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# *Gender Cleavages and the Resolution of Local Policy Issues\**

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This paper presents the results of a decisional analysis of 30 recent policy issues in Lawrence, Kansas, a setting having several characteristics conducive to the effective participation of women. On 20 of these issues, gender cleavages or differences were observed involving men and women activists and policymakers; such cleavages were much less prevalent among citizens at large. Gender cleavages involving policymakers and activists were found to overlap only partially with other types of cleavages. Particularly on issues with stronger gender cleavages, the views of men tended to prevail over those of women. This greater responsiveness to the preferences of men than to the preferences of women was not adequately explained by the greater participation of men, for regression models suggest that policy changes are more sensitive to increases in men's participation than to increases in women's participation. Explanations of such "gender bias" are briefly explored.

Do political communities adopt public policies that reflect equally the preferences of women and men political actors, or, alternatively, do communities exhibit "gender bias": an unequal pattern of policy responsiveness such that the preferences of men are more reflected in policy decisions than are those of women? The importance of this question is strongly implied by democratic theorists who assert that unequal influence in political communities should be the result of germane factors such as intensity of concern (Kendall and Carey, 1968), political participation (Cohen, 1971, pp. 17-22), or persuasiveness (Walzer, 1983, p. 304) and should not be the result of extraneous factors such as personal wealth, racial or ethnic background, or sex.

The differential influence of persons of various socioeconomic classes and racial backgrounds has been examined in the literature on community power, participation, and policymaking (e.g., Dahl, 1961; Verba and Nie, 1972; Browning, Marshall, and Tabb, 1984). Such research has suggested that by increasing their participation and mobilization, lower-status actors and racial minorities can increase their influence in the policymaking process, thus reducing, if not eliminating, unequal responsiveness based on class and race. Whether women can also increase their influence vis-à-vis men through their greater involvement in the resolution of local policy issues remains unclear.

The literature on women and politics provides several theoretical approaches that suggest reasons why men may dominate the policymaking process, creating gender bias against women. In the "power elite" approach, women are seen as

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victims of overt discrimination by men who seek to maintain a male-dominated political hierarchy (Amundsen, 1971, p. 45; McDonald and Pierson, 1984, p. 13). In the "structural/situational" approach, women are described as seldom having the careers or other resources (time, contacts, etc.) that are stepping-stones to sustained and effective participation (Welch, 1977, p. 728). According to proponents of the "socialization" approach, effective political participation by women is curtailed because women are first socialized and then stereotyped into particular gender roles that offer few opportunities to exert political power (Githens and Prestage, 1977, p. 144; Diamond, 1977, p. 111).

Another perspective that suggests that women may be relatively powerless focuses on gender differences in policy preferences. Women are thought to be more concerned with social services and neighborhood protection, while men are thought to be more concerned with economic growth and development (Sapiro, 1983; Burns and Schumaker, 1987).<sup>1</sup> As a result, gender cleavages—where mostly men are aligned against mostly women—may arise on community issues, especially those concerning economic development and social welfare. On such issues, the policy preferences of women may be viewed by community officials as less important than the unitary interest of cities in economic growth (Peterson, 1981). Thus, local communities in particular might exhibit "systemic bias" (Stone, 1980), as policymakers are more responsive to the growth-oriented preferences of men than to the preferences of women, which often conflict and compete with such economic priorities.

Despite the theoretical importance of the issue of gender bias in policymaking processes, the question has been ignored in community power research and only peripherally examined by researchers concerned with the politics of gender. Boles (1979), Gelb and Palley (1987), and Mansbridge (1986) suggest a number of factors reducing the influence of women's groups on such controversial issues as the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion. However, their analyses focus on women's groups and a small number of issues dealing with women's rights. Such research provides an inadequate basis for a more general assessment of the influence of women's participation relative to that of men.

Thus, several questions regarding gender and public policy must be addressed: (1) How frequently do significant gender cleavages occur on policy issues? (2) When such cleavages occur, to what extent do the views of men tend to prevail over those of women? (3) If men tend to prevail on issues involving gender cleavages, is the greater responsiveness to men due to their greater participation, mobilization, and involvement in prominent local organizations? This paper addresses these questions by mapping the preferences and participation of men and

<sup>1</sup>Until recently it has been widely believed that men and women exhibit few significant differences regarding policy preferences (see, e.g., Pomper, 1975). However, recent research and polls suggesting a "gender gap" (Rossi, 1983, p. 718; Frankovic, 1982) have stimulated research that points to substantial gender-related differences in attitudes on public policy (Shaffer, 1985).

women policymakers, activists, and citizens concerning the resolution of 30 policy issues in one community in order to test the following three hypotheses:

1. Gender-based cleavages are frequent occurrences on community issues and are quite independent of other cleavages (e.g., those based on socioeconomic status, race, etc.).
2. To the extent that men and women have different policy preferences, men's preferences will be more reflected in policy than will women's preferences.
3. To the extent that there is response bias in favor of men, this bias will not be accounted for by differences in participation by men and women.

### **Methodology**

#### *The Setting*

Lawrence, Kansas, a community of 56,000 residents, 30 miles west of the Kansas City metropolitan area, was chosen as the site for this study because it provides a setting where, relative to other communities, women's political participation might be extensive and effective.<sup>2</sup> As a progressive university community, there is little sentiment in Lawrence to limit the influence of women in public life. For example, the results of a recent citizen survey in Lawrence indicated that only 13 percent of the citizens moderately or strongly agreed with the statement that "while women should have the right to participate in local government, it is usually best for women to concentrate their energies in the home."<sup>3</sup> Women have been continuously elected to the five-person Lawrence City Commission since 1972 and to the three-person Douglas County Commission since 1979, and women held 29 percent of the seats on these commissions during the time of this study. There were four women on the seven-member (publicly elected) school board and three women on the seven-member hospital board (appointed by the City Commission) at the time of this study. Four women have served as mayor of the community in recent years, and two have headed the County Commission. In contrast, Welch and Karnig (1979) have found that women made up only 13 percent of the council members and 6 percent of the mayors in 264 American communities of comparable size with Lawrence. Thus, Lawrence provides a "crucial case" (Eckstein, 1975) for testing our hypotheses.<sup>4</sup> If women fail to achieve

<sup>2</sup>Local communities generally are thought to be conducive to efforts by women to affect public policy (Githens, 1983, p. 491).

<sup>3</sup>Random digit dialing techniques were used to obtain a sample of 611 Lawrence residents in this survey conducted in March and April 1986.

<sup>4</sup>Research concerning the influence of women has focused on the extent to which women hold office (Githens, 1983, pp. 483-88). We agree with the assumption in this literature that the presence of women officeholders is likely to enhance the influence of women in the policy process. But positional authority is not the same as influence over specific issues, as the literature on community power makes clear (Hawley and Svara, 1972, pp. 64-86). As one of our interviewees pointed out, women can "hold positions, [but] not power." And as Githens (1983, p. 490) points out, women outside of office often play important roles in policymaking.

equal participation and influence with men in a relatively supportive setting, then stronger gender differences can be expected in other communities less conducive to women's effective participation.

