Speaking Out: 
An Analysis of Democratic and Republican 
Woman-Invoked Rhetoric 
of the 105th Congress

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SUMMARY. This study demonstrates that Republican female House members invoke women in their public statements at the same frequency as their Democratic counterparts. Despite this congruency, the specific issues that female partisan legislators emphasize when they invoke women in their statements are quite different. Republican women discuss how tax, business, and pension laws affect working women while Democratic female representatives concern themselves with laudatory tributes and funding for welfare state programs. In addition to controlling for party, the explanatory variable of race is also introduced to explain variation in emphasis, particularly regarding the issue of abortion. Congressional Record entries contributed by the female members of the 105th Congress in 1997 serve as the data for this analysis. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <getinfo@haworthpressinc.com> Website: <http://www.HaworthPress.com> © 2001 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

Most scholarly discourse concerning female legislators asks if women possess different policy interests, leadership styles, or legislative behavior than their male counterparts. This analysis of female House
members examines the legislative behavior of female office holders, but not in comparison to their male colleagues. Instead, partisan and racial differences amongst female members of Congress are explored.

Specifically, this paper analyzes the public statements of female members of the U.S. House of Representatives when they invoke women’s specific interests or concerns in Congressional Record entries. The goal of this examination is to determine how often female members of Congress talk about women publicly and what policy issues they discuss in relation to women. Furthermore, this analysis seeks to discover if female representatives of a particular party or racial group talk more frequently about women in their political discourse than others.

This research is an exercise in understanding descriptive political representation. When a legislator provides relevant information about a represented population, he or she engages in one type of descriptive representation. In this sense, descriptive representation is not simply “standing for” a particular subset of the population, but also “talking and deliberating” (Pitkin 1967, 83). Many females in the House might feel that as women, they should attempt to represent descriptively the interests of women in some tangible way, such as providing information about women’s needs, desires, or special interests. Reingold finds that female legislators accept a link between “being a woman and actively representing women’s concerns” (1992, 531). Furthermore, rhetoric is important because the “congressman as position taker is a speaker rather than a doer” (Mayhew 1974, 62). Although the representative as a provider of information is not the only role a legislator plays in the House of Representatives, it is an important facet of the descriptive representation of women. This analysis will explore how often female legislators in the House exercise this role in relation to the specific interests and concerns of women.

**PREVIOUS RESEARCH**

Since few women served in Congress until the early 1990s, most researchers gathered data from state legislatures. Most of the literature surrounding female legislators attempted to assess the impact, if any, of gender on legislative outcomes and activities (Dolan 1997; Thomas 1991; Welch 1985; Welch and Thomas 1990).

A smaller amount of the literature considers partisan differences. When the concept of party is incorporated, strong comparisons are usu-
ally drawn between partisan men and women. Paddock and Paddock’s recent study (1997) concluded that slight differences in partisan style exist between male and female state party committee members. Less emphasis is placed on exploring the distinctions or similarities between Republican and Democratic women, though such studies do exist. Leader concluded in 1977 that Democratic women are more supportive of feminist goals and policies than their Republican counterparts. Hill’s study of state legislature Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) voting discovered that Republican women are more likely to abandon their party’s cues than Democratic women (1983). Vega and Firestone’s analysis of roll-call votes from 1981 to 1992 revealed that Democratic women were less cohesive in their voting agreement than Republican women (1995). Sapiro and Farah’s study of 1972 delegates to the presidential nominating conventions found that Republican women were more traditional and more interested in party positions than Democratic women (1980). Freeman discussed how Democratic and Republican female partisans argued for distinct versions of “women’s issues” at the 1992 presidential nominating conventions (1993). Most recently, Carroll and Casey described how Democratic and Republican female members of Congress distinctively influenced welfare reform in the 104th session (1998).

