



Presidential versus Civil Power: Public Opinion, Second-Wave Feminism, and Party Politics in the USA

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Abstract

This article theorizes the relationship between social movements, public opinion, and presidential power. While sociologists and social movement scholars have long neglected these interconnections, we argue that they form a key foundation of American political life. Drawing on civil sphere theory, we show that, at least in formally democratic regimes, the exercise of state power is continuously subject to public opinion, via social movements that pressure states in the public's name. We demonstrate how social movements compete with one another to speak on behalf of 'public opinion.' In giving expression to the desires of 'the public', imagined as a putative whole, movements exercise what we call 'civil power.' Taking the second-wave feminist movement and the countermovements that arose against it as our empirical case study, we examine their interaction with three particularly illustrative presidential administrations: that of Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan. While presidents organize state power, we argue, the effective functioning of this formal power is enabled by the civil power of social movements, whose roots are located in collective meanings and whose generation occurs outside the state.

Keywords

civil sphere, feminism, presidential politics, public opinion, social movements

Americans characterize historical periods with the names of presidents – The Age of Jackson, the Eisenhower Era, the Reagan years, Bush I and II, the Clinton Decade, the

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Obama Era. Inside this civil religion of presidential power, citizens are swept up into ferocious, frenzied electoral campaigns, certain that the election of their heroes will transform society and make America whole again (Alexander, 2010). Every four years, the fate of the world seems at stake (Alexander and Jaworsky, 2014).

The focus on who assumes executive power seems merely a matter of common sense in historical terms and a matter of sophistication in theoretical ones. After all, one of the singular accomplishments of modern societies is enormously powerful states, nationwide bureaucracies headed by charismatic leaders that monopolize violence, control taxation, raise armies, and decide ultimate questions of war and peace (Weber, 1978). It is hardly surprising, then, that generations of sociologists and social movement scholars have focused on how power can be wrested from antagonistic states.

In this essay, we develop a contrary position. We argue that the effective functioning of presidential power depends on support from power of a different kind, a 'civil power' (Alexander, 2006) whose roots are located in collective meanings and whose generation occurs independently from the state. Social movements exercise civil power, we argue, by serving as vehicles for public concerns, giving expression to the desires of 'the public' imagined as a putative whole – to which presidents are then beholden. While sociologists have long neglected the relationship between policy outcomes, social movements, and public opinion, we argue that these interlinkages are key agents of American democratic life. We conceptualize 'public opinion' not as the aggregation of individual opinions within a given population, but the principal referent of a 'discursive' or 'imagined' (Anderson, 1991 in Gamson, 2004) community whose symbolic interests are refracted and crystallized by social movements in the civil sphere.

Presidents have often been important targets of movement efforts for social change. Yet sociologists have had little to say about presidential administrations, while presidential studies scholars, in turn, have seldom analyzed social movements (Martin, 2003; Milkis and Tichenor, 2019). The fact that literatures on the executive office and American social reform efforts rarely intersect is particularly curious given their parallel historical development. As a wide swath of organized interests expanded in the early 20th century, Progressive-era reforms expanded the scope and power of the executive office, paving the way for the so-called 'modern' presidency (Martin, 2003; Milkis and Tichenor, 2019). The modern presidency solidified the expectation that the president, not party elites or congressional members, would '[give] expression and effect to the nation's aspirations for economic and social improvement' (Milkis and Tichenor, 2019: 34). In the USA, the president is the only figure in whom 'the state' achieves a national collective representation. It is through the election and support of the president that members of the civil sphere articulate their sense of what the laws should be and become (Mast, 2013).

The empirical material through which we will demonstrate these claims is the second-wave feminist movement and the countermovements that arose against it in the mid-1970s. We employ a hermeneutic approach in our assessment of primary and secondary data, tracing the intersection of (anti-)feminism and presidential politics in what we view as three particularly illustrative cases: the presidencies of Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan. Our analytical focus is the liberal, mainstream branch of the second-wave movement, given its explicit concern with influencing presidential administrations.¹ It was during the course of the Nixon, Carter,

and Reagan presidencies that the second-wave feminist movement and movements on the political right competed to speak on behalf of ‘women’s interests,’ each couching their own concerns as the true interests of the civil sphere. Despite this emphasis on ‘women’s’ concerns, the second-wave feminist movement and countermovements alike were largely comprised of white, middle-class women (Ferree and Hess, 1995; Schreiber, 2017).² The competition between the second-wave movement and countermovements showcases not only the agonistic quality of ‘public opinion,’ but the often damaging paradox that matters of ‘civil’ and ‘universal’ concern reflect the interests of *particular* social groups on the basis of gender, race, and class – a topic we explore in our final section.

