Women and Politics in Japan: 
A Combined Analysis of Representation and Participation

Mikiko Eto

Introduction

The current proportion of elected Japanese women is 8.1% in the Lower House (or House of Representatives), 16.1% in the Upper House (or House of Councillors) and 11% in Local Assemblies. As the Lower House is a pivotal institution of Japan’s national decision-making processes, the extremely low proportion of women in the Lower House symbolizes the political powerlessness of Japanese women. Indeed, a Japanese weekly magazine ironically stated that Japanese women legislators have become an “endangered species” (AERA, issued on 21 January 2013: 58). According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which compares the proportion of women elected to the Lower or Single House in 188 countries, Japan ranks 122nd (as of 1 November 2013). The international comparison reveals that the representation of Japanese women lags behind developed countries as well as many least developed countries.¹

Japan has developed socio-economically since surrendering to the Allies in August 1945. Of all non-Western nations, Japan has been the most successful in terms of building a stable democratic regime, modernizing society, and achieving high economic growth. Her success is evidenced by the Human Development Index (HDI)²: namely, Japan ranked 10th among 187 countries scoring 0.912 (Human Development Report 2013, UNDP). Japan also scored well in the Gender-related Development Index (GDI),³ ranking 10th among 186 countries with a score of 0.131 (Human Development Report 2013, UNDP). Japanese women sustain better living standards as they enjoy longer life expectancy⁴ and attain higher education.⁵ However, when we look at the Gender Gap

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¹ Regarding the Japanese level of women’s representation in the world, see Tables A-1, A-2 and A-3 in Appendix.
² The HDI aims to measure the level of socio-economic development in life expectancy, adult literacy, educational attainment, and decent living standards.
³ The GDI measures women’s inequality with men in the HDI; the smaller the difference between HDI and GDI, the lesser the level of inequality. If the GDI values 0, women enjoy the same level of human development as men.
⁴ The average life expectancy of Japanese women is 86.39 (as of 2010)
⁵ The proportion of women enrolled in high school reaches 96.5 %, while that in four-year colleges is 45.2 %. In addition, 10.8 % of women go on to complete two years of junior college rather than four years of college. See Figure A-1 in Appendix.
Index (GGI), which illustrates women’s socio-political status at a national level.\(^6\) Japan’s GGI score of 0.65 in 2013 resulted in a ranking of 105 among 136 countries (Global Gender Gap Report 2013, World Economic Forum). These two indexes illustrate the inconsistency between Japanese women’s private life and their presence in public life. One of the primary causes of this inconsistency is the insufficient number of women parliamentarians.

The low level of representation of Japanese women has been stagnating throughout the post-war period – with the exception of 1946, as shown in Figure 1. Although the proportion of women successfully elected to the Upper House has fluctuated, statistics show that there has been a steady increase. However, the number of women represented in the Lower House and Local Assemblies have increased only slowly and moderately. Whilst the under-representation of women has remained unchanged in Japan, other countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia have taken strides to improve the representation of women in politics, to a point where they have overtaken Japan.\(^7\)

\[\text{Figure 1: Changes in the Proportions of Women Legislators in Japan}\]

![Figure 1: Changes in the Proportions of Women Legislators in Japan](image)

(Sources from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2013)

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\(^6\) The GGI is composed of four indicators: health conditions, educational attainment, labour market participation, and political representation. The highest score is 1 and the lowest is 0.

\(^7\) For example, among twenty-two countries which are ranked as world top twentieth, twelve countries are from Africa, Latin America and Asia. See Table A-1 in Appendix.
Representative democracy is not the sole way of implementing a democratic system of politics; citizens can exercise their influence in other ways, such as through participatory, deliberative, and direct democracies. Indeed, the recent upheaval of the so-called Occupy Wall Street or Anti-Wall Street Movements, which bypassed representative institutions and refused to use legislative bodies to realize their political demands, can be seen as a participatory style of democracy, distinguished from representative democracy. However, this is not a recent event – in fact, a similar trend emerged over four decades ago. Empirical studies have demonstrated that while citizens are dissatisfied with elections, politicians, parliaments, and other formal political institutions, they are engagement in diverse democratic activities outside the representative system (e.g., Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki, 1975; Norris, 1999; Pharr and Putnam, 2000). Nonetheless, within liberal democracy, the representative system is still the main route to channel people’s interests, opinions, and demands into policy-making processes. This is because only elected representatives can constitute a democratically sovereign decision-making body and only a democratic parliament can represent the nation’s formal will, both domestically and internationally.

Japanese women constitute the majority of the country’s population, with men and women numbering 61,571,727 and 64,810,001 respectively (according to the latest national population census in October 2010). Even though women outnumber men in the population, their ability to ensure their voices reach the centre of political decision-making processes in Japan is moderate at best. Japanese women are the politically silent majority. This fact raises the following questions: Despite the country’s socio-economic advancement, why does women’s political status remain so low? Or more precisely, what causes this gap? How do women tackle their under-representation? How do they make their voices heard?

The purpose of this compilatory thesis is to find answers to the abovementioned questions. The thesis pursues to explore difficulties that Japanese women face in their struggles for political representation and participation. Focusing both on their presence in legislative bodies and on their participatory activities within civil society, the thesis attempts to elucidate what impedes Japanese women from entering politics and the obstacles they face in implementing their political activities. Specifically, I will attach importance to the interplay between women’s representation and feminist movements; that is, I will argue that women’s collective efforts to demand more women representatives are a necessary condition to significantly improve their representation. The Japanese case will demonstrate the inharmonious interplay between these two facets. It will shed light on a case study, which illustrates that having only lukewarm
women’s movements calling for more women representatives contributes to women’s on-going under-representation, which, in turn, discourages women from becoming more involved in these activities. Women’s representation plays a symbolic and substantive role in developing democracy. In other words, with a well-functioning democracy, all members of the political community share power equally. Throughout this compilation, I will suggest that the vicious cycle of under-representation and lukewarm feminist activism is not only detrimental to Japanese women, but it also impedes Japanese democracy from progressing further.

My hypothesis, as mentioned above, is that the interplay between electoral representation and participatory activities is essential to women’s political advancement. Women’s political influence is seriously restricted if they cannot secure a visible presence and impact upon the legislative process. Meanwhile, substantial gains in representation require the presence and activism of gender-conscious movements who advocate women’s rights and gender equality, and vice versa. This introductory part of my thesis comprises six sections. In the first four sections, I will attempt to theorize this interplay through an analysis of feminist debates on women’s representation. I will explain why representation and participation ought to work harmoniously together. First of all, I will review the established understanding of women’s representation, in which representation is categorized into two facets, descriptive – standing for, and substantive representation– acting for. According to this typology, these two concepts correlate with descriptive representation being understood as a requisite for substantive representation. Hence, for women’s political interests, it is important to increase the number of women representatives.

In the second section, I will shed light on a recent feminist debate on this established theory, namely, whether or not the correlation holds true empirically. I will first refer to the idea of critical mass, which posits this correlation by indicating the point at which descriptive representation is said to generate results that could be conceived as substantive representation. Thereafter, I will examine feminist arguments against the presumptions of this correlation and of the theory of critical mass, given that considerable increases in the number of women legislators do not necessarily generate a significant improvement in public policy for women. Disconnecting substantive representation from descriptive representation, these scholars highlight the importance.

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8 In this introductory part, I conceptualize women’s representation in relation to their participatory activities in civil society. Despite my respect for the other two key concepts: civil society and women’s movements, I do not conceptualize them here specifically because they are addressed in the articles included as part of this thesis. My definitions of civil society and women’s movements will be discussed in article one and articles three/four, respectively.
of policy-making for women, rather than the mere visible presence of women in legislatures. In their view, the scope of representation is no longer limited to electorally legislative activities but extends towards more diverse dimensions of policy-making, non-elected positions, and civil society activism; thus leading to influence within policy-making arenas. Widening the arenas of policy-making to include diverse individuals may contribute to the development of democratic politics, in accordance with active democratic models, such as participatory and deliberative democracy.

