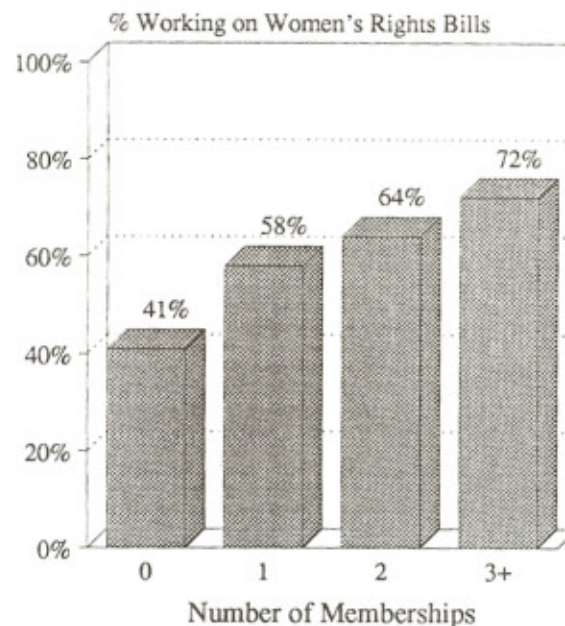
³Only women legislators were asked about membership in women's groups since most of their members are female.

⁴When we considered only self-reported endorsements by clearly feminist organizations (i.e., NOW and WPC), the same patterns emerged from the data.

⁵When memberships in traditional women's groups (e.g., BPW, LWV and AAUW) and feminist groups (NOW, WPC and other feminist groups) were analyzed separately, the results were similar.

This tendency for women connected to the organized women's community to have worked on women's rights legislation was not due merely to the more feminist and more liberal views of these women. Among legislators with similar policy attitudes on the Feminist Policy Index or the General Policy Index, women belonging to women's groups or endorsed by them were more likely than both women with weaker ties and men in general to have worked on women's rights bills. One possible explanation for this trend is that connections with women's groups keep women lawmakers in touch with the concerns of women and reinforce a sense of responsibility to represent women's shared interests.⁶

Figure 26: Women Lawmakers' Work on Women's Rights Bills Given Memberships in Major Women's Groups



The effects of age and seniority in the legislature: Will gender differences in work on women's rights bills last?

Women of all ages were more likely than men of similar ages to have worked on a bill aimed at helping women (Figure 27). Nevertheless, younger women were more likely than older women to have worked on a women's rights bill, just as younger men were more likely than older men to have done so. Among women (but not men) the generation gap was concentrated primarily among non-feminists, for regardless of age, feminists were working on women's rights bills. However, younger *non-feminist* women more frequently had worked on women's rights bills than older non-feminist women (55 percent vs. 42 percent). One woman legislator from the South attributed the changes in the younger legislators to the women's movement:

The younger group, whether they are male or female...are not the same as they were twenty years ago.... The younger men coming in now...in their late

⁶Susan J. Carroll, "Women State Legislators, Women's Organizations and the Representation of Women's Culture in the United States," in *Women Transforming Politics: Worldwide Struggles for Empowerment*, Edited by Jill M. Bystydzienski, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming.

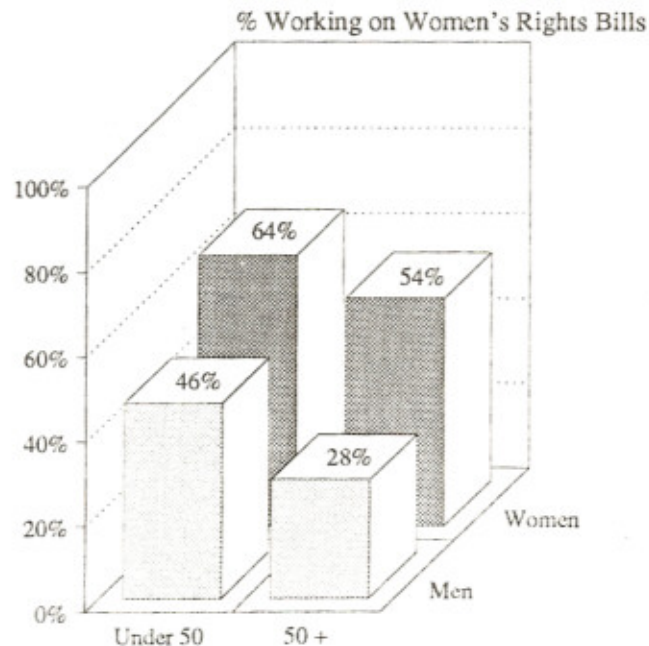
twenties, early thirties...are a different breed of young men. They're not perfect. But they're certainly more sensitized.... I believe that a lot of that has come from the women's movement.

Newer generations of officeholders — both male and female — are giving more attention to issues directly affecting women than was true in the past, while older men with greater seniority are the least involved in women's rights bill legislation. As one woman lawmaker observed, gender, generational and seniority differences affect legislative priorities:

...They [older men with greater seniority] are great for a vote but rarely will they take any leadership.... Actually, we have several young men in our legislature now...[who] did take leadership on the choice issue this last time.... I think that the younger guys were doing it probably for the political purpose.... They wanted the publicity with the women's groups.... They've [women's groups] become so strong and are really tallying who's who and who's supporting what; the older men, for the most part, are pretty secure and don't have to worry.

Sorting out the effects of age and seniority on legislative action is important since those with more years of service also tend to be older. Our data suggest that the

Figure 27: Lawmakers' Work on Women's Rights Bills Given Age



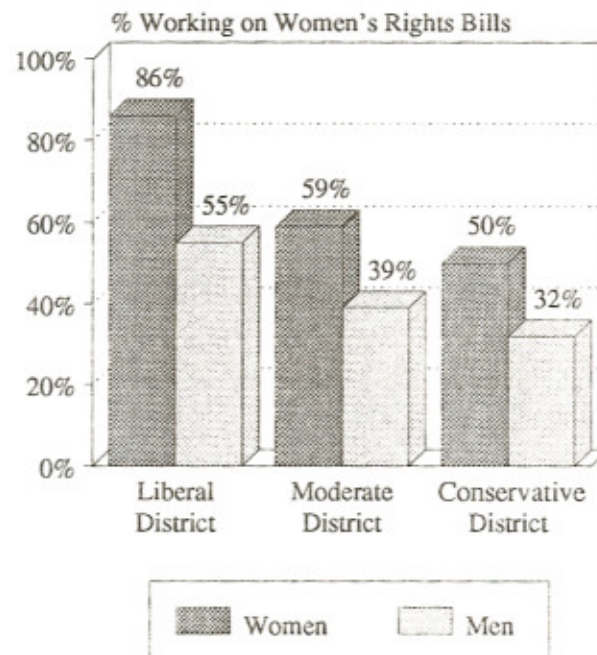
tendency for more senior male legislators to work less frequently on women's rights bills is due primarily to age rather than years of service in the legislature. Nevertheless, regardless of the cause, the tendency is for the most powerful legislators (older men with more legislative seniority) to be the least active in addressing women's special concerns.

Constraints on Women's Rights Bill Activity: A Look at the Political Environment

Are women more likely than men to work on women's rights bills because of the districts they represent?

Differences between women's and men's actions on women's rights bills might be influenced by constituency pressure. Indeed, women lawmakers who identified their district as liberal were more likely than those who identified their district as conservative to have worked on a women's rights bill (Figure 28). The same pattern held for men. Nevertheless, when women and men represented districts with similar ideologies, the women were consistently more likely to have worked on women's rights bills. Furthermore, regardless of how legislators described their districts' ideologies, legislators with more feminist policy preferences on the Feminist Policy Index or more liberal views on the General Policy Index usually were more likely to have worked on a women's rights bill. However, among women and men representing similar districts and sharing similar policy attitudes, it was the women who were more likely to have worked on a women's rights bill.⁷ For example, among those representing moderate

Figure 28: Lawmakers Work on Women's Rights Bills Given Type of District



⁷The only exception was that women who expressed high support for feminist policies on the Feminist Policy Index but who represented conservative districts were less likely than similar women from moderate districts to have worked on a women's rights bill.

districts and scoring high on the Feminist Policy Index or General Policy Index, women were about 20 percentage points higher in their work on women's rights bills.

Does the proportion of women in the legislature affect activity on women's rights bills?

Women were consistently more likely than their male colleagues to have worked on women's rights bills. This occurred in legislative chambers with fewer than 15 percent women members and in chambers with 15 percent or more women members. Men's activity levels seem to have been unaffected by the proportion of women in office. However, in any given session, women were somewhat more likely to have worked on women's rights bills in chambers where women were less numerous than in chambers where they were 15 percent or more of legislators (66 percent vs. 56 percent). The decline in activity on women's rights bills was concentrated in lower houses where women were 25 percent or more of the members.

It may be that where women are most underrepresented in the legislature, women lawmakers feel a special responsibility to look out for the concerns of women:

A week after I got in [office], I went on the Judiciary Committee, the only woman (and a non-attorney). They were passing out a revised version of the rules of evidence, about 150 pages long. It had passed last year. God knows why I was looking through it. In the course of perusing this information, I came upon the word "rape," and realized that they were about to reverse a rape shield law of ten years back. The bill was sponsored by the former chairman of the Judiciary Committee who was now [a major leader in the chamber]. Here I am. I wasn't in there a week. The committee [members] were very nice, and after two hours of discussion, they said let's vote it out anyhow and we'll work something out with her. They didn't pay much attention to me. But...we got it held up for ten days. Every woman in the state, including the secretaries and the wives, was screaming at the legislators.... The sponsor...put the [old] language back. If there is not a woman there to pay attention, it passes.... Women have to look after women's business because apparently nobody else will...look after it the same way.

Where there are higher proportions of women *and* higher absolute numbers of female legislators to share the responsibility, working on women's rights bills may not be as imperative for *every* woman in *every* session. This difference does *not* mean that less is being done to help women in states where there are more women officeholders. What it does mean is that the responsibility can be shared among more women, reducing the likelihood of a particular woman working on this type of bill in a given session. However, our data indicate that women who are both feminists *and* liberals appear to remain most active on women's rights legislation, regardless of the number of women in their chamber of the legislature.

Can women be political insiders and still work on legislation to help women?

Neither measure of insider status — holding a legislative leadership position or being a self-labeled political party insider — suggests that being an insider affected women's likelihood of having worked on a women's rights bill. Within each party, women who held legislative leadership positions were as likely as other women and more likely than their male colleagues of comparable status to have worked on a women's rights bill in the most recent session.

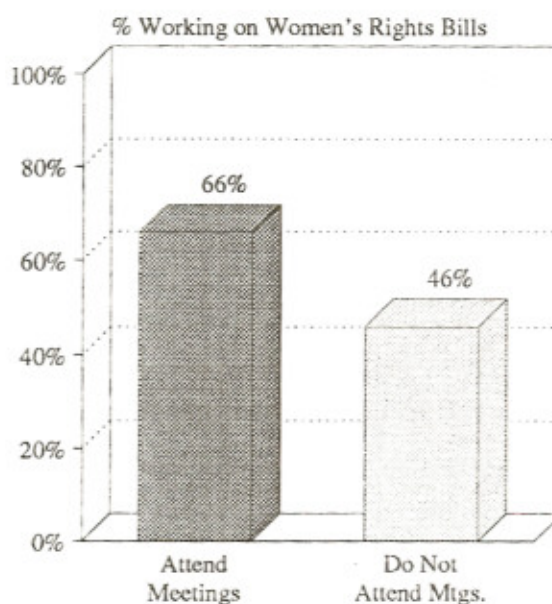
Based on their action on women's rights bills, there is no evidence that female political party insiders of either party — even the more conservative Republican party insiders — were less likely than other women within their party to have worked on bills aimed at helping women. Indeed, among the Democrats, women insiders were even more likely than women non-insiders to report such activity.

For those concerned that a woman officeholder might become "one of the boys" and, in the process, abandon the policy needs of women, our results suggest that such fears are unfounded. The increased presence of women in public office and their increased influence within these institutions should give women greater power to shape policy agendas. These changes do not seem likely to deter them from pursuing policies that improve the welfare of women.

Do women's caucuses or other policy-centered meetings of women legislators facilitate work on women's rights bills?

Women involved in formal women's caucuses or other formal or informal policy-centered meetings of women lawmakers were more likely to have worked on a bill aimed specifically at helping women (Figure 29). About two out of every three caucus or informal meeting attenders, but fewer than half of those not attending, reported having worked on a women's rights bill in

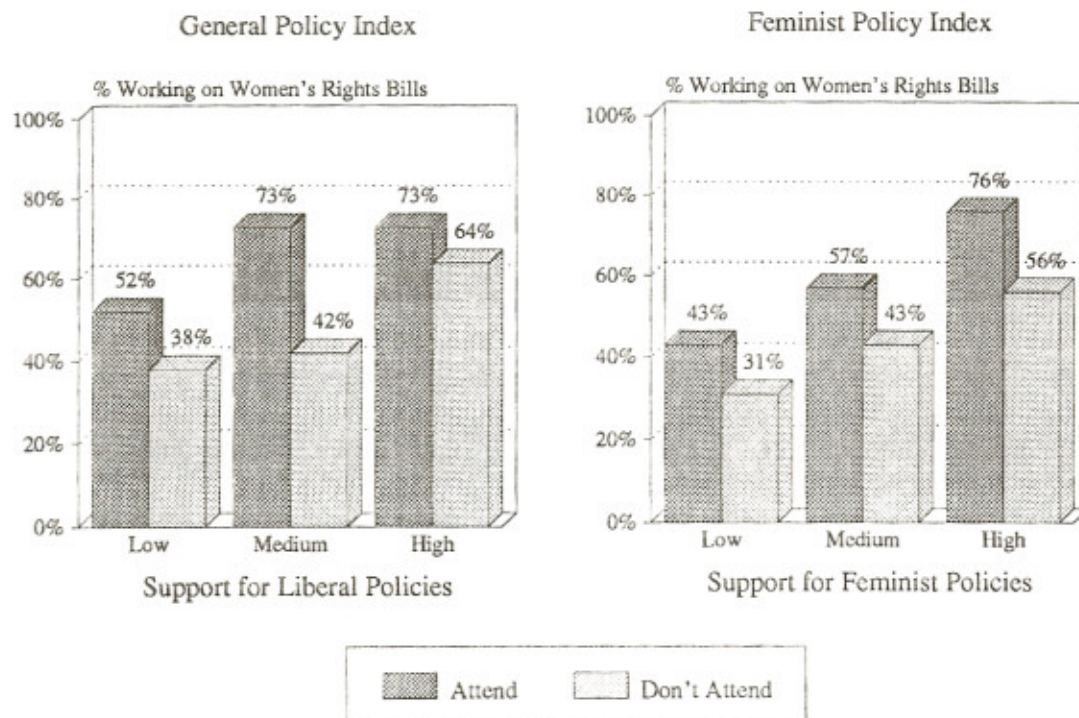
Figure 29: Women Lawmakers' Work on Women's Rights Bills Given Attendance at Formal/Informal Women's Caucus Meetings



the most recent session.⁸ Among women with similar policy preferences on our two indexes, those who were caucus attenders were more likely to have worked on a women's rights bill than those who were not attenders (Figure 30). Overall, the effects of caucus participation seem to have been greatest among those who were moderates on the General Policy Index (with a thirty point difference between women attenders and non-attenders) and those most supportive of feminist positions on the Feminist Policy Index (where there was about a twenty percentage point gap).

Regardless of where women stand on policy, involvement in a formal or informal women's caucus may encourage them to work with their female colleagues to help women. These formal and informal groups work on a variety of issues of importance to women. Examples of issues on the agendas of formal women's caucuses in 1989 included teen pregnancy, abolishing mandatory lie detector tests for rape victims, increasing the minimum wage, child care, child support, domestic violence and sex discrimination in

Figure 30: Women Lawmakers' Work on Women's Rights Bills Given Attitudes about Policies and Attendance at Formal/Informal Caucus Meetings



⁸See Appendix for questions used to construct measures.

insurance. Meetings of women officeholders appear to focus women's attention on these types of issues and to provide opportunities for women to work together on women's rights legislation.⁹ As one woman lawmaker explained:

We have formed our own caucus so that if we wanted to meet in closed-door sessions we could. We have set missions to remind women, in both elected and appointed office, to promote the right legislation for...women...[and] families.

The Fate of Women's Rights Bills

For those concerned about women, it is encouraging that the vast majority of women's rights bills were passed by the chamber in which the legislator served *and* were passed to the satisfaction of the lawmakers who had worked on them. Seventy-six percent of the women's rights bills mentioned by men passed in satisfactory form, as did 67 percent of those mentioned by women legislators.¹⁰

Summary

The increased presence of women in public office is heightening attention to the problems that women face and is ensuring that more legislators work on bills aimed specifically at helping women. Three out of five women legislators, compared to two out of five of their male colleagues, reported having worked in the most recent session on a bill aimed at helping women. Had they been asked how *many* women's rights bills they had worked on, the differences between women's and men's level of work on behalf of women might have been even greater.

Why do women make a difference in legislative attention to the problems women face? It is not solely because more women than men are liberals or feminists. When women and men in our study expressed similar levels of support for feminist policy positions or identified with similar political ideologies, it was the women who were more

⁹Debbie Walsh, "Organizations of Women Legislators," *CAWP News and Notes*, 7 (Spring 1989): 18-22.

¹⁰Those who had worked on a women's rights bill were asked: "Has this bill been passed by your house of the legislature?" Those who said it had been were asked a follow-up question: "Are you generally satisfied with the bill in its final form?" We did not inquire about reasons for dissatisfaction, but among the most likely reasons for dissatisfaction would be that a committee had rewritten the bill in an undesirable form or that amendments weakening the bill had been added in committee or on the floor.

likely to follow up their statements with action aimed at helping women. This was consistently true whether we compared women and men with similar profiles on self-labeled feminist identification, connections with the women's community, age, years of experience in the legislature, political ideology or constituency's political ideology. It may be that the life experiences of women and men encourage them to pursue different policies in office. When the profile of representatives more completely reflects the profile of the represented, legislative policymaking may be better informed by the experiences of all citizens.

Furthermore, while institutional factors no doubt can affect the ease and comfort women legislators may feel in pursuing women's rights bills, factors such as smaller proportions of women in office or insider status (either within their party or as a legislative leader) did not diminish women legislators' efforts to represent women. They were always more likely than their male colleagues to have worked on women's rights bills. However, participation in formal women's caucuses or informal policy-oriented meetings of women seemed to encourage women to act on behalf of women over and above what would be expected given their policy views.

Whether we look at bills worked on by men or by women, one thing is clear: the vast majority of women's rights bills passed in satisfactory form. Women were slightly less likely than their male colleagues to report successful passage of their women's rights bills, but the differences were small.

This report provides reasons for both optimism and pessimism among those who hope that government will become more open and responsive to the concerns of women. The optimism is warranted by the evidence that women in office are working on behalf of women's concerns. At the same time, because women remain a small minority of lawmakers, and because men are less likely to be working on women's rights bills, there is reason for concern about how responsive government will be to women's needs. Furthermore, today's most powerful officeholders — older men with seniority — are the least likely to be working on women's rights bills. Nevertheless, as more women become legislative leaders, there is reason to expect that governmental concern for the problems women face may increase and policy agendas may expand to incorporate these issues. It is especially encouraging that leadership does not seem to dampen women legislators' enthusiasm for representing the concerns of women.