Sociology’s Theoretical Neglect of Public Opinion

Social theorists in the late 19th through early 20th centuries, from de Tarde to Durkheim to Dewey, recognized the centrality and independent power of public opinion as a social force (Alexander, 2006: 69–106). De Tocqueville (2004 [1835]: 40), for instance, described public opinion as ‘the dominant power’ in a democracy. Because public opinion asserts ‘itself through elections and decrees,’ de Tocqueville observed, in ‘exercising executive power, the president of the United States is subject to constant and jealous scrutiny.’

As the 20th century unfolded, however, social theory became decidedly more skeptical about the independent power of public opinion in capitalist societies and, correspondingly, about the possibility of democracy itself. Habermas (1989 [1963]) argued, for example, that 20th-century capitalism, via its culture industry, had destroyed the public sphere and commodified public opinion. Mills (1956), like Habermas, acknowledged that an independent public sphere had once existed, but claimed it had been buried by industrial capitalism, such that public opinion became an ideology manufactured and controlled by the power elite. Bourdieu’s assertion that ‘public opinion does not exist’ (1980) came to be regarded as an infamously dismissive marker of such a position. These theorists failed to consider, however, that precisely *because* ‘public opinion’ represents a social construction rather than an empirical reality, it is able to sustain itself as an independent social force.

Critical theory’s demolition job on public opinion found crucial support in Weber, whose work on the ‘social’ as independent from the political was applied mainly to the premodern. As rationalization proceeded, Weber (1978) insisted, bureaucracy, political parties, and state power became the names of the modern game. Such powerful sites of social hegemony and political domination rendered the existence and influence of an autonomous public sphere a theoretical impossibility.

As Weber’s work became metabolized, it served as a central influence on the intellectual reorientation of sociology – and political sociology in particular – in the mid- to late 20th century, after which the study of public opinion and its causal role in democratic politics ‘virtually disappeared’ from the subfield (Manza and Brooks, 2012: 89). As Manza and Brooks recount, Millsian skepticism over survey research and a newfound emphasis on the macrostructural drove political sociologists away from anything that smacked of ‘cultural values,’ the latter seemingly fatally yoked to Parsonian functionalism (e.g. Domhoff, 2010; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Mann, 1993; Skocpol, 1979; Weir et al., 1988). Many came to conceptualize the state as an autonomous site of power

unmoored by the 'elusive' (Tilly, 2002: 205) realm of civil society (e.g. Evans et al., 1985; Mann, 1993; Skocpol, 1979; Tilly, 1995), even as political sociology grappled with social forces in a more structural sense.

Recent efforts to move away from state-centered to 'polity'-centered models (Skocpol, 1992) have refined rather than uprooted this Weberian tradition (cf. Berezin et al., 2020). For example, in their ambitious volume *The Many Hands of the State*, Morgan and Orloff draw attention to work that disaggregates and culturalizes 'state functions.' Yet, they continue to equate 'states' unique characteristics' with 'the distillation and concentration of power,' defining the central question as 'how states induce, or force, people to obey' (2017: 12) and asserting that such 'sinews of power' make states into 'the distinctively powerful governing structures of our time' (2017: 13). Whereas Morgan and Orloff describe the aim of their work as demonstrating how 'states profoundly shape the normative order' (2017: 10), our ambition is to show how the normative commitments of social movements, which speak in service of 'public' opinion, shape states.

Social movement theory, for its part, has long neglected public opinion as well (Banaszak and Ondercin, 2016; Burstein, 1998, cf. Van Dyke and Taylor, 2019). To the extent that public opinion is analyzed, it is often treated as an 'alternative' variable that competes with the direct efforts of movements to affect policymaking, rather than as something meaningfully related to the efforts of movements themselves (e.g. Amenta et al., 2010; Santoro, 2002; Soule and King, 2006; cf. Agnone, 2007; Giugni, 2004; McAdam and Su, 2002).