However, their view tends to overemphasize non-legislative policy-making and in turn disregards the role of electoral representation. In the third section, I will discuss three critical problems caused by their view: illegitimacy, self-interested politics and the omission of symbolic representation. A critical view is one of the most important approaches in feminist studies. Nancy Fraser (1987: 31) defines feminist critical theory as “the self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of contemporary women”. Fraser’s definition aims to revisit mainstream ideas that men have established in light of the distinct perspectives of women and other politically marginalized people. It is an analytical approach aiming to expose hidden dynamics behind mainstream ideas. Thus, my objective is to uncover hidden problems concerning the overemphasis on policy-making efficacy and its relevant democratic theories. I will maintain that the disregard for electoral representation could harm democratic politics.

To address these problems, the fourth section will reconsider the importance of electoral representation, arguing that both the number of women legislators and women legislators acting for women are still essential for women’s political equality. That said, electoral representation alone is insufficient to ensure women’s influence in policy-making processes; feminist movements are also necessary to ensure success in this regard. I will then propose an alternative idea wherein representation and participation can work together in synergistic harmony.

The last two sections – the fifth and sixth sections – will concentrate on introducing the case studies. I will first review preceding studies relevant to the subject of women and politics in Japan; I will subsequently map and briefly summarize five of my previously published articles as part of this compilatory thesis. Although each article has been published separately through different journals, each of them points towards my goal of demonstrating the interplay between women’s representation and participatory activities using Japanese case studies, as well as general perspectives. I will conclude with a discussion on the contribution of this thesis to the study of women and politics.
1. Descriptive and Substantive Representation

There are fewer theoretical studies of women’s representation than those of an empirical nature. However, feminist theorists focusing on this issue put forward crucial ideas not only regarding women’s representation but also with regards to general theories of representation (e.g. Williams, 1989; Young, 1990; 2000; Phillips, 1995; Mansbridge, 1999). They consider the conventional liberal account of representation to be inadequate for political latecomers like women, and therefore, theorize representation through a more inclusive lens.

In literature pertaining to feminist political science, representation is often divided into two conceptual categories, namely, descriptive and substantive representation, as derived from Hanna Fenichel Pitkin’s concept. Pitkin (1967) conceptualizes representation through four categorical features: “formalistic view”, “standing for” or “descriptive”, “symbolic”, and “acting for” or “substantive”. A formalistic view aims to give authority to representatives through elections. Descriptive representation means that representatives should reflect the descriptive characteristics of their electorate. Symbolic representation is a kind of “standing for”, but it does not reflect actual power or ability, like “a flag representing the nation, or an emblem representing a cult” (Pitkin 1967: 92). Substantive representation is a view that concentrates on “the activity of representing” or “the role of a representative” (Pitkin 1967:112). Substantive representation involves a “mandate-independence controversy” because of its action-oriented nature: the question is whether representatives should do what their constituents want or whether they should be free to act based on their beliefs (Pitkin 1967: 145).

Pitkin’s four conceptual categories are inextricably related to political practice. The four categories express diverse features of representatives: generally speaking, all representatives are authorized by elections, stand for their constituents, become a symbol of their constituents, and act for their constituents. However, Pitkin places more emphasis on substantive representation than others; above all, contrasting substantive representation with descriptive representation, she notes, “the best descriptive representative is not necessarily the best representative for activity or government”, and that “the descriptive view has no room for representation as accountability”, which is the most important part of political representation (Pitkin 1967: 89).

As Anne Phillips points out, many political theorists, particularly liberals, share Pitkin’s perception (Phillips, 1995: 3). Feminist political theorists, viewing the two categories of descriptive and substantive as two sides of the same coin, do not agree
with the perceptions of Pitkin and her followers. Feminist theorists believe that descriptive representation is essential for women’s political presence both substantively and symbolically (Mansbridge, 2005: 622).

Some influential ideas endorse this feminist account. One such example is Phillips’s distinction between “a politics of ideas” and “a politics of presence” (Phillips 1995). A “politics of ideas” is a traditional notion of liberal democracy that elected representatives should represent diverse ideologies in their constituents and act for the general interests without favouring any specific interest. It can refer to substantive representation with independent actions. This notion, however, is suited solely to highly homogeneous political communities and is no longer appropriate in modern societies in which different genders, races, and ethnicities intersect and the interests of constituents’ are diverse. Although representatives may act independently for the benefit of their constituents as a whole, male representatives cannot always represent women’s voices, just as representatives from a majority group are unaware of the problems faced by minority groups. Politically marginalized groups need to send their own representatives to legislative bodies. The “politics of presence”, by contrast, corresponds to “proportionate representation according to social characteristics such as ethnicity or gender” (Phillips 1995: 21). A politics of presence is required for fair representation in diverse and multicultural societies.

Another influential idea endorsing the feminist accounts of representation was proposed by Jane Mansbridge (1999: 628-657). Mansbridge advocates descriptive representation for women and blacks, two historically disadvantaged groups. At the same time, Mansbridge recognizes that this imposes serious costs on liberal democracy and suggests that descriptive representation should be emphasized in the four contexts in which it is expected to be most effective for disadvantaged groups: first, there is an inattentive and distrustful communication between a historically dominant group and a historically subordinate group; second, interests of disadvantaged groups remain un-crystallized or under-developed; third, there is a group which had been legally excluded from the right to vote; and finally, the full status of disadvantaged groups in the legislature is expected to increase their sociological legitimacy. In these contexts, Mansbridge (1999: 654) concludes, “descriptive representation usually furthers the substantive representation of interests”. These two concepts are correlated because women’s voices cannot reach policy-making processes without the significant presence of women in governing bodies.

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9 Feminist scholars often simplify descriptive representation as a way of highlighting the number of women representatives (see Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005: 407).
Iris M. Young (2000: 121-153) also advocates for the special representation of disadvantaged groups through “group representation”. Young (2000: 127-128) recognizes that any representative cannot represent the single will of the represented “[b]ecause the constituency is internally differentiated” in terms of interests and opinions. According to Yong, the definition of representation is to “represent aspects of a person’s life experience, identity, beliefs or activity where she or he has affinity with others” (Young 2000: 133). When a representative shares affinities of socio-cultural background and/or attributes of a particular group of people, she/he could well represent the group. Although Young does not specifically refer to the terms descriptive or substantive representation, she implies that descriptive representation is linked with substantive representation.

These three theorists not only advocate the correlation between descriptive and substantive representation, but they also recognize a risk that emphasizing the correlation may bring about and impose some conditions to mitigate the risk on their advocacy. Mansbridge (2005) suggests that the correlation involves essentialism, which limits women’s preferences and actions in politics. Not all women are interested in women’s issues or are conscious of gender. As Phillips (1995: 82) points out, the ideal that women representatives act for the female constituency is not guaranteed but is rather viewed as a “probability”. Furthermore, Young thinks that the correlation does not occur automatically but works through good communication between a representative and the represented. According to Young (2000: 131), “[t]he responsibility of the representative is not simply to tell citizens how she has enacted a mandate” but “to persuade them of the rightness of her judgement”. Representation is “a process involving a mediated relation of constituents to one another and to a representative” (Young 2000: 127).

In response to these theories, feminist scholars have engaged in empirical studies to examine how substantive representation synchronizes with descriptive representation. Focusing on women legislator’s policy preferences, political attitudes and values, they elucidate that women legislators tend to be more interested (than their male counterparts) in gender issues including women’s rights, gender equality, childcare and other family matters, as well as health care and social welfare; this view is supported by case studies from the United States of America (e.g. Thomas, 1994; Carroll, 2001; Dodson, 2006), the United Kingdom (e.g. Childs, 2001; 2004; Lovenduski and Norris, 2003), Sweden (e.g. Wängnerud, 2005), and Japan (e.g. Eto, 2012). Moreover, a significant increase in women legislators has the potential to alter political parties, ensuring they develop more women-friendly policies, an issue I will discuss in more
detail later.