This review of the scholarly literature surrounding female legislators hints at gaps in the research. First, most research has focused too narrowly on roll-call votes (Dolan 1997). Position-taking is an integral part of congressional behavior that can often remain distinct from roll-call voting (Mayhew 1974). Secondly, although political scientists have studied many legislative behaviors of female representatives (voting records, types of bills introduced, committees joined), they have not studied how women profess to represent women in their political rhetoric. This is an important part of the descriptive representation of women which needs further scholarly examination and attention. Thirdly, most previous research concerning female legislators has concentrated on gender differences. Because the numbers of women in Congress have grown substantially, researchers can begin to study women as an independent group of political actors. Pitting Democrats against Republicans, this study was designed to determine what issues female House members talked about on the floor when their arguments concerned women’s interests, and also the frequency of such discourse. This research aims to contribute to the short list of scholarly work that explores the differences in policy behavior between congressional women of different political parties.
This research does not aim to determine if the special interests of women, claimed by the female members of the House in their public statements, accurately mirror the true desires of a particular female constituency. Throughout this examination, it is important to keep in mind that female members of Congress, regardless of party or other characteristics, profess to know and represent the interests or desires of women. This does not mean female representatives actually know and understand the priorities of women, or female legislators represent female views in any way beyond mentioning them in their public statements as points of information or persuasion.

Furthermore, this empirical endeavor does not attempt to ascertain the motivations of female members of the House when they talk about women’s interests in their public statements. Some female members might mention women’s special concerns because they genuinely wish to represent the perceived views of their female constituency while other female representatives might mention women’s interests for more strategic reasons. For example, a Fact Sheet “The Gender Gap” published by the Center for the American Woman and Politics states that women are more likely to vote for candidates who support publicly women’s interests or issues (1996). In 1997, 58 PACs and donor networks gave money predominately to female candidates in the United States (CAWP 1997). More than half of female state legislators report that women’s organizations provide “support” for their electoral efforts (Carroll 1991, 44). Perhaps monetary contributions or other electoral concerns motivate female members of Congress to talk about women’s special interests. Determining the motivations behind making public statements about women on the House floor is beyond the scope of this specific project. Instead, this research asks how often female representatives speak about the distinct interests of women and what types of policy issues they speak about when invoking women in their statements.

**METHODOLOGY**

Entries of the 1997 *Congressional Record* serve as the data for this analysis. At the time of data collection, the 1997 session of the 105th Congress provided the most recent *Congressional Record* entries of a legislative session in which substantive numbers of both Democratic and Republican female members served in Congress. Each female House member’s entries as recorded in the *Congressional Record*, in-
including extensions of remarks as well as contributions to debates, were read and examined. In total, 16 Republican women and 34 Democratic women were used in this study.

I read and analyzed each entry in the *Congressional Record* for each female representative. Points of parliamentary procedure, public comments, extension of remarks, speeches, and motions executed by a member of Congress constitute entries in the *Congressional Record*. First, I determined whether or not an entry was “substantive.” A “substantive” entry was defined as an argument concerning a bill, resolution, amendment, or previous speaker’s comment. Actions not termed “substantive” for purposes of this analysis were as follows: those concerning leaves of absence, additional sponsors of bills, motions to adjourn, recorded votes, personal explanations, special orders, and notations of reports submitted. In short, if a representative argued a point or offered an opinion in a *Congressional Record* entry, her remarks were deemed “substantive” while entries serving as procedural instructions or requests were not defined as “substantive.” Although most of the *Congressional Record* entries analyzed were reactions or opinions regarding legislation, “substantive” remarks were not confined to legislative debates. Tributes made by female members lauding outstanding female accomplishments were also termed “substantive.” *Congressional Record* inserts were included.

As I analyzed the entries of each representative, I determined how many substantive entries each member contributed to the *Congressional Record* in 1997. In this respect, some members were more active than others. For example, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) was credited with 234 substantive entries while Sue Myrick (R-NC) only managed 24 such entries.