Political process theory (PPT), the dominant theoretical paradigm in social movement studies (Almeida, 2019: 44), is particularly concerned with the direct impact of movements. PPT theorists argue that challenging state policy hinges on movements' ability to exploit openings in political 'opportunity structures,' or chinks in states' powerful 'repressive, material, and regulatory capacities' (Bessinger, 2015: 596). It is the disruptive capacity of movements – their ability to threaten organized interests – that allows them to wrest power from states (McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1998; Tilly, 1995). Even when public opinion is explicitly brought into play, what is decisive is not its 'ideational content' (McAdam, 1996: 348) but, rather, the ability of the protests that change public opinion on particular issues to create a 'breakdown in public order' (McAdam, 1996: 353; Kriesi, 2004). In such conceptualizations, as critics have long charged (Armstrong and Bernstein, 2008; Taylor et al., 2009), cultural tactics, goals, and movement impacts are understood as separate from, or epiphenomenal to, the putatively real processes of political change (e.g. Jenkins, 1983; Kriesi, 2004; Tilly, 1995). Despite the efforts of PPT theorists to address these criticisms (e.g. Kriesi, 2004; McAdam et al., 2001), their recent works largely retain this structuralist bent.³ The political impact of public opinion results not merely from its relationship to structural disruption, we argue, but from its role as a discursive force that is continuously constructed and reconstructed against the symbolic metalanguage of the civil sphere.

Public opinion in this way can be conceived as the outcome of a contest over meaning rather than, as the majority of social movement scholars conceptualize it (e.g. Agnone, 2007; Burstein, 1998), a quantifiable external force. While most literature on social movement 'framing' ignores public opinion altogether, even as it presupposes its operation, (Bloemraad et al., 2016), our approach aligns with a smaller body of framing

scholarship arguing that social movements vie to generate and represent public opinion within 'discursive fields' including the mass media (Ferree et al., 2002; Gamson, 2004).

The Civil Sphere, Public Opinion, and Social Movements

The alternative approach we propose is grounded in civil sphere theory (Alexander, 2006, 2018). Societies possess a 'civil sphere,' an institutional and cultural domain that is analytically and to some degree empirically differentiated from such non-civil institutions as state, market, family, and religion. The civil sphere is grounded in a network of understandings drawn from a highly generalized symbolic system predicated on the binary classification of social groups, relations, motives, and institutions as 'civil' or 'uncivil' and corresponding homologies including rational/irrational; open/secretive; inclusive/exclusive; autonomous/dependent; deliberative/conspiratorial; and egalitarian/hierarchical. 'Public opinion' refers to the civil and anti-civil evaluations that members of society hold about one another, their social relationships, representative figures, and institutions. The normative reference of the 'public' is constructed via the discourse of civil society.

Civil spheres have a utopian reference, pointing to a solidary community that intertwines individual autonomy and collective obligation, in which every person is treated with equal respect and accorded equal rights. However, these normative aspirations – that every individual is attributed such 'civil' qualities as rationality, altruism, and truthfulness – are never more than partially institutionalized. They are contradicted by non- and often anti-civil hierarchies in other social spheres and polluted in relation to such primordial qualities as gender, race, religion, class, ethnicity, and region. Civil spheres generate strains that trigger collective efforts at 'civil repair,' demands that core groups live up to their democratic ideals by redefining excluded groups in terms that legitimate their civil incorporation (Alexander et al., 2021b). Movements may aim for 'assimilative' incorporation – in which mainstream institutions extend some degree of institutional entry to persons regardless of primordial origin – or advocate for race-, class-, and gender-conscious modes of civil incorporation in which 'differences' are recognized and legitimized. In the assimilative mode of incorporation, the particular is universalized; in the latter modes, the universal is particularized (Alexander, 2006).