Through more comprehensive research, Leslie Schwindt-Bayer and William Mishler (2005) demonstrate that there is no gain in substantive representation without descriptive representation. They analyse the interconnections between Pitkin’s four conceptual categories, employing aggregate data on women’s representation in 31 countries during the mid-1990s. Their significant finding is that descriptive representation is “the keystone to the representation of women” (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005: 422). While substantive representation is crucial to ensuring women’s demands are incorporated into public policy, the representation of women will not improve without descriptive representation operating concurrently with substantive representation.

2. Policy Outcomes Outside Legislatures

The abovementioned empirical studies notwithstanding, Lena Wängnerud (2009: 59) notes that it is not easy for scholars to convincingly prove the correlation between substantive and descriptive representation; above all, there is no guarantee that descriptive gains result in policy outcomes. One reason for this is the limited proportion of women in legislatures; arguably, women representatives cannot produce visible results in politics unless they gain some degree of proportionate influence. The matter of proportion was first taken up by Rosabeth Moss Kanter who focused on women workers in the US labour market in the 1970s (Childs and Krook, 2008: 727-729). Kanter (1977) explains the cause for women’s token status in a large corporation by their small numbers. Applying Kanter’s idea to women’s representation in Scandinavian politics, Drude Dahlerup (1988: 275) referred to the concept of “critical mass”, adopted from nuclear physics. Dahlerup (1988: 276) defines critical mass as “a qualitative shift”, that will occur when the proportion of women in an organization exceeds approximately 30%; that is, “[a] large minority can make a difference, even if still a minority”.

The 30% critical mass threshold is a somewhat controversial issue among scholars. For example, Lovenduski (2001: 744) points out that it “is a rather arbitrary figure”. In fact, the percentage determined by scholars varies from 15 to 30% (Studlar and McAllister 2002: 235-28). Thus, Karen Beckwith (2007: 28) identifies critical mass as the rough proportion of women parliamentarians “beyond a certain point”. Such proportions, in any case, are supposed to transform institutional political culture, political discourse, the policy agenda, women’s candidacy, and so on (Beckwith 2007: 28). However, Dahlerup (2006) conceives 30% to be the established notion, which came out of long-standing feminist debates. It is demonstrated by the fact that “30% is the
most widespread quota percentage” (Dahlerup 2006: 512). Further, the idea has become increasingly prevalent in the field of research on women and representation known as “critical mass theory” (Dahlerup, 2006: 512-513; Beckwith 2007: 28; Childs and Krook, 2008: 732-733).

This theory partly contributes to affirming the correlation between descriptive and substantive representation. It is useful for explaining inconsistencies between descriptive and substantive representation; feminists may continue to be unsatisfied with the unchanging nature of politics that persists despite considerable progress in women’s representation, given the proportion of women representatives is yet to reach the tipping point or percentage required for substantive change (Dahlerup, 1988: 76). However, when applying this theory to an actual case, scholars are often urged to take into account additional factors that affect the influence of women legislators. A certain percentage alone does not make a difference in politics. Dahlerup (1988: 296) puts forth the idea of “critical acts” that “will change the position of the minority considerably and lead to further changes”; this is exemplified by the experience of Scandinavian countries, where the proportions of women national parliamentarians in Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway reached 30% during the 1980s.

Beckwith (2007: 38) attaches importance to “a substantial increase in the number and proportion of women elected for the first time”, which she describes as “newness”. According to Beckwith (2007: 42-43), newly elected women act differently from their incumbent colleagues, predominately because they are “more likely to support party programmes, less likely to defy party whips …, and less likely to initiate and to support progressive or radical proposals than are party incumbents, male or female”. Hence, a large number of newly elected women may not bring about policy success to women (Beckwith, 2007: 44). The critical mass effect will be dysfunctional if a large proportion of women legislators are newly elected.

Joni Lovenduski (2001: 757), who views feminist consciousness as the key to women parliamentarians’ proposals for women’s issues, suggests that a significant percentage, rather than a mere percentage of feminist parliamentarians is necessary to change politics towards gender equality. Sarah Childs (2004) also confirms the necessity of gender-consciousness for substantive changes in politics. Distinguishing between women and feminist representatives, Childs (2004:25, 27) adopts an analytical approach and states that “the relationship between women’s descriptive and substantive representation is understood as reflecting women representative gender and party identities” and “acknowledges that women representatives act in particular gendered environments”. Donley Studlar and Ian McAllister (2002) argue that there is little
evidence to suggest that critical mass effects the acceleration of the number of elected women. Studlar and McAllister (2002: 248), like Lovenduski and Childs, conclude, “[a]n increase in feminist attitudes is more important than simply greater numbers of women in the legislature”.

Political environments are important for women representatives to make a difference in politics. In particular, party affiliation considerably sways women legislators. Childs (2004) demonstrates how the political legislative activities of “New Labour” women are constrained due to their party loyalty. Further, Osborn (2012) elucidates that women’s partisan identification frames their policy preferences in American state legislatures. Child and Osborn both suggest that women legislators are required to be partisans before acting for women. Manon Tremblay (2003) investigates the extent and manner in which representative institutions, such as electoral rules, voting procedures, and party systems affect critical mass by comparing institutions in Australia and Canada. Tremblay (2003: 222-233) demonstrates that the electoral rules, party systems, parliamentary cycles, and nature of the Houses influence women parliamentarians’ perceptions of acting for women.

Of greater concern, is the scepticism of some feminist scholars concerning critical mass as well as the correlation between descriptive and substantive representation (e.g. Weldon, 2002; Childs, 2004; Squires, 2007; Childs and Krook, 2008; 2009; Celis, Childs, Kantola and Krook 2008; Celis and Childs, 2012). Their scepticism derives from the fact that “a mere increase in the number of women elected – a ‘critical mass’ – does not always translate automatically into policy gains for women, given various constraints related to party affiliation, institutional norms, legislative inexperience, and the external political environment” (Celis, Childs, Kantola and Krook, 2008: 102). Following Dahlerup (2006) who prefers critical acts to critical mass, thus, Childs and Krook (2009: 126-127) put forth the concept of critical actors in which they define the concept as “those who act individually or collectively to bring about women-friendly policy changes”. According to Childs and Krook (2009: 126), the idea of critical actors focuses “on how the substantive representation of women occurs” and “on what specific actors do”. In other words, women’s substantive representation does not synchronize with their descriptive representation, and policy-making institutions outside legislatures or policy-makers other than women legislators often advance women’s policy successes.

Such feminist disregard for legislatures is inspired by the contribution of “state feminism” to women-friendly policy formation (Celis, Childs, Kontola and Krook, 2008: 103). State feminism is defined as the “activity of government structures that are formally charged with furthering women’s status and rights” and is driven by women’s
policy machinery that the government establishes to promote women’s status in society (Stetson and Mazur, 1995: 1-3). Women’s policy machinery (or women’s policy agency) is an intermediary institution between the government and women’s civil society organizations. It plays a role in incorporating women’s demands into public policies (e.g. Stetson, 2001). This allows feminists to extend their scope of women’s representation from the predominant political actions of women legislators to diverse players who are involved in policy-making, and from a narrow focus on legislatures to various institutions inside and outside the government. Laurel Weldon attaches importance to strong feminist interest in non-legislative influences on policy-making, demonstrating collaboration between women’s policy machinery and women’s movements in policy-making.

Weldon (2002) modifies women’s representation based on the institutional sources of direct influence on policy-making and divides it into three modes, i.e. individual women legislators, women’s policy machinery and women’s movements. She then compares the impact of these three modes on government responsiveness to violence against women in 36 democratic countries by employing OLS regression analysis. Weldon (2002: 1168) found “no linear relationship between the proportion of women legislators and government responsiveness to violence against women” nor “a critical mass effect … in this policy area”. Moreover, her analysis indicates that the interaction between women’s policy machinery and a strong, autonomous women’s movement does contribute to government action (Weldon 2002: 1170).

