

PADDLE BALL AS POLITICS

GENDER AND THE ROLE OF SOCIABILITY IN THE 1960S UNITED STATES CONGRESS¹

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Respect the institution of Congress – its history and heritage. It is easier to change that which is right, than undo a change that is wrong (*Roll Call*, January 1979).²

The most popular activity in the [United States House] gym is a variation of paddle ball and the courts are usually full. Paddle ball, in fact, is almost sacrosanct here (Rep. Donald Riegle, 1972).³

Congress is built on tradition. Dedicated to preserving the current power and the future legacy of Congress, legislators consistently attempt to safeguard their branch's social, political, and cultural traditions. Yet these traditions are heavily gendered. Congress was built for and run according to the rules of white gentlemen leaders.⁴ The assumption that lawmakers would be men was in the centuries-old Capitol building as well as the new office and research facilities on the Hill.⁵ Congress was constantly made and remade through the repetition of be-

¹ The author would like to thank the New Political History seminar (University of Southern Denmark, spring 2013) participants for numerous helpful comments and suggestions. Two anonymous reviewers also helped sharpen the article. Research for this article was made possible by grants from the University of Virginia Institute of the Humanities, the Dirksen Congressional Center, the United States Capitol Historical Society, and the Schlesinger Library at Harvard University. Special thanks go to Katherine Scott in the Senate Historical Office, who ensured that I had access to *Roll Call* in the Senate Library.

² "Freshman Congressman's Creed", *Roll Call*, 25.1.1979, p. 4.

³ Don Riegle with Trevor Armbrister, *O Congress*, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1972, p. 260.

⁴ The founders of the American Republic and the United States Congress were in many ways different from congresspersons of the 1960s and 1970s, but the assumption of whiteness, gentlemanliness, and leadership quality remained. For information on early American congressional culture, see Joanne Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic*, New York: Yale University Press, 2002. While this paper will focus primarily on the shifting gendered demarcations of the U.S. Congress during the 1970s, gender and race were and are intertwined and integrated into the norms, beliefs, routines, and self-definitions of the people who constituted the social fabric of the 1970s congressional work world.

⁵ As female congressional workers still like to comment, this fact was and is particularly evident in the small number and problematic location of women's bathrooms. For information on bathrooms and other special restrictions, see "Up in Arms," *Washington Post*, 18.2.1963.

haviors, traditions, and systematized rhetoric. A multitude of spatial restrictions, discursive slights and everyday difficulties signaled to women that they were not a natural element within congressional life.⁶ In the 1970s, the women's movement and the arrival of male congressional reformers would provide the tools necessary for congresswomen to challenge these social norms and gendered hierarchies. But through the 1960s, this masculine sociability, grounded in tradition, allowed men in Congress to retain power over what they perceived as their U.S. Congress and their legislative process.

Exploring how male comity was constructed and contested in the 1960s Congress is not an end in itself. As political scientist Richard Fenno noted in his study of 1960s House committee work, congresspersons had three goals upon arrival in the national legislature: attaining reelection, policy production, and gaining influence within the House or Senate.⁷ These were interconnected goals; the success of passing policy, including policy that directly benefitted a legislator's constituency and thus improved chances of reelection, hinged on that legislator's reputation and power within Congress.⁸ The "institutional mobility" of congresspersons – acquiring seats on the more powerful committees and moving up in the House or Senate leadership – was the basis of congressional stature.⁹ Evidence suggests, however, that such stature was not available to or was not as eas-

See also *Roll Call*, 11.1.1993, Senate Historical Library, United States Senate, Washington, D.C.; Irwin Gertzog, *Congressional Women: Their Recruitment, Integration, and Behavior*, 2nd ed., Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995, p. 7; Lois Romano, "The Gender Trap: Breaking into the Congressional Cloakroom," *Washington Post*, 6.3.1990. This complaint was common and extended to women working in business, see Betty Lehan Harragan, *Games Mother Never Taught You: Corporate Gamesmanship for Women*, New York: Warner Books 1977, p. 279-280.

- ⁶ Here, I draw on political scientist Jane Mansbridge's understanding of discursive identity. While Mansbridge uses this term to describe activist communities, I believe that it is equally applicable to those who identify with an empowered community. Congress – via its legislators and staff – demands a certain kind of devotion from its employees. Many identified Congress as a kind of second home from the 1940s through the Reagan Revolution in the 1980s, see Jane Mansbridge, "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women: A Contingent 'Yes,'" *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 61, no. 3, Aug 1999, p. 628-667.
- ⁷ Richard Fenno, *Congressmen in Committees*, Boston: Little & Brown, 1973. An overview and extended study of Fenno's work and that of his students is Morris Fiorina and David Rohde, *Home Style and Washington Work: Studies of Congressional Politics*, Chicago: University of Michigan Press, 1989.
- ⁸ The links between institutional power and policy-making have long interested scholars. For a good example, see Walter Oleszek, *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process*, Washington D.C., Congressional Quarterly Press, 2001. For an article following congressional careers through their entirety, see John R. Hibbing, "Contours of the Modern Congressional Career," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 85, no. 2, Jun 1991, p. 405-428.
- ⁹ Michael S. Rocca, Gabriel R. Sanchez, and Jason L. Morin, "The Institutional Mobility of Minority Members of Congress," *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 4, Dec 2011, p. 898.