When frontlash movements expand civil incorporation, they trigger backlash movements that seek to narrow the civil sphere (Alexander, 2019; Alexander et al., 2021a). In order to gain influence, activists on both sides speak in language that makes the democratic public into a normatively compelling idea, translating particularistic demands into universalizing form. In so doing, frontlash and backlash movements refract public opinion; competing with one another to represent issues of 'public' concern.⁴

Frontlash and backlash movements work to *crystallize* existing strands of public belief, naming and legitimizing pre-existing social concerns, often through the creation of civil organizations – one of the 'communicative' institutions of the civil sphere. They also work to *transform* various strands of public belief through the media, a second 'communicative' institution of the civil sphere, by reaching out to constituencies via media outlets such as newsletters, or by garnering attention in the press. They also *harness* 'public opinion' as a communicative force by commissioning opinion polls – a third

communicative institution – and leveraging poll data in their political efforts. As part of their continuous efforts to comprehend what the ‘public’ wants them to do, presidents rely on public opinion polling, often consulting polls that social movements themselves have released and interpreted (Beal and Hinckley, 1984). With the aim of translating ‘civil’ concern into political pressure, movements exercise *civil power*. ‘Public opinion’ as a political force in its own right may have a limited effect without the presence of social movements that work to crystallize, interpret, and harness it.

Social movements also exercise civil power via the civil sphere’s regulative institutions, including the electoral process and political parties (Alexander, 2006). Many professionalized civil associations are closely linked to political parties, which allows social movements to channel ‘public’ concerns into political campaigns and party platforms. By engaging in voter education campaigns, and by mobilizing data on voting patterns, movements can threaten electoral retaliation, transforming public opinion into a potentially regulative force that can constrain the range of actions the president and state actors can reasonably take. Civil associations also work to get ‘insider activists’ appointed to government positions (Banaszak, 2010), extending civil power deeply inside the organs of state.⁵

When newly elected politicians take office, they move from the civil sphere to the state. Yet, as we demonstrate in the following section, even as they wield the levers of power, presidents and their administrations remain face-to-face with the movements that purport to crystallize the interests of the civil sphere.

The (Anti-) Feminist Movement, Public Opinion, and the Presidency, 1969–1989

Second-wave Feminism and Richard Nixon

If Nixon ‘could have his way,’ reported Jack Anderson in 1971, ‘American women would confine their activities to homemaking and forget all this talk of “liberation”’ (1971: F4). President Nixon’s initial response to the ‘women’s movement’ was somewhere between ‘patronizing neglect’ (Freeman, 1975: 205) and open hostility. After four decades of ‘abeyance’ (Taylor, 1989), organized feminism had re-emerged with a vengeance only a few years earlier, during John F. Kennedy’s presidential tenure. In a half-hearted bid to placate female voters, Kennedy had created a presidential commission committed to women’s legal equity (Harrison, 1980), and in so doing, unwittingly helped birth the second-wave feminist movement by drawing together women activists from across the country in state-level commissions (Freeman, 1975). The National Commission’s major report, *American Women*, the publication of Betty Friedan’s bombshell bestseller, *The Feminine Mystique*, and the formation of the National Organization for Women (NOW) three years later crystallized a silently swelling current of opinion by naming the ‘problem that has no name’ (Friedan in Rosen, 2000: 4). This new wave aimed to undo the anti-civil construction of female traits – ‘piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity’ – which for centuries had warranted women’s ‘civil death’ (National Commission on the Observance of International Women’s Year, 1976: 1; 3).

By the time of Nixon’s presidency, media-oriented protests from national and grassroots second-wave feminist organizations alike – such as the Women’s Strike for

Equality in 1970 – were generating increasing public support (Klein, 1984: 25). As polls reported that more and more women supported the goals of the ‘women’s movement’ their support was constructed by pollsters and leading feminists alike as emblematic of ‘public’ commitments on the part of nearly all women. Louis Harris, for instance, drawing from the results of his 117-page study, reported that ‘most’ women backed efforts to ‘strengthen and change women’s status in society’ – despite the fact that the report actually recorded support among female respondents as ranging from 36% to 48% (*Palm Beach Post*, 1972). ‘The news that just cries out from this welter . . . of information,’ Harris wrote, was that ‘women have sprung loose as an independent political force’ – a force that ‘can never be bottled up again.’ Harris warned that Nixon had better find a way to ‘shore up his weakness among women.’ Despite their largely white and middle-class make-up, feminists from groups like NOW echoed this sentiment, positioning themselves ‘as a sort of vanguard who could speak to media and policy makers on behalf of a group called “women”’ (Barker-Plummer, 1995: 312). The avowedly anti-feminist Nixon would ultimately be impelled to meet the demands of women in such second-wave organizations.