### *A Sample of 30 Issues*

Gender bias in Lawrence was investigated using a decisional approach focusing on a sample of 30 issues that became part of the local political agenda and were resolved at various times between 1977 and 1984.<sup>5</sup> By focusing on issue resolution, rather than on agenda setting, a "conservative" methodological choice has been made which reduces the likelihood of detecting bias against women. In comparison to the resolution stage of the policy process, few people participate in raising issues and defining the political agenda; moreover, the participants in setting agendas seldom are relatively powerless (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970). Consequently, if there are gender inequalities in the resolution of agenda items, one would expect these inequalities to be even more pronounced in the equally important agenda-setting stage of the policy process.<sup>6</sup>

The 30 policy issues listed in the left-hand column of Table 1 are the principal units of analysis in this research. Since there is no universe of issues from which one can draw a random sample (Polsby, 1980, p. 96), these issues were selected as they arose, before their outcomes were known, in order to diminish the chance of a biased sample.<sup>7</sup> Efforts were also made to obtain variation regarding the levels of controversy surrounding these issues,<sup>8</sup> the types of more abstract

<sup>5</sup>Within a decisional framework, aspects of the reputational and positional methods are also employed. Persons identified as community influentials by a reputational method were contacted about their involvements, and some of our measures involve reputed participation. The involvements of all persons holding policymaking positions were measured and analyzed. While the decisional approach has many limitations for reaching conclusions about the overall structure of community power, this approach can be fruitfully applied to examine specific hypotheses regarding the influence of participants in various issue areas (Polsby, 1980, pp. 233-37).

The decisional analysis was conducted without focusing specifically on gender questions. When preliminary analysis of these data revealed interesting gender differences, we also conducted 42 open-ended interviews focusing on these differences with informants—men and women policy-makers and activists who were involved in a variety of Lawrence issues and are generally regarded as keen observers of the local political process. In general, informant perceptions were consistent with the results of the decisional analysis.

<sup>6</sup>If women have little influence in the resolution of issues, a circular pattern is likely to result. Having little ability to achieve influence in the issue-resolution stage may discourage women from further political participation in both issue resolution and agenda setting. This means that the political agenda may disproportionately reflect men's concerns over women's concerns.

<sup>7</sup>As various community issues arose, public opinion surveys were conducted providing citizen awareness and preference data concerning them. Thus, the sample was defined based on the availability of citizen preference data.

<sup>8</sup>Controversial or "key" issues are likely to generate more public involvement and responsiveness to public concerns (Page and Shapiro, 1983, p. 181). To assess whether the level of controversy affects the equality of involvement and responsiveness between sexes, it is important to examine issues having varying levels of controversy. As measures of such variance in levels of con-

philosophical issues they embodied,<sup>9</sup> and the type of government body charged with resolving them.<sup>10</sup> However, our sample is probably weighted toward more controversial economic development issues that were resolved by the City Commission (as they were the types of issues for which citizen preference data were available).

### Measures

The dependent variable in this study, policy change, was conceptualized as a continuous variable addressing the extent to which the resolution of each issue resulted in the status quo or, alternatively, resulted in new facilities, new developments, new resolutions, or changed policies. Measures of policy change were derived from interviews with both activists and officials (see below); policy change scores for each of the 30 issues are presented in the right-hand column of Table 1. If all persons preferring a policy change viewed an issue as being resolved in a highly successful manner and if all persons preferring the status quo viewed the issue as being resolved in a highly unsuccessful manner, a maximum policy change score (50) was assigned to that issue. A minimum policy change score (10) was given to those issues where all supporters of change viewed the issue as being unsuccessfully resolved, while all opponents of change viewed the issue in successful terms. Intermediate scores reflect the extent to which supporters of change thought they were more successful than opponents of change. Scores in the range of 27 to 33 indicate that supporters and opponents of change viewed policy decisions in about equally successful terms.

The independent variables in this study concern the policy preferences and levels of participation of men and women policymakers, activists, and citizens with regard to the 30 issues and were measured in the indicated ways:

*Citizen preferences.* The levels of citizen support for policy change in each issue area were obtained from citizen surveys conducted in the springs of 1977, 1980, 1982, and 1984.<sup>11</sup> Using results from the survey conducted closest to when

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controversy, Table 1 describes the numbers of men and women activists that became involved in each issue.

<sup>9</sup>These abstract issues concern the desirability of (1) increased government services and taxation, (2) public welfare, (3) governmental subsidization of economic development, (4) neighborhood protection against economic development, (5) governmental regulation of individual behavior that fails to conform to community moral standards, (6) more progressive tax policies, and (7) increased opportunities for citizen participation in the policymaking process. See Schumaker (1988) for an analysis of the extent to which these abstract issues underlie the 30 concrete issues examined here.

<sup>10</sup>One of the issues (BIRTH) was resolved by the hospital boards; two issues (TRIBES, CLOSE) were resolved by the school board; four issues (RAIL, IRB, REASSESS, and SOCIAL) were, at least in part, county issues; two issues (INTANG and WARDS) were settled by public referendum; other issues were resolved by the City Commission, which also had partial jurisdiction on the RAIL, IRB, and SOCIAL issues.

<sup>11</sup>To obtain these samples that provide citizen preference data, random selection was used in 1977 and random digit dialing techniques were used in the other three years. In 1977 the sample size was 373; for 1980,  $n = 532$ ; for 1982,  $n = 269$ ; and for 1984,  $n = 406$ .

TABLE 1

Sample of Lawrence Issues: Numbers of Persons Involved and Policy Outcomes

Concrete Issues	Number of Involved Policymakers		Number of Involved Activists		Policy Change
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
CORNfield Mall Proposal	7	1	31	13	13.5
SIZEler Mall Proposal	10	2	29	10	13.0
JVJ Downtown Mall Proposal	7	1	47	15	14.5
TOWNCENTer Mall Proposal	8	1	33	8	40.0
OREAD Neighborhood Development	7	2	30	12	39.0
EAST Lawrence Development	5	2	28	11	14.0
BLUFFS Development	7	2	16	9	31.5 <sup>a</sup>
Develop RAIL-served Industrial Park	7	4	51	11	15.0
Develop TECH Office Park	6	3	41	6	48.5
Authorize IRBs to Competing Firms	6	2	43	3	35.0
Build PARKing at 600 Mass.	7	2	30	6	46.0
Improve Airport RUNWAYS	5	2	28	1	50.0
Improve N. 2nd Street (N2ST)	7	1	19	5	37.0
Fire the City MANAGER	7	2	64	11	13.0
Change Political Structure: Create WARDs, Elect Mayor	6	2	35	9	13.0
CATHolic Center Expansion	6	1	22	3	42.0
Enforce ENVIRONMENTal Code	8	3	35	12	41.0
End INTANGible Tax	4	3	24	6	50.0
Impose Fee on Water Biils to Finance STORMwater Study	8	2	19	8	10.0
Impose Tax on VIDEO Games	7	2	10	1	10.0
REASSESS Real Estate	8	4	10	1	11.5
Improve Airport TERMINAL	9	2	35	1	44.0
Regulate Retailing of DRUG Paraphernalia	5	2	8	0	40.5
Authorize LIFELINE Gas Rates	7	2	38	13	13.0
Change MAYORal Selection Method to Open Commission Election	10	2	7	0	46.5
Regulate Billboards and SIGNS	8	4	14	5	32.0 <sup>a</sup>
Create BIRTHing Room	4	3	12	9	12.0
End TRIBES Value Clarification Pro- gram in Schools	6	2	2	9	34.0
CLOSE Schools with Low Enrollments	9	4	18	15	14.0
Increase Funding for SOCIAL Service Agencies	8	4	31	20	32.0 <sup>a</sup>