ily attained by women or persons of color.¹⁰ When scholars inquire “Are women transforming Congress?” they are asking a question that pertains not just to a legislative agenda, but to an entire social and cultural world within which that legislative process operates.¹¹

The assumption that legislators were male was concretized in language. Writers assumed a “he” when speaking or writing about legislators, while their secretaries were assumed to be “she”. U.S. House Clerk and former House legislator, W. Pat Jennings asserted that “the opportunity of serving here [in Congress] is among the greatest an individual might have during his lifetime”. Given that Jennings was writing to Rep. Patsy Mink, his assumption of this dedicated individual’s maleness is striking.¹² As late as 1967, Rep. Frances Bolton (R-OH) repeatedly asserted that “congresswoman” was not actually a word: “[w]e’ve had congressmen here for many generations and we haven’t ever had congresswomen. You’re a woman congressman.”¹³ The masculinity of Congress meant that women politicians had a lot of trouble figuring out where they fit in. Only in the 1970s would

¹⁰ Multiple studies have investigated the formal and informal barriers that women face in workplace advancement, whether in government, the federal bureaucracy, or within private corporations. The first study to point to the coincidence of formal and informal barriers to women’s advancement was Rosabeth Moss Kantor, see Rosabeth Moss Kantor, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, New York: Basic Books, 1977. These studies generally focus on either specific bans on women’s participation or the ways in which women’s “learned behavior” discourages them from pursuing jobs and power with the same single-mindedness as a man. For examples, see Sue Thomas, *How Women Legislate*, London: Oxford University Press 1994; Mary Guy, “Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Backward: The Status of Women’s Integration into Public Management”, *Public Administration Review*, vol. 53, no. 3, 1993, p. 285-292; Katherine C. Naff, “Through the Glass Ceiling: Prospects of the Advancement of Women in the Federal Government”, *Public Administration Review*, vol. 54, no. 6, 1994, p. 507-514; Katherine C. Naff, “Subjective vs. Objective Discrimination in Government: Adding to the Picture of Barriers to the Advancement of Women”, *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 48, no. 3, Sep 1995, p. 535-557. There is also a growing literature on gender and theories of organizations, see Mike Savage & Anne Witz, “The Gender of Organizations”, in: Mike Savage and Anne Witz (eds.), *Gender and Bureaucracy*, New York: Blackwell Publishers/The Sociological Review, 1993; Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelly (ed.), *Gender, Power, Leadership, and Governance*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

¹¹ A small but growing number of books have addressed this question, see Cindy Simon Rosenthal (ed.), *Women Transforming Congress*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 2002; Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelly, *Gender, Power, Leadership, and Governance*, Chicago: University of Michigan Press, 1995; Susan Carroll (ed.), *Women and American Politics: New Questions, New Directions*, London: Oxford University Press, 2003.

¹² Letter from W. Pat Jennings to Patsy Mink (5 Jan 1967) in Folder 7, Box 99, Patsy Mink Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter referred to as Patsy Mink Papers).

¹³ Peggy Lamson, *Few Are Chosen: American Women in Political Life Today*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company 1968, p. 33. Notes from the original interviews in the Peggy Lamson Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard College, Cambridge, MA (hereafter referred to as Peggy Lamson Papers).

women like Rep. Bella Abzug (D-NY) begin to challenge these rhetorical norms.¹⁴ By apparent default, partisan debate, legislating, and running for office were male activities. Though some women did engage in politics, they were labeled by men and often by themselves as exceptions, each of whom continually needed to explain how they would balance their identities as politicians with their identities as women.¹⁵

Through the 1960s, legislators assumed that any feminine behavior or advocacy for women compromised one's dedication to one's constituency, as well as the United States as a whole. The only independently-elected woman in the Senate during the majority of her tenure, Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME) responded to a particularly acute need to fit in in order to remain socially accepted and legislatively effective. Chase Smith argued that she could actually separate sex from her legislative career: "I accept my responsibilities, do my homework and carry myself as a member of the Senate – never as a woman member of the Senate. I'm always happy to be recognized as a woman – and a lady, but I do not let it enter into my official affairs".¹⁶ Through the 1960s, a number of men would continue to decry the "unfortunate tendency" women had of identifying themselves as "women" and becoming closely tied to "so-called women's issues." As one congressman asserted, "[y]ou don't see men defining themselves as men. And this permits us to focus on other, more important, things".¹⁷ In defining womanhood as diametrically opposed to wheeling and dealing politics, men reestablished their control over "a number of important policy arenas".