Chapter 3: Gender Differences in Legislative Agendas

Women legislators were much more likely than men to mention women's rights bills, health policy issues and children and family issues as their top legislative priority. We divided priorities into two types: 1) women's distinctive concerns (comprised of women's rights bills and bills addressing women's traditional areas of interest) and 2) other issues. Women were more likely than men to mention a women's distinctive concern as their top legislative priority.

Women and men were equally likely to report that their top priority bill had passed their chamber of the legislature in satisfactory form. However, for both female and male lawmakers whose top priorities were women's distinctive concerns, their priorities fared better in chambers with greater proportions of women.

Introduction

Time is a scarce resource for legislators. Thus, a legislator's priorities tell us what is most important to her or him and indicate the policy areas likely to be affected because this individual rather than someone else holds office. As the number of elected women gradually expands, the opportunity to shape legislative agendas to reflect women's interests also increases. The question is: Will women direct government's attention toward women's distinctive concerns?

By our definition, the priorities we call *women's distinctive concerns* are composed of: 1) *women's rights bills* (those that are feminist in intent and that deal with issues having a direct impact on women); and 2) *women's traditional areas of interest* (bills that reflect women's roles as caregivers both in the family and society and thus that address issues in health care, care of the elderly, education, housing and the environment). This chapter examines lawmakers' personal legislative priorities to see whether the increased presence of women officeholders means that more legislators are paying greater attention to either or both subcategories of *women's distinctive concerns*.

We first examine the top priorities of legislators to see whether women's distinctive concerns — women's rights bills and bills relating to women's traditional areas of interest — are more often priorities for women than men. Then we identify characteristics of individuals and the political environment that affect priorities and gender differences in priorities. Throughout our examination of the factors that affect priorities, we focus the discussion on the general category of women's distinctive concerns. The subcategories of women's distinctive concerns — women's rights bills and women's traditional areas of interest — are discussed only when important differences appear between them. Finally, we examine legislators' records of success in getting their priority bills passed.

A Look at the Priorities of Female and Male Lawmakers: Do Women Make a Difference?

To determine legislators' priorities, we asked them the following question:

We'd like to find out about the bills that you've been working on during the current session. Although you may have worked on a number of bills, for the next few questions we want you to pick out the single bill that you would say has been your own personal top priority for the current session. First, can you very briefly describe the focus of this bill?¹

When priorities were categorized as either women's distinctive concerns or other concerns (e.g., budget, finance, transportation), the gender differences in priorities became apparent.² Women indeed were more likely than men to mention a women's distinctive concern as their top legislative priority (Figure 31a). This was true among Democrats as well as among Republicans (Figure 31b).

Figure 31a: Lawmakers' Top Legislative Priority



¹As in the analysis in the previous chapter, this question provides a snapshot of behavior in a single session. However, while individual legislators' priorities may change from year to year, the probability of subgroups of legislators having certain types of priorities in any given year should be captured in this snapshot.

²See Appendix for more details concerning classification.

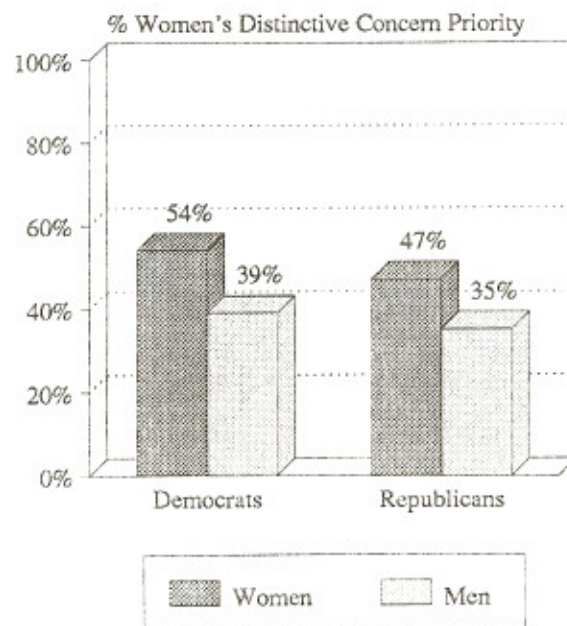
The increasing presence of women in office seems to be altering legislative agendas by raising the priority given to issues that most directly touch women's lives. This view was expressed frequently by women lawmakers:

I think more and more people are seeing problems of kids and families and women, [and there is a]...willingness to step forward and be involved and discuss these. For a long time it seemed necessary to have the male model, but it's okay now to talk about education and child care and domestic violence.

There was some overlap among the types of policy priorities women and men mentioned, and some women were quick to point out that neither are women the only ones who care about these human concerns nor are women only concerned with these issues:

I can think of a number of men in the [legislature] who felt as strongly about these [humanistic] issues as we women did.... [Furthermore,] women aren't only interested in what we euphemistically call human services, health issues.... I think it's important for women to develop an expertise in some areas, but I also think it's very important that they really get the big picture. And I mean the *big* picture.

Figure 31b: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority Given Political Party



One veteran woman legislator credited the influence of women and reinforcement by the public for increasing men's interest in women's distinctive concerns:

I think the differences [between women and men lawmakers] are becoming less all the time because the male legislators are discovering that women get a lot of publicity with their kinds of issues. In my legislature the [men] try to beat us to them. We are always glad to have an advocate.... We'll help to get the research and the material and baby them along...because it goes a lot quicker if a male stands up and advocates something for children and...families or health care or something like that. We have sensitized them to these issues and also made our issues more in the mainstream of public policy.

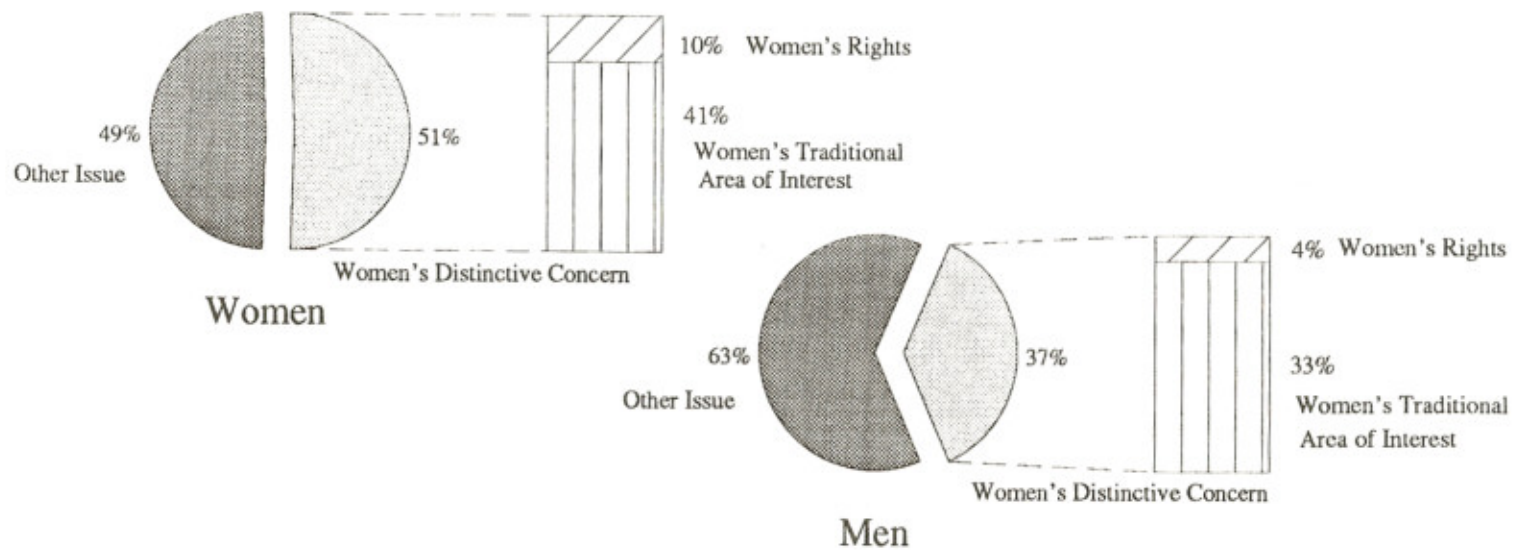
Regardless of the apparent "mainstreaming" of these issues, it was still women legislators who were more likely to have had a women's distinctive concern as a personal top priority. This was true within both subcategories of women's distinctive concerns. Ten percent of women, but only 4 percent of men, had a women's rights bill as their top legislative priority (Figure 32a). Women also were more likely than men to have had a priority reflecting women's traditional areas of interest (41 percent vs. 33 percent). A number of issues are encompassed within this broad category. The most frequently mentioned priority of this type was health care policy, with 14 percent of women but only 6 percent of men mentioning this issue (Figure 32b). A notable gender difference occurred as well on children and family issues, with 11 percent of women but only 3 percent of men mentioning these as priorities.³ Among priorities not classified as women's distinctive concerns, the major difference was that men were only slightly more likely than women to have mentioned budget/tax issues as their top priority (13 percent vs. 9 percent).

African-American and white women were equally likely to have had a women's distinctive concern as their priority. Fifty-two percent of white women and 56 percent of African-American women legislators mentioned a women's distinctive concern as their top legislative priority. Thus, whether we focus on the activities of white or African-American women legislators, the story is the same — women are working to refocus legislative agendas toward greater attention to humanistic and feminist concerns.

While we can state with confidence that women officeholders are making a difference, some women may be more likely than others to have a distinctive impact on policy agendas. These variations arise both from a variety of individual characteristics and from the political environment within the legislature.

³Separating some women's rights bills from some bills dealing with families and children often was difficult given women's traditional roles as caregivers within the family. Therefore, in discussing children and family issues and women's rights priorities in this paragraph, we assigned to both categories some priority bills that seemed equally appropriate in either category: day care, parental leave and teen pregnancy prevention. In the remainder of the study, these priorities were counted *only* as women's rights priorities. This had no effect on the proportion citing women's distinctive concerns since it included both subgroups.

Figure 32a: Lawmakers' Top Legislative Priority with Subcategories of Women's Distinctive Concerns



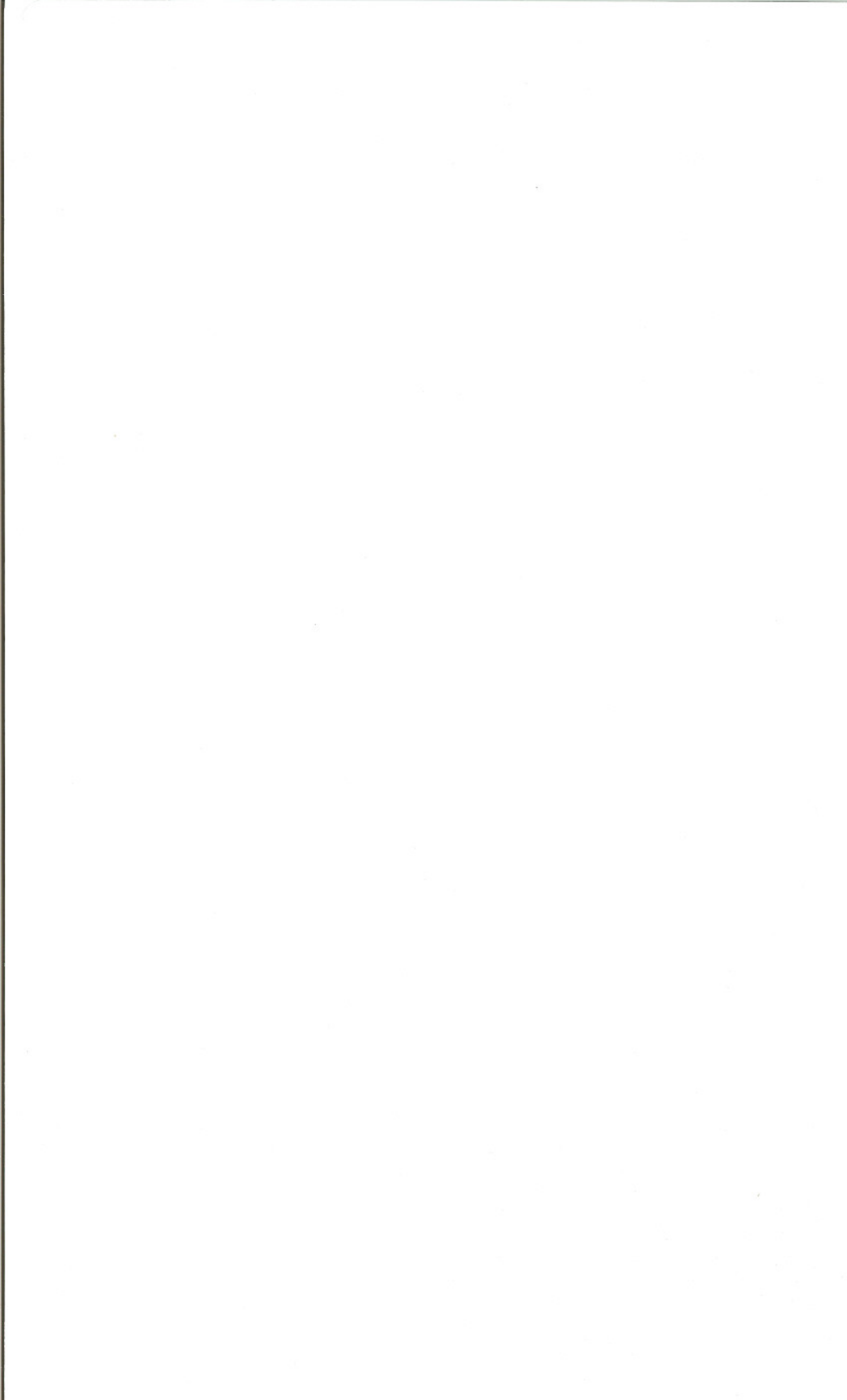
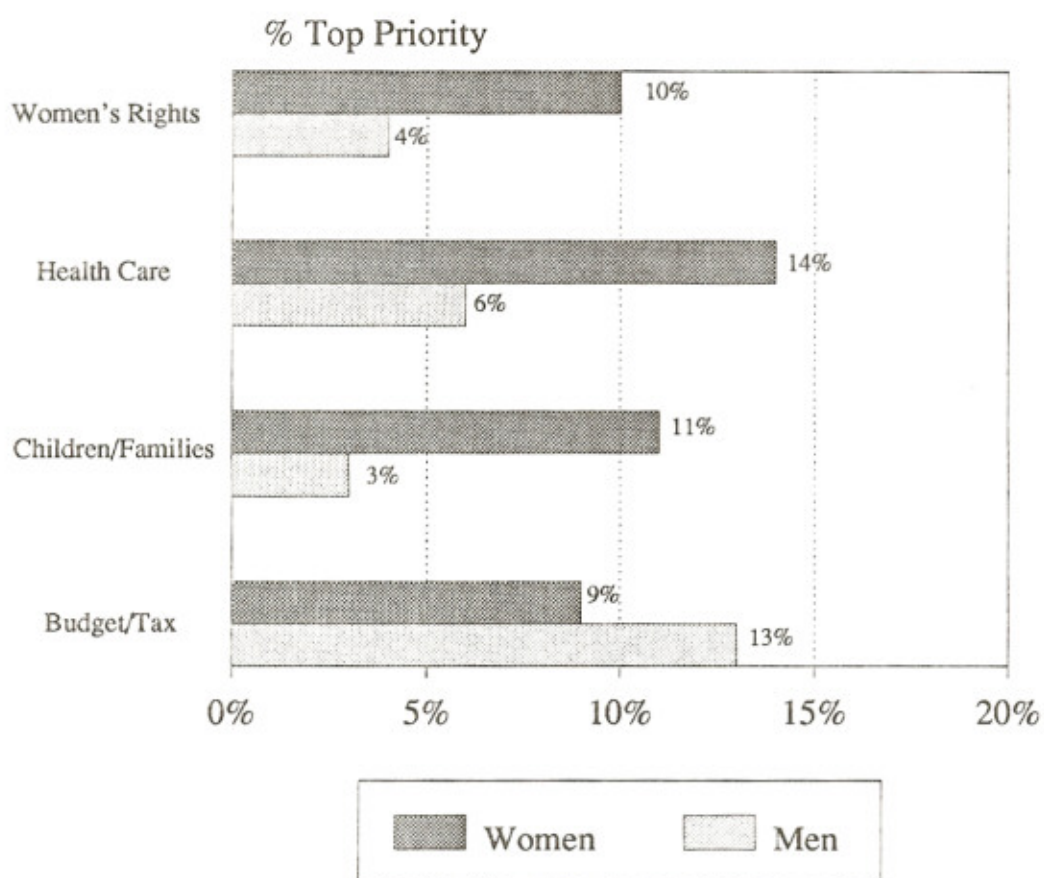


Figure 32b: Issues Where Gender Differences in Priorities Were Greatest



Factors Affecting Priorities: A Look at Individual Characteristics

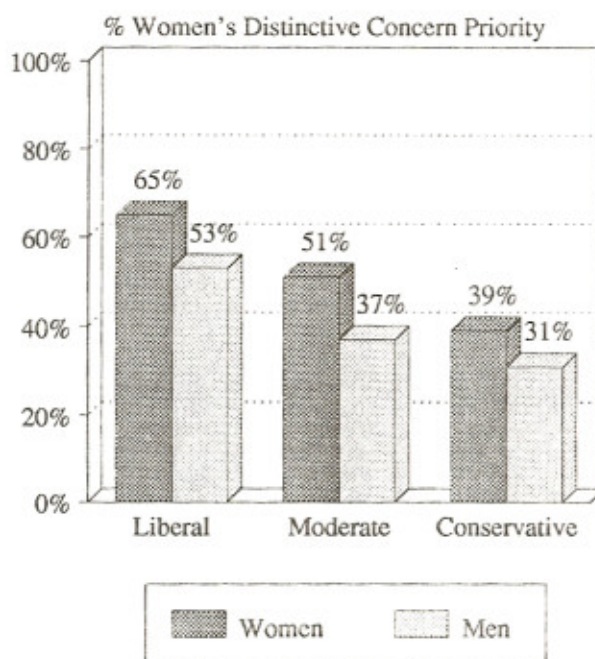
Do women have different priorities than men because women are more likely to be liberals?

Among legislators with similar self-described ideological perspectives, women were more likely than men to mention a women's distinctive concern as a top priority (Figure 33). Thus, although liberals were the most likely to have given top priority to a women's distinctive concern, the effects of gender meant that conservative women were about as likely as moderate men to have had a women's distinctive concern as a priority, and moderate women were as likely as liberal men to have this type of priority.

Ideology did affect the subtypes of women's distinctive concerns that women had pursued, and so the reasons for the gender gap differed across the ideological groups. Among liberals, women's and men's priorities differed because women were much more likely than men to have had a women's rights priority (16 percent vs. 3 percent). Among conservatives, the gender gap was due primarily to the greater likelihood of women having worked on priorities reflecting women's traditional areas of interest (36 percent vs. 28 percent).