NOTE: <sup>a</sup>Virtual ties between opponents and supporters of policy changes.

the issue was resolved,<sup>12</sup> the citizen preference measures were simply the percentage of men and the percentage of women who supported policy change among those persons of the same sex who were aware of each issue and had an unambiguous preference regarding its outcome.

*Policymaker preferences.* The levels of policymaker support for policy change with regard to each of the 30 issue were obtained from interviews conducted in 1984 (after the issues had been resolved) with all city commissioners ( $n = 11$ ), county commissioners ( $n = 3$ ), school board members ( $n = 7$ ), and hospital board members ( $n = 7$ ) who resolved these issues and from interviews with central administrators and agency heads ( $n = 11$ ) involved in them. The specified preferences of those elected officials and administrators directly involved in each issue were used in calculating the percentage of men and the percentage of women policymakers who supported policy changes with regard to that issue.<sup>13</sup>

*Activist preferences.* Measures of activist support for policy changes were obtained from 203 completed telephone and personal interviews conducted with activists (after the issues had been resolved). Initially contacted were: (1) persons (other than policymakers) mentioned during the policymaker interviews, in newspaper accounts, and in minutes of meetings as being active on an issue; (2) leaders of all community groups that sometimes become involved in governmental issues; and (3) the 100 persons ranked as most influential in the community, as indicated by a modified reputational study of Lawrence (Bolland, 1983). Persons who claimed some involvement in any of the 30 issues were asked to specify their preferences regarding each issue in which they were involved and to indicate who they viewed as their main supporters and opponents on such issues.<sup>14</sup> Normally, persons cited by at least two other activists were also contacted and interviewed. The percentages of men and women activists who supported or opposed a policy change were derived by compiling by sex the interviewed activists according to their specified preferences and the other activists they cited according to their attributed preferences.<sup>15</sup>

*Net policymaker and activist participation.* To measure men's and women's

<sup>12</sup>For purposes of this analysis, an issue was "resolved" when a policymaking body reached a critical decision regarding it during the 1977 to 1984 time period.

<sup>13</sup>The specified preferences of officials were revealed through the interviews rather than by their formal votes. Occasionally, elected officials voted against their specified preferences in response to various community pressures. Policymakers having "mixed feelings" were deleted when calculating the measures of policymaker support for policy changes.

<sup>14</sup>Only 45 percent of the community influentials and 15 percent of the group leaders whom we contacted said they were directly involved in any of the 30 issues. Only 5 percent of those activists contacted refused to provide interviews.

<sup>15</sup>Persons whose preferences were not clearly identifiable as being on either the pro or con side of an issue were omitted from this compilation.

participation on each of the 30 issues, the compilations of men and women policy-makers and activists discussed above were utilized. Measures of unweighted net participation of men and women policymakers (NETPM) and activists (NETACT) were calculated for each issue by subtracting the number of opponents of policy change from the number of supporters of policy change for both men and women. Unlike the previous measures of preferences, which calculated percentages of persons supporting an issue and which are thus independent of the numbers of men and women involved, these measures of net participation reflect both the number of men and women involved in each issue and their preferences.

Because all participants are not equally involved in issues and because participants may represent different group constituencies, additional measures of net participation were also calculated by weighting the participation of men and women by the visibility of their involvement, their degree of advocacy, the resources they expended, their persuasive participation, their mobilization activities, and their involvement as representatives of various local groups. The measures of such weighted participation are discussed below.

*Visibility of involvement.* The citations of the supporters and opponents of policy change by policymakers and activists were used to derive measures of visibility of involvement on each issue by men and women policymakers and activists. Assuming that persons most involved in an issue were most cited by others, each actor's involvement was weighted by the number of times he or she was cited by others as involved on each policy issue. Those persons not cited by others were deleted from this analysis.<sup>16</sup>

*Policymaker advocacy.* During the policymaker interviews, officials were asked whether they viewed their own role in each issue as being (1) a relatively neutral referee, (2) a weak advocate, (3) a strong advocate, or (4) the principal initiator. These data were used to weight policymaker involvement by the degree of advocacy.

*Resources expended.* When interviewed activists indicated involvement on an issue, they were asked to estimate on five-point rating scales the amount of time they devoted to each issue and the amount of money they spent. An index of resources expended by an individual was derived by averaging these estimates of time and money spent, and the person's participation was weighted by this index.

*Persuasive participation.* Interviewed activists were asked to estimate on five-point rating scales the number of times they discussed each issue with other

<sup>16</sup>It is possible that this procedure underestimates women's involvement, relative to men's involvement, as men are more often attributed leadership positions than women (Duerst-Lahti, 1985, p. 10). However, there is no reason to believe that such measurement error is systematic across issues; thus such error should not bias our results.

citizens, contacted city administrators, contacted elected officials, and addressed public officials at hearings and commission meetings. An index of persuasive participation was then derived for each activist by averaging these estimates, and each activist's participation was then weighted by this index.

*Mobilization.* Interviewed activists were asked to indicate on five-point rating scales the extent to which they mobilized others into groups, circulated petitions, publicized issues in the media, and engaged in demonstrations and boycotts. An index of mobilization, indicating the extent to which each actor was involved in the "socialization of conflict" (Schattschneider, 1960, pp. 1-19), was attained by averaging these ratings for each person, and the person's participation was then weighted by this index.

*Group involvement.* Interviewed activists were also asked to indicate whether they participated in each issue as an individual or as a member of a group. When persons indicated a group involvement—as they did 44 percent of the time—they were asked to provide the name of the group and to estimate the size and stability (or permanency) of the group on five-point rating scales. The groups they named were ranked on a five-point scale in terms of their structural disadvantages or advantages in local politics.<sup>17</sup> The participation of persons involved in groups was then weighted by an index of group strength, which was attained by averaging estimates of group size, stability, and structural advantage.