After determining an entry was “substantive,” I then examined it to discover if women’s issues or concerns were invoked in the argument. To determine if an entry was an example of “woman-invoked rhetoric,” I carefully scanned all substantive remarks for feminine words or pronouns such as “women,” “mothers,” “girls,” or “daughters.” If the speech contained such words, I analyzed the entry to determine if the representative invoked the interests or welfare of females in their argument, making this determination by reading the entire entry at hand. The substantive *Congressional Record* entry had to claim, in some way (even in only one or two sentences), that the legislation or issue at hand affects females. Merely mentioning the word “women” or another feminine noun was not enough for inclusion; the representative had to profess concern with women’s well-being, specific interests, or desires within the
substantive remark for it to be coded as “woman-invoked rhetoric.” For example, on November 9, 1997, Representative Patsy Mink (D-HI) argued that the Small Business Reauthorization Act would help women and minorities who owned businesses. On October 28, 1997, Representative Nita Lowey (D-NY) asked Congress for more money for breast cancer research because such research affects the health of women. A September 22, 1997 speech given by Representative Nancy Johnson (R-CT) discussed the issue of sexual misconduct in the military. Johnson never mentioned how sexual misconduct specifically harms women or females. Instead, Johnson spoke broadly about the “victims” of sexual misconduct with no specific reference to how harassment hurts females in the military. As a result, Johnson’s speech was not coded as “woman-invoked rhetoric.”

The speech concerning a particular bill or subject did not have to concern wholly women’s interests or concerns. If only one part of the Congressional Record entry mentioned the impact of the legislation, amendment, or policy on women, then I included it as “woman-invoked rhetoric.” On June 26, 1997, Representative Nydia Velázquez (D-NY-12) spoke against the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. She stated that the Republican tax plan would “punish two million working, middle-class women” by not providing them with appropriate tax relief. Within her speech, the interests of women were not Velázquez’s only expressed concern. However, in at least part of her remarks, Velázquez claimed that this piece of legislation affected the interests of women.

After an entry was categorized as “woman-invoked rhetoric,” I noted down a description of the remarks. This description consisted of a short paragraph that explained what policy, legislation, or issue was being discussed, how the representative specifically invoked women in her argument or statement, and the date of the entry. Although an individual Congressional Record entry might have contained several claims involving women, each entry only counted as one instance of “woman-invoked rhetoric.”

Upon completion of the data collection, I subsequently developed eight nonexclusive policy categories for coding and grouping purposes. The eight policy areas were as follows: abortion, personal economics, welfare state, safety, health, equality, foreign policy, and tributes. Each instance of “woman-invoked rhetoric” was placed in only one category. Specific distinctions between the categories are outlined as follows.

“Personal economics” policy issues claim to affect the financial well-being of working women. These arguments refer to changes in tax laws, labor laws, pension laws, IRA provisions, and programs for
women-owned businesses. “Welfare state issues” refer to rhetoric endorsing the continuation, expansion, or revision of traditional welfare programs such as Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) and child care programs for mothers receiving federal subsidies. This category also includes arguments that discuss changes in welfare reform, such as provisions that would allow continuing education to count as work. “Safety” refers specifically to criminal issues such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, and repeat sexual offender laws, while “health” concerns breast cancer research funding, teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS research for women, and other female health problems. In this data set, no speeches argued for issues that could be classified as both “safety” and “health.” Both “safety” and “health” refer to domestic policy issues rather than international concerns. “Equality” is comprised of ideological arguments surrounding gender equity or civil rights. Examples include arguments for the continuation of Title IX and speeches discussing the unequal treatment of women in the military. “Foreign policy” refers to comments that criticize or applaud proposed policy that affects the condition or status of foreign women. If the statement mentioned the health or safety of foreign women, it was placed in the “foreign policy” category. Countries addressed in these foreign policy remarks were China, Bosnia, Ecuador, India, Ethiopia, Israel, and Afghanistan. “Tributes” are dedications made to women who are said to have significantly impacted the lives of women. The tribute had to mention that the person or organization receiving commendation affected the lives of females. Finally, the category of “abortion” includes remarks on “partial-birth” abortion legislation and funding foreign population planning programs. Even if they referred to policies that affect foreign women, all references to abortion were placed in the “abortion” category only. Additionally, all arguments concerning the funding of abortion were placed in the abortion category. For examples of entries in each issue category, see Appendix A.