Some suggest that women's and men's divergent life experiences may cause gender differences in priorities regardless of ideology. However, while women's life experiences

Figure 33: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority Given Political Ideology

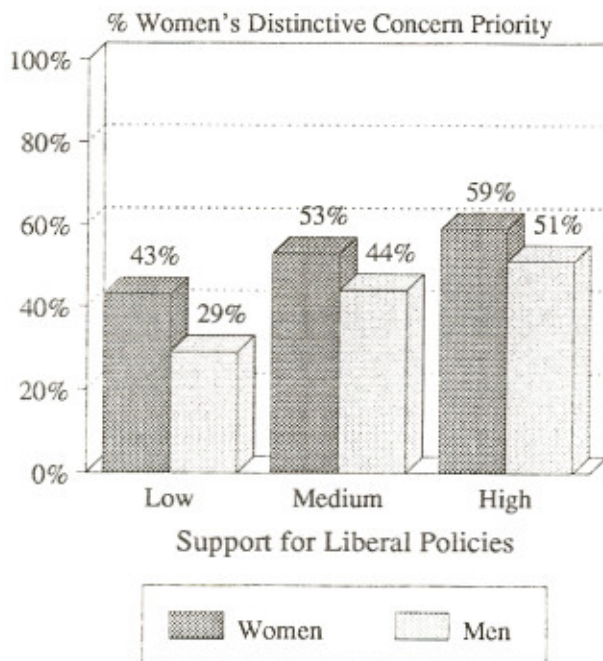


may bring them in closer contact with human needs, sometimes these concerns touch men's lives as well. This may lead them to do the unexpected, as one woman legislator explained:

One of the more interesting things that happened in the legislature this last time was that a man came in and sponsored a bill for a team for [investigating the] sexual abuse of children. He was a very conservative member and generally had not been terribly supportive of a lot of these issues, but had seen an instance of something that he found was really terrible. He did come in and support a bill — an appropriation to have what we call child abuse investigation teams.

Nonetheless, by and large, women legislators were more likely than their male colleagues cut from the same ideological cloth to have placed women's distinctive concerns at the top of their priorities.

Figure 34: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority Given Attitudes on General Policy Index



policy attitudes and ideologies, the woman is more likely to give greater priority to women's distinctive concerns.

This conclusion is reinforced by analysis using a second measure of ideology — attitudes on the General Policy Index. Regardless of whether they scored low, medium or high in support for liberal policies, women legislators were more likely than men with similar policy views to have listed as their top priority a women's distinctive concern (Figure 34). As one woman legislator observed:

Even conservative women in our legislature are supporting things like mammography screening and the WIC funding and things like that.... I see abortion as the only thing dividing women in our legislature.

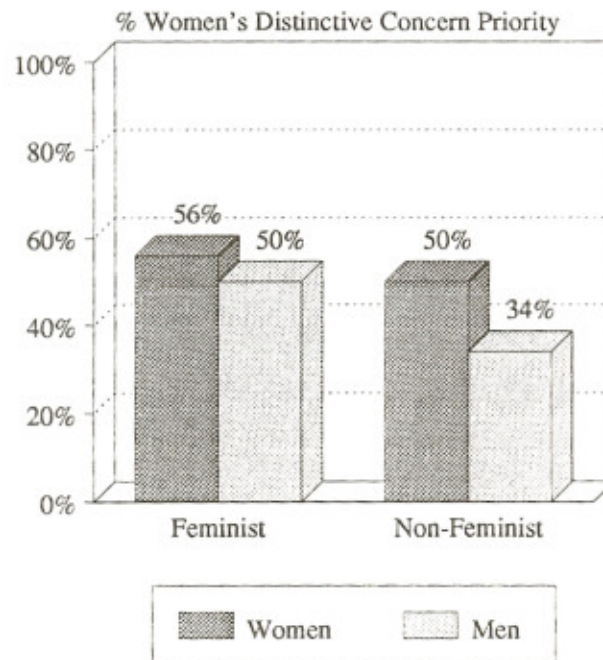
Overall the data suggest that when a man and a woman share similar

Do women have different priorities from men because they more often are feminists?

Women are shifting the focus of legislative agendas to include more issues that reflect women's distinctive concerns, but their impact cannot be attributed solely to the presence of feminists among women legislators. Self-described feminist women were only slightly more likely than non-feminist women to have had a women's distinctive concern as their top priority (Figure 35).

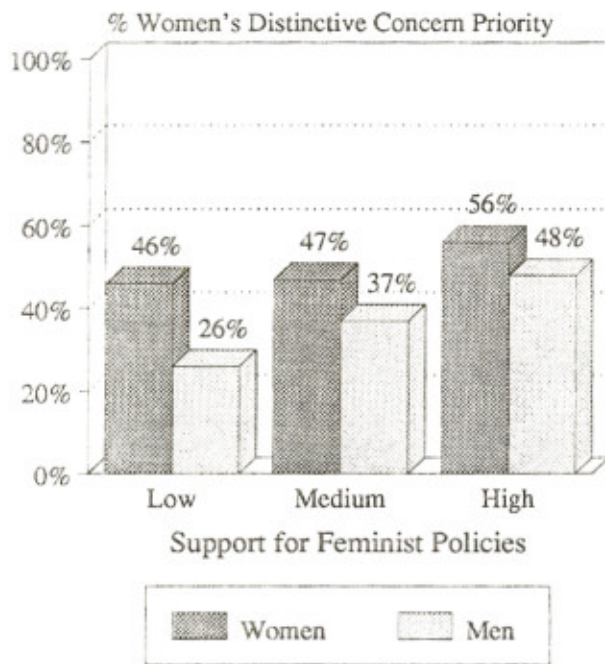
However, feminist and non-feminist men diverged sharply in priorities. Feminist men (who were only 20 percent of the men sampled) were as likely as non-feminist women to have mentioned a women's distinctive concern as a top priority; in contrast, non-feminist men (the vast majority of males in the legislature) were the least likely to have done so. The similar importance placed on women's distinctive concerns among feminist women, feminist men and non-feminist women belies one important difference: feminist women were more likely than non-feminist women and feminist men to have had a women's rights bill as their priority (14 percent, 7 percent and 6 percent, respectively).

Figure 35: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority among Feminists and Non-Feminists



The gender differences were greater when we compared the priorities of lawmakers with similar policy attitudes on the Feminist Policy Index (Figure 36). The gender gap

Figure 36: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority Given Attitudes on Feminist Policy Index



was greatest among low scorers on the index, suggesting that even women who oppose the cornerstone issues of the women's movement are shaping a different agenda than their male colleagues. Among those with higher scores on the Feminist Policy Index, the gender gap narrowed, but nevertheless remained.

Overall, the results suggest that men with an ideological leaning toward feminism are more likely than other men to give priority to women's distinctive concerns. But because so few men are feminists, the increased presence of women — feminist or not — in the legislature seems certain to encourage government to focus more on issues that reflect women's distinctive concerns.

Do women have different priorities from men because they are connected to women's groups?

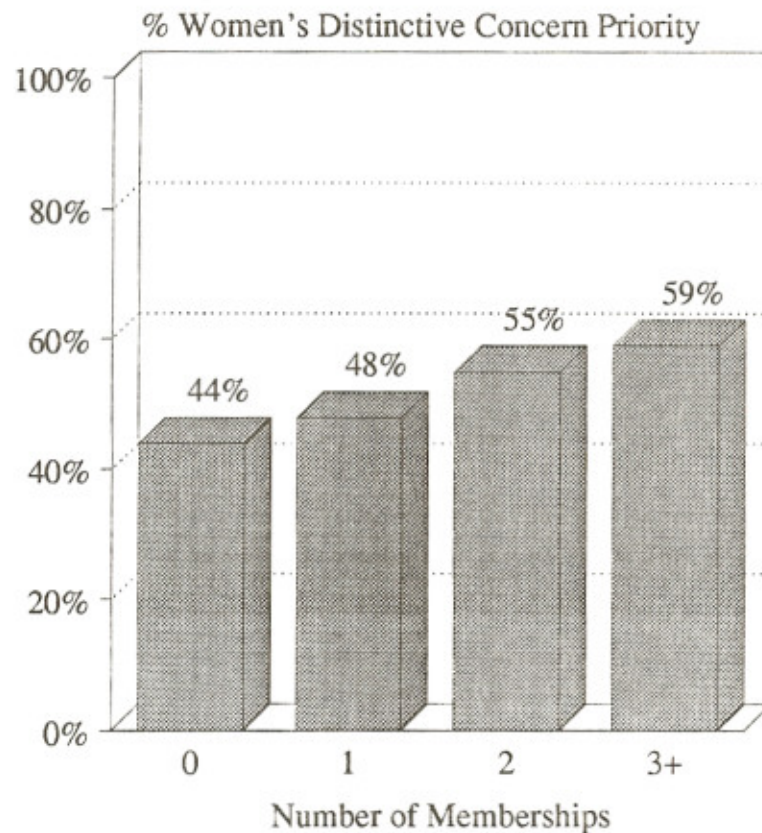
The answer to this question depends on whether we define this connection in terms of memberships in women's groups or campaign endorsements by women's groups.⁴ The more women's groups to which a legislator belonged, the more likely it was that her top priority was a women's distinctive concern (Figure 37).⁵ Nevertheless, women who belonged to *no* women's groups were still more likely than their male colleagues to have listed a women's distinctive concern as their top priority (44 percent vs. 37 percent).

⁴Only women legislators were asked about membership in women's groups since most of their members are women. See Appendix for discussion of questions used to determine group memberships and campaign endorsements.

⁵This trend was more pronounced when memberships only in feminist groups were counted.

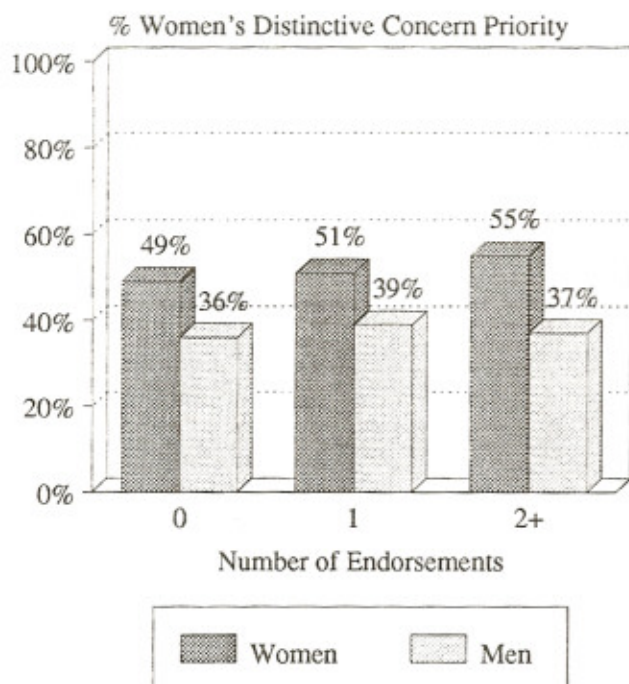
The number of campaign endorsements by women's groups did not differentiate among those women who did and did not have a women's distinctive concern as their top priority (Figure 38). However, among women and men legislators with equal numbers of endorsements, women were more likely than men to have had such a bill as their priority. While the men endorsed by these groups may be valuable allies on roll call votes, women endorsees seem more inclined to attempt to reshape legislative agendas.⁶

Figure 37: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority among Women by Memberships in Major Women's Groups



⁶The same patterns appear if we look only at self-reported NOW and WPC endorsements and exclude reports of endorsements by other women's groups.

Figure 38: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority Given Endorsements by Women's Groups



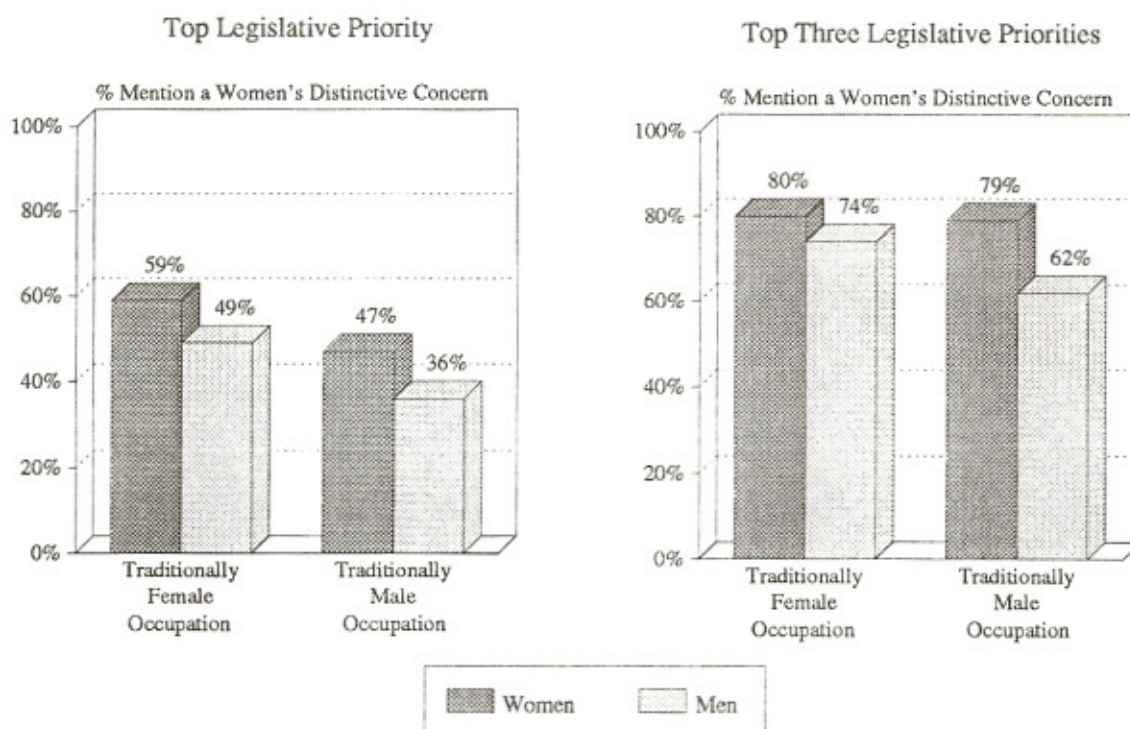
Do differences in women's and men's roles in the workforce contribute to gender differences in priorities?

Among both women and men, the top priorities varied according to occupation (Figure 39). Women in traditionally female occupations were the most likely to have mentioned a women's distinctive concern as their top priority, followed by the small group of men in traditionally female occupations and by women in traditionally male fields. Men in traditionally male fields, who were the vast majority of male lawmakers in our study, were the least likely to have mentioned such a priority. The twelve percentage point difference in priorities of women in the two types of occupations was due to the fact that women in traditionally male fields were less likely than women from traditionally female occupations to have had a women's traditional area of interest as

their top priority. These two groups were equally likely, however, to have mentioned a women's rights bill as their top priority.⁷

We also asked lawmakers if there were one or two other bills that were important priorities to them. This allowed them to mention up to three priorities, but it did not force them to mention bills about which they actually cared little. We combined responses to both questions in order to look at their top *three* priorities. The results indicated that women in traditionally male occupations and in traditionally female occupations were equally likely to have worked on a women's distinctive concern (79 percent and 80 percent, respectively). Women in both occupational types were equally likely to have mentioned both women's rights bills and bills addressing women's traditional areas of interest in their top three priorities. It may be that women in non-traditional occupations combine interests in areas generally associated with women's lives

Figure 39: Women's Distinctive Concern as Legislative Priorities Given Legislators' Occupation



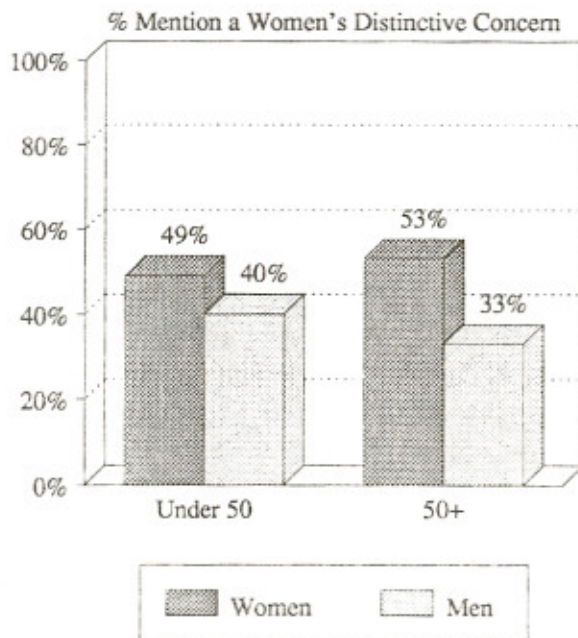
⁷The patterns found among those in traditionally male fields also were found among women and men attorneys — a subset of this larger category.

with other political concerns, resulting in a broader array of policy priorities. That women regardless of occupation were equally likely to have mentioned women's concerns as one of their top three issues suggests that women officeholders will continue to bring distinctive priorities and perspectives to government as their opportunities for employment expand.

Are gender differences in priorities due to motherhood?

Women legislators often attribute their different perspectives from men to their experiences as mothers. However, our data suggest that regardless of whether or not they have children, women are more attentive than men to legislation that focuses on women's distinctive concerns. Furthermore, among women and men legislators who are parents, women are more likely than men to give attention to women's distinctive concerns. This pattern holds for both types of women's distinctive concerns — women's rights priorities as well as priorities dealing with women's traditional areas of interest.

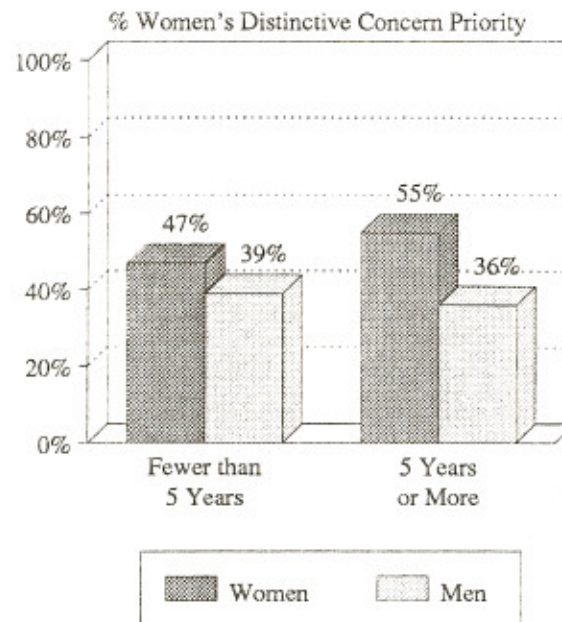
Figure 40: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority Given Legislators' Age



The effects of seniority and age: Will gender differences in priorities last?

Regardless of age or seniority, women more frequently than their male counterparts mentioned as their priority a women's distinctive concern (Figures 40 and 41). The gender gap was particularly great among older and among more senior legislators. While the gender gap in priorities may be closing as new generations of men replace older men, the fact is that, regardless of age, women's distinctive concerns are more central to women's legislative agendas. These patterns suggest that, as younger women move into office, they will continue to devote substantial energy to women's distinctive concerns.

Figure 41: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority Given Seniority



Constraints on Differences in Priorities: A Look at the Political Environment

Do women have different priorities than men because they more often represent liberal districts?

There was little evidence to suggest that gender differences in priorities were due to district influence. Legislators of both sexes representing liberal districts were more likely than those from conservative districts to have had priorities reflecting women's distinctive concerns. Yet, within each type of district, women were more likely than men to have mentioned a women's distinctive concern as a priority (Figure 42). This was particularly true in moderate and conservative districts.