For feminists who disagree with critical mass or the correlation between descriptive and substantive representation, women’s representation is no longer limited to legislatures or electoral representation. Weldon (2001:1171), for example, concludes that substantive representation should be discussed along with the notion of “multiple sources of political representation”. Rather than electoral representation alone, Squires (2007) suggests that policy-making of diversity mainstreaming, which includes civil society and associates with participation and deliberation, facilitates substantive representations. Celis, Childs, Kantola and Krook (2008: 104-107) attempt to redefine substantive representation with four questions regarding who, where, why and how. According to the authors’ redefinition, substantive representation involves “a wide range of possible players”, “take[s] place in multiple locations”, pursues “different aims and motivations”, and presents “various patterns”.

Lovenduski (2005: 3-6) also defines substantive representation as a wider term linked with policy-making processes and involving women’s policy agencies. Substantive representation, she says, refers to “the consideration of [women’s] interests
in decision-making processes” while descriptive representation considers “the inclusion of women as political actors” (Lovenduski 2005: 17). Lovenduski (2005) conceives women’s policy agency/machinery as a core player in the realization of women’s demands. In this regard, women’s representation moves beyond the traditional idea of election-based representation. Young can be included in the group of those who contest the conventional understanding of political representation. She does not limit “forms of group representation” to legislatures; rather she extends the scope to formal and informal institutions outside parliaments, such as governmental commissions and boards, private corporate governing bodies and civic voluntary associations (Young 2000: 141-142).

Michael Saward (2010; 2011) provides a theoretical grounding for such feminist accounts of political representation. Saward (2011: 74-77), who envisages political representation through a wider spectrum that includes civil society activities, defines it as two categorical components, namely, “representative democracy” and “democratic representation”. Representative democracy is centred on state institutions with formal authority, such as “legislatures, executives, judiciaries, and an array of other public bodies”, in which civic voices are channelled through elections, as it is very familiar with our political life. Democratic representation includes non-state democratic practices, which are disseminated throughout diverse locations of society, and where civic voices are represented by multiple modes without formal authority (Saward 2011: 75-76). Saward (2011: 75) highlights that “representative democracy does not exhaust democratic representation”. According to Saward, legislatively electoral representation is only one part of political representation composed of a multi-layered democratic entity.

The scope of women’s representation goes beyond electoral representative democracy and is, in turn, extended to include more diverse democratic opportunities. Specifically, this view sheds more light on policy-making involving civic activists as well as non-elected officials, as opposed to that of legislation – thus I call policy-making outside legislatures “non-legislative policy-making”. This feminist view not only has the potential to widen democratic arenas of politics, benefiting the development of women- (and other disadvantaged people) -friendly public policy, but it is also associated with a theoretical challenge to liberal elitist democracy.

In the last four decades, two democratic models – participatory and deliberative democracy – have emerged to challenge liberal representative democracy. An earlier model is participatory democracy, represented by Carole Pateman (1970) and Benjamin Barber (1984). Pateman (1970) argues against Joseph Schumpeter and his followers,
who conceived democracy as a competition among leaders for votes and considered citizens’ role in politics to be merely a matter of electoral participation, highlighting citizens’ participation in decision-making of the workforce/industry that she considers to be a political system. Conversely, Barber (1984) believes that participation in community decision-making transforms ordinary people into “citizens” by providing them with a space to deliberate, act, share and contribute.

Following participatory democracy, deliberative democracy is critical of the elitist model of liberal democracy and seems to take over the essence of what democracy ought to be from the former. Although deliberative democrats define their concepts of democracy in various ways, they all agree that deliberative democracy aims to improve “the quality of public decision-making” (Held 2006: 237). John Dryzek (2000: 8) refers to deliberative democracy as the “quest for democratic authenticity”. In this “quest”, deliberative democrats do not exclude any other theory of democracy (see Cohen, 1998). Its main rival is the aggregative conception of democracy (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004: 13). Its potential risk of aggregation notwithstanding, in this respect, liberal representative democracy is not synonymous with aggregative democracy.

Participation and deliberation are the key elements common to both participatory and deliberative models of democracy. Although the participatory model emphasizes participation to encourage citizens’ substantive involvement in decision-making, it does not disregard deliberation, implying that a consensus in decision-making cannot be reached without deliberation among participants. Similarly, the deliberative model is premised on citizens’ voluntary participation in deliberative arenas; in this model, genuine deliberation can be achieved by autonomous citizens. Therefore, the main difference between the two models lies in their way of disseminating democracy throughout society rather than their purpose.

To the extent that women’s – and other marginalized people’s – influence on policy-making is facilitated by good communication between policy-makers and those who are involved in or understand the problems in question, most notably persons directly concerned or activists in civil society the abovementioned feminist view of

10 Deliberative democracy has branched into several schools (Held, 2006: 234-237). However, the schools can be roughly divided into two streams: those of John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas, corresponding to liberal and critical theory, respectively (Elster, 1998: 5; Dryzek, 2000:8-27). The Rawlsian stream centres deliberation on liberal governmental institutions, including special assemblies for constitution-making (Elster, 1998), deliberative polling (Fishkin, 1991; 1995; 2009), deliberative days (Ackerman and Fishkin, 2003; Fishkin and Laslett, 2003), and citizen’s jury (Beetham, 2005). Conversely, the Habermasian/critical stream highlights the public sphere or civil society. Critical deliberative theorists criticise the Rawlsian/liberal stream for its limitations, such as excluding politically powerless people from deliberative arenas, focusing entirely on material issues and being framed by the Westphalian nation-state system (Young, 1997; Dryzek 2000; Fraser, 2008).
non-legislative policy-making pursues the same goal as participatory and deliberative democracy. The feminist view hinges both on civic participation in policy-making arenas and deliberation between policy-makers and citizens, and further contributes to supplementing liberal representative democracy in a more civic oriented-way. In other words, non-legislative policy-making meets women’s demands not only for policy benefits but also for a more direct engagement in policy-making, thereby strengthening democratic processes of policy-making. The feminist view of respect for non-legislative policy-making, as well as participatory and deliberative models of democracy, can be interpreted as “post-modernist” (Inglehart, 1999) or “most-materialist” (Dalton, 2000) demands. Citizens in advanced societies, who enjoy socio-political autonomy and material affluence, hardly obey authorities; rather they tend to act according to their own decisions. Thus, they are discontent with indirect involvement in political decision-making and attempt to infuse their voices into policy-making by bypassing legislative institutions, as mentioned earlier.

3. Democratic Problems of Non-Legislative Policy-Making
The overemphasis on non-legislative policy-making efficacy, and in turn, the disregard for electoral representation, is a danger to democracy. It induces the following three problems that harm democratic politics.

3.1. Legitimacy Problem
The first is whether or not non-elected participants in policy-making possess political legitimacy. Legitimacy of representatives in modern democratic states is warranted by periodical popular elections. Elected representatives not only represent the popular will, but they also constitute representative government. In the modern nation-state system, only representative government constitutes sovereignty to rule the people, exercise power over them, protect their rights from infringing others and defend national interests against other countries. Hence, elections are the cornerstone of democratic politics. “Critical actors”, such as civil servants, researchers, and citizens, are not elected by popular vote. Can their direct commitment to policy-making be legitimatized? Saward (2010; 2011) would answer “yes” to this question.¹¹

As previously mentioned, Saward (2010; 2011) views political representation as a combination of two components, i.e. democratic representation spread throughout society, and representative democracy based in the state. Challenging the conventional notion of political representation, Saward (2010: 35) puts forth an alternative “representative claim”, in which representation is “not fixed institutional presences”, but

¹¹ Regarding the issue of legitimacy in deliberative democracy, see Dryzek, 2010 and Parkinson, 2006.
rather “derives ultimately from events – notably claims” and takes on a “constitutive, boundary-crossing, dynamic, and ubiquitous character”. According to this notion, even citizens, like legislators, are political representatives if they make their claims or receive claims voiced by others. For this, democratic legitimacy of political representation is defined by a more flexible and contextual standard. According to Saward (2010: 143), many civil society institutions, such as schools, hospital boards, trade unions, business cooperatives and universities carry out elections to select their board members or executive committee members, demonstrating that democratic representation in civil society follows the same logic as state-based representative democracy.