It is important to note that the rhetoric examined for this study includes arguments on both sides of any given issue. For example, arguments characterized as pro-life as well as pro-choice were counted equally in the “abortion” category. The focus of this research is to discover how often female House members invoke women in their remarks and what issues this rhetoric concerns. Data collection was completed to include both sides of controversial issues that result in “woman-invoked rhetoric.”
RESULTS

Democratic and Republican female House members invoked women in their arguments at similar frequencies. To compare these two groups, a woman’s rhetoric score (WRS) was calculated for each member. This percentage is the number of times the representative invoked women divided by her total number of substantive remarks. For example, Representative Connie Morella (R-MD) was credited with 131 substantive entries. Of these 131 substantive remarks, I coded 26 as including “woman-invoked rhetoric.” As a result, her WRS score was 26/131, or .198. According to Table 1, Republican and Democratic female legislators invoked women in their arguments at strikingly similar rates. Almost 12% of the substantive remarks made by Republican women in 1997 contained woman-invoked rhetoric of some sort while 9% of Democratic women’s substantive remarks included woman-invoked speech.

Democratic and Republican female House members both considered women in their arguments. Although the frequency of woman-invoked rhetoric was similar across political parties, it is important to remember that the overall amount of rhetoric is dramatically unequal because Democratic women greatly outnumber their GOP counterparts. In 1997, Republican females as a group invoked women in substantive remarks 110 times in the Congressional Record while their Democratic counterparts invoked women 221 times. Even if their woman-invoked rhetoric ratios are similar, Democratic women simply generated more aggregate rhetoric about women than Republican females.

What kinds of issues motivated female House members to employ woman-invoked rhetoric in their substantive remarks? As demonstrated by Figure 1, abortion remained a salient issue for female members of the 105th Congress. Nearly a third (29.3%) of the speeches invoking

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<th>TABLE 1. All Women Members–Frequency of Woman-Invoked Rhetoric</th>
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<td>Republicans</td>
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<td>Democrats</td>
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women were arguments, either pro-choice or pro-life, about abortion policy. Surprisingly, tributes to female achievements consumed 17% of the total woman-invoked rhetoric. Health related issues were also mentioned with high frequency (18.4%). Rhetoric referring to gender-equity or civil rights only comprised 3.3% of the total woman-invoked rhetoric sampled. Foreign policy issues, such as Most Favored Nation status for China, also constituted a scant 3.3% of woman-invoked rhetoric.

A comparison between Republican and Democratic women on policy issues produces interesting results. While female representatives of the two parties invoked women in their substantive remarks at similar rates, Table 2 shows that issues emphasized by female partisans were dissimilar.

The most important issue for Republican and Democratic women is abortion. Health issues affecting women are also mentioned frequently by women of both parties. However, Democratic women pay more attention to tributes of women. Almost 20% of their woman-invoked rhetoric is spent on tributes while Republicans spend considerably less time (11%) on this activity. Additionally, Republican women discuss the effects of personal economics on women at a higher frequency (18.2% versus 8.6%) than Democratic women.

However, it is important to note once again that the overall amount of rhetoric greatly favors Democratic women. This observation is particu-
larly instructive in the issue categories of abortion, personal economics, and tributes. Although abortion ranks highly for women in both parties, Democratic women spoke about the issue 60 times while Republican women discussed it 37 times. Republican women focus more on personal economics for women, but only spoke one more time (20 versus 19) about this issue in 1997 than their Democratic counterparts. Additionally, the number of tributes offered by Democratic women greatly outnumber the amount offered by Republican females (44 versus 12).

Female representatives of color might not spend as much time as white female representatives speaking about women because perhaps part of their time is spent addressing racial issues or concerns. In a study of state legislators, Barrett discovered that black women are similar to nonblack women in their strong support for “pro-women policies” but also similar to black men in their support of minority policies (1995). According to Barrett, the most pressing policy issues among black female state legislators are education, health care, economic development, and employment issues. Swain explains that black members of Congress have a broader view of constituency that includes “all blacks and disadvantaged people within the United States” (1993). When considering the policy interests of nonwhite female legislators, we must ask if racial priorities conflict with gender priorities or if the two merge into a unique position (Barrett 1995, 224).