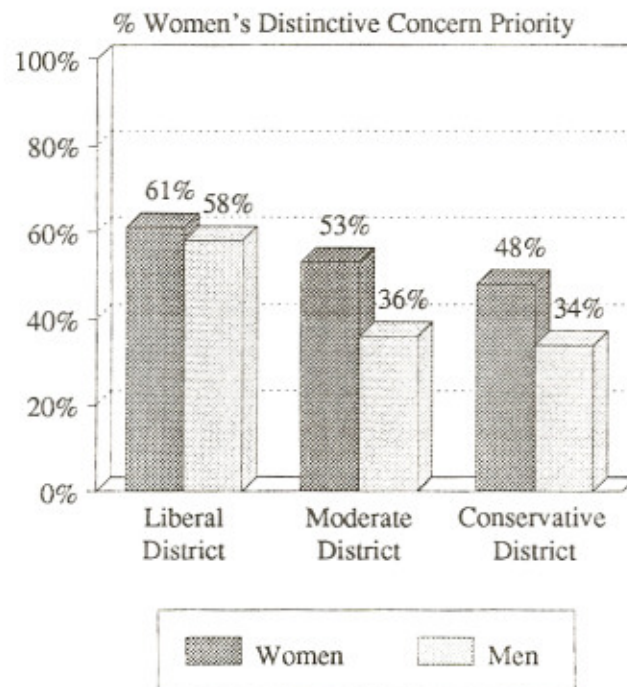
However, even in liberal districts, where women's and men's priorities looked most similar, there were interesting gender differences in priorities. We looked more closely at the type of women's distinctive concerns mentioned, separating these priorities into the two subcategories: women's rights priority bills and priority bills reflecting women's traditional areas of interest. Women were much more likely than men representing liberal districts to have had a women's rights bill as a priority (17 percent vs. 5 percent) and were less likely than men to have had a priority dealing with women's traditional areas of interest (43 percent vs. 53 percent). Thus, it seems that, even in liberal districts,

women are defining their representational mission differently than are their male counterparts.

Does the proportion of women holding office influence priorities?

The number of women who served in a chamber of the legislature had little effect on the extent to which women *or* men gave priority to women's distinctive concerns. Women were just as likely to have mentioned one of these as their top priority when women were less than 15 percent of legislators as when women were 15 percent or more of legislators (Figure 43). Furthermore, regardless of the proportion of women in office, women were consistently more likely than their male colleagues to have mentioned these concerns as their top priority. These trends suggest that, as the number of women in office increases, more women will share the responsibility of directing attention to women's distinctive concerns.

Figure 42: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority Given Type of District



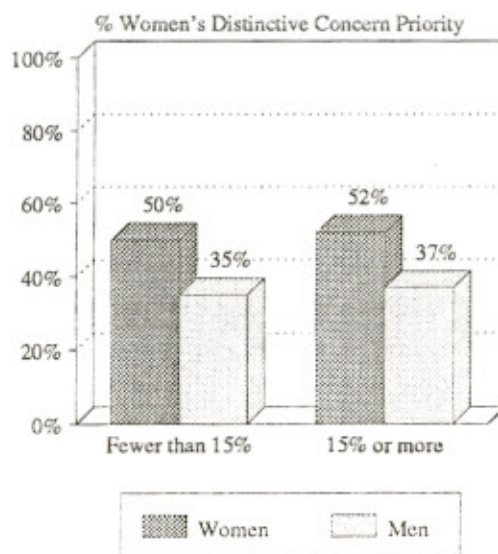
Can women be political insiders and still have priorities that differ from those of men?

Some people are concerned that, as women are accepted into predominantly male institutions, their priorities will change; however, our data suggest that this does not occur. According to our two measures of insider status (identification with the label "political party insider" and holding a legislative leadership position), women in both parties were more likely than their male colleagues with similar party insider or legislative leadership status to have had a women's distinctive concern as their legislative priority. There is no evidence that women who take responsibility for representing the concerns of women are more likely to be excluded from insider positions than other women.

The challenge for women officeholders may not be holding to their principles once they become insiders, but rather attaining positions of influence. In some states this is more of a problem than in others, as one woman lawmaker from a conservative state controlled by "the good old boys" explained:

There's a long, strong power hold among a few people.... I believe whenever you do not have a lot of bargaining power or turnover, you don't have opportunity for change. People are not inclined to hand it to you. What I worry about is the ability of women to be able to maintain the leadership...[on] a lot of issues that are now in the forefront that women have been promoting for a long time: ethics, health care, aging. They don't often have *positions* of influence to maintain leadership on those issues.

Figure 43: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority Given Percentage of Women in the Legislature



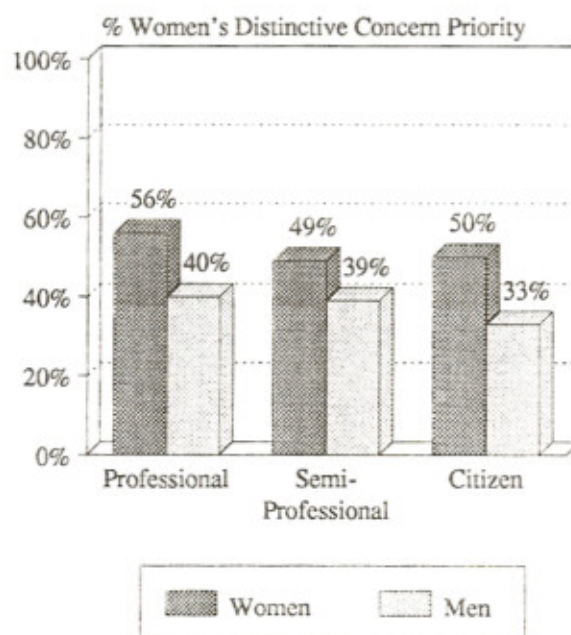
Does professionalism of the legislature affect gender differences in priorities?

The degree of professionalism in the legislature (as measured by salary) had little impact on the gender difference in policy priorities. Women in semiprofessional and citizen legislatures were almost as likely as women in professional institutions to have used their position to make a difference in the legislative agenda (Figure 44).⁸ Thus, it seems that the professionalism of the legislature is not likely to affect the priorities that women bring into office.

Do women's caucuses or other policy-centered meetings of women legislators play a role in encouraging gender differences in priorities?

The absence or presence of a women's caucus and attendance or non-attendance at these gatherings does not seem to affect the likelihood that women legislators are working on issues of concern to women as a personal priority. About half of the women legislators listed bills focusing on women's distinctive concerns as their legislative priority (53 percent of attenders vs. 49 percent of non-attenders).

Figure 44: Women's Distinctive Concern as Top Legislative Priority Given Professionalism of Legislature



⁸The small differences were the result of women in professional legislatures being more likely to have worked on women's rights priority bills than women in citizen legislatures (13 percent vs. 8 percent).

Nevertheless, caucuses and other informal meetings may help women pursue their humanistic and feminist policy goals more effectively. As one legislator whose caucus has worked on issues such as domestic violence, welfare, nutrition and housing pointed out:

Our [women's] caucus has a retreat and brings in all of the organizations that women dominate throughout the state to tell us what they have as their priorities for legislation. Out of that day of hearings, we choose three, at most five, priorities. This gives all of the women an opportunity to really feel involved in at least these issues which are usually unanimously adopted. They are the big issues that we know we will be dealing with. The women's caucus not only supports them by its action of adopting them, but it also develops the means of getting the bills passed, developing the bill and the lobbying strategy and bringing in the support. That means that women can then focus on their own constituent needs. They can go back home and talk about what they did on women's issues, but it also gives them the opportunity and the freedom to work on transportation, the budget, economic development.

Women's caucuses also can provide an institutionalized structure for dealing with these issues, as one legislator explained:

[Our speaker] will turn to the caucus on any issue that deals with children, family and even other things like no smoking. He'll do what we ask him to do because we've established the kind of rapport and we don't hold it against him that he doesn't understand what we're talking about — he tries, but he's just macho. He's political enough to know that these issues are important to the Democratic party.

The Fate of Legislative Priorities

Women and men were equally likely to have achieved their policy goals. About two out of three legislators reported that their priority bills had passed their house of the legislature in a form satisfactory to them.⁹ The pattern held for both women and men even after taking into account differences in ideology, party, feminist identification, age, years in the legislature, professionalism of the legislature and proportion of women in the

⁹After mentioning the priority bill, each legislator was asked: "Has this bill been passed by your house of the legislature?" Those who said it had been were asked a follow-up question: "Are you generally satisfied with the bill in its final form?" The responses were then classified into three categories: passed satisfactorily, passed but not satisfactory or not passed.

legislative chamber. Furthermore, priority bills that represented a women's distinctive concern were as likely to have passed as bills representing other concerns.

However, the proportion of women in the legislative chamber did affect the success of bills dealing with women's distinctive concerns. Both women *and* men who pursued these priorities in legislatures where women were fewer than 15 percent of the members were less likely to report passage of a satisfactory bill than those in legislatures where women were more numerous. When women were a smaller proportion of the legislative chamber, 59 percent of the women and 63 percent of the men with a women's distinctive concern as a priority reported passage of their bill in satisfactory form, compared with 70 percent of female and male legislators in chambers with memberships of 15 percent or more women. This suggests that legislatures in which there are more women may be more supportive of women's distinctive concerns.

Some women legislators see signs that the attitudes of their male colleagues are changing:

It was not too long ago in [my state] that we [women] would do all the preliminary work on these issues and then it would get down to the floor and we would ask a male to handle the legislation because it would have a much better chance of getting through.... Now all of a sudden, women are at the same level as men are and they [the men] come to us and ask us to carry it, and we don't have to go to them anymore.

Despite these victories, the successes that women have achieved, even in legislatures where there are larger numbers of women, seem very fragile to some:

We have to keep up the pressure, every day of our lives. If we let go, it's like the minute you pull that breaker away and the tide is there and in a very short period of time you can't find our footprints. That is the discouraging part of being a woman veteran legislator.

Another added:

I used to feel...frustrated, until one day I said to myself, it's almost like when your kids are in school. If you could send your kid to go fight the battle with the teacher or when you had a baby if you could say to your kid, "Here you get up at 2:00 A.M. and take your own bottle," you would. But the kid couldn't do it, so you had to do it for him. So now I just accept it as a fact of life — the reality that you have to be there constantly nagging and pushing and pulling. I just don't get all consumed by that. We [women] make things happen, but we have to work at it the same way we raised our families, the same way we live our private lives.

Summary

Based on the legislative priorities of women lawmakers, our research suggests that the increased presence of women in public office is heightening legislative attention to those issues we label as "women's distinctive concerns" — priorities that include women's rights bills and women's traditional areas of interest.

Women do not have to be feminists to make a difference. Even women who do not identify themselves as feminists are pursuing priorities reflecting women's distinctive concerns. Furthermore, feminist men are about as likely as non-feminist women to list a women's distinctive concern as their top priority. However, feminist men are greatly outnumbered by non-feminist men, who attach less priority to these concerns.

Women are consistently more likely than their male colleagues to list a women's distinctive concern as important even after taking into account factors such as political ideology, campaign endorsements by women's groups, parenthood, occupational experiences, age, seniority, ideology of the constituency, professionalism of the legislature, proportion of women in the legislative chamber and political insider status.

Women and men are equally successful in getting their priority bills passed. However, when a women's distinctive concern is the top priority, it is more likely to pass in a chamber where women are 15 percent or more of the members. This is true whether the bill is the priority of a female or a male legislator.

Will women continue to make a difference in reshaping legislative agendas? Overall the answer appears to be yes, although there are indications in our findings that the concerns of men and women are converging. Some of our data suggests that as women begin to move into traditionally male occupations in greater numbers, their legislative agendas may represent a combination of women's distinctive concerns and policy items more typically associated with male leadership. In addition, younger men seem more attuned to women's traditional concerns than older men. Nevertheless, even if the slight trends toward convergence of women's and men's priorities continues, it seems clear that women lawmakers will make a difference in public policy and in legislative priorities for decades to come.

Chapter 4: Impact on Process

Women were more likely than men to mention "concerned citizens" as very helpful in working on their top priority bill. African-American women were even more likely than white women to do so. Majorities of women and men believed that the economically disadvantaged have greater access to the legislature because of women legislators. Women and men had different views about women legislators' impact on male legislators' conduct on the floor and about the prevalence of discrimination in the leadership. The vast majority of women, regardless of ideology, feminist identification or age, were working to encourage more women to run for public office.

Introduction

The transformative effect of women's presence in public office does not necessarily end with policy. How an institution works — including who has power and who has access — has a lot to do with what gets accomplished within that institution. Some believe that women bring to office different ways of working — that, as officeholders, they attempt to conduct business more openly so that all points of view can be aired and consensus reached. Women's increased presence in public office also may bring a different style of interaction, a concern for different segments of the constituency and of the larger society and a different relationship between elected representatives and the citizens they represent.

There are many explanations for why women might be expected to make a difference in the processes of politics and government. Some see the potential for women to have a distinctive impact as an outgrowth of their roles in the family, where they serve as chief negotiators, peacemakers and caregivers. Women's gender role socialization may predispose them toward consensus building and desire for inclusiveness and toward placing greater emphasis on connectedness. These inclinations could affect institutional processes when women participate in significant numbers. Whatever the causes, the increased presence of women legislators has the potential to leave its mark on legislative institutions and institutional processes.

This chapter examines whether the legislative process and the legislative institution have been affected by elected women. We look at the impact of women's increased presence on: 1) sources of support in achieving legislative priorities; 2) access to the legislature; 3) leadership styles; 4) collegial relations; and 5) mentoring of potential women candidates.

Sources of Support in Achieving Legislative Priorities

We presented legislators with a list of seven different groups that might have helped them in their work on their personal top legislative priority: their own party's leaders; lobbyists; women legislators from their own party; the opposition party's women legislators; women's groups outside the legislature; concerned citizens; and the opposition party's leaders. Although women and men had help from similar sources, a few gender differences shed light on women's distinctive legislative style and the implications for change in governmental institutions (Figure 45).

Women most frequently mentioned concerned citizens as very helpful in working on their top priority bill, and they were substantially more likely than men to do so. One woman legislator we talked with stressed the strong ties between women legislators and their constituents:

Women have more of a tie with our constituent base than men do because we work harder at that. I think that we work harder in terms of educating people in order to try to pull people into the process.

Another woman lawmaker thought women constituents found it easier to approach a woman legislator:

There is probably greater participation of women constituents because they're more comfortable calling me, or stopping me in the grocery store.... I'm absolutely convinced that women constituents feel that they have a greater voice when they can confide in someone who has been through the same things they have.

In addition, women were slightly more likely than their male colleagues to see each of the following as very helpful in their efforts to get their priority bill passed: lobbyists; women legislators of the same party; women legislators of the opposing party; and women's groups outside the legislature.

There were some differences between African-American and white women in terms of the sources of support identified. African-American women were more likely than their white female colleagues to cite their party's leaders (60 percent vs. 41 percent), women legislators from the other party (35 percent vs. 25 percent) and concerned citizens (62 percent vs. 50 percent) as very important sources of help in working on their top legislative priority. They also were more likely to cite as very important women's groups (52 percent vs. 19 percent). This is not surprising given their tendency to be more closely connected to these organizations than their white female colleagues.¹

¹See Susan J. Carroll and Wendy S. Strimling, *Women's Routes to Elective Office: A Comparison with Men's*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983.

African-American women were less likely than their white female colleagues to say lobbyists were very helpful (24 percent vs. 38 percent).

The focus of the bill affected the relative importance of certain sources of support among women and men legislators (Figure 46). Women and men working on a priority bill dealing with a women's distinctive concern were almost equally likely to see women legislators of their own and the opposing party as very helpful. However, when the priority bill was *not* a women's distinctive concern, the importance of women legislators of both parties dropped significantly among men, but only slightly among women. Furthermore, regardless of the type of bill, women always saw citizens and women's groups outside the legislature as more important than did men.

Figure 45: Lawmakers' Sources of Support for Top Legislative Priority

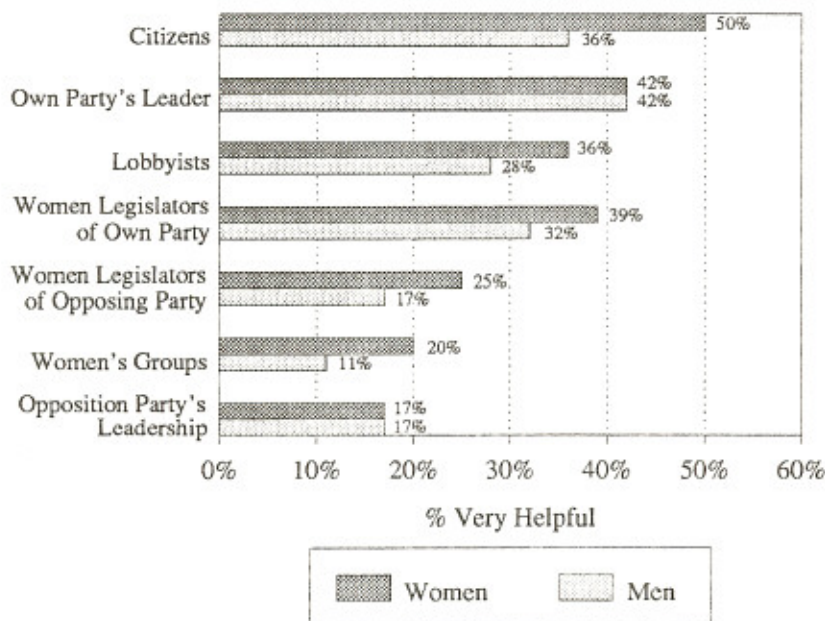
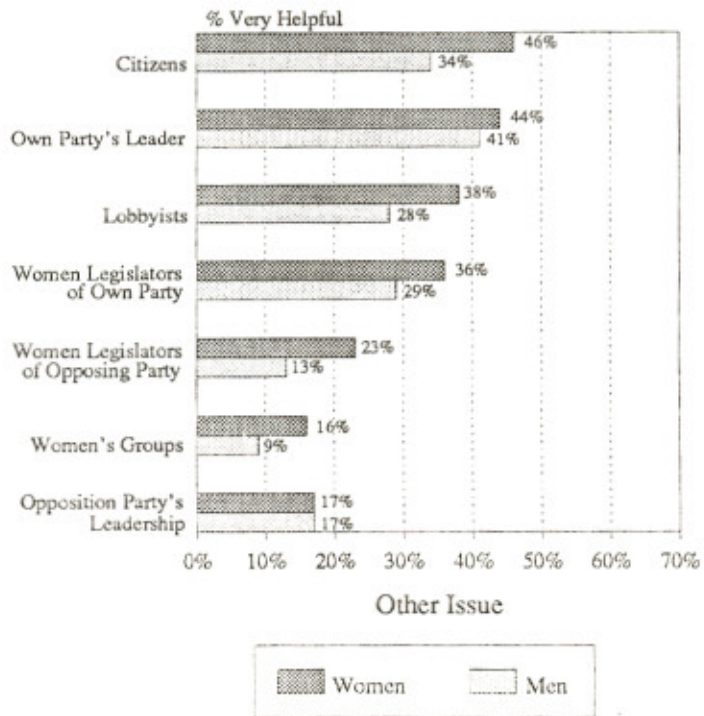
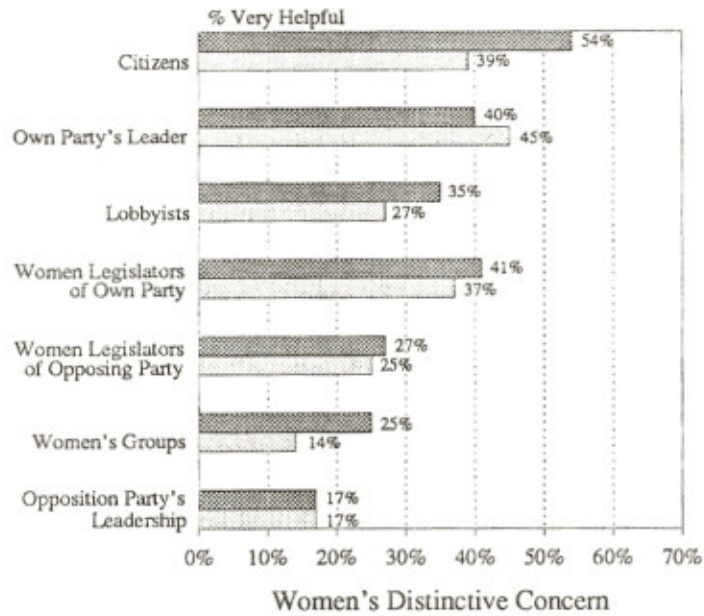


Figure 46: Sources of Support for Top Legislative Priority Given Type of Bill



Have Women Made a Difference in Access to the Legislature?