The sense that any hint of focus on women compromised legislative objectivity was enshrined in the seemingly gender-neutral congressional veneration of "public trust" as absolute dedication to one's constituency. While a longstanding policy, both the House and the Senate codified "public trust" as the official policy of the Senate and "the ideal concept of public office" in 1968, in response to a series of congressional financial scandals.¹⁸ As the House stated, "public trust" was a governing philosophy based upon the "profound political reality that the repre-

¹⁴ Bella Abzug, quoted in Mary McGrory, "The Capitol Letter: Bella Sandpapers the House into Shape", *The New York Post*, 14.4.1976, box 1032, Bella Abzug Papers, Columbia University Special Collections and Archives, Columbia University, New York City, NY.

¹⁵ Maurine Neuberger noted this in her introduction to Peggy Lamson's book. See Maurine Neuberger's forward in *ibid* p. xii.

¹⁶ Margaret Chase Smith, interview with Peggy Lamson, folder MC 183-9, box 1, Peggy Lamson Papers.

¹⁷ Gertzog, *Congressional Women*, p. 63-64.

¹⁸ Sponsored by Sen. John Stennis, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Standards and Conduct, S. Res. 266, declared that the power of a national legislator "holds this power in trust to be used only for their benefit and never for the benefit of himself or of a few". Such a resolution was deemed necessary in the wake of the Bobby Baker scandal. S. Res 266, 90th Congress, 2nd Session in folder 8, box 101, Patsy Mink Papers.

sentative in Congress is the extended voice of the constituent.”¹⁹ Yet the average constituent was assumed to be a male breadwinner. This assumption resulted in the nearly complete absence of policymaking that focused specifically on women during the 1960s.²⁰ The ERA – identified as the longest lasting and most central women’s issue through the twentieth century – remained a non-issue for most of the century. Both Democrats and Republicans touted their inclusion of the ERA in their platforms, then neither party found the ERA important enough to pursue. Instead, politicians dealt with women through family-oriented policy which assumed a male head of household.²¹ Maintaining the public trust apparently required a focus on male constituents.

The assumed maleness of congressional culture and policymaking content required enforcement. Men were penalized whenever they stepped outside the bounds of traditional masculinity. Alternative clothing, behavior that deviated from congressional norms, and attention to feminine legislative areas blurred the distinctions between the sexes. During the 1960s, an influx of younger, antiwar liberals into the House and Senate chambers brought with them a wide variety of new notions about acceptable masculinity.²² Criticizing May Day demonstrators in the District, Rep. Wayne Hays (D-OH) took to the House floor to criticize their congressional allies thusly: “There is a picture of Mr. Riegle (R-MI) here and also one of Gloria Steinem, and I’m glad they have them labeled because otherwise I could not tell one from the other, from the hair”.²³ Like Hays, many legislators perceived a direct connection between peace politics and hair length. Rep. Philip Burton (D-CA) responded to criticisms of his new beard, arguing that “I have personally found no evidence that hair growth diminishes job efficiency in this institution”.²⁴

¹⁹ Democratic Study Group, “Democratic Study Group Fact Sheet 19 – Ethics” (29 Mar 1968), 2 in folder 8, box 101, Patsy Mink Papers.

²⁰ The two exceptions were the Equal Pay Act and the inclusion of sex in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

²¹ Alice Kessler-Harris explores the contours of and reasons for policymakers’ institutionalization of the normative definition of “family” as a heterosexual marital unit with a male breadwinner and a female homemaker within Social Security legislation. See Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, London: Oxford University Press 2003.

²² For more information on the “young turks” targeting old establishment legislative politics, see Julian Zelizer, *Taxing America: Wilbur Mills, Congress, and the State, 1945-1975*, London: Cambridge University Press 1999, p. 349-360. Zelizer examines how these reform efforts specifically targeted the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, run by Rep. Wilbur Mills.

²³ Wayne Hays, quoted in Riegle with Armbrister, *O Congress*, p. 23.

²⁴ Philip Burton, quoted in Irma Moore, “Senate Rule Is Hair-Raising,” *Washington Post*, 8.9.1971, “Russell SOB – Newspaper & Magazine Articles, 1905-1972” folder, Architect of the Capital Files, Office of the Architect of the Capitol, Washington, D.C. (hereafter referred to as Architect of the Capitol Files).

The 1960s conversations about accommodating familial responsibilities of congresspersons demonstrate that good legislators would structure their personal lives around their work lives, and not vice versa. In 1967, seventy-six representatives signed a protest letter asking Speaker John McCormack (D-MA) to restructure the congressional yearly schedule to facilitate family time in the summer.²⁵ A representative since 1927, McCormack remained childless through the over forty years he spent in the House, and he notoriously took enormous pride in his long hours and absolute dedication to the institution of Congress. He had long considered a mandated August vacation to be an evasion of congressional duties, a subversion of public trust.²⁶ Thus, “Family Men in Congress (FMIC)” organizer Rep. John Wydler (R-NY) defensively noted that his requests were not motivated by a “desire to shun work”.²⁷ Wydler and FMIC were immediately placed on the defensive when arguing for family-oriented decision-making in Congress.²⁸ Similarly, most members maintained a belief that bringing your children to work could not be considered professional.²⁹ When staffer Judith Nies’ went with a group of women to ask Rep. Wilbur Mills (D-AR) about opening a child care facility for female staffers, she recalls that “we were laughed out of his office”.³⁰