### The Frequency and Independence of Gender Cleavages

#### *Issues with Gender Cleavages*

Table 2 lists the issues on which significant gender cleavages or gender differences were found between men and women policymakers, activists, or citizens. A *gender cleavage* occurs when the majority of men are on one side of an issue and the majority of women are on the other side of the issue. Strong cleavages occur when such differences in gender preferences are statistically signifi-

<sup>17</sup>Peterson (1981) provides the theoretical basis for these rankings. Groups pursuing allocation policies, such as neighborhood groups, were ranked at the neutral midpoint (3) of our scale. Groups pursuing developmental policies were ranked as advantaged (4) because they contribute to the economic interest of the city. The Chamber of Commerce was ranked higher (5) than other growth-oriented groups because of its leading role in pro-growth coalitions in local communities (Peterson, 1981, p. 133). Ad hoc groups which protested developmental policies were ranked as relatively disadvantaged (2) because satisfying their goals can reduce the economic gains sought through developmental policies. Groups pursuing redistributive policies were ranked as most disadvantaged (1) because satisfying their goals can have a negative effect on the local economy. These rankings are consistent with empirical assessments of the overall influence of various types of groups in American communities generally (Faye, Cigler, and Schumaker, 1986) and in Lawrence specifically (Schumaker, Bolland, and Feiock, 1986, p. 40).

**TABLE 2**  
**Gender Cleavages on Policy Issues**  
**(Percentage Who Support Policy Changes among**  
**Men and Women Policymakers, Activists, and Citizens)**

Issues Having Cleavages or Significant Differences	Policymakers		Activists		Citizens	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Fire City MANAGER	14	100* <sup>a</sup>	34	64** <sup>a</sup>		
CORNfield Mall Proposal			[47	8]**		
SIZEler Downtown Proposal			55	30*		
JVJ Downtown Mall Proposal			[36	0]**		
TOWNCENT Downtown Proposal			58	12*		
OREAD Neighborhood Development	57	0*	53	17**		
EAST Lawrence Development	80	0**	64	9**		
BLUFFS Development	86	0**	63	0**		
Develop RAIL Industrial Park	86	0**				
Authorize IRBs to Competing Firms	67	0*	[44	0]*		
Build PARKing Lot at 600 Mass.	86	0**				
CATHolic Center Expansion	100	0*	59	0**		
Enforce ENVIRonmental Code					[78	89]**
Finance STORMwater Study			[21	50]*	[56	71]**
Impose Tax on VIDEO Games					47	57*
Improve Airport TERMINAL	78	0*			[70	79]*
Authorize LIFELINE Gas Rates			29	62**		
Change MAYORal Selection Method	90	0**				
Regulate Billboards and SIGNS			29	60*		
Create BIRTHing Room			[50	89]*		
End TRIBES Program			0	67*		
CLOSE Schools with Low Enrollments					61	46**
Increase Funding for SOCIAL Service	20	100**				

NOTES: <sup>a</sup>Since all policymakers and most of the visible activists were included in this analysis, tests of significance based on random sampling assumptions are not strictly appropriate. They are reported as benchmarks of the strength of gender cleavages.

[ ] Indicates a gender difference, although a cleavage is absent.

\*S.L. is less than .10; \*\*S.L. is less than .05.

cant at the .05 level, and weak cleavages occur when such differences in gender preferences are statistically significant at the .10 level. A *gender difference* occurs when the preference of men and women are significantly different (at the .05 level), but the majority of men and women have the same preference.

The data in Table 2 indicate that gender cleavages (shown without brackets) or differences (shown with brackets) involving policymakers and/or activists occurred on 20 of the 30 issues. Such gender cleavages were particularly evident on issues involving economic growth, neighborhood protection, and social welfare. Economic development projects and policies (such as the various shopping mall proposals, the RAIL industrial park, and IRB authorizations) consistently received significantly more support from men than from women. Women were more supportive of neighborhood preservation (e.g., they tended to support extensive downzoning in the OREAD and EAST Lawrence neighborhoods, opposed the BLUFFS development and a new CATHolic Center which threatened existing neighborhoods, and have sought to contain STORMwater problems in neighborhoods by proposing more stringent drainage regulations on developers). Women were also more concerned about social welfare as seen by their higher levels of support for LIFELINE gas rates and for increased financial contributions from local governments to SOCIAL service agencies.

In contrast to these frequent gender cleavages among policymakers and activists, only five of the 30 issues exhibited gender cleavages or differences among citizens. Indeed, at the citizen level only one strong gender cleavage occurred when men were more supportive than women of a proposal to close some elementary schools with low enrollments.

Gender cleavages thus appear to be much more prevalent among *homo politicus*—those men and women policymakers and activists who influence, or seek to influence, policy choices—than among *homo civicus*—the vast majority of citizens for whom “political activity will always seem rather remote” (Dahl, 1961, p. 224). Especially in local politics, conflict is organized among *homo politicus*. As Peterson (1981, pp. 109–10) argues, “Political processes at the local level are limited” to policymakers, community elites, and a relatively small number of activists because “voters attend to political questions in such a slipshod and haphazard manner.”

The policy orientations of inactive men and women are significantly different, as men are generally more supportive than women of governmental promotion of economic growth, while women are generally more supportive than men of public welfare and neighborhood protection, but these gender differences are more pronounced among policymakers and activists than among citizens (Burns and Schumaker, 1987).<sup>18</sup> Moreover, activists are much more likely than inactive

<sup>18</sup>Because there are many more persons in our citizen samples than in our combined policymaker and activist samples, statistically significant differences are easier to achieve in the citizen sample. The finding of more statistically significant differences in the smaller samples involving policymakers

citizens to link general concerns about economic growth, public welfare, and neighborhood protection to specific issues where these concerns are at stake.<sup>19</sup> Thus, while gender differences regarding policy directions exist among citizens generally, citizens are not very attentive to concrete political issues embodying these concerns. It is thus left for women activists and policymakers to bring women's greater concern about neighborhood protection and public welfare to the policy process, just as it left for men activists and policymakers to bring men's greater concern for economic development to the policy process.

### *Gender versus Other Cleavages*

To understand further the importance of gender cleavages in local policy-making processes, the gender cleavages found here were examined in relationship to other kinds of cleavages that have been more prominently discussed in the community politics literature (e.g., class and racial conflicts). For this analysis, the preferences of inactive citizens were set aside, and the preferences of the participants (the policymakers and activists) who were involved in each issue were combined. The presence or absence of a gender cleavage or difference involving all participants on each issue was then determined on the basis of the percentages of men policymakers and activists and the percentages of women policymakers and activists favoring each policy change. Using similar procedures, other characteristics of policymakers and activists involved in each issue were also examined to determine the presence or absence of the following types of cleavages or differences: (1) socioeconomic status (lower vs. middle vs. upper status), (2) neighborhood (persons living in neighborhoods having lower vs. middle vs. higher property values), (3) race (whites vs. nonwhites), (4) age (those less than 30 years old vs. those 30 through 55 years old vs. those over 55 years old), (5) residency in the community (less than 5 years vs. 5 through 20 years vs. more than 20 years), (6) sector of employment (public vs. private), (7) town-gown status (whether or not persons were associated with the university), (8) self-defined ideological orientation (conservatives vs. liberals), and (9) self-defined partisan identification (Democrats vs. Republicans).