Possibly Democratic women of color lowered the Democratic mean WRS because of this phenomenon. To test this hypothesis, I compared the mean women’s rhetoric scores of Democratic white women and Democratic women of color. (See Table 3.) No negligible difference

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Dem. Women</th>
<th>N = 34</th>
<th>Repub. Women</th>
<th>N = 16</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>27.1% (60)</td>
<td>33.6% (37)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>8.6% (19)</td>
<td>18.2% (20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>4.5% (10)</td>
<td>.9% (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Policy</td>
<td>3.6% (8)</td>
<td>2.7% (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>15.4% (34)</td>
<td>24.5% (27)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>4.5% (10)</td>
<td>3.6% (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tributes</td>
<td>19.9% (44)</td>
<td>10.9% (12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welfare State</td>
<td>16.3% (36)</td>
<td>5.5% (6)</td>
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exists between women of color and white women. These data suggest that women of color did not substantially lower the Democratic mean women’s rhetoric score.

Even if Democratic women of color invoked women at the same frequency as Democratic white female House members, did they address the same policy issues in their woman-invoked rhetoric? Furthermore, controlling for race, did white Republican women address different policy issues than white Democratic women? (See Table 4.)

When it comes to policies or legislation that claims to affect women, Democratic women of color professed different concerns than did

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<th>TABLE 3. Democratic Women</th>
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<tr>
<td>Women of Color</td>
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<tr>
<td>0.0896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Women</td>
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<td>0.0903</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<th>TABLE 4. Issues Discussed in Woman-Invoked Rhetoric, Racial Differences</th>
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<td>Abortion</td>
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<td>Economics</td>
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<td>Equality</td>
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<td>Foreign Policy</td>
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<td>Health</td>
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<td>Safety</td>
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<td>Tributes</td>
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<td>Welfare State</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Democratic white women. While Democratic white women talked about abortion frequently (36.1%), women of color devoted much less time to this issue (13.6%). If Democratic women of color spoke about abortion at the same rates as Democratic white women, we would expect them to discuss abortion approximately 32 times during 1997. However, Democratic women of color mentioned this issue only 12 times during the legislation session.

Finally, it is interesting to note that this data partially confirms Barrett’s findings regarding pressing policy issues for nonwhite female legislators. Speeches concerning economics, employment, and health issues all ranked highly for Democratic women of color, although discourse about education was scant for all female members in 1997.

Comparing Republican white women to Democratic white women also yields notable results. A great deal of the white Republican woman-invoked rhetoric concerned economic policy and its effect on women (20.4%). Democratic white women spent only 4.5% of their woman-invoked rhetoric time on this issue. Additionally, health issues ranked higher for Republican women in comparison to Democratic white women (24.5% versus 14.3%). The issue of abortion consumed roughly the same portion of woman-invoked rhetoric time for white female House members of both parties.

CONCLUSION

The results of this empirical investigation are important to political scientists for several reasons. Although political scientists previously investigated how legislators represent women’s interests or causes, an analysis of how often female representatives discuss this topic on the House floor has never been completed prior to this examination. Almost 11% of the public 1997 Congressional Record statements of female members of Congress mentioned the specific concerns of women. Female representatives do not forget the concerns of women when they engage in discussion on the House floor. This finding indicates that female representatives often utilize the “talking and deliberating” activity associated with descriptive representation to promote women’s issues, interests, and concerns.

More surprisingly, this data demonstrates that Democratic and Republican women do not differ in the rates in which they mention women on the House floor. Although Democratic women are frequently considered the symbolic representatives of women’s causes, Republican
women actually speak about women at the same frequency as their liberal counterparts. Despite this unanticipated finding, this analysis also explains, in part, why Democratic women are still largely perceived as the leaders of women’s causes. Because Democratic female representatives greatly outnumber Republican females, Democratic women talk much more about women in the aggregate. Republican women do not avoid discussion about women’s interests and concerns, but their contributions are greatly outweighed by Democratic efforts. This finding is particularly instructive to the Republican Party. If the GOP wants to alter this large disparity, either more Republican women must win election to the House or the already elected female GOP partisans must speak more frequently about women to compensate for this deficit. The large partisan difference in aggregate woman-invoked rhetoric is important for the perceived images of the two major political parties. The continued appearance of the Democrats as the “party of women” is undoubtedly related to the continued persistence of electoral phenomena such as the gender gap.9

Democratic and Republican women talk about different issues when they discuss women’s interests. Although female representatives from both parties are concerned about abortion policy, Democrats concentrate on welfare policy and laudatory tributes to women while Republicans talk more about economic policy. Once again, the small number of Republican women legislators limits the ability of the GOP contingent to direct discussion about women. If Republicans hope to change the types of issues discussed in relation to women’s interests, the party might consider trying to increase their aggregate output of woman-invoked rhetoric. These data suggest that Republican women talk about different issues affecting women than their Democratic counterparts, but the small number of Republican female legislators perhaps limits the GOP’s ability to challenge the traditional Democratic agenda of women’s issues to address more conservative causes, such as economic policy.