Congressmen’s reticence about bringing children to Congress was connected to their belief that the Hill was a separate space for serious male politicking. Legislators often referred to the space as a boys’ club or a men’s locker room. The introduction of women into this space was an enormous threat to traditional politics. Women shut down the male conversation that occurred in places like the House and Senate cloakrooms, which were acknowledged as some of the most impor-

²⁵ Assembled names list in folder 6, box 98, Patsy Mink Papers.

²⁶ McCormack was second only to the previous Speaker Sam Rayburn in years served in Congress. His lengthy dedication to the institution of Congress was cited continually after his death in 1970, see 116 *Congressional Record* 26.5.1970, p. 17021-17041.

²⁷ Dear Colleague letter from John Wydler (17 Jul 1967) in folder 6, box 98, Patsy Mink Papers.

²⁸ It was not until the 1970 that the House successfully bent its schedule to accommodate the school calendar. However, most Congresses after 1970 used an extension resolution to subvert the regular August recess, see Shira Pollak, “The Roots of August Recess,” *The Hill* 5.8.2010: <http://thehill.com/capital-living/cover-stories/112741-the-roots-of-august-recess> (1.7.2013).

²⁹ Patricia Schroeder, *24 Years of House Work ... And the Place Is Still a Mess: My Life in Politics*, Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing 1998, p. 142.

³⁰ Judith Nies, *The Girl I Left Behind: A Narrative History of the Sixties*, New York: Harper, 2008, p. 290. Rep. Frank Thompson and Sen. Charles Mathias pursued Hill daycare bills in 1978 and 1979, see H. Con. Res. 747 (12 Oct 1978) and S. Con. Res. 102 (15 Aug 1978) in “Child Care” folder, Architect of the Capitol Files. Four years later, led by Sen. Charles Mathias, the Senate successfully established a day care center. The Senate debate on the bill can be found in *Congressional Record* 14.11.1983, S16080-S16083. The House finally succeeded in establishing its child care facility in 1987. Martin Frazier, “House Center Will Soon Offer Part-Time Child Care”, *Roll Call* 13.12.1987, “Child Care” folder, Architect of the Capitol Files.

tant spaces of male socializing and legislative deal-making.³¹ Former page Donald Anderson recalls the “shocked silence” of men who witnessed an exhausted Rep. Helen Meyner (D-NJ) lie down to take a nap on one of the couches that they had used to similar ends for decades.³² Though this might seem a strange reaction to a fairly innocuous action, congresspersons generally used the House and Senate cloakrooms to drink, tell off-color stories and jokes, and generally relax and bond.³³ The presence of women disrupted all of these practices. As Donald Anderson described, “The handful of women Members of the House never sat in the back. They would come in occasionally for a refreshment at the snack bar but never linger, because it was like going into the men’s locker room”.³⁴

Men sexualized areas of Congress by removing their clothing, in order to increase camaraderie and simultaneously make social spaces unfriendly to women. When three congresswomen staged a protest against their exclusion from the “members-only” gym, the gym director protested that “[t]he men come out of there [the work-out rooms] in various states of dress to make telephone calls and things. We really aren’t set up here for women”.³⁵ Both the congressional pool and the balconies off the House and Senate floors were areas where women could not tread, for fear of seeing their colleagues partially or completely nude.³⁶ As former Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-CO) recalls: “The first time I wandered out there for some fresh air during a debate, I could hear a lot of *harrumphing* behind me.

³¹ For an architectural historian’s argument for the interaction between political culture and the architecture of legislative spaces, see Charles T. Goodsell, “The Architecture of Parliaments: Legislative Houses and Political Culture”, *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 18, no. 3, July 1988, p. 287-302. Goodsell does not address gender in his article.

³² “Donnald K Anderson Home”, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, <http://oralhistory.clerk.house.gov/interviewee.html?name=anderson-donn> (10.10.2010), p. 22-23.

³³ The congruence between male socializing and politicking in the cloakrooms is most vividly described in Robert A. Caro, *Master of the Senate: The Years of Lyndon Johnson*, New York: Vintage Books, 2002. See also Riegle & Armbrister, *O Congress*, p. 281. This reliance on joking as a linguistic method of inclusion and exclusion is explored in more theoretical ways by linguist Cornelia Ilie, see *The Use of English in Institutional and Business Settings: An Intercultural Perspective*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2007, and Cornelia Ilie, *European Parliaments under Scrutiny*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2010.

³⁴ “Donnald K Anderson Home”, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, <http://oralhistory.clerk.house.gov/interviewee.html?name=anderson-donn> (10.10.2010), p. 22-23.

