How do we account for the discrepancy between the number of Japanese women at MOFA and at United Nations organizations? This paper will account for where women and men are located in diplomacy—national or international. I will argue that as is the case in ministries of foreign affairs around the world, institutional rules and norms account for low numbers of women in these organizations. This research will make a new contribution to the literature by demonstrating that institutional rules and norms at the UN provide many more opportunities to Japanese women to engage in diplomatic work unlike in national MFAs where norms and rules tend to circumscribe women’s participation. I argue that women choose to seek out these opportunities to fulfil their goals. Thus, in addition to institutional rules and norms, this article investigates women’s agency in pursuing careers in international affairs.