

# FUTURES OF WOMEN, WOMEN OF THE FUTURE



by Christopher B. Jones

Assistant Professor of Political Science  
Eastern Oregon State College  
School of Administrative Studies  
1410 "L" Avenue, La Grande, OR 97850.

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## **Why study the future?**

Any futurist worth his or her salt will tell you that the future cannot be PREDICTED. That does not mean we should ignore the future altogether. Not thinking about the future is a bit like driving down the Interstate at 70 miles an hour looking only through the rear view mirror. The world around us is changing at such a pace that we can no longer judge the future simply by what has gone before. We must actively scan the horizon for the coming changes and be prepared for them. We have to anticipate changing road conditions and potential hazards and look ahead. Similarly, the past is no longer a sufficient guide for the coming changes in the future.

There are massive changes ahead that have the potential to utterly transform our society. Those changes include global population growth, the aging of U.S. society, environmental changes, economic transformations, technological revolutions, and global cultural and political change.

## **How does one study the future?**

I believe there are a number of valid ways to plan for the future. Among those methods include: emerging issues analysis, environmental scanning, trend analysis, alternative futures analyses (incasting, backcasting), and scenario building. The two of these techniques which are central to this paper's objective are trend analysis and alternative futures scenarios. The trend, you may surmise from the title of my paper, is the improving status of women. The alternative futures scenarios I'll present are simply the images that feminists have generated to describe their preferred future--the future they would like to live in.

## **Why political science?**

About now you may be wondering why a political scientist would be talking about the future? After all, politicians seem totally focused on only the most narrow of time frames--two to four years to be precise--so why should a political scientist care either. Maybe it is already obvious to some of you why.