³⁵ “Gym-Dandy Congress Gals”, *Daily News* 7.2.1967, p. 3; “3 Find Gym in House Only for Him, Not Her”, *New York Times* 7.2.1967. Both located in folder 5, box 694, Patsy Mink Papers.

³⁶ *Ibid*; Riegle & Armbrister, *O Congress*, p. 190; Lois Romano, “On the Hill, the Gender Trap”, *Washington Post* 6.3.1990, “H-235 – Lindy Boggs Suite” folder, Architect of the Capitol Files; “Distaff Side’s Bid Ripples House Pool”, *Washington Post* 11.2.1967, p. D28 and “Skinny Dippers’ Win in Rayburn Pool”, *Roll Call* 16.2.1967, p. 1; Karlyn Barker, “Many Federal Buildings Have Gymnasiums”, *Washington Post* (6.4.1972); Isabelle Shelton, “The House Swimming Pool Is Being Dechauvinized”, *Washington Star* 9.3.1975, p. E1 in: “Rayburn HOB – Gymnasium” folder, Architect of the Capitol Files.

It seems that the congressmen liked to pull off their trousers and sunbathe on the chaise loungers. They felt 'letting' women on the House floor was enough; we shouldn't also have access to their tanning clinic".³⁷

Both formal and informal restrictions affected congresswomen's ability to network with their colleagues, which in turn affected their ability to advocate for policy. The gym was one place where House and Senate members constructed intimate relationships with one another, eroded potential distrust, and established the basis for cooperation and bipartisan coalition-building.³⁸ The trust-building in which legislators engaged contributed to the exclusionary nature of both House and Senate gyms. Not just anyone could join the "gym group," which one GOP member noted was especially helpful for moving private bills.³⁹ As another member told former staffer and political scientist Charles Clapp:

The gymnasium group is about the most influential one in the House. ... You can accomplish a lot on an informal, casual basis. You can discuss informally things you don't want to call a man about. One important value of the gym is that it crosses party lines. You have an opportunity to get to know better the guys in the other party.⁴⁰

Close male relationships had both social and legislative functions, and the seeds for these relationships were often planted in places like the gym.

The centrality of masculine sociability extended to political functions where legislative and party business was discussed, a situation that created often insurmountable barriers to women's participation in congressional leadership. As Rep. Edith Green (D-OR) angrily observed in 1972, "[i]t has never even been *suggested* that a female might be capable of holding leadership," noting that both House Speakers Sam Rayburn (D-TX) and John McCormack ran meetings that involved copious amounts of alcohol, swearing, and card-playing. In 1971, Rep. and Democratic Caucus Western Division chair Rep. Wayne Aspinall (D-CO) asked Green – then a whip for the Democratic Caucus – to take his place for a Democratic Caucus Steering Committee meeting that he could not attend. Offended that a woman would infiltrate this traditionally male decision-making province, Caucus chair Rep. Ray Madden (D-IN) threatened to cancel the meeting if Green insisted on at-

³⁷ Patricia Schroeder, *24 Years of House Work ... And the Place Is Still a Mess: My Life in Politics*, Kansas City, KS: McMeel Publishing, 1998, p. 32. Schroeder also recounts this fact in Lois Romano, "On the Hill, the Gender Trap", *Washington Post* 6.3.1990, "H-235 – Lindy Boggs Suite" folder, Architect of the Capitol Files.

³⁸ The few articles on paddleball in *Roll Call* indicated the bipartisan nature of play. See Karen Feld, "Around the Hill: Fractured Fascell", *Roll Call* 25.2.1971, "Rayburn HOB – Gymnasium" folder, Architect of the Capitol Files. For a recommendation that new members join the gym for networking purposes, see Charles Clapp, *The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution 1963 p. 14.

³⁹ Clapp, *The Congressman*, p. 37.

⁴⁰ Clapp, *The Congressman*, p. 40.

tending.⁴¹ The assumption was that the flow of male conversation would be interrupted by the mere presence of a woman.

These exclusions and the culture fostered within male-only spaces facilitated male political mentorship of other men.⁴² As former Washington correspondent Meg Greenfield noted, newer members encountered “if not exactly hazing at least some initiation rites and put-downs by the big kids”.⁴³ Indoctrination processes produced a group culture where, as one congressman noted, “[f]riendships bind men together in a way that women do not experience. ... The language that we use, the drinking we do, make it very difficult for women to enter this world”.⁴⁴ Rep. John Anderson (R-IL) thanked Rep. Charlie Halleck (R-IN) for “fathering” him early in his career upon Halleck’s retirement.⁴⁵ Camaraderie sat at the base of the average congressman’s ability to pursue policy initiatives, especially if they were in the early stages of their congressional career. Meanwhile, women entered Congress as outsiders and had to work much harder to infiltrate male spaces and cultivate open friendships with men who might help them within the congressional workplace. As a result, women could not rely on friendships or merely manly respect as a tool of what political scientist Gregory Wawro refers to as “legislative entrepreneurship”.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Claudia Dreifus, “Women in Politics: An Interview with Edith Green”, *Social Policy*, Jan/Feb 1972, p. 18. This lack of a seat at the more powerful tables continued through the 1980s. Rep. Marcy Kaptur recounts a similar story where she was initially excluded from White House congressional meetings, demanded inclusion, and was seated not at the table but along the rim of the room. She was only given a seat at the table when, enraged, she walked out in the middle of a meeting. See Lois Romano, “On the Hill, the Gender Trap”, *Washington Post* 6.3.1990, “H-235 – Lindy Boggs Suite” folder, Architect of the Capitol Files.