One of the first indications that a change was in the offing was the reaction to a question that the feminist journalist Vera Glaser posed to the president at his second televised press conference: Why had only three out of over 200 presidential appointments gone to women? ‘Can we expect some more equitable recognition of women’s abilities,’ she asked Nixon, ‘or are we going to remain the lost sex?’ (Voss, 2009). Activists from NOW channeled Glaser’s demand by picketing the White House in a series of widely publicized protests (*Fort Meyers News-Press*, 1969; I Shelton, 1969), polluting Nixon’s administration as exclusive and uncivil.

Feminist organizations pushed Nixon to create an independent agency to bolster women’s rights and opportunities. The idea was initially proposed by ‘insider activist’ Rep. Florence Dwyer, who argued in a letter to Nixon that the economic, social, and legal subordination of women ‘continue[d] to weaken our social structure and distort our system of moral principles’ (Glaser, 1969: 11). Nixon initially ignored the letter (Stout, 2012), but its circulation in news outlets generated increasing outrage from feminist organizations. Discrimination on the basis of gender was now widely constructed in the mainstream media as a destructive civil intrusion, and the second-wave movement channeled the newfound ‘public’ commitment into political pressure. As Elizabeth Boyer of the Women’s Equity Action League (WEAL) wrote to Nixon, ‘if I assess [women’s] attitudes correctly, a groundswell of feeling is developing . . . which will not brook very much delay or circumlocution. The burgeoning membership in our organization, which has expanded into nearly twenty states by word of mouth alone, certainly testifies to this’ (in Martin, 2003: 128).

After prodding from Glaser, Dwyer, and various women’s organizations, Nixon finally budged, creating a President’s Task Force on Women’s Rights and Responsibilities, on which Glaser was asked to serve (Stout, 2012: 23). The Task Force issued a report calling for the president’s support on several women’s rights initiatives. Nixon was reluctant to publish the report, dragging his feet for months (I Shelton, 1970) despite the urging of several of his own advisors to release it. As the Special Counsel to the President wrote, ‘This is a bit like the school desegregation issue. It is beginning to build up a real

head of steam. I would like to see us leading the parade rather than jumping on the band wagon after it is already well down the road' (Stout, 2012: 44). The president's Chief of Urban affairs had also advised him in a memo a few months prior to 'take creative political leadership' on the matter of 'female equality'. 'OK,' Nixon wrote in the margins (Stout, 2012: 22-23).

The matter of releasing the report became moot when Glaser leaked it to the press in April 1970. Civil pressure from the second-wave movement ultimately compelled Nixon to endorse nearly all the report's recommendations, and 19 out of the 20 became law (Voss, 2009). Nixon eventually appointed more than 100 women to high-level administrative positions (Stout, 2012: 84) and supported a host of anti-discrimination initiatives. He signed the Higher Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibited sex-based discrimination in federally funded educational institutions (Title IX); renewed and revised Lyndon Johnson's Executive Order 11375, directing federally contracted employers to submit timelines for promoting and hiring women; and gave the United States Commission on Civil Rights authority to investigate sex-based discrimination (Kotlowski, 2001).

As the 'women's movement' caught fire, the 92nd Congress (1971-1972) passed more women's rights bills than all previous legislative sessions combined, and Nixon signed them (Freeman, 1975: 202). This included the congressional passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The ERA was a vehicle through which liberal feminists disseminated their demand for the civil repair of gender relations; arguing from a universalist position, they contended that gender and women's 'difference' from men was a social construct rather than a natural condition. This contextualization allowed male domination to be labeled as a 'sexist' intrusion into the democratic promise of civil equality (Alexander, 2006: 258).

Nixon was personally lukewarm and politically evasive about the ERA. Activists from a host of groups including the National Women's Party and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women pressured him, channeling public support via letters, petitions, telegrams, protests, and lobbying efforts (Freeman, 1975; I Shelton, 1970, 1972; P Shelton, 1970). Members of the Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women insisted in a report submitted to Nixon that only a 'small number' (p. 3) of women with anti-democratic commitments disfavored the ERA, emphasizing its 'widespread' support (p. 10) emblemized by 'the women's groups representing nationwide aspirations of women today' (p. 1).⁶ Heeding activists' warnings that failing to support the ERA could cost him the re-election, Nixon finally endorsed it (I Shelton, 1972), and in 1972 the ERA passed in Congress with overwhelming majorities. The battle would now commence in the states, three-fourths of which would have to ratify for the ERA to take effect (Soule and King, 2006).