Table 3 suggests that, in Lawrence, gender conflict among activists and offi-

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and activists is due to there being much weaker gender difference among citizens. Even on the school closing issue, there was only a 15 percent difference between men and women in their policy preferences, as shown in Table 2.

<sup>19</sup> Among activists, for example, support for neighborhood protection in general was strongly related to opposition to development in the OREAD (Pearson's  $r = -.63$ ), in EAST Lawrence ( $r = -.76$ ), and to the CATHolic Center ( $r = -.64$ ). Among citizens, in contrast, support for neighborhood protection was more weakly related to opposition to development in the OREAD ( $r = -.11$ ), in EAST Lawrence ( $r = -.06$ ), and to the CATHolic Center ( $r = -.24$ ). See Schumaker (1988) for an extended analysis of how activists and citizens differ in their ability to link abstract principles to concrete policies.

TABLE 3

Various Bases of Community Conflict: The Frequency and Independence of Gender Cleavages Involving Policymakers and Activists, Based on 30 Issues

Cleavage Type	Number of Issues Having		
	Strong Cleavages	Weak Cleavages or Significant Differences	Association with Gender Cleavages (Kendall's Tau-C)
Gender	7	13	—
SES	5	5	.01
Neighborhood	11	8	.18
Race	0	2	.22
Age	7	4	.41**
Length of residence	6	0	.25*
Sector of employment	9	3	.34**
Town-Gown	4	0	.41**
Ideology	12	3	.22
Partisan identification	6	1	.39**

NOTE: \*S.L. is less than .10; \*\*S.L. is less than .05.

cials is as frequent as other types of cleavages.<sup>20</sup> Neighborhood and ideological conflict is often stronger than gender conflict, but weak gender cleavages or gender differences occur on almost half (13) of the 30 issues. Moreover, gender conflict appears to be more frequent overall than class (SES) and racial conflict.<sup>21</sup>

To some extent, gender cleavages overlap other community cleavages, as shown in the last column of Table 3.<sup>22</sup> For example, because women are more supportive than men of neighborhood protection and public welfare, and because support for neighborhood protection and public welfare is linked to a liberal ideological orientation (Burns and Schumaker, 1987), issues like the downzoning of the OREAD and EAST Lawrence neighborhoods contained both gender and

<sup>20</sup> Each issue having a gender cleavage or significant difference involving policymakers or activists also had a cleavage or significant difference involving *both* policymakers and activists. Since three issues had gender differences among citizens only, Table 3 reports 20 gender cleavages while Table 2 reports 23 gender cleavages.

<sup>21</sup> Class and racial cleavages are likely to be less pronounced in Lawrence than in many other American communities. Lawrence is predominately middle class. Blacks, native Americans, Spanish Americans, and Asian Americans comprise only 10 percent of its population.

<sup>22</sup> Ordinal measures of the extent to which various kinds of cleavages occurred on each issue were used. If a strong cleavage was present, a score of 2 was assigned. If a weak cleavage or a significant difference was present, a score of 1 was assigned. If no cleavage or significant difference was present, a score of 0 was assigned. Kendall's Tau-C indicates the strength of association between the scale of gender cleavages and the scales of other cleavages across the 30 issues.

ideological cleavages. However, because support for economic development is only weakly related to ideological orientations (Burns and Schumaker, 1987), economic development issues usually show gender cleavages, but not ideological cleavages, thus resulting in the absence of statistically significant overlap between gender and ideological cleavages across the 30 issues in the sample. In general, Table 3 shows that the presence of gender cleavages is only weakly related to the presence of other kinds of cleavages on issues.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, as suggested by our first hypothesis, gender cleavages involving policymakers and activists appear to be frequent occurrences on community issues, and such gender cleavages are quite independent of other cleavages.

### Gender and Policy Outcomes

Table 4 describes the extent to which policy decisions are congruent with and responsive to the preferences of men and women.<sup>24</sup>

#### *Preference-Policy Congruence*

On the top half of Table 4 each issue having a gender cleavage or difference is presented on the basis of whether men or women tended to be victorious, achieving policy decisions congruent with their predominant preferences. For issues involving either strong or weak cleavages, a victory by one sex means a loss for the opposite sex. For example, on the issue of whether or not to fire the city MANAGER, the majority of both men policymakers and men activists favored his retention while the women policymakers and the majority of women activists sought his replacement. Since the manager was retained, the policy result was consistent with men's preferences—involving a male victory—and was incongruent with female preferences—indicating a loss for women.

<sup>23</sup>Our concern is with cleavages as descriptive phenomena at the aggregate level, not with the independent causal effect of gender on policy preferences among individuals. When the other demographic and attitudinal variables considered in this section are employed along with gender as independent variables in multivariate regression models that seek to explain policy preferences on each issue, gender sometimes has little independent impact on policy preferences, even on those issues having gender cleavages. However, this does not mean that gender is theoretically or politically insignificant in these cases. In such cases gender is an important independent variable linked to policy preferences through various kinds of developmental sequences. For example, relative to men, women tend to have lower socioeconomic status, be more liberal, and have Democratic party identifications, and these variables may, in multivariate models, have stronger direct impacts than gender on policy preferences. Although the impact of gender on policy preferences is indirect in such cases, it is not spurious. As argued in the conclusion, bias against liberal attitudes regarding neighborhood protection and public welfare results in bias against women who tend to hold these attitudes.

<sup>24</sup>The concepts of congruence and responsiveness concern the extent to which these are significant positive relationships between preferences and policy, while the concepts of power or influence concern whether preferences *cause* policies (Nagel, 1975). In the next section, the question of whether differences in responsiveness to men and women are caused by gender differences in participation is examined.

TABLE 4  
Issues Classified by Type of Gender Conflict and  
Outcome for Predominant Men and Women Actors

	Involving Combined Policymakers and Activists			Cleavages and Differences In- volving Citizens
	Strong Cleavages	Weak Cleavages	Significant Differences	
Men victories and/or Women losses	MANAGER (P, A) TOWNCENT (A) OREAD (P, A) CATH (P, A) LIFELINE (A)	PARK (P) TERMINAL (P) MAYOR (P)	IRB (P, A) <sup>a</sup> STORM (A) <sup>b</sup> BIRTH (A) <sup>a</sup>	VIDEO (C) STORM (C) <sup>a</sup>
Women victories and/or Men losses	EAST (P, A)	SIZE (A) TRIBES (A)	CORN (A) <sup>a</sup> JVJ (A) <sup>a</sup> RAIL (P) <sup>c</sup>	ENVIR (C) <sup>a</sup> TERMINAL (C) <sup>a</sup> CLOSE (C)
Ties	BLUFFS (P, A)	SIGNS (A)	SOCIAL (P)	

<i>Winning percentages</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Policymakers (P)	77	23
Activists (A)	67	42
Policymakers and activists	65	31
Citizens (C)	50	60

<i>Responsiveness (Correla- tions between policy change and the prefer- ences of)</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Policymakers	.50**	-.04
Activists	.30*	.17
Policymakers and activists	.47**	-.01
Citizens	.16	.11

NOTES: <sup>a</sup>No decision for men activists.