Finally, these numbers suggest that the issue of abortion is complicated. While Republican and Democratic white women address abortion at the same rates, Democratic women of color talk about this issue much less on the House floor. Although abortion was mentioned 92 times in 1997 by all female legislators, Democratic women of color, who comprise approximately one-fourth of all female House members, only discussed this issue 12 times. This empirical evidence implies that among female House members, the issue of abortion is dominated by the discourse of white women. Further research on the issue of abortion is needed to confirm these findings.
Additional scholarship is needed to provide a more robust picture of the “talking and deliberating” function of female descriptive representation. Analyzing Congressional Record entries beyond the first legislative session of the 105th Congress would provide a broader outlook of how female representatives invoke women in their political rhetoric. A longitudinal study might decrease variability, making inferential analysis more readily applicable. Although content analysis of Congressional Record entries is time-consuming and tedious, an enlarged sample size would help determine the validity of these findings. This examination has included two independent variables in its analysis, namely party identification and race. Including demographic district characteristics such as mean income level might explain some of the differences in policy concerns amongst female House members. Further content analysis of this rich source of empirical data is warranted as more scholars pursue research in the growing field of female representation.

**AUTHOR NOTE**

The author would like to thank Professor David Mayhew of Yale University for his helpful assistance on this project. This material is based upon work supported under a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship.

**NOTES**

1. For a discussion of the connection between public opinion of congressional districts and voting records of House members, see Benjamin Page, Robert Shapiro, Paul Gronke, and Robert Rosenberg’s article entitled “Constituency, Party, and Representation in Congress” published in 1984 in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 48. The authors discover that issues involving women’s rights and ERA display a high degree of correlation (.59) between a district’s opinion and a member of Congress’s voting record.

2. The following is a listing of female members elected to the House of Representatives with reference to party affiliation. 102nd Congress–19D, 9R; 103rd Congress–35D, 12R; 104th Congress–31D, 17R; 105th Congress–35D, 16R; 106th Congress–39D, 17R. Because of the small number of Republican women in the House in the 102nd and 103rd Congresses, the 105th Congress provided the most recent data for comparison across parties. Source: Center for the American Woman and Politics Fact Sheet, Elected Women in 2000, http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp.

3. I used the Internet resource called “Thomas” for my analysis of the Congressional Record. “Thomas” is maintained by the Library of Congress and can be located at http://thomas.loc.gov.
4. Because they are non-voting delegates rather than full members of the House, I did not include Representatives Donna Christian-Green (U.S. Virgin Islands) or Eleanor Holmes Norton (District of Columbia). Due to her absence from the House in 1997 because of heart bypass surgery, I also did not include Representative Julia Carson (D-IN) in this sample. Health problems greatly diminished Carson’s activity in the House; according to my analysis, she only produced six substantive entries in the Congressional Record in 1997. I did include Representative Susan Molinari (R-NY) since she was present and active for over three-quarters of the 1997 session, although she resigned from the House on August 2, 1997.

5. In my research, I found 3100 “substantive remarks” in total. All of these speeches or remarks were read to determine if arguments concerning females were present in the text.

6. All of my instances of “woman-invoked rhetoric” fit into one of these eight categories. In total, I found 331 instances of “woman-invoked rhetoric” in 1997’s Congressional Record. Although eight categories might seem like a small number of policy areas, keep in mind that this data only represents entries from one year’s (1997) Congressional Record entries. I re-checked my data twice for accuracy in categorization. I did not choose “education” as an analytical category because I found very few references to education in the entries I coded. Educational advances by women were mentioned in three speeches invoking the 25th Anniversary of Title IX. Those three speeches [given by Representatives Kilpatrick (D-MI), Pelosi (D-CA), and Mink (D-HI)] were coded as examples of “gender equity” because they lauded the increased opportunities for women due to the prohibition of sex discrimination in Title IX. Additionally, Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) discussed educational opportunities for women on welfare twice in the month of May. Since both comments endorsed amending existing welfare law to provide more educational opportunities for women receiving public assistance, I placed these two remarks in the “welfare state” category.