During that same year, as Nixon launched his re-election campaign, the 'women's movement' managed, for the first time, to significantly affect the political platforms of the two parties, signaling a pivot toward what would soon become a close fusion between the 'mainstream' wing of the movement and electoral politics (Young, 2000: 32). In 1971, a group of leading feminist activists including Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, Bella Abzug, and Shirley Chisholm formed the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) (Wolbrecht, 2000: 35). Even as Nixon privately mocked the newly formed caucus in conversations with his top advisors, the NWPC warned, 'Mr. Nixon is going to

find out in 1972 that women will no longer let themselves be consigned . . . to the sidelines of political power' (Thomas, 1971: 39) – reminding the president that they spoke on behalf of 'the majority' (I Shelton, 1971: E15). Publicly, Nixon did not want to be seen as taking their concerns lightly. Republican party strategists sensed that feminism represented a 'powerful source of change in behavior of the US electorate' (Young, 2000: 88), and that such groups as the NWPC served as envoys for this change. Both party platforms had been virtually silent on 'women's issues' in 1968 (Wolbrecht 2000:35); by 1972, each devoted significant attention to such concerns, including equal opportunity and the ERA, in large part due to the efforts of the NWPC (Young, 2000: 88–95).

Shortly after Nixon's landslide re-election, the Supreme Court gave women the legal right to abortion in the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling. In 1971, Nixon had ordered military hospitals to rescind their liberal abortion policies and backed the repeal of a liberal New York abortion law, hoping to woo Catholic voters (Kotlowksi, 2001: 251). Translating his stance on abortion into the discourse of the civil sphere, NOW activists declared that Nixon was engaged in an anti-civil, conspiratorial, 'diabolical plot' to deny women the right to self-determination (*Hartford Courant*, 1971: 23; see also Glaser, 1971). Armed with poll data indicating that most Americans were in favor of abortion, they insisted that abortion rights were 'obviously' (*Hartford Courant*, 1971: 23) supported by the public. In the middle of his re-election campaign, the president responded to this civil pressure by swiftly changing course. Nixon returned to his earlier position that it was a matter for the states to decide; he instructed his aides to 'keep out' of the matter (Kotlowksi, 2001: 252) and made no efforts to restrict *Roe's* scope after its passage (O'Connor and Epstein, 1985: 219).

Nixon was no feminist. Still, it was during Nixon's presidency, and with his grudging cooperation, that the second-wave feminist movement became 'a powerful force to reckon with' (Martin, 2003: 166) vis-à-vis state power. As *Newsweek* ironically observed in 1972, 'the person in Washington who has done the most for the women's movement may be Richard Nixon' (*Newsweek*, 1972: 16).

Anti-feminist Backlash: Jimmy Carter, STOP-ERA, and the Politics of Resentment

Just as all three branches of government had become receptive to the second-wave feminist movement (Spruill, 2018: 41), the cultural efflorescence and institutional codification of its goals triggered an anti-feminist countermovement. During Gerald Ford's brief presidential tenure, the GOP perceived the antifeminist sentiments of a nascent 'Religious Right' as representing only a fringe segment of public opinion (Spruill, 2017). Not until Jimmy Carter's presidential bid in 1976 would the force of a newly ascendant religious and cultural conservatism begin to forcefully shape the contours of presidential politics (McVicar, 2016).

A focal point of mobilization for the countermovement was the ERA, prompting conservative religious women to create a series of organizations to defeat it, including Beverly LaHaye's Concerned Women for America and Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum (Schreiber, 2017). Tapping into simmering cultural resentment about feminism, Schlafly connected with social conservatives across the nation through her newsletter, *The Phyllis*

Schlaflly Report, and televised debates (Critchlow and Stachecki, 2008). The anti-ERA movement drew in predominately white, middle-class fundamentalist Christians, evangelical Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Mormons, many of whom were previously uninvolved in the political arena (2008: 165–168).

The anti-ERA movement dovetailed with the ‘pro-life’ movement, each rooted in disdain for the ‘excesses’ of liberalism and assailing the putatively arbitrary exercise of power by a bloated federal government that used tax-payer dollars to pander to the demands of a narrow coterie of self-aggrandizing feminists (Klatch, 1987; Wolbrecht, 2000: 40, 168). In this view, government initiatives to improve women’s status represented anti-civil social engineering schemes that intruded into the social fabric. By hitching the ERA to fears of government overreach, Schlaflly’s STOP-ERA campaign garnered support from conservatives growing increasingly hostile toward activist courts, ‘big government,’ and federal social welfare spending (Critchlow and Stachecki, 2008: 168–169; Schreiber, 2017: 323).