To see if women's increased presence in the legislature has changed certain institutional processes, we asked legislators the following questions:

- How much difference do you think the increased presence of women in your house of the legislature has made in the extent to which legislative business is conducted in public view rather than behind closed doors?
- How much difference do you think the increased presence of women in your house of the legislature has made in the extent to which the economically disadvantaged have access to the legislature?
- Do you agree or disagree that the men in your legislature socialize a lot more with lobbyists than the women do?²

When attempting to determine if the increased presence of women in public office has actually changed access to the legislature by different groups, the answer seems to depend on whether the question is asked of women or men legislators.

On only one question — whether economically disadvantaged groups have greater access to the legislature because of women legislators — did majorities of both women and men (79 percent and 59 percent, respectively) agree that women have made a difference. As one woman legislator explained: "There is a perception that a woman cares, is a nurturing person, that a woman will look after you." Another expressed similar views, tracing the gender differences to socialization:

I think generally we are better listeners.... I guess we are socialized that way.... A female legislator takes more seriously the responsibilities to be sensitive to a broad range of constituent groups that [she] represent[s]...and also [has] a better ear and higher sensitivity for needs of women, children and poor people.

On the other two questions, the assessments given by female and male lawmakers were significantly different. Fifty-seven percent of women legislators saw women as forcing more legislative work out from behind closed doors into the public view, and 78 percent of them said that male lawmakers are more inclined than women to socialize with lobbyists. As one woman legislator explained her relationship with lobbyists:

²The following responses were counted as affirmative assessments that women are having an impact in the conduct of the legislature: 1) saying that the increased presence of women has made "a lot of" or "some" difference on questions 1 and 2; and 2) agreeing "strongly" or "somewhat" with the statement in question 3. See Appendix for complete question wording.

I got one of these big checks from a lobbyist in my box one day. I said, "Why did you do this? I never vote for your issues. How is it that you're sending me a campaign contribution?" and he said, "Because we can always depend on you, we can trust...what you say, when you say it.... You don't say, 'Well let's talk about this over dinner,' and, 'Well, how about let's go fishing next weekend and talk it over.' You don't do that to us. You say, 'This is a lousy bill. I think it's ridiculous. Go away!' And we go away and don't waste our time on you."

Another contrasted her style of dealing with lobbyists with the style they were more accustomed to from their dealings with male legislators:

When the committee breaks for lunch, I brown bag it. It's the only time I answer the telephone and do the messages. So when lobbyists want to see me, they come into my office and they brown bag it. When I am after people like the ones who have the dog tracks and the horse tracks, I know they don't get up in the morning, so I say, "I'm in my office at seven o'clock in the morning. If you want to come in at seven, bring two cups of coffee."

Men legislators painted a somewhat different picture of women's impact on the legislative process. Only 32 percent of men agreed that more legislative work is conducted in public view because of women, and a minority — 44 percent — agreed that men socialize more with lobbyists.

Perceptions of women's impact on the process varied not only with gender, but also with ideology. Self-labeled conservatives were less likely than liberals or moderates to see women as making a difference in institutional processes (Figure 47). However, gender remained important. Women were more likely than their male colleagues who shared their ideological label to say that the presence of women has made a difference. Furthermore, conservative women's views of women's impact were similar to those of liberal men. Similarly, within each party, women consistently saw a difference on these three measures of impact, although Republicans were less inclined than Democrats of the same sex to perceive women as making a difference on these questions.

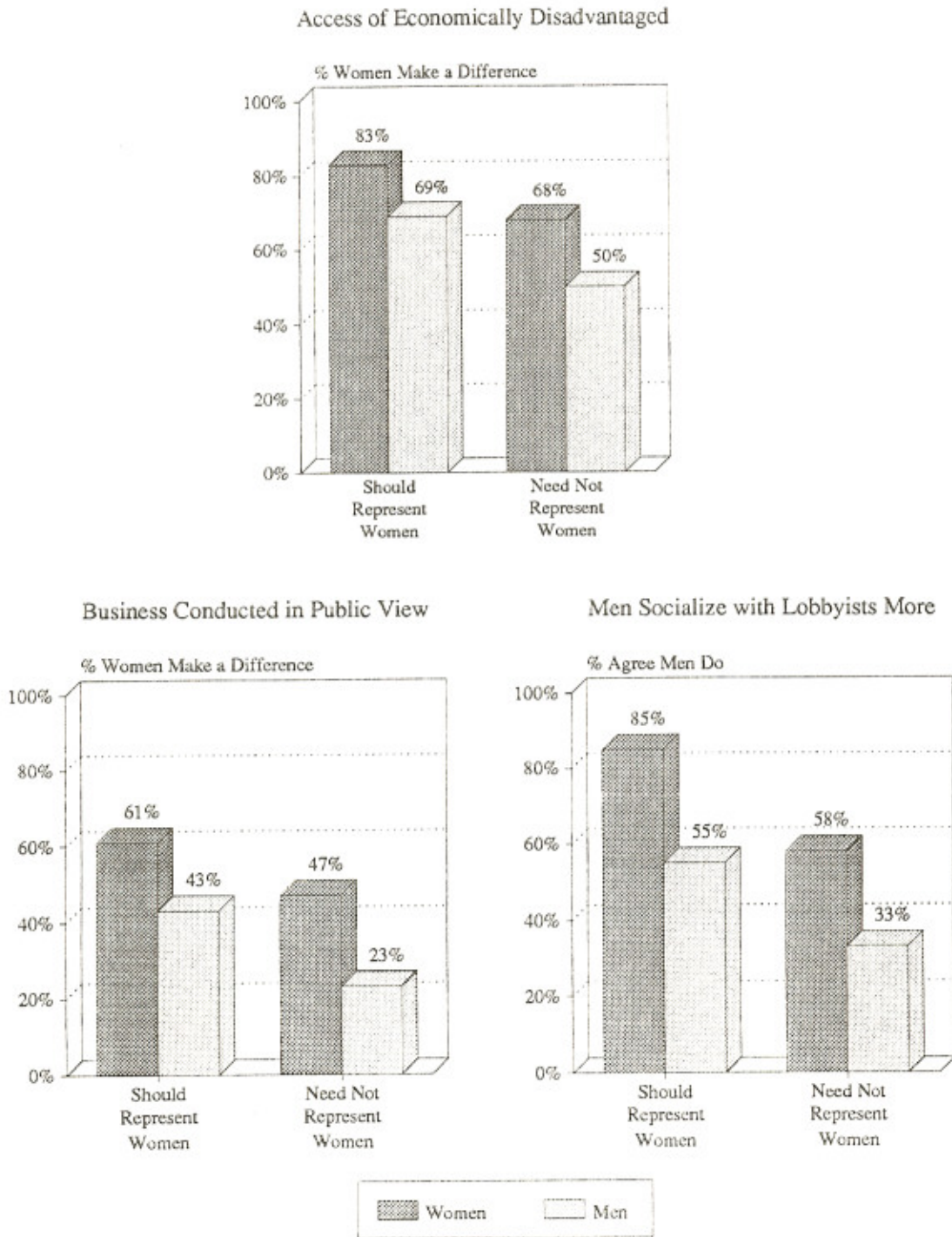
It became clear that there was an association between whether legislators thought that women should represent women and whether they perceived that women had influenced the access of the economically disadvantaged, had influenced the extent to which business is conducted in public view and agreed that men socialize more with lobbyists (Figure 48).³ Those who disagreed that women should represent women's concerns were less likely to see women as making a difference than those who agreed. However, gender also was important — for among like-minded respondents on this question, more women than men agreed that women had made a difference in access.

³Seventy-four percent of women legislators, but only 46 percent of the men agreed that elected women have a special responsibility to represent women's concerns within the legislature.

Figure 47: Female and Male Lawmakers' Views about the Impact of Women Legislators on Process Given Political Ideology



Figure 48: Female and Male Lawmakers' Views about the Impact of Women Legislators on Process Given Views about Women Legislators Representing Women's Concerns



Leadership Styles

To explore whether women and men exercise leadership differently, we asked legislators to imagine they were committee chairs and to tell us how they would exercise leadership in certain situations. We expected women to prefer a more inclusive and consensual style of leadership, with greater concern for allowing everyone to have a say and for conducting business openly. We anticipated that men might prefer a hierarchical, pragmatic leadership style that favored getting the bill through as they wanted it, perhaps by limiting debate and reaching decisions outside of committee meetings.

Yet few gender differences emerged in legislators' responses to hypothetical questions.⁴ At least four out of five women and men said they would prefer: 1) that other members be satisfied with the bill even if it meant that they themselves could not have specific provisions they wanted; 2) that decisions be made within committee meetings rather than outside them; and 3) that debate not be limited, so that all could be heard. Either female and male legislators do not differ in the way they exercise committee leadership or their behavior differs, but they express similar views about leadership in response to hypothetical questions.

Another way of assessing leadership style is to ask legislators to identify the qualities they believe are associated with good political leadership. To see whether women and men differed in their conceptions of good political leadership, we presented legislators with a list of the following six qualities and asked them to indicate the importance of each:

- a sense of mission
- a concern with providing leadership opportunities for others
- the ability to convince people to do something they initially might not be inclined to do
- a concern with encouraging everyone involved in a decision to express their views
- a willingness to share recognition for accomplishments
- a concern with how those affected by a decision feel about the decision⁵

Overall, women and men shared similar views about which qualities they felt were very important for political leaders, and majorities of both sexes considered all six traits to be very important. The greatest difference was that women were more likely than men to see as very important the ability to convince others to do something they initially might not want to do (65 percent vs. 52 percent).

However, there were differences in qualities that African-American and white women identified as important. African-American women were much more inclined than

⁴See Appendix for complete wording of hypothetical questions about leadership style.

⁵Respondents were asked whether they felt each of these qualities was "very important," "somewhat important" or "not very important" in making a person a good political leader.

their white female colleagues to see a sense of mission as very important (87 percent vs. 65 percent) and to say that providing leadership opportunities to others is very important (91 percent vs. 65 percent).

Among women and men who actually held positions of legislative leadership (and thus for whom leadership styles were less hypothetical), gender differences regarding political leadership did occur. Both Democratic and Republican women legislative leaders were more likely than their male counterparts of the same party to see two of the qualities as very important for political leaders: a sense of mission and a concern with how those affected by a decision feel about the decision (Figure 49). Within each party, there were other notable gender differences in the importance of some of the qualities. Democratic women leaders were at least 10 percentage points more likely than their male counterparts to see as very important the ability to convince people to do something they initially might not want to do and a willingness to share recognition for accomplishments with other people. Republican women leaders were at least 10 percentage points more likely than their male colleagues to see as very important a concern with providing leadership opportunities and encouraging others to express their ideas and opinions during the decision-making process. Despite the small differences among women legislative leaders in the qualities they deemed important, the higher value that they placed on some leadership characteristics suggests their potential to have a significant and distinctive impact on the institutional process.

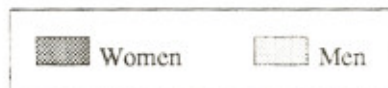
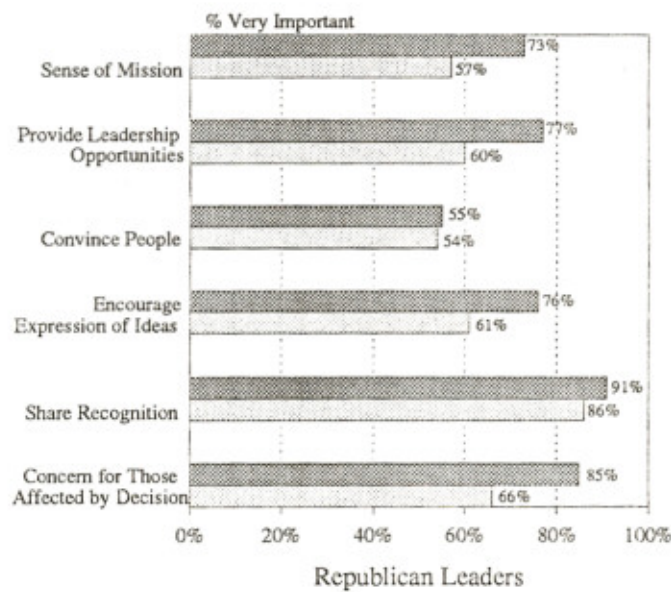
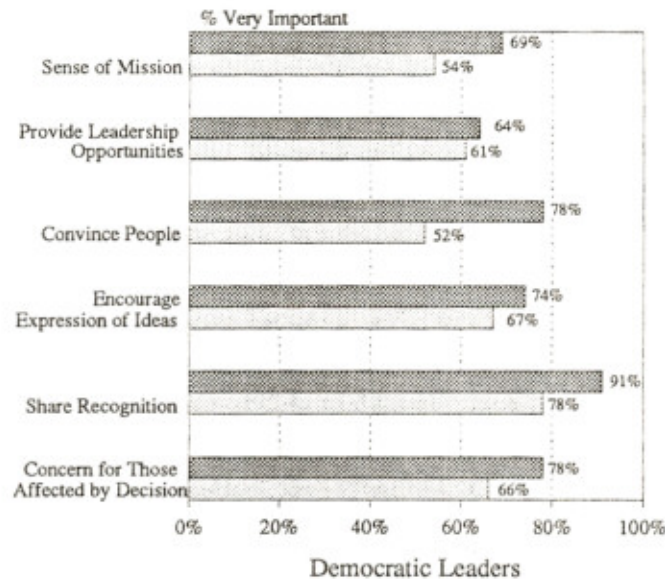
Gender differences in identifying certain leadership *qualities* as important may be reflected in perceived gender differences in the *exercise* of leadership. One woman legislator explained the differences between her style of leadership and her male colleagues' as follows:

More than anything else, we [women] know we have to create an atmosphere of team effort, share the glory. One of the first things I ever did as committee chair was [to let it be known] that if you did the work on my committee, you [get] to sign the little stupid blurb that goes into the calendar. There is your name signed to that because you did the work. A simple little thing like sharing instead of acting like, "I'm the chairman, I'm going to sign everything. I'm the big-shot."

Ensuring that credit is shared seems to be a way to get the job done rather than an act of self-sacrifice:

Although we [women] are willing to give up the recognition for having done something, I, for one, never forget. I use that and go back and say, "Now listen, I gave you the opportunity for the recognition of such and such," or, "You got such and such line item in the budget and went home and got all the credit for it, so now is the time to pay off."

Figure 49: Qualities Political Leaders Should Have According to Female and Male Legislative Leaders of Each Party



When asked whether she ran committee meetings differently and whether the process was more open with her as chair, one female committee chair explained:

[It is] more open.... As far as the committee itself, I'm fairly open within the committee to everybody participating...whereas I think other chairmen will do things like have the same leadership group decide every week, and then they hand out [voting] instructions to the rest of the committee. I see my style as a lot different that way. I clearly have my own ideas about how things ought to go and very seldom do they go in a different way, but I think my style is more "let's look at this together," and the committee is pretty accessible.

Collegial Relationships between Women and Men Lawmakers

Men vastly outnumber women in every state legislature in the nation; therefore, women must work with their male colleagues to get their policies passed. This often means that women must learn how to work with men who are used to dealing with women in their more traditional roles as wives, mothers, sisters or daughters. Women must learn how to handle obstacles presented by men's habitual patterns of dealing with women who are not colleagues.

We asked legislators to respond to two items that pertain more or less to collegial relationships:

- How much difference do you think the increased presence of women in your house [of the legislature] has made in the way legislators conduct themselves on the floor of the legislature?⁶
- Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with this statement: Within the legislature, most men try to keep women out of leadership positions.

On both questions, women and men legislators responded very differently. Only 36 percent of men saw any change in conduct on the floor of the legislature as a result of the increased presence of women. However, a majority of women legislators (62 percent) said that they felt their male colleagues behaved differently on the floor of the legislature because of the increase in women's numbers, and their stories reflected this incremental change. As one woman lawmaker suggested:

⁶The possible choices were: "a lot of difference," "some difference" or "very little difference." Responses of "no difference" or "don't know," if volunteered, also were accepted.

Critical mass — getting enough to make a difference — is really important, I think. When I came along, there were twelve women in my party caucus [not three or four like there had been for a long time].... For the first six to eight months, it was all...the little barnyard good old boy jokes and keep your place. The first thing we [women] did was stop smoking in the caucus room. Big deal, right? It was a big deal to them; they didn't like having to go outside of the room to smoke their cigarettes.

An even larger disparity occurred on the question of whether men try to keep women from moving into leadership. While only 16 percent of male legislators agreed with the statement, 48 percent of the women responded that they believed men try to keep women out of leadership positions. African-American women, who must overcome both racial and sex discrimination, were particularly likely to perceive that women are discriminated against, with 70 percent agreeing that men try to keep women out of leadership.

Again, women's perceptions were supported by the experiences they recounted. One woman recalled the problems that women once faced in her legislature due to stereotypes and prejudice:

We had a speaker of the house who insisted he had to have a male majority leader — he absolutely could not function with a woman majority leader.

Others saw the biggest barriers arising from women being shut out of the informal associations outside the legislature:

Those who are getting into the leadership are those who are playing golf with the guys that are in leadership now.... I don't play golf.

Another observed:

With men as real power brokers, you really sometimes feel that it would be nice to be included.... I understand that they just don't think that way and it's a subtle kind of exclusion that occurs. For example, I sit among lots of men. At the end of the session day, there will be various men come by...and say [to the men around me, but not to me], "How about dinner?" Or, "How about going to so and so, and we're going to talk about...." [But] we [women] aren't part of the group unless we just force ourselves on them, and that's not always a good idea. You just have to endure that natural old boys' club. It's there, and there's no way you can do much about it.