<sup>b</sup>Victory for men activists; no decision for women activists.

<sup>c</sup>Loss for men policymakers and a victory for women policymakers. Also a loss for men policymakers and activists combined, but no decision for women policymakers and activists combined.

\*S.L. is less than .10; \*\*S.L. is less than .05.

For issues involving significant gender differences, policy decisions yield victories (or losses) for one sex, but neither a victory nor a loss for the opposite sex. For example, on the CORNfield mall proposal, there was a significant gender difference among activists: 47 percent of the men supported the proposal, but only 8 percent of the women did. Since men and women policymakers have both strongly opposed this project, the policy result has been a clear victory for women activists. But the classification of men is problematic. On the one hand, since the majority of men activists opposed the project, the outcome could be construed as a win for men, as policy has been consistent with dominant male preferences. On the other hand, since support for the project came almost entirely from men, the outcome could be construed as a loss for men. Thus, this issue is classified as a victory for women activists and as neither a victory nor a loss for men activists. Similarly, Lawrence City Commission decisions to provide Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs) to businesses competing with existing local firms represent a win for men policymakers who tended to support such bonds. The outcome represents a loss for women policymakers and activists, who opposed such bonds. However, men activists—who tended to oppose the bonds but did so less strongly than women—are credited with neither a victory nor a loss on the issue.

The results in the top portion of Table 4 suggest, then, that men activists and officials have been more victorious than women activists and officials on issues involving strong gender cleavages.<sup>25</sup> Women and men activists and officials have been about equally successful when weak gender cleavages or gender differences are involved. And women have been more successful than men on three of the five issues that involved gender cleavages or differences at the citizen level.

To summarize these data, the winning percentages of men and women policymakers, activists, and citizens are also provided in Table 4. For example, women citizens had a winning percentage of 60 percent based upon their victories on three issues involving gender differences among citizens (on ENVIR, TERMINAL, and CLOSE) and their losses on two such issues (VIDEO and STORM). Men citizens had a winning percentage of 50 percent; based on the previously discussed considerations, men citizens had one victory (on VIDEO) and one loss (on CLOSE).<sup>26</sup> However, the other percentages in Table 4 indicate more successful win-loss records for men policymakers (7-2) and men activists (6-3) than for women policymakers (2-7) and women activists (5-7).<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Three issues (BLUFFS, SIGNS, and SOCIAL) were resolved in ways in which proponents and opponents of change viewed themselves as almost equally successful. Such "ties" were, of course, deleted from this analysis of "wins and losses."

<sup>26</sup>The citizen surveys consistently revealed that women, relative to men, were significantly more interested in local government, more likely to vote in local elections, but less likely to be involved in specific issues. Such differences may help explain why gender bias is less evident at the citizen level than it is among activists.

<sup>27</sup>Male-dominated groups (such as the Chamber of Commerce) also were significantly more successful than female-dominated groups (such as the League of Women Voters) on these issues. It is

### *Responsiveness to Men's and Women's Preferences*

An additional method of assessing the extent to which the preferences of men and women are reflected in policy involves determining the levels of responsiveness to men and women (Schumaker and Getter, 1977). Such responsiveness is shown at the bottom of Table 4 by the zero-order correlations across the 30 issues between policy changes and men's and women's preferences at the citizen, activist, and policymaker levels. For policymakers, activists, and policymakers and activists grouped together, there are statistically significant relationships between preferences and outcomes. However, these relationships only hold true for men; the policy preferences of women activists and officials are unrelated to the policy decisions. For citizens, there are no statistically significant relationships between men's preferences and policy changes or between women's preferences and policy changes.

In summary, policy decisions are more congruent with and responsive to the preferences of men activists and officials than to those of women activists and officials. Except for the lack of gender bias at the citizen level, the second hypothesis that men's preferences are more reflected in policy than are women's preferences is supported—at least in Lawrence.

### **Gender, Political Participation, and Power**

#### *Gender Differences in the Effects of Net Participation*

Is gender bias against women policymakers and activists due to women's lesser involvement on local issues than that of men?<sup>28</sup> Table 1 shows that, with the single exception of the TRIBES school issue, more men than women were involved in each issue. Perhaps the greater responsiveness to men on these issues is simply due to the greater participation of men policymakers and activists than of women policymakers and activists, as considered by the third hypothesis.

To examine this hypothesis, the following simple regression model was analyzed, using the 30 issues as units of analysis, for both policymakers and activists:

$$PP = B_1M + B_2W + e$$

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also important to consider whether women were most successful on relatively controversial or relatively noncontroversial issues (see fn. 8). To address this question, the degree of controversy of each issue was estimated based on levels of citizen awareness and of activist involvement. The win-loss records for men and women were then recalculated after triple- and double-weighting highly and moderately controversial issues. Weighting issues by their degree of controversy did not significantly affect our estimates of the success of men and women actors.

<sup>28</sup>Citizens are ignored in this analysis because of the lack of gender bias at the citizen level in Lawrence and because citizens at large have no measurable participatory activity on policy issues.

where,

*PP* is the extent of public policy change;

*M* is the number of men proponents minus the number of men opponents;

*W* is the number of women proponents minus the number of women opponents.

In contrast to the zero-order correlation coefficients (reported in the previous section) that relate policy changes to the percentage of men and women who support such changes, this regression model relates policy changes to the net participation of men and women. This is an important difference because "percent support" is a measure that is independent of the number of men and women involved, while "net participation" is a function both of the number of persons who are involved and of their policy preferences.<sup>29</sup>

If  $B_1 = B_2$  (where  $B_1$  and  $B_2$  are standardized regression coefficients, or Beta-weights, estimating the independent effect on policy changes of increases in the net number of men and net number of women participants respectively), then policy changes are equally responsive to increases in the number of men and women participants who support and oppose policy changes; in this event, gender bias could be attributed to the lesser participation of women. If the Beta-weights for the effects of net male participation are greater than the Beta-weights for net female participation, then increases in men's participation would influence policy changes more than would increases in women's participation; in this event, gender bias could not be attributed to the lesser participation of women, as equal levels of net participation by men and women would not equally influence policy changes.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Although conceptually distinct, our measures of percent support and net participation are strongly correlated empirically across the 30 issues. Male policymaker preferences (percent support) and net male policymakers participation are very highly correlated ( $r = .97$ ). The weakest such correlation ( $r = .81$ ) is between female activist preferences and net female activist participation. Such high correlations result in multicollinearity and large standard errors for the regression coefficients when both percent support measures and net participation measures are included as independent variables in multiple regression models which predict policy changes. As a result, whether the unequal effects of men's and women's preference (i.e., percent support) disappear when controls for men's and women's net participation are introduced cannot be determined. The simpler models used in this study examine whether women's preferences and participation explain policy changes to the same degree as men's preferences and participation.