Moreover, he considers democratic legitimacy as “provisional”. Saward (2010: 144) declines “a set of universal standards for political legitimacy” and instead conceives of “democratic legitimacy as acceptance by appropriate constituents, and perhaps audience, under certain conditions”, noting that the term “legitimation” may be more appropriate than legitimacy because it expresses “an open-ended process”. Therefore, “democratic legitimacy across society” is proved by “evidence of sufficient acceptance of claims by appropriate constituencies under reasonable conditions of judgement” (Saward 2010: 145). Even though claim-makers or claim-recipients are not elected officially, they are legitimate representatives as far as they are accepted by their groups, organizations, or locals – which he terms “constituencies”. In this context, an election is no longer a requisite for representational legitimacy; a more crucial condition is whether or not a representative fully represents and predominantly works for the represented.

Democratic legitimacy of claims, Saward argues, is judged by the appropriate constituency, which comprises the intended constituency and actual constituency: the former “is the group the claimant claims to speak for” and the latter “is the group whose members recognize their interests as being implicated in the claim in some way” (Saward, 2010: 145-151). The appropriate constituency, at any rate, is composed of citizens, so that it is citizens who judge democratic legitimacy (Saward, 2010: 147-148). Nonetheless, it is not sufficient to convince one how the appropriate constituency judges democratic legitimacy. The measure of judgements appears to be contextual. As Saward, (2010: 151) explains, the judgements “are … subjective matters; self-positioning of citizens with respect to claims made for and about them is what counts”. Self-positioning requires “inter-subjective consideration of claimants and their claims” (Saward, 2010: 151). Inter-subjectivity might be reasonable to assess human behaviours or events because social science cannot follow natural science models, as noted by Dahlerup in the context of critical mass. However, inter-subjectivity as a scale of
judgement is not as definitive as an election; at least, votes can be counted numerically. Even deliberative democrats do not deny an electorally-substantiated majority rule, but they rather rely on an election to make a final decision after the full deliberation (e.g. Young 1997: 62; Elster 1998: 14). An election could be more convincing for rational citizens than inter-subjectivity or self-positioning.

Furthermore, Saward overlooks another aspect of legitimacy. Political representation, specifically representative government, is legitimatized not only by democracy but also by sovereignty (Schwartz, 1988; Garsten, 2009). Democracy functions as “an instrument of the popular will” to respond to the represented (Garsten, 2009: 90-91). This constitutes the democratic side of legitimacy. Sovereignty, on the other hand, frames a nation-state (Garsten, 2009: 106) and gives legitimate authority to representative government. Sovereignty commonly entails two meanings of “external independence and internal absolute authority” (Wissenburg, 2009: 1). In the latter meaning, it refers to the exercise of “a full and unitary power over an entire society” (Schwartz, 1988: 2), thereby forcing citizens to obey its rule and usurp their rights. It seems, at this point, sovereignty is inconsistent with democracy. Is sovereignty consistent with democracy? The answer would be affirmative, as long as sovereignty is derived from and authorized by the popular will. Therefore, would it be, as long as sovereignty prevents brutal power (both internally and externally) from harming the popular will or democracy. Inevitably, national sovereignty must be granted by all constituents rather than just a few. Thus, it is questionable whether claim-makers/recipients who represent the appropriate constituency could constitute sovereignty. In fact, only those who are elected by nation-wide popular votes could be granted democratic sovereign power.

3.2. Involving Self-Interested Politics

The second problem is that non-legislative policy-making may cause “self-interested politics”. Women’s movements, interest groups or NGOs/NPOs rarely represent all women and often advocate the special interests of some women. Even mass movements cannot take up the diverse interests or opinions of all women. Moreover, integrating women into one group brings about a risk of essentialism (see Phillips, 2010: 69-82). The more women’s interests are diversified according to the advancement of gender

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12 Wissenburg (2009) argues against sovereignty of nation-states because he deems the present political reality to be “political pluralisation”. According to Wissenburg, state sovereign power is no longer workable. Instead of the frame of nation-state, he puts forth a frame of “metropolis”. Even though circumstances surrounding the world have increasingly eroded sovereignty of nation-states, the nation-state frame is still the key unit of global politics and the economy.
mainstreaming, the more women’s movements will be divided into many groups. These organizations do not always seek common interests, rather they represent different causes and advocate for different demands to be met (see Mutz, 2006); this explains the reason they split into many diverse groups. Their policy demands are sometimes contradictory and as a result, the groups’ direct actions for ensuring their demands are incorporated into policy-making make a cause of infighting among the groups. For example, one group representing the interests of young working mothers may demand more public-provided nurseries. This demand for nurseries may force the government either to scrap a job training programme for unemployed women or to cut child allowance expenditure; groups which stand to lose their benefits due to the demand for nurseries will immediately take action to prevent the government from scrapping programmes or cutting expenditure. Policy-making arenas are transformed into a field where diverse groups vie to have their demands met. Can we call this democratic politics? If civil society activists always intend to make use of non-legislative policy-making, it appears to be difficult for them to avoid becoming involved in self-interested politics.

In addition, many women may be unable or unwilling to engage in social movements and other kinds of political activism, and only a handful of women may have opportunities to be critical actors in policy-making. Women tend to have limited spare time: they are much busier than men due to the multiple roles they undertake in society, such as house makers, caregivers, and workers in most countries where genuine gender equality has not yet been realised (see Phillips 1991: 42-46). Participation in voluntary activities in addition to duties in the home and workplace would impose further burdens on women. For those who are disconnected from policy-making arenas, electoral representation is the sole measure – apart from referenda – to channel their demands and interests into policy-making processes or to express their political opinions.

3.3. Overlooking a Role of Symbolic Representation
Finally, we should consider another important role of representatives: namely, elected representatives serve as the symbol of a nation or region as suggested by Pitkin’s typology. Pitkin herself attaches less importance to symbolic representation, in which representatives are role models for society and function as influentially prominent figures. To politically marginalized groups, however, their presence in legislatures has an important implication for their social life. Judith Shklar (1991), in her book on American citizenship, maintains that voting is not merely a civic right but it also
embodies people’s social standing. Social standing is identified with “a place in one of
the higher or lower social strata”, thereby being the source of social respect (Shklar,
1991: 2). Thus, a social group without the right to vote would be treated as second or
lower class citizens in society. Similarly, a presence in legislatures can contribute to
stratifying the social standing of groups; one group with under-representation would be
less respected than another group with over-representation.

Symbolic representation also affects political culture. As described earlier,
empirical studies have demonstrated that women legislators are more interested in
women-friendly and gender related issues than their male colleagues. Does this imply
that women legislators urge their parties, which predominantly address such
conventional issues such as macro economy, finance, and international affairs, to extend
their interests towards more diverse issues? Indeed, a volume edited by Claire Annesley,
Francesca Gains, and Kristein Rummery (2007) examines the extent to which the
British Labour Party has feminised politics according to an increase in the number of its
women parliamentarians in the 1997 general election. Despite its conclusion that “the
party has not succeeded in feminising politics”, the volume notes that the New Labour
government is unique for its approach in developing women-friendly policies, such as
childcare, pensions, parental leave and same-sex relations, and that such policy-making
was often brought about by party feminists who put pressure on the their male
colleagues (Rummery, Gains, and Annesley, 2007: 246).