Some have broken down at least some of the barriers:

It used to be blanket invitations [to the male legislators] in [my state]. [The speaker] is having his hunt up in the miserable cold. I'll tell you what I did. I

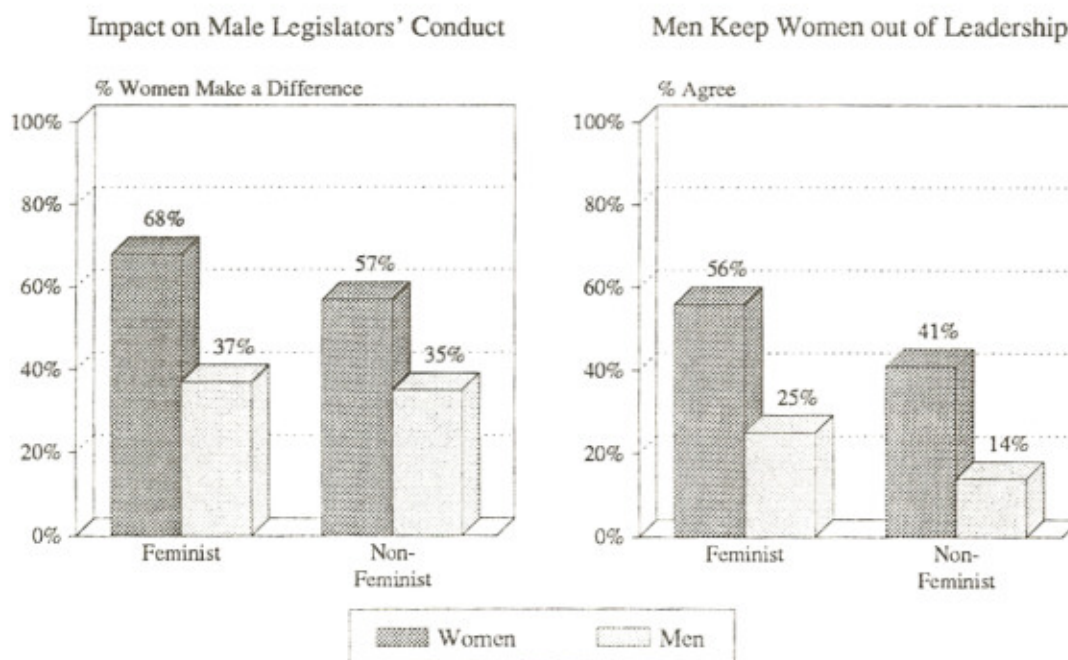
said I am sick and tired of not being invited to these things. And he said, "I never thought to ask you." Women are now asked.... I mean I had to go, but what a miserable trip. I had to get up at four o'clock in the morning and go to this pond. But I do fish. So of course when it came to the fishing trips, I said the same thing, "I'm a good fisherperson and I bait my own hooks; you don't have to dig worms for me." So they started inviting the women, and that is one of the ways that we got into these small groups.

In some cases, the response to exclusion is greater unity among women. But others see it as having the potential to create divisions among women competing for recognition:

[Previously] there's [been] no tendency to support each other because there's so little room [for advancement].... Women in an arena like ours are inherently competitive. If she gets a chairmanship, and there's only going to be one chairmanship [given to a woman] every twenty years, it's going to keep the rest of us back.... But I think that has changed a lot. I think women are beginning to see even in our [competitive] arena, that the more we stick together, the more power we'll have.

Although women as a group saw collegial relations in the legislature differently than did men, ideology, partisanship and feminist identification influenced the extent to which

Figure 50: Feminist and Non-Feminist Lawmakers' Views about the Impact of Women on Collegial Relations



legislators saw women's increased presence as having affected interactions within the legislature.⁷ Conservative legislators were less likely than liberal legislators of the same sex to see women's increased presence as having affected men's behavior and to agree that men try to keep women out of leadership positions. However, conservative women were slightly *more* likely than liberal men to believe that women have affected male legislators' conduct (52 percent vs. 46 percent) and to say that men keep women out of leadership (38 percent vs. 31 percent). In examining partisan trends, Republican women were less inclined than Democratic women to see women as having changed men's behavior (52 percent vs. 69 percent) and they were less inclined to see men as trying to keep women out of leadership (41 percent vs. 53 percent). But overall, Republican women's perspectives looked more like Democratic women's views than their Republican male colleagues' views. Non-feminist women were somewhat less inclined than feminist women to see men's conduct as changing or to see men as keeping women out of leadership (Figure 50). Again, however, non-feminist women's perceptions of legislative life were more similar to feminist women's than to men's.

Bringing Women Into Public Office

One way that women can have a profound impact on processes within the legislature and within government institutions more broadly is by encouraging more women to run for public office. Indeed, the increased presence of women in legislatures is ensuring that more legislators are involved in helping break down the gender barriers to office. The need for women to help other women is clear, as this female legislator explained:

Women have a hard time. Number one, women have a hard time raising money, especially the first time because people just don't take them very seriously. As the days and the years go on, it gets easier and easier, but fundraising is one of the most difficult things for women and their campaigns.

Almost all women legislators (84 percent) reported having done something to encourage other women to run for office. As might be anticipated, some women were more likely than others to have engaged in this type of activity: feminists were slightly more likely to have done so than non-feminists; liberals were somewhat more likely to have done so than conservatives; and those well connected to the women's community were more likely to have done so than those less well integrated into these networks. But

⁷There was a slight difference among women — but not among men — with greater or less seniority in responses to the question of whether men try to keep women out of leadership. Women with greater seniority were slightly less likely than women with less than five years of experience to agree with this statement (44 percent vs. 54 percent). However, this was still a sizable minority of more senior women legislators who agreed. This suggests that even as women gain experience they may continue to encounter sex discrimination as an obstacle to their progress in the legislature.

overall, the vast majority of women were working to increase the presence of women in public office. This was true regardless of ideology, feminist identification, partisanship, connection to the women's community, age, seniority, the proportion of women already in the legislature or women's caucus attendance.

Summary

The increased presence of women as lawmakers appears to be making a difference, to varying degrees, in patterns of interaction within the legislature, access to the legislature, the presence of alternative leadership styles, collegial relations and the encouragement of women candidates. But when it comes to subjective assessments of how much difference women are making in institutional processes, the answer often depends on whether the question is addressed to women lawmakers or their male colleagues.

Majorities of women and men agree that women are helping to give the economically disadvantaged greater access to the legislature. Majorities of women also see women as opening up the process so that more business is conducted in public view, believe that men socialize more with lobbyists and feel that women lawmakers have a responsibility to represent the interests of women. Majorities of men disagree.

It is difficult to say whether the increased presence of women in public office will change the way political leadership is exercised. In response to hypothetical questions, both men and women appear to aspire to an open and democratic style of leadership. However, gender differences emerge when women and men are asked whether various traits are very important to political leadership, particularly among women and men who actually hold positions of legislative leadership.

Women lawmakers are more likely than men to say that citizens are very helpful in work on their top priority bill, suggesting that women more often than men bring citizens into the policy process. While women colleagues are important sources of support for both female and male lawmakers working on priorities reflecting women's distinctive concerns, they remain so for women lawmakers regardless of type of policy priority.

Women and men express different views about women's impact on collegial relationships within the legislature. Women say they have changed men's behavior on the floor, but that men try to keep women out of leadership positions; majorities of men disagree with these two statements.

Encouraging more women to run for office might well be one way to increase women's distinctive impact within government institutions, and large majorities of women are taking steps to ensure that other women follow in their footsteps. Women across the ideological spectrum are providing support to increase the numbers of women in public office, but feminist women, liberal women and women connected to the women's community are the most likely to be working to bring women into office.

Conclusion: Reshaping the Agenda

Women lawmakers are reshaping the agendas of state legislatures across the country. Although women remain a small minority (18.3% in 1991) of state legislators, their impact on public policy is profound and distinctive. Elected women are working to make the agendas of legislative institutions more responsive to women's demands for equal rights as articulated by the contemporary women's movement and more reflective of women's concerns stemming from their roles as caregivers in the family and in society more generally. The change taking place as more and more women move into legislatures is evident in women legislators' attitudes on public policy issues, in their actions on legislation, and in impressions of their impact as expressed not only by the women themselves but also by their male colleagues.

In 1981, the Center for the American Woman and Politics conducted a study of women public officeholders which discovered a gender gap in public policy attitudes among elected officials similar to the gender gap that has been apparent in the general public for more than a decade.¹ The new study described in this report provides additional, more recent evidence that a sizable gender gap is evident in the public policy preferences of women and men serving in state legislatures. On six of eight issues, women legislators were more likely than their male colleagues to support feminist and liberal policy positions. Women more often than men supported passage and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, opposed prohibitions on abortion rights and agreed that minors should be able to obtain a legal abortion without parental consent. Women legislators were less likely than their male counterparts to favor the death penalty, to express faith in the ability of the private sector to solve our economic problems and to view the building of additional nuclear power plants as a desirable method for meeting their state's power needs. When we combined all eight policy attitudes in a summary *General Policy Index*, about one of every three women, but only one of every six men, scored high in support of liberal policy positions. When responses to questions about the ERA, abortion and parental consent were combined to form a *Feminist Policy Index*, one-half of the women, but only one-fourth of the men, scored high in support of feminist policy positions.

The gender gap in public policy attitudes was present among legislators of both parties. Democratic women were more liberal and more feminist in their policy attitudes than were Democratic men; similarly, Republican women were more moderate (i.e., less conservative) and more feminist than Republican men. Although Republican women were, as expected, less liberal in their policy attitudes than Democratic men, they were about equally as feminist.

While the gender gap in policy attitudes among state lawmakers suggests that women and men bring different perspectives to their work in the legislatures, attitudes alone

¹Kathy A. Stanwick and Katherine E. Kleeman, *Women Make a Difference*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1983.

cannot reshape legislative agendas. Attitudinal differences must be accompanied by gender differences in legislative actions in order for women to be agents of change.

The study described in this report goes well beyond our 1981 research in providing the first comprehensive and systematic evidence that women legislators are different from men in their *actions* as well as in their attitudes. Our research reveals two important ways in which women legislators express their different interests and concerns in their work on legislation.

First, women legislators in our study were more likely than their male colleagues to report that they had *worked on* one or more bills aimed specifically at helping women² — legislation that we called *women's rights bills*.³ Fifty-nine percent of women legislators, compared with 36 percent of men, had worked on at least one women's rights bill during the current legislative session.

Second, women legislators differed from their male colleagues in the focus of their *top priority bill* — the single bill that was of greatest importance to a legislator during the last legislative session. Women more often than men (51 percent vs. 37 percent) had legislative priorities that focused on what we called *women's distinctive concerns*.

The category "women's distinctive concerns" encompasses bills of two types — *women's rights bills*⁴ and *bills dealing with women's traditional areas of interest*.⁵

²This legislation did not have to be a top priority for the legislator (although it could have been), nor did the legislator have to sponsor it. We simply asked each legislator if she or he had *worked on* legislation during the last session where the bill itself, or specific provisions of the bill, were intended to help women in particular. We also asked legislators to describe what the bill or its relevant provisions did for women.

³These bills dealt specifically with issues of direct concern to women generally (e.g., legislation concerning rape, teen pregnancy or women's health) or focused on their specific concerns as wage earners (e.g., pay equity), working mothers (e.g., maternity leave, day care) or marital partners (e.g., domestic violence, spousal retirement benefits, division of property in divorce). We chose to call these bills "women's rights bills" because they appeared to be consistent with the major policy goals of the contemporary women's movement as set forth in the statements of purpose of organizations such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), and the former Women's Equity Action League (WEAL). They also appeared to be consistent with the agenda for the future established by delegates elected to the government-sponsored National Women's Conference held in Houston, Texas in November 1977 (see *The Spirit of Houston: The First National Women's Conference, An Official Report to the President, the Congress and the People of the United States*, Washington, D.C.: National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, March 1978.) However, it is important to emphasize that not all legislators who worked on the legislation we call "women's rights bills" did so with the intent of advancing the cause of feminism. Some legislators undoubtedly worked on these bills because they viewed them as beneficial to women in general or to their women constituents in particular, not because they saw them as part of a larger feminist agenda. While bills that seemed consistent with feminist goals were included in the category "women's rights bills" even if the legislator who worked on a particular bill may not have viewed it as feminist in intent, bills that seemed anti-feminist in intent were excluded. However, only 1.2 percent of women and 1.4 percent of men reported that they worked on anti-feminist legislation.

⁴See note 3 above.

Women legislators were more likely than their male counterparts to have top priority bills of both types. One of every ten women state legislators, but fewer than one of every twenty men, had a women's rights bill as their top priority. Similarly, two-fifths of women, compared with one-third of men, had a top priority bill that focused on women's traditional areas of interest; in particular, women were more likely than men to have priority bills focusing on children and families (11 percent vs. 3 percent) and health care (14 percent vs. 6 percent).

Women of both parties are active in reshaping legislative agendas through their work on women's rights legislation and through their legislative priorities. Democratic women in our study more often than Republican women worked on women's rights bills and had a women's distinctive concern as their top legislative priority. Nevertheless, Republican women were more likely than men of either party to have worked on women's rights legislation and to have top priority bills focusing on women's distinctive concerns.

Women legislators not only give priority to and work on legislation that reflects the concerns they bring to the legislature as women, but also are successful in using the legislative process to get this legislation enacted. Women legislators in our study were about equally as effective as men in getting their bills passed. About two of every three legislators reported that their priority bills had passed their house of the legislature in satisfactory form, and priority bills focusing on women's distinctive concerns were as likely to have passed as other types of legislation.

Legislators' impressions of the effects of increased numbers of women lawmakers on public policy provide additional evidence that women are having a distinctive impact and influencing the agendas of state legislatures. Majorities of men as well as women lawmakers agreed that the increased presence of women in the legislatures has made a difference in: expenditure priorities for the state, the extent to which legislators consider how legislation will affect women as a group and the number of bills passed dealing specifically with the problems faced by women.

Legislators' impressions regarding the effects of increased numbers of women lawmakers, combined with our findings of gender differences in legislative priorities and women's greater involvement with women's rights legislation, provide compelling evidence that women are pursuing a set of policy objectives distinguishable from those of their male colleagues. Women lawmakers clearly are having a distinctive impact on public policy. As the numbers of women legislators increase, the attention that legislators give to women's rights issues as well as to issues pertaining to health care, the welfare of children and families and other concerns related to women's traditional roles is likely to increase as well.

⁵We consider "women's traditional areas of interest" to include those concerns — e.g., health care, education, the welfare of children and the family — that stem from women's roles as caregivers in the family and in society more generally.

Because growth in the number of women legislators has followed an incremental pattern during the past two decades,⁶ the change brought about as increasing numbers of women have entered the legislatures has been neither revolutionary nor dramatic, and consequently, has attracted little attention. However, as our research findings demonstrate, significant change is taking place — change that has important long-term implications. As more women enter legislatures, the policy agenda is being reshaped to better reflect the concerns brought into the legislature by women. The end result is likely to be an agenda that is more responsive not only to the specific needs of women, but also to the needs of a broader cross-section of our society (including, for example, the economically disadvantaged, children and those who lack access to adequate health care).

Maximizing Impact: The Role of Individual Characteristics

A profile of the types of women whose attitudes and actions differ most from those of their male colleagues has emerged from this research. These women legislators are the ones most likely to have a distinctive, gender-related impact on public policy and to be active in reshaping the agendas of legislative institutions.

The women legislators most likely to reshape the legislative agenda are: feminist, liberal, younger and African-American. Women lawmakers who called themselves feminists (45 percent of all women legislators) and those who identified themselves as liberals (27 percent of all women legislators) were more likely than legislators of other ideological perspectives, both women and men, to support feminist and liberal policy positions, to work on women's rights bills and to have top priority bills focusing on women's distinctive concerns (especially in the area of women's rights). Younger women legislators (i.e., less than 50 years old) were also more likely than older women legislators and male legislators of all ages to express liberal and feminist policy positions and to work on some women's rights legislation. However, no comparable age differences in top priority bills occurred. While African-American women were equally likely as white women to have priority bills focusing on women's distinctive concerns, they were more likely than both men and white women to support liberal and feminist policies and to have worked on at least one women's rights bill during the last legislative session.

While liberal, feminist, younger and/or African-American women legislators are the most active in reshaping legislative agendas, many other women legislators are also having a distinctive, gender-related impact on public policy. A gender gap exists in both attitudes and action among non-feminists as well as feminists and among moderates and

⁶Women constituted 4.5 percent of legislators in 1971, 8.0 percent in 1975, 10.3 percent in 1979, 13.3 percent in 1983, 15.7 percent in 1987, 17.0 percent in 1989, and 18.3 percent in 1991. See Center for the American Woman and Politics, "Women in State Legislatures 1991," New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), National Information Bank on Women in Public Office, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1991.

conservatives as well as liberals. Women legislators who did not call themselves feminists and women who identified as moderates or conservatives were more likely than the men who shared their ideological labels to take liberal and feminist stands on issues, to work on women's rights legislation and to have a women's distinctive concern as their top legislative priority. A similar gender gap in both attitudes and action was evident among older legislators and among white legislators.

The importance of this pattern cannot be stressed too strongly, for it suggests that *on the average* female and male legislators who are of the same generation, ideology and/or race have different attitudes and will be active on different types of legislation. Although women and men legislators may share many of the same characteristics, they nevertheless are not the same in thought or action. Gender does seem to make a difference over and above the effect of other characteristics.

In most legislative races involving women candidates, the choice is not between a young, liberal, feminist, African-American woman and an older, conservative, non-feminist, white male. Rather, the choice often is between a woman and a man (or men) who are of the same race, who come from the same generation and who are very similar in their political ideology and other characteristics. Particularly in primary elections where party is not a factor, but even in many cases in general elections where candidates are from different parties, our findings suggest that the candidates may offer more of a choice to voters than is immediately apparent: a woman candidate and her male opponent who seem similar in many respects nevertheless are likely to exhibit gender-based differences in attitudes and behaviors if elected to office. While certainly not true in every case, the woman candidate is more likely to be liberal and feminist in her policy positions, to work on women's rights legislation and to have legislative priorities focusing on women's distinctive concerns as women and as caregivers.

Maximizing Impact: The Importance of Connections to Women's Organizations

One of the most important indicators of whether or not a woman legislator is likely to be an active agent in reshaping the legislative agenda is her connection to women's organizations and the organized women's community. The more memberships women legislators had in women's organizations,⁷ the more likely they were to support liberal and feminist policy positions on issues, to work on women's rights legislation and to have a women's distinctive concern as a top priority. Women who held no memberships in women's organizations were more likely than men to have top priority bills that

⁷We asked specifically about memberships in the League of Women Voters [LWV], the American Association of University Women [AAUW], the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs [BPW], the National Organization for Women [NOW], the Women's Political Caucus [WPC] and feminist groups other than NOW or WPC.

focused on women's distinctive concerns, but they were only slightly more likely than men to have worked on a women's rights bill. Moreover, they were no more likely than men to have liberal or feminist policy attitudes. It is not clear whether this close connection between women's organizations and the legislators most likely to be working to reshape legislative agendas occurs because women who care about women's issues join women's groups or because women's organizations reinforce within women legislators a sense of responsibility for representing women's shared interests. Regardless, the connection is a strong one.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the more endorsements a woman legislator had from women's groups in her last election, the more likely she was to have an impact on public policy different from that of men. The men who received endorsements from women's groups were less likely than women who received endorsements to support liberal and feminist policy stands. More important, they were considerably less likely than endorsed women to work on women's rights legislation once in the legislature or to give top priority to legislation focused on women's distinctive concerns. The question of whether women's groups should endorse only women or whether they should endorse men as well has provoked considerable discussion and controversy within many of the organizations that endorse candidates. While our findings certainly cannot resolve this issue, they do suggest that women's groups receive more direct benefits from their endorsements of women candidates than from their endorsements of male candidates.