<sup>30</sup> Nagel (1975) provides a useful discussion about drawing inferences concerning the relative influence or power of various types of actors using the types of data and multivariate analysis procedures that are employed here. By using multiple regression, the impact of net male participation is controlled when estimating the impact of net female participation; thus, the lesser impact of women's participation could not be accounted for by the relatively greater participation of men. Standardized regression coefficients, rather than unstandardized regression coefficients, are reported because our concern is to compare the relative importance of male versus female inputs. Because our dependent

TABLE 5

Gender Bias among Policymakers and Activists: Multivariate Analyses Predicting Policy Changes ( $N = 30$ ) on the Basis of the Participation and Preferences of Men and Women

	Men	Women	$R^2$
Number of supportive policymakers less opposed policymakers (NETPM)	.51**	.00	.33
NETPM weighted by visibility of policymaker involvement	.27	-.14	.10
NETPM weighted by degree of policymaker advocacy	.46**	-.09	.23
Number of supportive activists less opposed activists (NETACT)	.33*	.02	.11
NETACT weighted by visibility of activist involvement	.43**	-.06	.16
NETACT weighted by resources expended by activists	.32*	-.13	.09
NETACT weighted by persuasive participation by activists	.39**	-.06	.14
NETACT weighted by mobilization by activists	.36**	-.02	.13
NETACT weighted by group involvement by activists	.35*	.04	.13

NOTE: Except for the  $R^2$  column, which lists coefficients of determination, table entries are standardized regression coefficients.

\*S.L. is less than .10; \*\*S.L. is less than .05.

The results of this regression analysis of policy change as affected by men and women policymakers are reported in the first row of Table 5. The net number of men policymakers (the number of men policymakers supporting policy change less the number of policymakers opposing change) is strongly and positively related to such change ( $B = .51$ ); however, when the participation of men is controlled, the net number of women policymakers is unrelated to policy change ( $B = .00$ ).

Row 4 of Table 5 shows the differential impact of the net number of men and women activists on issue outcomes. Again, the net number of men activists ap-

variable, policy change, lacks an intuitively interpretable interval scale, our concern is not to estimate the degree of change in policy outcomes resulting from increases in net participation (as would be provided by unstandardized regression coefficients).

pears to affect policy decisions ( $B = .33$ ), while the net number of women activists does not ( $B = .02$ ). Thus, policy changes seem to be sensitive to men's participation but not to women's participation. Gender bias appears to involve a lesser responsiveness to *both* women's preferences and women's participation than to men's preferences and men's participation. Thus, there remains an unexplained bias against women who become active on policy issues.

### *Weighted Net Participation*

Perhaps such bias is explained by other dimensions of participation than simply the number of men and women involved. Perhaps women participants are less deeply involved than men or perhaps women are involved as representatives of weaker groups than are men. For example, if women spend less time and make fewer contacts than men in pursuing their preferred outcomes or if women represent smaller, less stable, and less structurally-advantaged groups than men, policy changes could be expected to be more sensitive to the preferences and participation of men than of women. To examine such possibilities, the involvements of men and women policymakers and activists have been weighted by several measures of their levels of participation (see the Methodology section), and the resulting weighted measures of participation have been employed in our regression model.

Such analyses, also reported in Table 5, do not substantially alter the findings, as men's net participation continues to have a greater impact on policy changes than does women's net participation. When policymakers participation is weighted by the visibility of involvement (as measured by the frequency with which policymakers are cited by others as important actors on each issue) and by policymaker's own assessments of their degree of advocacy on each issue, men's net participation continues to predict policy decisions better than does women's net participation. Similarly, when activist participation is weighted by the visibility of activists' involvement and by the extent to which they expend the resources of time and money, engage in persuasive acts of participation, employ mobilization strategies on issues, and represent groups of unequal strength, men's net participation has more influence on policy than does women's net participation.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup>It is noteworthy that the weighted involvements of women policymakers and activists are negatively related to policy changes. This suggests that more in-depth participation by involved women is counterproductive, resulting in "negative influence" for women. Extreme caution should be used before reaching this conclusion, however. First, the magnitudes of the negative Beta-weights are small and statistically insignificant. Second, in analyses not reported here, we found that more in-depth involvement increased the influence of women proponents of policy change while decreasing the influence of women opponents of policy change. Third, there are no clear theoretical reasons why more in-depth involvement by women should be counterproductive, or why such participation should be less effective for opponents of policy change than for proponents of policy change. Clearly, additional research is needed on the effectiveness of more in-depth participation.

TABLE 6

Differences between Men and Women in Their Depth of Involvement on Policy Issues

	Men		Women		Sign. Level
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	
<i>Policymakers</i>					
Number of participants	7.0	1.5	2.3	1.0	—
Visibility	2.5	1.8	2.0	1.6	N.S.
Advocacy	2.2	.5	2.4	.8	N.S.
<i>Activists</i>					
Number of participants	25.9	14.3	7.8	4.5	—
Visibility	1.6	1.0	1.4	.7	N.S.
Index of resources expended	2.2	1.1	2.3	1.1	N.S.
Hours spent	87.0	161.0	84.1	157.0	N.S.
Dollars spent	33.13	84.6	39.49	91.9	N.S.
Index of persuasive participation	2.2	1.2	2.3	1.3	N.S.
Contacts with other citizens	2.3	1.1	2.5	.9	.06
Contacts with elected officials	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	N.S.
Contacts with administrators	.8	1.1	.8	1.2	N.S.
Times addressed commission	.3	.6	.4	.7	N.S.
Index of mobilization	.7	1.1	.9	1.3	N.S.
Times participated in group meetings	1.4	3.1	2.0	3.8	N.S.
Times circulated petitions	.2	.9	.4	1.5	N.S.
Times publicized issues in media	.5	.9	.5	.8	N.S.
Times engaged in demonstrations or boycotts	.01	.05	.05	.2	.00
Index of group strength	3.8	1.4	2.9	1.1	.00
Percentage of interviewed activists participating through groups	42.3	—	50.1	—	.09
Group advantage scale	3.2	1.6	1.8	.8	.00
Group size (no. of persons)	74.6	74.6	48.5	45.6	.03
Group stability (no. of years)	7.8	6.6	8.1	6.1	N.S.