Women’s visible representation also has a significant impact on wider society, both
explicitly and implicitly. For example, in a society with a significant number of women
legislators, people will no longer conceive women as being politically incompetent; in
particular, young women, like young men, might decide to enter politics without any
hesitation. On the contrary, when women legislators are invisible, people will continue
to think that politics does not concern women, leading to women detaching themselves
from politics. Miki Caul Kittilson (2005: 643) notes “the increase in women’s
parliamentary presence…have ideational, or normative, effects”. The visible presence of
women legislators would move socio-political culture towards more gender equality and
might have further ramifications throughout society.13

4. Representation and Participation Working in Harmony
The direct influence of women on policy-making can supplement their low numerical
presence – or low performance of their representatives – within legislative bodies,
providing them with alternative opportunities to channel their voices into the formation of public policy. However, it can never replace electoral representation and may even damage democracy, if relied upon excessively. Electoral representation lies at the heart of a democratic polity. A significant gain in descriptive representation does not automatically result in a visible improvement in substantive representation. As we have seen previously, there are many factors that affect changes in the political status quo; specifically a male-dominated political culture, both within parties and parliament, is an obstacle to women legislators’ acting for women even though their parties (such as New Labour) may have adopted more women-friendly policies. The numbers, meanwhile, affect the conditions of political change, to the extent that one cannot isolate this from understanding institutional shifts (Dahlerup, 2006: 520). It will take time to bridge the gap between descriptive and substantive changes in women’s political influence; society needs to be patient as this is a long-term process.

Two viewpoints affirm the significance of women’s electoral representation. First, it is clear that there are opportunities for deliberation between representatives and the represented in legislatures. The proponents of non-legislative policy-making, as well as deliberative democrats, might overlook the deliberative opportunity provided by electoral representation. Mansbridge (2003), in theorizing recent American representation by four forms – promissory, anticipatory, gyroscopic, and surrogate representation, elucidates how electoral representation is relevant to deliberative democracy. She notes that the four forms of representation could contribute to deliberative democracy. This is because each form, more or less, requires good deliberation between the represented and representatives “to ascertain whether or not representatives have fulfilled their promises or have persuasive reasons for not doing so” in the case of promissory representation; to provide a space of communication in elections in the cases of anticipatory representation and gyroscopic representation; and to share important perspectives in the case of surrogate representation (Mansbridge, 2003: 525). Electoral representation could potentially strengthen democracy through good deliberation, as opposed to a conventionally inactive apparatus. In order to make reliable connections with the constituency, representatives should have sincere discussions with their constituencies so that they are able to make informed decisions and take actions based on the discussions (Young, 2000: 132). Good deliberation between elected representatives and the represented promotes legislatively substantive representation; the better the deliberation between women legislators and women as a constituency, the more likely that they would act for women. Even though non-elected officials in government or policy agencies are deeply involved in policy formation, it is
legislatures that take final responsibility in formulating policy drafts. In this regard, deliberation between women and their elected representatives is crucial for the realization of their policy demands.

The second affirmative viewpoint for women’s electoral representation lies in strong connections between women’s participatory activities and electoral representation. As discussed earlier, feminist scholars have clarified the collaboration between women’s movements and women’s policy machinery. However, women’s movements are also key collaborators in improving women’s representation within political parties. This can be demonstrated by examples from Nordic countries (see Christensen, 1999). From the late 1960s to early 1980s, Western feminist movements were often spearheaded by radical branches, which viewed established political institutions as meaningless for their goal of socio-cultural revolution (e.g. Dahlerup, 1986). As a result, they detached themselves from political parties and other political institutions. In contrast, Nordic feminists, with the exception of Denmark and to a lesser extent Iceland, were less influenced by radical ideology, and rather were actively involved in party politics (Phillips, 1991: 83-91).

Diane Sainsbury (2004: 67-78; 2005: 198-207), for example, demonstrates how Swedish women’s movements between 1967 and 1987 had been involved in party politics; Swedish women, different from their other Western counterparts, approached political parties to advance their political demands, while political parties ensured the nomination of women electoral candidates, so as to gain the support of women voters. This is the reason the proportion of Swedish women parliamentarians reached 30% in the mid-1980s (Wängnerud, 2005). Consequently, Sainsbury (2005: 211) explains, “gains in representation resulted from party feminists and state feminists working in tandem”. In the 1990s, as radical branches lost their potency, Western feminists became aware that women’s presence in politics was important for improving their circumstances both in their private and public life; in fact, British feminists, who had previously been attracted by radical ideology, increasingly threw themselves into party politics (see Short, 1996).

To be most effective, it is best to assert the equal importance of both the number of women legislators and women’s influence on policy-making, rather than creating a simplistic dichotomy that prioritizes one over the other. Feminist scholars often emphasize the crucial role of women’s movements in the establishment of gender quotas or other measures aimed at increasing women legislators. Few gains are likely to be made without the voices and agency of women. Women’s strong advocacy within civil society and advancing claims for more women legislators are essential to
improving women’s descriptive and substantive representation. Concurrently, these voices in civil society are necessary for the mutually reinforcing synergies between descriptive and substantive representation, which in turn enhance democracy itself.

However, the question remains of how women’s participatory activities can be linked with electoral representation. As will be discussed in article one, I envisage a “multi-layered seamless world” composed of five interconnected types of human activities – the family, private, civic and political associations, and state political institutions – whose boundaries are overlapping and may simultaneously accommodate a variety of citizens’ activities. This conception emphasizes the connection of politics to everyday life through citizen’s participatory activities. When the interactions among everyday life, civil society and representative institutions are healthy and smooth, diverse participatory activities of citizens, both inside and outside of representative institutions, enable people to enhance their substantive engagement in politics and further strengthen democratic politics.

Political parties play an intermediary role in connecting women’s participatory activities with their electoral representation. Lovenduski (2005) suggests that women’s policy machinery sometimes facilitates this connection. This is exemplified by such cases as Belgium (Meier, 2005), France (Baudino, 2005), Italy (Guadagnini, 2005), Peru (Schmidt, 2003), Spain (Valiente, 2005), and Sweden (Sainsbury, 2005). However, the relationship between parties and women’s movements is affected by the associational characteristics of the parties. For example, long-established parties with a hierarchical structure are often isolated from grassroots activities, as their activities are professional and often bureaucratically managed. In contrast, civic-friendly parties, which work with social movements and other civic voluntary associations, could act as intermediaries between citizens and representative institutions more effectively than bureaucratic parties. The relationship, meanwhile, changes according to the characteristics of women’s movements (see article two, three, and four). Collaboration between women’s participatory activities and their electoral representation, at any rate, could develop democratic politics for women. An essential element of women’s political life involves representation and participation work together in harmony.

5. Previous Studies of Women and Politics in Japan
The subject of “women and politics in Japan” has not attracted much attention from Japanese political scientists. The main reason being that Japanese academia, political science included, is still dominated by men with little interest in women’s or gender issues. Although Japanese women political scientists, especially the younger generations,
have gradually become involved in studies of women and politics, the subject remains marginalised within Japanese academia. Scholars outside Japan appear to be somewhat more active in tackling the issue.

The majority of existing studies on Japanese women and politics emerged subsequent to the 1990s. The Upper House election, held in July 1989, led to twenty-two newly elected women, thus attracting scholarly attention to women politicians in Japan. This inspired such studies as the political styles of women Diet (Japanese national parliament) members (Iwai, 1993), woman political leaders (Stockwin, 1994), historical analyses of the event of 1989 (Hastings, 1996; Ogai, 1996), gender-insensitive political institutions (Ogai, 2001; Mikanagi, 2001), and women candidacy (Aiuchi, 2001).