Men Who Are Helping to Reshape the Agenda

There are male legislators who are helping women reshape the legislative agenda. The subgroups of male legislators most like women in their attitudes and actions are: men who call themselves liberals, men who self-identify as feminists and men who are under the age of 50.

Men who called themselves liberals (14 percent of all male legislators) or who self-identified as feminists (20 percent of all male legislators) were much more likely than other men and more likely than moderate, conservative and non-feminist women to express feminist and liberal attitudes on policy issues. Liberal and feminist men were also much more active than other men in support of women's rights legislation and legislation related to caregiving.

Nevertheless, liberal and feminist men were somewhat less likely than women to translate their attitudes into action. Liberal men were only slightly more likely than moderate women to work on any women's rights legislation, and they were no more likely than moderate women to have a women's distinctive concern as their top legislative priority. Similarly, feminist men were no more likely than non-feminist women to work on women's rights legislation or to have top priority bills focusing on women's distinctive concerns.

While liberal and feminist men are greatly outnumbered by moderates, conservatives and non-feminists among their male colleagues, these findings suggest that they are important allies in altering the legislative agenda to make it more responsive to women's demands for equal rights and more reflective of women's concerns as caregivers in the family and society. However, women are still more likely to take the lead in reshaping the agenda; feminist and liberal women are particularly active in doing so.

Men under the age of 50 were much more likely than their older male colleagues to take liberal and feminist stands on issues, to work on women's rights legislation and to have a women's distinctive concern as their top legislative priority. However, younger men were also notably less likely than women of any age to do all these things. These findings suggest that generational change is taking place among men — change that is leading men to become more sensitive to the concerns and issues of greatest interest to women. Over time, this change among men may lead to greater convergence between the sexes. However, at present and for the foreseeable future, women are still likely to lead the way in reshaping the legislative agenda to make it more responsive to women's concerns.

The Effect of the Political Environment on Women's Impact

For the most part our research did not reveal important effects of the political environment on women legislators' attitudes or actions in reshaping the legislative agenda. Although the ideology of the district a woman legislator represented did seem to have some effect on how active she was on behalf of women's interests, somewhat surprisingly women's level of activity did not seem to be much affected by either the professionalism of the legislature or the proportion of women in the legislature.⁸

Nevertheless, our examination did lead to two important conclusions regarding the effects of the political environment on women's impact. First, as women gain more seniority in the legislature and become legislative leaders, they do not abandon their commitment to women and to reshaping the legislative agenda. Second, just as connections to women's organizations outside the legislature seem to lead women lawmakers to be more active agents in representing women's interests, so too do connections to women's caucuses and other policy-oriented gatherings of women inside the legislature.

Women with five or more years of experience in the legislature expressed policy attitudes that were similar to those of their less senior female colleagues, and like women legislators who had more recently entered the legislature, were more likely than their

⁸Legislators in legislative chambers with 15 percent or more women were more successful in securing passage of top priority bills focusing on women's distinctive concerns than were legislators in chambers with fewer women, suggesting that the proportion of women in the legislature does affect the fate of legislation focusing on women's rights and women's traditional areas of interest.

male colleagues of similar seniority to have a women's distinctive concern as a top priority. Perhaps more important, women in positions of leadership within the legislature were virtually identical to other women legislators in their policy views and in their levels of activity on women's rights legislation. Women in positions of legislative leadership also were more likely than male legislative leaders to give top priority to legislation focused on women's distinctive concerns. In short, our findings suggest that women's commitment to representing the interests of women does not diminish as they achieve greater longevity or as they move into leadership positions within state legislatures.

The commitment of women legislators to representing the interests of women does, however, seem to be enhanced when they are involved with formal women's caucuses or when they attend formal or informal policy-oriented meetings of women within their legislatures. While the top priority bills of women who attended meetings of women legislators did not differ significantly in focus from the top priority bills of women who did not attend such meetings, women who met with other women in their legislatures were considerably more likely than those who did not to have worked on women's rights legislation during the last legislative session. Just as a connection to the women's community outside the legislature seems to support women legislators in their efforts to reshape the legislative agenda, so too does a connection to a women's community inside the legislature.

Questions Remain

In demonstrating that women are reshaping the agendas of legislatures across the country, this research represents an important first step toward understanding the impact of women in public office. However, if we are to appreciate fully the changes in public policy, political processes and governing institutions that may accompany the movement of increasing numbers of women into public office, much more work is required. The research in this report suggests at least three important areas that deserve further exploration in future research on the consequences of women's increasing presence in public office.

First, there is still much work to be done in exploring the extent and nature of women officeholders' influence on public policy. The analysis of the impact of women legislators on public policy presented in this volume is based on *self-reports* of behavior during a single legislative session. More in-depth information about women's impact might be gathered through actual *observation* of officeholders' behavior and/or by focusing on a longer time frame. We asked legislators to describe the content and focus of the legislation on which they were working, but we were not able to assess how important or innovative the legislation was, the roles that women and men played as the legislation was considered by the legislature or the actual amount of time and effort that women and men devoted to the legislation.

Neither were we able to examine whether the life experiences of women lead them not only to work on more women's rights legislation and to have different priorities than men, but also to bring different perspectives and considerations to bear on all the various types of legislation on which they must act. For example, because of their caregiving roles and responsibilities, women legislators might be more likely than men to think about the possible impact of legislation on children or the elderly regardless of whether the bill under consideration focuses on transportation, banking, economic development or health care.

Future research might provide more in-depth information about these and other possible policy-related differences in women's and men's legislative efforts. Legislative case histories might provide considerable insight into the impact of women on public policy; key pieces of legislation could be tracked through a legislature, with attention focused on the relative roles played by women and men in influencing the content and fate of the legislation. The research presented in this report provides clear evidence for women's impact on public policy based on a large and representative sample of officeholders; future research should perhaps be aimed at providing a more in-depth understanding of women's policy-related impact in a more limited and focused setting.

Much work remains to be done on the question of whether and how the increased presence of women in public office is affecting political processes and institutions. Chapter 4 of this report indicates some ways in which women may be having an impact beyond their influence on public policy. Women lawmakers in our study were more likely than men to say that input from citizens was helpful to them in working on their priority legislation, and majorities of both women and men agreed that women are helping to give the economically disadvantaged greater access to the legislature. Both of these findings suggest that women may be more accessible to their constituents and may differ from men in the way they view and relate to their constituencies. In an era of declining public confidence in political institutions, women's increasing presence among public officials might enhance government's responsiveness to its citizens.

Majorities of women and sizable minorities of men believed that the presence of women in the legislature has increased the extent to which legislative business is conducted in public view rather than behind closed doors, that men socialize more with lobbyists and that the increased presence of women has changed the way legislators conduct themselves on the floor of the legislature. These findings suggest that women legislators may have legislative styles that differ from those of their male colleagues and that accepted ways of doing business may change as the numbers of women increase.

While these findings indicate that women officeholders may be having some impact in changing political processes and institutions, our finding that women are about as likely as men to have their top priority legislation passed by their house of the legislature suggests that women have become effective actors within legislative institutions and consequently may *not* be working to change institutional processes. Rather, women may be mastering and using those processes to achieve their policy goals — goals which do differ in important ways from those of men. Although the research in this report provides some tantalizing clues about the impact women officeholders may have on political

processes and the institutions in which they serve, much more work is required in this area.

Finally, in demonstrating that women pursue somewhat different policy objectives than men within legislatures, the findings of this report raise an important and disturbing question that should be examined through further research: do women's different policy interests have negative consequences for their political careers? Are women paying a price in their political careers as a result of the fact that they may be more interested in women's rights, health care and the welfare of children than in tax law, economic development or infrastructure? Do male officeholders advance more quickly in political institutions because they are more interested in the issues that male-dominated institutions have deemed important, the so-called "power issues," while women are marginalized when they express interest in issues that have been viewed by these same institutions as more peripheral? As a related question, are there any examples of institutions where the "power issues" are being redefined as more women enter and have greater influence? Are there cases where public policies to help women, children, families, the sick and the needy are viewed as equally important as public policies affecting the banking industry, highway construction and intergovernmental relations? The possible consequences of gender differences among public officeholders must be more fully considered, analyzed and understood — whether those consequences be to impede the political careers of individual women or to transform the focus of public policymaking to make it more inclusive and more responsive to the concerns of all citizens in our society.

Appendix

Policy Views

The Issue Questions

Now, I am going to read you several statements about current political issues. For each, I want you to indicate whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly.

If left alone, except for essential federal regulations, the private sector can find ways to solve our economic problems.

The death penalty should be an option as a punishment for those who commit murder.

Government should provide child care services to all parents who need them, with fees charged according to ability to pay.

To meet the future power needs of my state, more nuclear power plants should be built.

**Minors should be able to obtain a legal abortion without parental consent.*

State and local taxes should be raised to help make up for some of the decrease in federal funding for social services.

**The Equal Rights Amendment should be passed by Congress and ratified by the states.*

**I personally think abortion should be prohibited in all or most circumstances.*

The General Policy Index and the Feminist Policy Index

Using legislators' responses to questions about these issues, we created two summary indexes of their policy attitudes. The first, the *General Policy Index*, was based on responses to all eight policy questions, with high scorers giving the largest number of liberal responses on the eight issue questions. In this analysis, a liberal policy position was defined as one advocated by the more progressive wing of the Democratic party. This position favors increased taxes to fund social services, government provision of child care, passage of the ERA and legal abortion without parental consent for minors.

This position opposes the death penalty, the notion that the unregulated private sector can solve our economic problems, more nuclear power plants and prohibiting abortion. Scores were categorized as low (0-4), medium (5-6) or high (7-8) in support of liberal policies.

The second measure, the *Feminist Policy Index* used the responses to questions on the ERA, parental consent and prohibiting abortion (marked by an "*"). For the Feminist Policy Index, we counted the number of times each legislator's issue preferences were in agreement with the positions of major national feminist organizations (e.g., the National Organization for Women and the National Women's Political Caucus) and categorized lawmakers' scores as low (0), medium (1-2) or high (3) in support of feminist policies.

Measures of Impact on Policy

Measures of Legislators' Impressions of Women's Impact on Public Policy

In recent years, the number of women serving in legislatures has increased across the country. We are interested in finding out whether you think the presence of women has affected the way your house of the legislature works. How much difference do you think the increased presence of women in your house has made in [read each item]. Has it made a lot of difference, some difference or very little difference? [If volunteered by the respondent, responses of "no difference" or "don't know" also were accepted.]

The extent to which legislators consider how legislation will affect women as a group?

Expenditure priorities for the state?

The number of bills passed that deal specifically with the problems faced by women?

Work on Women's Rights Bills

Of all the bills that you have worked on during this session, are there any where the bill itself or specific provisions of the bill were intended to help women in particular? If yes: Can you describe in one sentence what the most important of these bills did for women?

Examples of women's rights bills included those dealing with:

- Establishing greater equity in dividing marital property in divorce/assessing alimony
- Custody and child support
- Teen pregnancy prevention
- Domestic violence prevention
- Pay equity
- Parental leave
- Day care
- Prenatal care/health care for women
- Medicaid funding for abortion
- Sex equity in education
- Displaced homemaker's assistance
- Emergency room protocol for rape victims
- Increasing penalty for rape
- Funding for rape crisis center
- Insurance coverage for mammograms
- Providing services for elderly women
- Equal pay for equal work
- Pro-choice legislation
- Equal treatment insurance
- Prohibiting sexual harassment
- Regulation of judges' instructions to jury (rape cases)

If respondents answered "yes" to the initial question, but did not describe what the bill did for women, they were deleted from further analysis, as were those responding "don't know" and those who did not answer the initial question. This was true of 2.6 percent of the women and 4.8 percent of the men. Bills mentioned that did not relate to women specifically (e.g., bills aimed at children, the elderly, etc.) were considered invalid and the responses were recorded as "no." About 5.6 percent of women's and 5.4 percent of men's responses were of this type. In addition, we also excluded anti-feminist bills from this category, but only 1.2 percent of women and 1.4 percent of men mentioned these. This reclassification had little effect on the relative likelihood that various subgroups had worked on a women's rights bill, although it slightly reduced the number reporting such activity.

Priorities

We'd like to find out about the bills that you've been working on during the current session. Although you may have worked on a number of bills, for the next few questions we want you to pick out the single bill that you would say has been your own personal top priority for the current session. First, can you very briefly describe the focus of this bill?

The responses to this question were the primary focus of Chapter 3. However, in one analysis we examined a broader array of priorities using responses to the following question:

Are there one or two other bills or packages of bills that have been particularly important to you during the current session?

Bills legislators mentioned in response to questions about priorities and about work on bills aimed at helping women were classified as either a women's distinctive concern or some other issue. Those defined as women's distinctive concerns were divided into two subcategories: women's rights bills and women's traditional areas of interest.

Women's Distinctive Concerns

- Women's Rights Bills
- Women's Traditional Areas of Interest
 - Children and Families
 - Health Care
 - Education
 - Elderly
 - Housing
 - Environment

Other Issues

- Intergovernmental Relations
- Judiciary
- Transportation
- Labor
- Taxation/Budget
- Insurance/Business
- State Procedure
- Miscellaneous

Measures of Impact on Process

Assistance on Priority Bills

We would like to know which people have been most helpful to you in working on this [top priority] bill in your house of the legislature. We are going to read you a list of different people and groups. Please indicate whether, in general, each was very helpful, somewhat helpful or did nothing in support of your position on this bill. [Volunteered responses of "they worked against it" or "mixed response" were also accepted.]

Your party's leaders

Lobbyists

Women legislators of your party

Women legislators of the other party

Women's groups outside the legislature

Concerned citizens

The other party's leaders

Legislators' Impressions of Women's Impact on Access and Collegial Relations

In recent years, the number of women serving in legislatures has increased across the country. We are interested in finding out whether you think the presence of women has affected the way your house of the legislature works. How much difference do you think the increased presence of women in your house has made in [read each item]: Has it made a lot of difference, some difference or very little difference? [If volunteered by the respondent, responses of "no difference" and "don't know" also were accepted.]

The way legislators conduct themselves on the floor of the legislature?

The extent to which legislative business is conducted in public view rather than behind closed doors?

The extent to which the economically disadvantaged have access to the legislature?

I am going to read you several statements about the roles of women and men inside the legislature. For each statement, please tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly.

Women legislators have a special responsibility to represent women's concerns within the legislature.

Within the legislature, most men try to keep women out of leadership positions.

The men in my legislature socialize a lot more with lobbyists than the women do.

Leadership Styles

Hypothetical Questions about Leadership Style

We want you to imagine that you are chairing a committee because we want to find out what would be most important to you as a committee chair. I am going to read you a series of alternatives where both alternatives may be important, but I want you to tell me which alternative would be more important to you.

First, would it be more important to you as a committee chair that the bills that come out of your committee include provisions you care most about or that most members of the committee are fairly satisfied with the bills, even if that means that some of the provisions you favor are left out? [Volunteered responses of "depends" or "it doesn't matter" also were accepted.]

Second, would it be more important to you that most people who want to testify on a particular bill have a chance to be heard, even if that takes a long time, or would it be more important to you to place limits on debate, even if that means that some people will not be heard?

Finally, would you prefer that the major provisions of the bill be agreed upon by committee members informally outside the scheduled committee meetings, or would you prefer that decisions about the major provisions of the bill be made at the committee meetings themselves?

Qualities Important for Political Leaders

People disagree on which qualities make a person a good political leader. I am going to read you a list of qualities that may or may not be important leadership characteristics. For each quality, I want you to tell me whether you think that particular quality is very important, somewhat important or not very important in making a person a good political leader.

A sense of mission.

A concern with providing leadership opportunities for other people.

The ability to convince people to do something that they initially might not be inclined to do.

A concern with encouraging everyone involved in a decision to express their ideas and opinions.

A willingness to share recognition for one's accomplishments with other people.

A concern with how those who are affected by a decision feel about the decision.

Measures of Factors That Can Affect Impact

Legislator's Political Ideology

On most political issues, do you generally think of yourself as very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal or very liberal?

Our analysis collapses the responses into three categories: conservative (very conservative and conservative); moderate (moderate); and liberal (liberal and very liberal).

Feminist Identification

I am going to read you a list of labels that some people reject, but others use to describe themselves. For each, we would like to know whether you do or do not identify with the label: ...Feminist....

Connection to Women's Groups

Membership in Women's Groups (Women Legislators Only)

The number of memberships was computed based on responses to the following question:

I am going to read you a list of women's groups and for each I would like you to tell me whether or not you are a member.

League of Women Voters

American Association of University Women

Business and Professional Women

National Organization for Women

Women's Political Caucus

A feminist group other than the National Organization for Women or the Women's Political Caucus

Campaign Endorsements

The number of campaign endorsements by women's groups was calculated from responses to the following questions:

Did you receive any support, either formal or informal, from the National Organization for Women during your last election?

Did you receive any support, either formal or informal, from the Women's Political Caucus during your last election?

Did any other women's organizations formally or informally support your candidacy during the last election?

Occupation Classification

Other than being a legislator, what is or was your primary occupation?

Using two coders' judgments of occupation type, respondents' occupations were classified as traditionally female, traditionally male or neither.

Traditionally female: secretary or clerical worker; teacher; nurse; social worker; and librarian

Traditionally male: attorney; real estate agent; insurance agent; professor; physician; farmer; laborer; accountant; labor union leader; engineer; journalist; banker; manager/administrator; political consultant; public relation person; fire fighter; police officer; and member of military

Neither: self-employed; government worker; student; legislative aide; other white collar worker; and sales

Professionalism of the Legislature

Using 1988 legislative salary data, legislatures were divided into three groups: professional (highest paid), semiprofessional (middle range) and citizen (lowest paid). States fall into the categories as follows:

Professional: Alaska; California; Delaware; Hawaii; Illinois; Louisiana; Maryland; Massachusetts; Michigan; Minnesota; New Jersey; New York; Ohio; Oklahoma; Pennsylvania; and Wisconsin

Semiprofessional: Arizona; Colorado; Connecticut; Florida; Georgia; Indiana; Iowa; Maine; Mississippi; Missouri; Nebraska; North Carolina; Oregon; South Carolina; Tennessee; Virginia; and Washington

Citizen: Alabama; Arkansas; Idaho; Kansas; Kentucky; Montana; Nevada; New Hampshire; North Dakota; Rhode Island; South Dakota; Texas; Utah; Vermont; West Virginia; and Wyoming

District Ideology

On most political issues, would you characterize the majority of voters in your district as very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal or very liberal?

Our analysis collapses the responses into three categories: conservative (very conservative and conservative districts); moderate (moderate districts); and liberal (liberal and very liberal districts).

Attendance at Women's Caucuses or Other Policy-Oriented Meetings of Women Legislators

The following questions were asked of women legislators only:

Is there a formal women's caucus open to women legislators of both parties in your house of the legislature? [Yes/No]

If no formal caucus: *During the current session, have Democratic and Republican women in your legislature ever met together formally or informally as a group to discuss legislation that affects women? [Yes/No]*

If no formal caucus or other meetings of women from both parties: *During the current session, have women in your party ever met together formally or informally as a group to discuss legislation that affects women? [Yes/No]*

The above questions were asked until one was answered "yes" or the list was exhausted, whichever came first. Those who responded affirmatively to one of the three questions were then asked:

Did you attend any of the these meetings? [Yes/No]

"Attendees" reported that such meetings occurred and that they had attended some of the meetings. "Non-attendees" either reported no such meetings occurred or that the meetings occurred but they did not attend them.