The reason why the original (unweighted) findings are not substantially altered when participation is weighted by depth of involvement is simply because involved men and women do not differ substantially with regard to their degree of involvement. Table 6 shows that, while men policymakers and activists are slightly more visible than are women, women report approximately equal or

slightly greater levels of activity on other measures of depth of involvement.<sup>32</sup> With respect to engaging in demonstrations and boycotts, women are significantly more active than are men. These data can be interpreted to mean that, although fewer women participate on policy issues than do men, women participants are as involved in these issues once they decide to participate. Inequality in depth of participation does not seem to be a factor explaining gender bias (Randall, 1982, p. 66; Sapiro, 1983, p. 120).

The data at the bottom of Table 6 show that men are significantly more involved than women in relatively large and structurally advantaged groups, especially in business-oriented organizations like the Chamber of Commerce. This may explain part of the bias against women. However, men and women participate in groups of approximately equal permanency, and women may be more likely than men to participate through groups rather than as individuals. Thus, weighting the participation of men and women who are involved in groups by an index of group strength does not substantially reduce estimates of gender bias.

In short, the third hypothesis is sustained. Gender bias (a condition where men's preferences are more reflected in policy changes than are women's preferences) may be due in part to more men than women participating as policymakers and activists in community issues and to men being involved in groups that are larger and more effective than those in which women participate. But part of this gender bias also seems to be due to men's participation having a greater impact on policy changes than women's participation has. The results of the regression analyses suggest that the participation of more women, greater depth of involvement by women, and greater involvement in stronger groups by women does not significantly increase the impact of women on the resolution of community issues and thus does little to reduce gender bias in the distribution of political power.

### Conclusions

This analysis is not without its limitations. First, only gender bias in the policy-formulation stage of the policy process has been examined; additional research needs to be conducted concerning the possibility of unequal influence between women and men in the agenda-setting and policy-implementation stages of the policy process. Second, this research focuses on gender bias in one community. Because Lawrence appears to provide a setting conducive to women's effec-

<sup>32</sup>The scores for the indices of resources expended, persuasive participation, mobilization, and group strength reported in Table 6 are based on the five-point scales described in the Methodology section. The policymakers advocacy scores reflect the previously defined four-point scale. Other scores are interval measures. The number of participants and the visibility of those involved (i.e., numbers of citations) are based on actual counts. The scores of specific activist involvements (e.g., dollars spent, contacts with other citizens, group size and stability, etc.) are based on midpoint values of the intervals used in the five-point rating scales presented to activists during our interviews.

tive participation, it is likely that greater gender bias than that discovered in Lawrence is present in many other communities. If procedures such as those reported here were replicated for other communities, this conjecture could be tested and cross-community variations in gender bias could be analyzed to discover the contextual conditions that reduce gender bias. Third, this research focuses on issues where women have participated at lower levels than men. On only one of the 30 issues examined here (TRIBES) were there more women than men activists; on this issue, women were relatively successful. This suggests the possibility that bias against women's preferences and participation diminishes on issues where women participate in equal or greater numbers than men. Again, research where there is greater variance in the relative proportions of men and women activists and policymakers would permit examination of such possibilities.

Nevertheless, this analysis suggests the value of integrating the study of gender politics with the study of community power. The literature on gender contributes to an understanding of community power by suggesting that gender conflict and unequal influence of women vis-à-vis men are significant aspects of the distribution of power in local policymaking. The literature on community power contributes to an understanding of gender politics by showing that gender differences in preferences and participation have policy effects. Women have less political power than men—they get less of what they prefer in the policy formation stage of community politics—because the participation of women policymakers and activists has little impact on policy changes, at least in Lawrence.

The different theoretical perspectives in the women and politics literature provide useful interpretations for these findings. The socialization and structural-situational perspectives help to explain why there are fewer women than men who are active on local policy issues. Perhaps women—more than men—have been taught since childhood that good citizenship involves voting participation but not issue-specific participation, and perhaps the work experiences of women—more than men—shield them from involvement in decision making (Sapiro, 1983, pp. 106–08; Clark, 1984, p. 2; Soule and McGrath, 1977, p. 193). Nevertheless, our research suggests that another source of the lesser involvement of women than men may be the political process itself. If women tend to end up on the losing side when issues are resolved, they might well learn that their participation is ineffective; such lack of reinforcement from past political participation is likely to discourage future participation. In short, the low levels of women's issue-specific participation may be rooted in adult learning within the political process as well as in the learning about women's roles that occurs during childhood and in the work environment (Lynn and Flora, 1977; Sapiro, 1983).

The power elite perspective that women are subjected to direct discrimination also provides a plausible interpretation of the present results. Gender discrimination in the policy process occurs when policy decisions reflect the preferences of one sex more than those of the opposite sex *and* when such unequal responsiveness is unexplained by germane factors. In Lawrence during the pe-

riod of this study, the preferences of men activists and policymakers were more reflected in policy changes than were the preferences of women activists and policymakers. Such unequal responsiveness was not explained by the unequal participation of men and women, as men's participation has a greater impact on policy than does women's participation. Such findings provide a *prima facie* case for the existence of gender discrimination.<sup>33</sup> But what exactly is being discriminated against when gender bias occurs? Are women being discriminated against simply because they are women?

Proponents of another perspective posit that women are relatively powerless because of gender differences in policy preferences. Especially in local politics women tend to seek land use policies that restrict economic development and social service expenditures that compete with men's priorities to provide the physical infrastructure that facilitates growth. Thus, gender bias occurs because the priorities of many women are often at odds with the structural emphasis toward growth and the economic interests of cities observed by many urban analysts. In short, what Clarence Stone (1980) calls "systemic bias" toward growth may also result in gender bias. And what Peterson (1981, p. 183) sees as a structural bias of local political systems against redistributive issues also results in gender bias. As Stone argues, officeholders are more responsive to economic growth preferences than to neighborhood and social service concerns because of the revenue needs of local governments and the need to sustain those business-oriented organizations that contribute most strongly to the attainment of various community goals. Thus, the participation of men seems to effect policy changes because men tend to act on behalf of economic growth policies and through organizations whose commitment to growth has enhanced their structural advantages in local politics. The participation of women seems to have little impact on policy because women more often than men act on behalf of neighborhood preservation and social service policies and through organizations whose goals are viewed as less conducive to the interest of the city in promoting economic development. But understanding that such systematic bias *also involves* gender bias makes clear that economic growth policies are not the unitary interest of the city (Peterson, 1979), for such policies reflect the interests of men more than the interests of women.

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<sup>33</sup>Even if gender discrimination is the appropriate interpretation, our data do not imply that legal remedies are available, for there is no constitutional or legal basis for equal power between the sexes in the resolution of policy issues—at least if women's rights for an equal opportunity to exercise political influence are not abridged. While our research indicates the condition of unequal political power between men and women, it does not indicate or imply that women's political rights have been violated.

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