There are several studies specializing in the representation of Japanese women. John Hickman (1997) and Ray Christensen (2000) discuss the reasons for women’s under-representation, focusing on Japan’s electoral system. In a subsequent essay, Christensen (2008) adds party endorsements and societal factors to his previous investigation concerning the reasons for women’s under-representation. Kazuki Iwanaga (1998, 2008) also identifies multiple factors – i.e. the electoral system, party competition, and Japanese culture – as obstacles to improving the underrepresentation of women. Jackie Steele (2011), through interviews with 17 women parliamentarians, analyses how elected women navigate electoral opportunities. Catherine Bochel and Hugh Bochel (2005) explore the low proportion of women local assembly members employing cultural perspectives. As article two demonstrates, some of my findings complement the results of these preceding studies, however, the current contribution aims not only to place my various findings into a wider international perspective but also to emphasise the important role of women’s consciousness and expectations regarding women’s claims for increased representation.

With regard to the political implications of Japanese women’s movements, we can find diverse studies in the English literature. Vera Mackie (1997; 2003) situates feminist movements in a historical perspective, applying the two concepts of modernity and citizenship. Taking a different approach, Sheldon Garon (1993) discusses patriotic women’s movements in wartime Japan. Other studies highlight a variety of post-war Japanese women’s movements; for example, the peace movement between 1945 and the 1950s (Yamamoto, 2004), voluntary political activism in the 1970s (Pharr, 1981), the second wave of feminist movements (Robins-Mowry, 1983; Chafetz and Dworkin, 1986: 140-143, 185; AMPO, 1996; Gelb, 2003), a broad range of current women’s organizations (Khor, 1999; Murase 2006; Gaunder, 2011; Shin, 2011), the consumer
movement (LeBlanc, 1999; Bouissou, 2000), and the grassroots political activities of women in the late 1990s (Takao, 2006).

These studies of Japanese women’s movements can be divided into two groups according to their focus. In the first group, the authors investigate Japanese women’s movements in terms of organisational scale and structure, ideology, activities, and campaigns, and then they clarify the distinct nature of the movements (Robins-Mowry, 1983; Chafetz and Dworkin, 1986: 140-143, 185; Garon, 1993; AMPO 1996; Mackie, 1997; 2003; LeBlanc, 1999; Khor, 1999; Bouissou, 2000; Yamamoto, 2004; Gaunder, 2011; Shin, 2011). In the second group, the authors focus on the interaction between the women’s movements and political institutions to examine the influence of the movements upon politics (Pharr, 1981; Gelb, 2003; Murase, 2006; Takao, 2006).

According to this classification, this thesis contributes to both groups highlighting the relationship between ideological characteristics and political orientations of women’s movements in Japan. The present study attempts to paint a more comprehensive portrait of post-war Japanese women’s movements.

6. Mapping the Articles

The compilation consists of the following five published articles:

1) “Reframing Civil Society from Gender Perspectives: A Model of a Multi-layered Seamless World”, published in Journal of Civil Society, 8:2 (June 2012), pp. 101-121, reviewed by three anonymous readers.


In article one, which focuses on civil society figures as the logical framework of my thesis, I propose an overarching model to help situate the interplay between everyday life, civil society, and the state. Women’s policy demands stem from their daily practices and experiences, while their collective activities in civil society allow them to be channelled to state political institutions in the form of political demands. Depicting how these three elements interact, I emphasise the fluid and overlapping boundaries that emerge from citizen interaction and engagement within and across each of these entities. Article one explains the reason for extending my analytical perspective to concrete studies of women and politics in Japan, and the range of activities constituting their political representation (articles two and five) in women’s civil society activities and everyday life (articles three and four). In other words, Article one maps the research agenda that is fleshed out in the subsequent articles (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 emphasises the overlapping boundaries between neighbouring elements in order to express the close-knit linkage between the family, civil society and state political institutions. As Figure 2 shows, article two focuses on women’s representation (“state political institutions”) in Japan, taking into account its linkage with “political associations”. Articles three and four highlight Japanese women’s movements (“private, civic and political associations”) in terms of their interaction with everyday life (“family”) and politics (“state political institutions”). Article five, discussing Japanese parliamentary deliberations on gender equality led by women legislators, focuses mainly on “state political institutions” but also underscores the importance of women legislators’ connection with “political associations”.

Subsequent four articles – two, three, four and five – attempt to establish the hypothesis that women’s strong voices are essential to achieving significant improvements in their electoral representation descriptively and substantively, based on the Japanese case study. Throughout the four articles, a dependent variable, which is tested in my case studies, is women’s representation in Japanese legislatures, and an explanatory variable or independent variable, is women’s participatory activities in civil society.
Figure 2: Mapping Articles Two through Five onto Article One

Note: The market is excluded from this model. The figure is simplified to emphasize the interactions among the five elements.
In article two, I arrange four relevant variables (factors) that affect women’s electoral representation: the electoral system; socio-political culture; party positive actions for women (electoral gender quotas); and the activities and attitudes of women concerning their own representation. I examine each variable to identify an explanatory variable in the Japanese case. My finding is that although all four variables have had negative effects upon Japanese women’s low presence in legislatures, among them, women’s lukewarm attitudes towards electoral representation is the most serious obstacle to improving their on-going under-representation. The article, in other words, establishes that the explanatory variable of the activities and attitudes of women is more influential in impeding Japanese women from representing themselves than three others. Women’s movements do not adequately pressure political parties, the government, or society to increase their numerical representation in legislative bodies in Japan.

As reviewed earlier, some English-language studies address this issue. Article two, however, is distinguished from the preceding literature in that I employ a multi-dimensional approach, created on the basis of preceding international studies. The preceding studies of Japanese women’s under-representation do not employ this kind of comprehensive approach. My multi-dimensional approach brings about new insights into the causes of Japanese women’s under-representation.

Articles three and four, therefore, concentrate on Japanese women’s movements. Based on their ideological backgrounds, I categorize Japanese women’s movements into two types, feminist and non-feminist. This ideological categorization is identified with an intervening variable, which influences both activities of women’s movements and political institutions, specifically political parties. Article five highlights women representatives acting for women in the Diet, applying a dependent variable to legislatively substantive representation and an explanatory variable to women parliamentarians’ connection with women’s movements.

Article three analyses women’s movements in Japan from a historical perspective, starting in 1945. The post-war movements can be divided into three groups: the elite feminist-initiated, second-wave feminist, and non-feminist participatory. Although these three groups have contributed to vitalising democracy from below, I demonstrate that non-feminist participation is the most influential in its mobilisation, social visibility, and political impact. Whereas the second wave feminist movement could only mobilise a handful of women, and segregated itself from the wider society,

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14 After the publication of Article two, three elections – Lower House, local assemblies and Upper House, each – were held. I reflect changes of the proportions relevant to the article by Figures A-2 and A-3 in Appendix, as well as by Figure 1 in the text.
15 The renewed proportions relevant to article three are shown by Figures A-4 and A-5 in Appendix.
non-feminist participatory movements succeeded in involving a large number of women at the grassroots level.

Article four looks at the overall non-feminist participatory movements to understand the characteristics of their political actions, as distinct from those of the feminist movement. The article finds that the non-feminist participatory movement consists mainly of non-employed married women or homemakers who have become involved in the movement due to concerns about everyday life. Their collective activities are derived from their gender roles as mothers and wives, and as a result, these women lack feminist concerns and demands. Their contribution to democratising old-fashioned local politics notwithstanding, their absence from feminist mobilising limits Japanese women’s movements’ ability to improve their descriptive representation, because feminist consciousness is a necessary requisite concerning demands for gender equality in politics. The third and fourth articles, in sum, suggest that the weakness of the feminist movement prevents Japanese women from acting in concert to collectively call for more women representatives.

In articles three and four, I divide Japanese women’s movements into two ideological types: non-feminist and feminist. To date, there are no existing studies that can offer this overview of the post-war Japanese women’s movements using this kind of analytical typology. Additionally, the two articles can be distinguished from previous studies of Japanese women’s movements in their emphasis on political influence, especially how, and the extent to which, the movements contributed to deepening democratic politics. In this regard, the two articles successfully identify the unique characteristics of Japanese women’s movements, which differentiate them from their Western counterparts.