Anti-ERA leaders not only crystallized existing strands of public opinion by legitimizing concerns about cultural changes, but prompted a host of new concerns by emphasizing the putatively undesirable consequences the ERA could bring. STOP-ERA advocates worked to transform public opinion against the ERA in key battleground states (Mansbridge, 1986). Schlaflly’s success hinged on her ability to portray ‘women’s libbers’ as ‘intemperate’ extremists (Schlaflly in Critchlow, 2005: 227), on the one hand, and anti-ERA activists as rational and altruistic on the other. She ‘exploited [NOW’s] public image of radicalism’ (Critchlow, 2005: 229), which often flouted conventional political tactics in favor of more disruptive forms of public protest, equating feminists with anti-civil aggression and incompetence. Schlaflly also emphasized the ‘radical’ consequences of the ERA, including such supposed civil intrusions as gender-neutral bathrooms and the inclusion of women in the military draft, and highlighted the link between the ERA, abortion, and gay rights (Mansbridge, 1986). Although contentious, many ‘mainstream’ feminists had come to see these latter two issues as closely tied to women’s rights (Mattingly, 2015: 544–546).

The ERA, Schlaflly argued, was redundant at best, because gender equality was already protected under the Civil Rights Act of 1964; at worst, it was actually an *infringement* on women’s equal rights (Schlaflly in Critchlow, 2005: 225). While liberal feminists argued that the ERA would promote the full participation of women in the civil sphere, anti-feminist crusaders used the same civil metalanguage to argue that the ERA undermined women’s autonomy by eliminating the ‘right to be provided for’ (Klatch, 1987: 136). While they publicly emphasized that women had the right to choose whether to be homemakers *or* to pursue careers, they insisted that the majority of women chose the former, which they construed as ‘the most basic and precious legal right . . . [of all]’ (Schlaflly in Schreiber, 2017: 322).⁷

As these debates approached their zenith, Jimmy Carter entered office. The ERA battle came to a head at the ‘International Women’s Year’ (IWY) conference in Houston in November 1977, Carter’s first year in office. In his presidential campaign, Carter had pledged his full support of the ERA, assuring feminists that he ‘wanted to be known as the president who achieved equal rights for women’ (Mattingly, 2015: 538). Yet, just a few months into his first term, observing the bitter tension and polarization the ERA

produced, the president sought to distance himself from it, declining an invitation to attend the IWY conference (Flippen, 2011: 140).

Carter warily kept tabs on the conference from the sidelines. Over 20,000 women attended, including a small group of socially conservative delegates wearing yellow ribbons that said 'majority' – iconizing their representation of the 'mainstream' (Flippen, 2011: 147). Meanwhile, Schlafly hosted a counterconference the same day, the 'Pro-Family Rally.' Both conferences attracted significant media coverage, which further propelled the rapidly escalating culture wars into a national, mass-mediated social drama. While the IWY conference was a powerful point of mobilization for feminists, it failed to win over 'Middle America,' and the newly dubbed 'pro-family' movement won the public relations battle (Flippen, 2011: 147–149). The anti-ERA movement was able to evocatively link the proposed Constitutional amendment to a slew of offensive, concrete anti-civil ramifications. By contrast, the pro-ERA campaign concentrated on abstract legal protections and failed to delineate specific and positive outcomes the amendment would bring (Mansbridge, 1986). Following the IWY conference, public support for the ERA in key non-ratifying states declined, falling below 40% among women by 1978 (Critchlow and Stacheki, 2008: 158–163).

