*Commenter: Robbie Richards*

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**Comments on Assignment 1**

As an introduction to a larger study, this seems like a great start. The issue of intersectionally disadvantaged populations is laid out well, and a clear case to be studied is identified. My comments below are mostly suggestions on how to advance the paper from this introduction, though perhaps some revision of the research question itself would help address some of these suggestions.

*Tying the VAWA to Intersectionality*: It seems the VAWA left the plight of intersectionally disadvantaged women unaddressed, yet you intend to use VAWA as a case study of “the mechanisms through which intersectionally disadvantaged groups gained access to the policy making process.” This seems somewhat contradictory. For this design to be successful, it will be important to spell out more explicitly why the VAWA is a good case study for intersectionality. The VAWA did not directly address the needs of the intersectionally disadvantaged, so are you arguing that it had indirect effects in terms of highlighting those needs? Does it matter that the needs of these women are different than more advantaged women, as your narrative currently suggests? Be sure as you continue the paper to justify the selection of VAWA as a valid case for the question you are trying to answer.

*Causality*: The way you talk about the policy, it seems to be an exogenous shock that mobilizes various interests. However, VAWA was probably both mobilizing and itself the product of mobilized groups. Pay careful attention to the role of womens’ groups in “causing” the policy, since you are also trying to use the policy to explain the rise of certain womens’ groups. Perhaps where you are going with this is that groups representing advantaged women have a comparative advantage in organizing and securing policy changes, and that an externality of this activity is the mobilization of groups representing less advantaged women as their problems become more defined. These dynamics will require significant attention in order to make your case.

Also, you mention that existing studies do not use policy as an outcome variable, yet it does not seem your outcome is VAWA, but rather that VAWA caused led to some other outcome (mobilization of intersectionally disadvantaged women). Your first three models follow this logic, while the other two have policy as the outcome. It will be important to really nail down the question you are trying to answer, because you seem to have two questions. Perhaps you can do both, as separate chapters of the dissertation, but it bears thinking about and making clear to the reader.