As outlined in article two, the level of Japanese women’s representation remains quite low; this has resulted in Japanese politics making few changes towards developing more women-friendly policies and furthering gender equality. However, even a small number of women parliamentarians have acted for women to enhance women’s rights. Article five takes up this issue, highlighting the discourse of gender equality in the Diet. In this article, I discuss how women Diet members made efforts in the Diet sessions to correct the phrase “corporative decision-making”, which the ruling party had used as a means of compromising with the old guard who oppose the notion of gender equality. Specifically, I explicate their success in correcting its distorted meaning. The key to their success was in their close-knit relationships with gender equality agencies and feminist action groups. Thus, the final article implies that feminist activism in civil society is important for achieving legislatively substantive representation of women,
like descriptive representation.

The Japanese case studies featured in four of my articles illuminate the importance of the interplay between women’s electoral representation and their participatory activities in civil society. My hypothesis appears to be established at least in the case of Japan.

**Conclusion**

This introductory paper comprises two parts. In part one, I have contracted the theory, which frames my compilatory thesis by exploring diverse feminist debates on women’s representation. We have seen that feminist scholars have recently been doubtful about the correlation between descriptive and substantive representation as well as about critical mass, attaching more importance to non-legislative policy-making than electoral representation. However, I have argued against their overemphasis on non-legislative policy-making or disregard for electoral representation, and instead, I have put forward a conception of the close-knit relationship between women’s electoral representation and their participatory activities in civil society. Based on this conception, I have hypothesised that the interplay between electoral representation and participatory activities is indispensable to women’s political advancement. Subsequently, I have mapped five articles as part of the thesis and summarised the essentials of each article. Article one is placed as the overarching aspect of the thesis, while the four subsequent articles highlight case studies from Japan. I have noted that the four aforementioned articles support my hypothesis.

This thesis is the first piece of research that systematically sheds light on both women’s representation and women’s movements in Japan; consequently, it paves the way for new developments in studies of Japanese politics. Moving beyond a scholarly community of Japanese politics, it also has the potential to contribute to an international scholarly community of women and politics. My potential contributions can be divided into three areas.

First, the thesis demonstrates that feminist movements are essential to improving women’s representation descriptively and substantively. Many preceding studies of women’s representation have already admitted the importance of women’s movements for their representation. The thesis, nonetheless, assumes originality for its further explanation of why women’s movements are crucial to improving women’s representation and how the former affects the latter. Throughout articles two, three and four, I found that while the non-feminist movements have contributed to shifting local politics from an old-fashioned style to a more democratic one, they have barely
contributed to improving women’s representation and equality nationwide, because they neither speak out for women’s political rights nor demand improvements in the under-representation of women. In other words, strong feminist movements calling for more women representatives are indispensable for improving women’s representation. In advanced Western countries, there have been traditional women’s movements, such as homemakers’ organizations, charitable associations and community activity groups; these are similar to Japanese non-feminist movements. Nonetheless, Western feminist scholars attach less attention to these traditional women’s movements than that accorded to feminist movements – though there are a few exceptions (e.g. Naples, 1998; Ortbals, 2010). The findings presented here were advanced, through typological analysis of both “feminist” and “non-feminist” women’s movements, a reality of women’s activism that is particularly important in understanding the Japanese context. This analysis offers innovative insights and new methodological concerns of great relevance to the international literature on women and politics as well as to dominant approaches within feminist political science.

The second contribution lies in the comprehensive model presented in article one, which seeks to conceive of our political world as a seriality of everyday life, civil society and state political institutions; it is this model of political advocacy that offers a framework capable of integrating and connecting the contributions of the four other articles. This model explains how and why women’s movements are intimately connected to political representation. In particular, it illustrates how women’s political demands emerge from their everyday practice and experiences, and how these demands can be developed into collective demands of many women through civil society associations (private, civic and political). Further, civil society associations can mediate and channel these demands through engagement with state political institutions. Of these three associations, political associations play a key role in channelling the demands to state political institutions and incorporating women’s demands into state policies. This model can therefore explain why civil society associations are necessary for women to realise their demands and how civil society associations of women can pursue improvements in their representation. The model underpins my findings.

As article one reveals, existing feminist studies of civil society have not attached much attention to the seriality of everyday life, civil society and state political

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16 For example, Dahlerup and Gulli (1985) refer to those in Nordic countries, Naples (1998) edits a volume on community activism of American women and Ortbals (2010) examines those in Andalusia, Spain. In my own field research (2003-2004) on traditional women’s movements, I studied organizations that were similar to the Japanese non-feminist ones, such as the National Federation of Women’s Institute (NFWI) in Britain and the Danish Women’s Activity Society/Danish Housewives Union.
institutions, although they maintain that the boundaries of these three elements are fluid and overlapping. Nonetheless, they do not adopt this kind of perspective as an integral component of their thinking. As such, this thesis appears to be the first work to have made practical use of such a holistic framework. More importantly, it is not only in women’s politics, but also in politics in general where everyday life, civil society, and state political institutions are deeply inter-connected. For any citizen, his/her political demands are generated from daily activities; for ordinary citizens, who have no direct route to legislative bodies, civil society associations provide that access. This thesis offers important implications for political studies in general.

Finally, the thesis responds to the debates on descriptive and substantive representation affirmatively. Article five, analysing the parliamentary performance of Japanese women legislators in debates on gender equality, presents two core findings with regard to the correlation between descriptive and substantive representation in legislatures. One is that even a minority of women parliamentarians can work to produce a significant result for women as a constituency. As seen earlier, women representatives do not necessarily devote themselves to women’s interests, nor do only women representatives do this. However, Japan exemplifies that descriptive representation contributes to legislatively substantive representation, in particular gender equality issues. Another finding, more importantly perhaps, is that the women legislators who fought to advocate gender equality in parliamentary sessions were linked with civil society organizations advocating women’s rights and equality. Women representatives can, and do, act for women sincerely insofar as they try to respond to those who expect them to do so. Descriptive representation does not automatically spur substantive representation, but the correlation holds true in cases where descriptive representation refers to those representatives who have a strong tie with descriptive constituency. This suggests that a harmonious linkage between electoral representation and participatory activities is a necessary condition for upholding the correlation.

References


Representation”, *Political Studies*, 56, 725-736.


Appendix

Table A-1: Top twenties of the Proportion of Women MPs in 188 Countries and Japan’s Rank (Lower House or Single House)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Election Year</th>
<th>Proportion of Women MPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Andorra</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>United Republic of Tanzania</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources from IPU Women in Parliament, as of 1 November 2013 (http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm)
Table A-2: World Average of the Proportion of Women MPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single House or Lower House</th>
<th>Upper House or Senate</th>
<th>Both Houses Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources from IPU women in Parliament, as of 1 November 2013 (http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm)

Table A-3: Regional Averages of the Proportion of Women MPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Lower House or Single House</th>
<th>Upper House or Senate</th>
<th>Both Houses Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nordic countries</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe excluding Nordic countries</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab States</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources from IPU women in Parliament, as of 1 November 2013 (http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm)

Figure A-1: Changes in Educationally Gender Differences in Japan, Comparing Higher Education

Source from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2011
Figure A-2: Different Proportions of Elected Female Candidates between District and PR in the Lower House Elections

Source from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2013

Figure A-3: Changes in the Proportion of Female Members in Five Types of Local Assemblies

Sources from the Gender Equality Bureau and Cabinet Office in Japan, 2012
Figure A-4: Changes of the Voting Rates in Lower House Elections

Sources from the Ministry of Internal affairs and Communications, 2013

Figure A-5: Changes of Voting Rates in Upper House Elections

Sources from the Ministry of Internal affairs and Communications, 2013