⁴² Numerous scholars have found mentorship to be important, within a variety of legislative environments as well as federal government agencies. Meanwhile, women often had experiences like Frances Bolton, who recalls that she “plodded along” as a “lone wolf”, see Frances Bolton, interview with Peggy Lamson 25.4.1967, Peggy Lamson Papers. For other congresswomen’s accounts of social isolation, see Shirley Chisholm’s account of her experiences in the New York Assembly in *Unbought and Unbossed*, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1970, p. 63. Bella Abzug recounts her own and Rep. Ella Grasso’s loneliness in Bella Abzug, *Bella! Mrs. Abzug Goes to Washington*, New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972, p. 66.

⁴³ Meg Greenfield, *Washington*, New York: Public Affairs 2001, p. 26.

⁴⁴ Gertzog, *Congressional Women*, p. 63. Gertzog conducted his interviews from 1977-1981, see pages xii-xiii. Gertzog noted that this “gym fellowship” persisted into the 1990s. One female congressional employee noted that “[t]hey had in common the all-male environment, the locker-room language and banter, and the opportunity to exchange ideas of mutual interest in an atmosphere embodying the physical activities that they saw as natural extensions of their male identities”, see pages 90-91.

⁴⁵ John Anderson, 114 *Congressional Record* 18.9.1968, p. 27370.

⁴⁶ Gregory Wawro, *Legislative Entrepreneurship in the U.S. House of Representatives*, University of Michigan Press 2000, p. 4. Wawro deals with a number of entrepreneurship tools, including co-sponsorship with an eye towards coalition-building, grouping issues to attract a majority coalition, and expanding the number of titles in a bill.

These modes of behavior did not exist solely to make women feel uncomfortable or deprive them of equal policy-making opportunities. Though the presence of women heightened some of the more overt displays of masculinity, politicking was ultimately a conversation between men, a weighing of capabilities based in part on whether a man could be a real friend. Congressmen gave numerous tributes to retiring legislators, commending them on their friendliness. Otherwise little-known congressmen like Rep. Paul Schenck (R-OH), were praised as a “great ... storyteller, [who] not only edified his colleagues on the floor with his anecdotes, but especially livened up the Republican cloakroom”.⁴⁷ And other men like Charles Halleck were not simply memorialized as “wise” and “a living institution,” but “a team player”.⁴⁸ Congressmen viewed supporting one another as personally and professionally important. Whether cloaked in gruffness, raunchy stories, or genial behavior, collegiality was an integral part of being a “man’s man”.⁴⁹ And only a man’s man could successfully ingratiate himself with his fellow congressmen, certainly a prerequisite of climbing the congressional power ladder.

Congresswomen mounted a few small protests against these exclusionary practices in the 1960s, centered on spatial exclusions rather than behavioral norms that privileged men. In 1967, Reps. Patsy Mink (D-HI), Charlotte Reid (R-IL), and Catherine May (R-WA) attempted to integrate the “members only” gym, since they too wanted to join the calisthenics class ostensibly offered to all members of Congress.⁵⁰ The director attempted to get the congresswomen to cover their ears so that he could announce their presence to the male gym contingent, to which Rep. May replied, “[t]he language won’t bother us”.⁵¹ As usual, both impolite language and nudity worked to reinforce gendered congressional norms and exclude women from male-coded spaces where off-the-record legislative work might be accomplished.

Women needed to be careful, since anyone who engaged in activism was labelled a “show horse” rather than a serious politician by fellow legislators.⁵² Rep.

⁴⁷ “Extensions of Remarks,” 115 *Congressional Record*, 24.1.1969, p. 1809.

⁴⁸ See remarks made by Reps. John Rhodes, Burt Talcott, and Samuel Stratton, 114 *Congressional Record*, 18.9.1968, p. 27367, 27370.

⁴⁹ This is the term frequently used to describe retiring male members, especially those who were especially powerful within the House or Senate. For one example, see former House doorkeeper William “Fishbait” Miller’s recollections of Sam Rayburn in Miller and Frances Spatz Leighton, *Fishbait: The Memoirs of the Congressional Doorkeeper*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1977, p. 7.

⁵⁰ “Gym-Dandy Congress Gals”, *Daily News* 7.2.1967, p. 3; “3 Find Gym in House Only for Him, Not Her”, *New York Times* 7.2.1967. Both located in folder 5, box 694, Patsy Mink Papers.