7. I have not performed any inference tests (such as a t-test) to compare the means between Republican and Democratic women. In this instance, statistical tests are not appropriate since I am examining the entire population of female members of the 105th Congress. If an entire population is analyzed, no sampling variance exists, thus making it inappropriate to use significance tests to assess the probability of sampling error.

8. Since I am not treating my data as a sample but as a population, the small size of the Democratic women of color category (N = 13) is not a hindrance. I am not drawing statistical inferences from the data set.

9. See the 1999 Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) Fact Sheet entitled “Gender Gap Evident in Numerous 1998 Races.” In 1998, the Voter News Service estimated the gender gap, or the number of percentage points between the proportion of men’s and women’s votes garnered by the winner, at 4%.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Health:

March 10, 1997–We must standardize Medicare coverage for bone density testing–80% of those suffering from osteoporosis are women (Representative Connie Morella, R-MD).

April 29, 1997–Heart disease is the number one cause of death and disability among American women (Representative Maxine Waters, D-CA).

Abortion:

February 13, 1997–Approving the Presidential Finding Regarding the Population Planning Program–family planning funding is good for women and children but using taxes for abortion is inappropriate (Representative Jennifer Dunn, R-WA).

February 13, 1997–Family Planning Facilitation and Abortion Funding Restriction Act of 1997–United States has provided money for thirty years to organize family planning abroad; this funding has helped poor women (Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, D-TX).

Safety:

May 6, 1997–Housing Opportunities and Responsibilities Act of 1997–amendment introduced to ban sexual predators from public housing because these offenders have “stalked women and children” previously (Representative Nancy Johnson, R-CT).

June 19, 1997–Proving for Consideration of National Defense Authorization Act–we need a better review of the entire military justice system because women in the military are routinely subjected to harassment (Representative Carolyn Maloney, D-NY).

Personal Economics:

March 19, 1997–Working Families Flexibility Act of 1997–This bill does not help women because women who work to support their families need to know they have the security to depend on overtime pay (Representative Loretta Sanchez, D-CA).

July 31, 1997–Conference Report on HR 2014–For the first time in sixteen years, American women are getting a tax cut–women are starting businesses today at twice the rate of men–a lower capital gains tax helps women (Representative Jennifer Dunn, R-WA).
Equality:

November 4, 1997–Dismantling of Equal Opportunity–disapproval of allowing affirmative action ban in California to stand because it will reverse the gains made by African Americans, women, and other minorities (Representative Eva Clayton, D-NC).

February 5, 1997–Response to General Dennis Reimer’s suggestion that sex-segregated training return to the military–we cannot use human nature and sexuality as an excuse for gender discrimination–women must be treated equally (Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-TX).

Welfare State Funding:

April 30, 1997–Congressional Black Caucus Opposes an Appropriations Bill Which Throws Women and Children off WIC–WIC allows hundreds and thousands of women and children to avoid the disaster of hunger (Representative Maxine Waters, D-CA).

May 6, 1997–Housing Opportunities and Responsibilities Act–need this act to address the plight of working mothers who have jobs and/or take educational classes (Representative Diana DeGette, D-CO).

Foreign Policy:

June 24, 1997–Disapproval of Most-Favored Nation (MFN) Status for China– one of the many reasons not to support MFN status for China is the “outrageous abuse and neglect of baby girls” in China (Representative Tillie Fowler, R-FL).

July 30, 1997–Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs–need to address concerns about Ethiopia’s treatment of women, including practices surrounding genital mutilation and maternal care (Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, D-TX).

Tributes:

October 21, 1997–20th Anniversary of the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues–this caucus has worked to insure the well being of women, children, and families (Representative Connie Morella, R-MD).

June 17, 1997–Recognition of the Michigan Women’s Historical Center–this center has enabled the people of Michigan to learn more about its outstanding women (Representative Debbie Stabenow, D-MI).