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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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