Political Insider Measures

Political Party Insider

Political party insiders were determined by response to the following question:

I am going to read you a list of labels that some people reject, but others use to describe themselves. For each, we would like to know whether you do or do not identify with the label: Political Party Insider....

Legislative Leadership

Legislators who currently held one of the following positions were considered legislative leaders:

- Committee Chair
- Senate President/President Pro Tem
- Speaker of the House
- Majority Leader
- Minority Leader
- Party Whip/Majority Whip/Minority Whip
- Party Caucus Chair
- Assistant Majority/Minority Leader/Whip
- Assistant (Vice) Caucus Chair
- Assistant Floor Leader
- Secretary of Party Conference
- Speaker Pro Tem/Deputy Speaker
- Floor Leader
- Senate Vice-President

Number of Cases

The following are the weighted number of cases for each of the graphs in this report. The reader should be aware that in some instances when the entire sample is used for analysis, item non-response means that the number of observations for analysis is slightly less than the number of cases in the entire sample.

	Women	Men
Figure 1		
Consider legislation's impact on women	n = 595	n = 461
Affect expenditure priorities	n = 591	n = 471
Bills passed dealing with women	n = 587	n = 466
Figure 2	n = 607	n = 485
Figure 3		
General Policy Index	n = 607	n = 485
Feminist Policy Index	n = 607	n = 485
Figure 4		
General Policy Index		
Democratic	n = 350	n = 253
Republican	n = 252	n = 226
Feminist Policy Index		
Democratic	n = 350	n = 253
Republican	n = 252	n = 226
Figure 5		
General Policy Index		
African-American	n = 33	
White	n = 554	
Feminist Policy Index		
African-American	n = 33	
White	n = 554	

	Women	Men
Figure 6		
General Policy Index		
Liberal	n = 156	n = 69
Moderate	n = 283	n = 223
Conservative	n = 147	n = 184
Feminist Policy Index		
Liberal	n = 156	n = 69
Moderate	n = 283	n = 223
Conservative	n = 147	n = 184
Figure 7		
General Policy Index		
Feminist	n = 264	n = 93
Non-feminist	n = 325	n = 377
Feminist Policy Index		
Feminist	n = 264	n = 93
Non-feminist	n = 325	n = 377
Figure 8		
General Policy Index		
0 memberships	n = 165	
1 membership	n = 145	
2 memberships	n = 143	
3+ memberships	n = 154	
Feminist Policy Index		
0 memberships	n = 165	
1 membership	n = 145	
2 memberships	n = 143	
3+ memberships	n = 154	
Figure 9		
General Policy Index		
0 endorsements	n = 238	n = 302
1 endorsement	n = 195	n = 118
2+ endorsements	n = 174	n = 65
Feminist Policy Index		
0 endorsements	n = 238	n = 302
1 endorsement	n = 195	n = 118
2+ endorsements	n = 174	n = 65

	Women	Men
Figure 10		
General Policy Index		
Traditionally female occupation	n = 234	n = 41
Traditionally male occupation	n = 208	n = 298
Feminist Policy Index		
Traditionally female occupation	n = 234	n = 41
Traditionally male occupation	n = 208	n = 298
Figure 11		
General Policy Index		
Fewer than 5 years	n = 271	n = 178
5 years or more	n = 336	n = 307
Feminist Policy Index		
Fewer than 5 years	n = 271	n = 178
5 years or more	n = 336	n = 307
Figure 12a		
General Policy Index		
Under 50 years old	n = 259	n = 235
50+ years old	n = 348	n = 250
Feminist Policy Index		
Under 50 years old	n = 259	n = 235
50+ years old	n = 348	n = 250
Figure 12b		
General Policy Index		
Under 50 and lower seniority	n = 139	n = 104
Under 50 and higher seniority	n = 120	n = 131
50+ and lower seniority	n = 132	n = 74
50+ and higher seniority	n = 216	n = 176
Feminist Policy Index		
Under 50 and lower seniority	n = 139	n = 104
Under 50 and higher seniority	n = 120	n = 131
50+ and lower seniority	n = 132	n = 74
50+ and higher seniority	n = 216	n = 176

	Women	Men
Figure 13		
General Policy Index		
Liberal district	n = 59	n = 23
Moderate district	n = 297	n = 225
Conservative district	n = 226	n = 222
Feminist Policy Index		
Liberal district	n = 59	n = 23
Moderate district	n = 297	n = 225
Conservative district	n = 226	n = 222

Figure 14		
General Policy Index		
Fewer than 15% women members	n = 163	n = 121
15% or more women members	n = 444	n = 364
Feminist Policy Index		
Fewer than 15% women members	n = 163	n = 121
15% or more women members	n = 444	n = 364

Figure 15		
General Policy Index		
Democrats		
Party insider	n = 140	n = 73
Not party insider	n = 194	n = 168
Republicans		
Party insider	n = 111	n = 82
Not party insider	n = 134	n = 139
Feminist Policy Index		
Democrats		
Party insider	n = 140	n = 73
Not party insider	n = 194	n = 168
Republicans		
Party insider	n = 111	n = 82
Not party insider	n = 134	n = 139

	Women	Men
Figure 16		
General Policy Index		
Democrats		
Leader	n = 114	n = 109
Not leader	n = 236	n = 144
Republicans		
Leader	n = 60	n = 62
Not leader	n = 193	n = 164
Feminist Policy Index		
Democrats		
Leader	n = 114	n = 109
Not leader	n = 236	n = 144
Republicans		
Leader	n = 60	n = 62
Not leader	n = 193	n = 164
Figure 17		
General Policy Index		
Professional	n = 164	n = 122
Semiprofessional	n = 216	n = 170
Citizen	n = 227	n = 194
Feminist Policy Index		
Professional	n = 164	n = 122
Semiprofessional	n = 216	n = 170
Citizen	n = 227	n = 194
Figure 18		
General Policy Index		
Attend meetings	n = 389	
Do not attend meetings	n = 210	
Feminist Policy Index		
Attend meetings	n = 389	
Do not attend meetings	n = 210	
Figure 19a	n = 591	n = 462
Figure 19b		
Democrats	n = 339	n = 238
Republicans	n = 248	n = 217

	Women	Men
Figure 20		
African-American	n = 32	
White	n = 545	
Figure 21		
Liberal	n = 151	n = 64
Moderate	n = 277	n = 213
Conservative	n = 142	n = 177
Figure 22		
Low	n = 227	n = 280
Medium	n = 167	n = 122
High	n = 214	n = 83
Figure 23		
Feminist	n = 262	n = 90
Non-feminist	n = 318	n = 365
Figure 24		
Low	n = 83	n = 100
Medium	n = 210	n = 255
High	n = 298	n = 107
Figure 25		
0 endorsements	n = 232	n = 291
1 endorsement	n = 188	n = 108
2+ endorsements	n = 172	n = 62
Figure 26		
0 memberships	n = 157	
1 membership	n = 142	
2 memberships	n = 141	
3+ memberships	n = 152	
Figure 27		
Under 50 years old	n = 250	n = 222
50+ years old	n = 341	n = 239

	Women	Men
Figure 28		
Liberal district	n = 59	n = 22
Moderate district	n = 288	n = 216
Conservative district	n = 221	n = 210
Figure 29		
Attend meetings	n = 379	
Do not attend meetings	n = 207	
Figure 30		
General Policy Index		
Attend meetings		
Low	n = 120	
Medium	n = 103	
High	n = 155	
Do not attend meetings		
Low	n = 96	
Medium	n = 58	
High	n = 53	
Feminist Policy Index		
Attend meetings		
Low	n = 41	
Medium	n = 123	
High	n = 215	
Do not attend meetings		
Low	n = 41	
Medium	n = 83	
High	n = 83	
Figure 31a	n = 607	n = 485
Figure 31b		
Democrats	n = 339	n = 238
Republicans	n = 248	n = 217
Figure 32a	n = 607	n = 485
Figure 32b	n = 607	n = 485

	Women	Men
Figure 33		
Liberal	n = 156	n = 69
Moderate	n = 283	n = 223
Conservative	n = 147	n = 184
Figure 34		
Low	n = 227	n = 280
Medium	n = 167	n = 122
High	n = 214	n = 83
Figure 35		
Feminist	n = 264	n = 93
Non-feminist	n = 325	n = 377
Figure 36		
Low	n = 88	n = 111
Medium	n = 215	n = 266
High	n = 304	n = 108
Figure 37		
0 memberships	n = 165	
1 membership	n = 145	
2 memberships	n = 143	
3+ memberships	n = 154	
Figure 38		
0 endorsements	n = 238	n = 302
1 endorsement	n = 195	n = 118
2+ endorsements	n = 174	n = 65
Figure 39		
Top legislative priority		
Traditionally female occupation	n = 234	n = 41
Traditionally male occupation	n = 208	n = 298
Top three legislative priorities		
Traditionally female occupation	n = 234	n = 41
Traditionally male occupation	n = 208	n = 298

	Women	Men
Figure 40		
Top legislative priority		
Under 50 years old	n = 259	n = 235
50+ years old	n = 348	n = 250
Figure 41		
Fewer than 5 years	n = 271	n = 178
5 years or more	n = 336	n = 307
Figure 42		
Liberal district	n = 59	n = 23
Moderate district	n = 297	n = 225
Conservative district	n = 226	n = 222
Figure 43		
Fewer than 15% women members	n = 163	n = 121
15% or more women members	n = 444	n = 364
Figure 44		
Professional	n = 164	n = 122
Semiprofessional	n = 216	n = 170
Citizen	n = 227	n = 194
Figure 45		
Citizens	n = 597	n = 472
Own party's leader	n = 593	n = 471
Lobbyists	n = 590	n = 470
Women legislators of own party	n = 590	n = 464
Women legislators of opposing party	n = 587	n = 451
Women's groups	n = 587	n = 456
Opposition party's leadership	n = 587	n = 467

Figure 46

	Women	Men
Women's distinctive concern priority		
Citizens	n = 310	n = 178
Own party's leader	n = 306	n = 178
Lobbyists	n = 305	n = 176
Women legislators of own party	n = 305	n = 174
Women legislators of opposing party	n = 304	n = 168
Women's groups	n = 302	n = 170
Opposition party's leadership	n = 300	n = 177
Other issue priority		
Citizens	n = 288	n = 293
Own party's leader	n = 287	n = 293
Lobbyists	n = 285	n = 294
Women legislators of own party	n = 285	n = 290
Women legislators of opposing party	n = 284	n = 283
Women's groups	n = 285	n = 286
Opposition party's leadership	n = 288	n = 290

Figure 47

Access of economically disadvantaged		
Liberal	n = 150	n = 66
Moderate	n = 274	n = 217
Conservative	n = 141	n = 177
Business conducted in public view		
Liberal	n = 148	n = 65
Moderate	n = 279	n = 217
Conservative	n = 141	n = 182
Men socialize with lobbyists more		
Liberal	n = 152	n = 65
Moderate	n = 276	n = 203
Conservative	n = 142	n = 173

Figure 48

Access of economically disadvantaged		
Should represent women	n = 429	n = 211
Need not represent women	n = 151	n = 253
Business conducted in public view		
Should represent women	n = 437	n = 211
Need not represent women	n = 148	n = 256
Men socialize more with lobbyists		
Should represent women	n = 435	n = 208
Need not represent women	n = 150	n = 240

	Women	Men
Figure 49		
Democratic leaders		
Sense of mission	n = 114	n = 107
Provide leadership opportunities	n = 112	n = 108
Convince people	n = 110	n = 107
Encourage expression of ideas	n = 114	n = 108
Share recognition	n = 114	n = 108
Concern for those affected by decision	n = 114	n = 108
Republican leaders		
Sense of mission	n = 58	n = 60
Provide leadership opportunities	n = 60	n = 60
Convince people	n = 59	n = 61
Encourage expression of ideas	n = 60	n = 61
Share recognition	n = 60	n = 61
Concern for those affected by decision	n = 60	n = 61

Figure 50

Impact on male legislators' conduct		
Feminist	n = 256	n = 90
Non-feminist	n = 306	n = 363
Men keep women out of leadership		
Feminist	n = 261	n = 92
Non-feminist	n = 321	n = 374

CAWP Publications

Have the growing numbers of women in public office made a difference in public policy? Do women officeholders pursue different policy priorities than their male colleagues? Are there gender differences in officeholders' views about how political institutions should work?

The Center for the American Woman and Politics provides answers to these and other related questions in its newest series of reports: "The Impact of Women in Public Office." The results provide convincing evidence that women and men differ in their policy attitudes and policy priorities as well as in their views about the political process. The results raise important questions about the implications of women's underrepresentation in government.

Reshaping the Agenda: Women in State Legislatures (1991)

This report examines policy views, actions and perspectives on the legislative process to see whether and how women's increased presence in state legislatures has had an impact. Based on surveys of a national sample of state legislators, the research shows that women are making a difference, and this gender difference is present regardless of ideology, feminist identification, constituency ideology, seniority, age or political insider status. (122 pages)

Women lawmakers are reshaping the agendas of state legislatures across the country.... Elected women are working to make the agendas of legislative institutions more responsive to women's demands for equal rights as articulated by the contemporary women's movement and more reflective of women's concerns stemming from their roles as caregivers in the family and in society more generally. (From Reshaping the Agenda)

Gender and Policymaking: Studies of Women in Office (1991)

This report is a collection of eleven essays written by scholars who investigated the impact of elected and appointed women in local, state and national offices. (133 pages)

The cumulative message of these studies seems unavoidable, the underrepresentation of women in public office has profound consequences for society because it affects both the nature of the policies that are considered and enacted and the voices that are heard in the policymaking process. (From Gender and Policymaking)

The Impact of Women in Public Office: An Overview (1991)

This report highlights selected findings from CAWP's study of women state legislators and from the eleven studies of women officeholders' impact conducted by scholars. The emphasis is on providing information useful for women running for public office and those who are concerned about bringing more women into public office. (Approximately 36 pages)

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Additional CAWP Publications

Books

In the Running: The New Woman Candidate (1981), by Ruth B. Mandel. This book describes the emergence of women as candidates for elective office in the United States in the 1970s. Using a journalistic perspective, it analyzes the campaign experiences of women who are running for federal, state, and local offices across the country. (Price \$10.00)

Women as Candidates in American Politics (1985), by Susan J. Carroll. This scholarly book examines political parties' recruitment of women candidates, the factors that affect the outcomes of women's primary election campaigns, the future officeholding ambitions of women candidates, and women candidates' views on women's issues. The study is based on a nationwide survey of women who ran as major party candidates for congressional, statewide, and state legislative offices in 1976. (*Order directly from: Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN 47401. Price: Cloth-\$25, Paperback-\$8.95*)

Documentary Film

Not One of the Boys (1984) This 60-minute documentary film produced by CAWP examines the progress women are making and the obstacles they encounter after more than a decade of increased involvement in political life. The film focuses on 1984 as both an ordinary and an extraordinary year for women in American politics. It appeared on the PBS series *Frontline* and is available in 1/2" VHS or 3/4" videocassette for sale or rental from CAWP. A discussion guide provides general background information on women and politics and supplementary information to accompany the film. (Purchase \$155, Rental \$40; discussion guide free with purchase or rental of film)

Bringing More Women into Public Office: A Series of Reports

Bringing More Women into Public Office: Introductory Kit (1983) Nine fact sheets highlight the findings from CAWP's research about women's and men's routes into elective and appointive offices. Also included is a quiz about women's political history and status and an annotated answer sheet. (*Free in limited quantities; call for information about bulk rates.*)

Women Make a Difference (1983) Selected findings from CAWP's studies are highlighted in this monograph. A key theme is the difference women can and do make as elected and appointed public officials. The report outlines steps which may be taken to expand women's participation in politics, focusing on those findings which are relevant and useful for women interested in seeking public office and for people who conduct programs to increase women's numbers in public life. (48 pages, Price \$4)

Women's Routes to Elective Office: A Comparison with Men's (1983) Based on data collected through surveys of women and men elected to state legislatures, county governing boards, and municipal offices, this report examines the factors which influence women's entry into elective offices. A major section focuses on black women's routes to elective office. (225 pages, *Price \$10*)

Women Appointed to the Carter Administration: A Comparison with Men (1983) This first-ever profile of women who have held high-level appointive offices at the federal level analyzes data about all the women and a sample of the men who served in high-level appointed positions under President Jimmy Carter. Women who served in selected positions on the president's and vice-president's staffs are also included. (88 pages, *Price \$6*)

Women Appointed to State Government: A Comparison with All State Appointees (1983) This study examines appointed state cabinet-level officials. Based on data collected through telephone surveys, it compares the first-ever national profile of women in state cabinets to a profile of a sample of all appointees. (119 pages, *Price \$6*)

Women's PACs (1983) This monograph is based on information gathered at a meeting with representatives of fourteen political action committees which solely or primarily support women candidates. It describes some of the key questions faced by such groups, and illustrates the varied ways in which they have answered these questions. A current list of women's PACs is included with each copy. (28 pages, *Price \$3*)

Political Women Tell What It Takes (1983) This report presents information CAWP gathered at six consultations held with women public leaders in 1981 and 1982. It focuses on the roles which political parties, women's organizations, and individual women have played in recruiting and supporting women candidates and appointees. (37 pages, *Price \$3*)

Getting Women Appointed: New Jersey's Bipartisan Coalition (1984) This monograph documents the formation and activities in 1981 and 1982 of New Jersey's Bipartisan Coalition for Women's Appointments, an ad hoc group organized after CAWP convened a meeting of politically active women to discuss how to get more women appointed to state-level posts. (20 pages, *Price \$3*)

Elected Women Organize: Statewide Associations (1986) This report examines the status of statewide associations of elected women in twelve states. The associations bring together women across party lines and from all levels of office. (40 pages, *Price \$3*)

Other CAWP Publications

Fact Sheets about Women Candidates and Women in Elective and Appointive Office
CAWP regularly publishes fact sheets about women candidates and officeholders. These include current data (such as the number and percentage of women serving, state-by-state rankings, and party breakdowns) as well as historical information. Besides a summary fact sheet about women in elective office, CAWP issues fact sheets about women in the U.S. Congress, statewide elective offices, state legislatures, legislative leadership, county governing boards, municipal offices, the parties, and New Jersey government; also available are fact sheets about women candidates, women of color in elective office, women appointed to presidential cabinets, sex differences in voter turnout, and the gender gap. New fact sheets are issued periodically. (*Free in limited quantities; call for information about bulk rates.*)

Subscriber Information Service (SIS) SIS subscribers receive three packets a year, each of which includes: our newsletter, *CAWP News & Notes*, fact sheets, reports, reprints of articles, and other timely information. (*Price \$20 annually*)

Election 1989: The Abortion Issue in New Jersey and Virginia (1990)

This report contains findings from a study of the first two states to hold gubernatorial and state legislative elections after the Supreme Court's *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* decision. Using survey and interview data from voters, candidates, and activists, researchers at the Eagleton Institute of Politics looked at how the abortion issue played a role in the two states' elections. (183 pages, *Price \$12*)

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