⁵¹ “Patsy, 2 Colleagues Call for Equal Gym Rights”, unidentified newspaper 7.2.1967 in folder 5, box 694, Patsy Mink Papers.

⁵² For an explanation of the difference between “work horse” and “show horse” approaches, see Donald R. Matthews, “The Folkways of the United States Senate: Conformity to Group Norms and Legislative Effectiveness,” *American Political Science Review*, 53, Dec 1959, p. 1064-1089. The categories have been reiterated in Charles Clapp, *The Congressman: His*

Adam Clayton Powell (D-NY) was most famous for these tactics. Powell spent a great deal of energy on challenging local segregation and daily racialized slights. He effectively desegregated the House Press Gallery and repeatedly brought black constituents and staffers to the House Restaurant. He followed segregationist Rep. John Rankin (D-MS) around the floor of the House because Rankin disliked sitting next to him.⁵³ And ignoring loud protests from fellow legislators, Powell used his congressional offices for a closed-door planning session with Black Power in 1966.⁵⁴ This activism contributed to in a declining reputation within Congress. Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-CA) noted that “[t]he loudmouths are well known, but they’re not very effective”.⁵⁵ Legislators sacrificed their reputations if they wanted resist discriminatory workplace practices.

Thus, these initial challenges to gender-based barriers were tentative. After arguing with the director over their rights, Mink, Reid, and May agreed to delay their “sweat-in” or “exercise-in”, instead demanding that women be given better swimming hours in the congressional pool.⁵⁶ When the Capitol’s East Front was extended in 1961, Speaker Sam Rayburn set aside a small room for the congresswomen.⁵⁷ Before the advent of the Congressional Congresswomen’s Caucus in 1977, female legislators constructed an all-female space in which to relax, bond,

Work as He Sees It, Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1964, p. 22-23; James L. Payne, “Show Horses and Work Horses in the United States House of Representatives,” *Polity*, 12, Spring 1980, p. 428-456. I would argue that the distinction between a “work horse” and a “show horse” is influenced by race, class, and sexuality, since protesting against local discrimination quite frequently requires a typically “show horse” set of tactics, placing Hill minorities of any stripe in a Catch-22 where they must choose between “work horse” acquiescence to daily slights and greater legislative effectiveness or “show horse” tactics, which can be effective in easing daily discrimination for all minorities while decreasing the legislative effectiveness of the show horses themselves.

⁵³ A good overview of Powell’s role in Congress can be found in “Crafting an Institutional Identity” in the “Black Americans in Congress” database: <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Historical-Essays/Keeping-the-Faith/Crafting-Institutional-Identity/> (27.5.2013).

⁵⁴ Robert C. Smith, *We Have No Leaders: African-Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era*, New York: SUNY Press, 1996, p. 30.

⁵⁵ Augustus Hawkins, quoted in William J. Eaton, “Hawkins Retiring – But Not Quitting”, *Los Angeles Times*, 23.12.1990.

⁵⁶ Aldo Beckman, “Congresswomen’s ‘Sweat-in’ is Foiled”, *Chicago Tribune*, 7.2.1967, <http://www.proquest.com/> (24.9.2010). Mink remained one of the strongest supporters of co-ed gym class, see “House OKs coed gym class”. *Chicago Tribune*, 19.7.1975, <http://www.proquest.com/> (4.1.2011).

⁵⁷ A year later when their numbers increased to seventeen, they successfully petitioned Rayburn for a larger room, which eventually accommodated a powder room, a kitchen, and a reception and meeting area. The best and most concise history of the congresswomen’s lounge is “Room H-235: The Lindy Claiborne Boggs Congressional Women’s Reading Room, United States Capitol”, Office of the Curator, Jun 2003, in the Room H-235, The Lindy Claiborne Boggs Congressional Women’s Reading Room Folder, Architect of the Capitol Office, Washington, D.C.

and strategize. In many ways, the “Congresswomen’s Suite” functioned as an all-female cloakroom, where women could take naps on daybeds or work on legislation while remaining close to the House floor. From personal offices and this collective space, female legislators fought for the few pieces of feminist legislation proposed by the executive branch.⁵⁸

The “rising tide of women legislators” heralded by the media in the early 1960s initially did little to alter the gendered hierarchies built into Congress.⁵⁹ The number of women who took seats on the Hill actually declined during these years.⁶⁰ As sociologist Mary Fainsod Katzenstein has noted, a large part of what defines collectivities “is agreement on what requires debate”.⁶¹ The Hill remained systematically unreceptive to bills or amendments that dealt specifically with women as a class. Yet there were small challenges to masculine norms, including the new appropriation of space for congresswomen, which supplemented firsts such as Rep. Martha Griffiths’ (D-MI) appointment as the first woman to sit on the powerful House Appropriations Committee. But without the feminist movement outside of Congress, these actions had limited effects. Congresswomen still had to work within an institution that remained defined by masculine spaces, behavioral norms, and social habits. All of these things structured not only who obtained power on the Hill, but what issues were regarded as important congressional business.

Through the 1960s, policymaking was grounded in a male sociability that foreclosed the emergence of a broad agenda for women’s rights. As Meg Greenfield has observed, it is personal relationships “that people start to cultivate, worry about, and protect when they have been here a while”.⁶² An emphasis on these relationships pushed women away from advocating for policies to establish women’s equality.

⁵⁸ As historian Cynthia Harrison has described, it was only with insistent pressure from a women’s network in the federal bureaucracy that the Equal Pay Act passed Congress in 1963, see Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women’s Issues, 1945-1968*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989, p. 91-100. For information on the joking during debate over the inclusion of sex discrimination in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, see Charles Whalen and Barbara Whalen, *The Longest Debate: A Legislative History of the 1964 Civil Rights Act*, Cabin John, MD: Seven Locks Press, 1985, p. 49.

⁵⁹ This rising tide was frequently cited when any new women entered Congress or achieved fairly prestigious positions within the institution, see Robert C. Albright, “Early-Vacation Dream Is Rudely Shattered”, *Washington Post*, 27.1.1963.

⁶⁰ The numbers of women in Congress declined through the 1960s, from a peak of twenty in 1963 to twelve by the 1970s, see “Women Representatives and Senators by Congress, 1917-Present” at <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Data/Women-Representatives-and-Senators-by-Congress/> (12.5.2013).

⁶¹ Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, *Faithful and Fearless: Moving Feminist Protest Inside the Church and Military*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 35.

⁶² Greenfield, *Washington*, p. 28.

It is integral that scholars begin to understand organizations and political institutions as unique and historically-specific social and work worlds, rather than machine-like bureaucracies. An examination of the 1960s U.S. Congress points to the need for scholarly investigations of masculinity within organizations and government institutions, with a particular focus on changes in gendered cultural norms over time. Though numerous studies have addressed how gender excludes women from full and equal participation in male-dominated organizations, few have actually closely examined the contours of the masculinity that reigns in these institutions.⁶³

Historian E. Anthony Rotundo specifically identifies the U.S. Congress as a place where traditions founded in an all-male setting have persisted, “elaborate[ing] the masculine culture established in the 1800s”.⁶⁴ Male legislators constructed and carefully policed institutional norms that pushed women away from feminist advocacy. But members’ attacks on these norms would only increase. The wave of progressive reformers elected in the late 1960s arrived in Congress ready to challenge politics as usual; their demands for child care on the Hill were part of a much larger set of goals.⁶⁵ In the 1970s, this group of legislators successfully pushed Congress to reorganize and devolve power, worked as legislative allies, and thus helped to make feminist legislation possible.⁶⁶ Congress’ gendered exclusions also united congresswomen, providing the basis for a solidarity that supported the production and successful passage of a record quantity of feminist legislation in the 1970s.

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⁶³ A good start on this scholarship is Duerst-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelly (eds.), *Gender, Power, Leadership, and Governance*, Chicago: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

⁶⁴ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*, New York: Basic Books, 1994, p. 8. See also Shirin Rai, in the foreword to the special issue on ceremony and ritual in the Parliament, in: *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, vol. 16, no. 3, Sep 2010, p. 281; James March and Johan Olson, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics*, New York: Free Press 1989, p. 56.

⁶⁵ Julian Zelizer, *On Capitol Hill: The Struggle to Reform Congress and Its Consequences*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 7.

⁶⁶ Reorganization was centered in the House and led by the Democratic Study Group see David Rohde, “Committee Reform in the House of Representatives and the Subcommittee Bill of Rights”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Jan 1974, p. 39-47; Arthur G. Stevens, Jr., Arthus H. Miller, and Thomas E. Mann, “Mobilization of Liberal Strength in the House, 1955-1970”, *American Political Science Review*, vol. 68, no. 2, Jun 1974, p. 667-681.

ABSTRACT**Paddle Ball as Politics:****The Role of Sociability in the United States Congress in the Sixties**

Scholars have traditionally approached the legislative process as a systematic weighing and balancing constituency desires, party loyalties, ideological beliefs, and national goals. However, legislatures do not make their decisions in a vacuum, and the individuals who constitute a legislature remain subject to the ever-changing traditions and social norms that govern behavior in the Capitol. Congress was constantly made and remade through the repetition of gendered behaviors, traditions, and systematized rhetoric. The prevalence of male-only activities increased comity and greased the wheels of policymaking, influenced which congressmen attained institutional power, and eased the daily work life of those men who simply wanted to be popular amongst their peers. At the same time, this multitude of spatial restrictions, discursive slights, and everyday difficulties signaled to female legislators that they were not a natural element within congressional life. In the 1970s, the women's movement would provide tools that congresswomen could use to challenge these social norms and gendered hierarchies. But through the 1960s, this masculine sociability, grounded in tradition, allowed men in Congress to retain power over what they perceived as their U.S. Congress and their legislative process.