Throughout the ERA battle, STOP-ERA activists went head-to-head with feminist activists working to ratify the ERA, portraying themselves as the true voice of women's interests. They polluted 'women's liberationists' as an anti-democratic 'well-financed and vocal minority,' as the Alabama STOP-ERA chapter insisted in a letter to state legislators (Critchlow, 2005: 225). 'Feminists do not represent all women of America,' Beverly LaHaye asserted, declaring 'it is the height of absurdity to suggest that all women are in lockstep march led by Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem' (Rohlinger, 2017: 150). Anti-ERA activists channeled this assertion in their persistent efforts to lobby state legislatures, and they ultimately convinced legislators in non-ratifying states – and even in some ratifying states that rescinded their previous ERA support (Mattingly, 2015) – that they spoke on behalf of 'the public.' While polls reported that a numerical majority of citizens actually supported the ERA – by 1980, for instance, 60% of women and 54% of men (Klein, 1984: 159) – what proved decisive was the STOP-ERA movement's ability to mobilize the support they *did* have and to portray it as indicative of the mood of the whole country.

While STOP-ERA transformed anti-ERA strands of public opinion into a regulative force, the pro-ERA campaign failed to similarly translate pro-ERA strands of opinion. Because organizations like NOW and ERAmerica were primarily top-down, dedicating little time to grassroots lobbying, they failed in their efforts to turn 'generalized public sympathy for reforms that benefit women into political pressure on specific legislators' (Critchlow and Stacheki, 2008: 165, 171; Mansbridge, 1986: 4). The fact that 'public opinion' appeared on their side when measured by polling data prompted pro-ERA activists to underestimate the strength of the opposition (Mansbridge, 1986: 18). The arithmetical aggregation of individual opinions could not independently exert a political influence without first being interpreted and harnessed in the civil sphere; public opinion, that is, had to be transformed into persuasive civil power.

Unable to transform civil into state power at the grassroots, national women's groups and insider activists tried pressuring Carter directly to lobby more vigorously

for the ERA, but to no avail. Despite pro-ERA activists' privileged access to the state (Mattingly, 2015) and their greater numbers and financial strength than the counter-movement (Critchlow, 2005: 250), the civil power of the anti-ERA countermovement proved decisive. With the 'pro-family' movement leading the battle for public opinion in the state-level ratification process, Carter further distanced himself from the issue, loath to expend 'precious political capital' on what by 1978 seemed certain to 'be a losing cause' (Walker, 2012: 364).

As the organizational traction of the 'pro-family' movement grew in the months following the IWY conference, making the GOP more conservative, the 'mainstream' branch of the second-wave feminist movement was radicalizing, and each vied for Carter's attention. By the late 1970s, second-wave feminists had expanded their issue agenda beyond equal rights and opportunities – a focus that reflected its white, middle-class bias – to advocate for institutional changes benefiting minority and working-class women (Hartmann, 1998: 228–229). Writings of feminist women of color in the 1970s and 1980s, including Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Frances Beale, Cherríe Moraga, and Gloria E Anzaldúa would change 'the outlook of an entire political generation' (Whittier, 1995: 98; Rosen, 2000), expanding and unsettling the dominant liberal understanding of 'universal rights' and challenging liberal feminists' push for race-blind assimilative incorporation. Women of color had long charged that in universalizing the needs and experiences of white women, both the mainstream and grassroots branches of the second-wave movement paid 'lip-service to the idea of sisterhood and solidarity between women but at the same time dismiss[ed] Black women,' (hooks, 1982) discounting the ways in which racism dovetailed with sexism. The late second-wave's expanded issue agenda was reflected in the IWY conference. Members of its National Commission worked to select a diverse group of delegates, over a third of whom were ethnic or racial minorities (Mattingly and Nare, 2014: 88). Its 'National Plan of Action' included calls for federal funding for abortion, government-sponsored childcare, shelters for 'battered women,' increased aid for people on welfare, and the elimination of legal discrimination against gay people (Flippen, 2011: 150; Spruill, 2018: 48).

Yet, organized feminists were working to expand the role of the federal government just as the growth of conservative countermovements worked to limit it, pushing Carter further to the right on such issues as social welfare (Osgood and White, 2014) and further fracturing his relationship with the 'women's movement.' The culture wars over the ERA and IWY helped engender the consolidation of a powerful network of grassroots religious and political organizations midway through Carter's presidency. A revived conservative movement worked in tandem with the so-called 'Religious Right' to meld the cultural politics of anti-feminism with such broader conservative causes as small government and free market economics (McVicar, 2016; Spruill, 2018: 47–52; Wolbrecht, 2020: 161). In so doing, the 'New Right' coalition crystallized existing strands of public opinion, naturalizing connections among ideological issues that many social conservatives already understood as linked (see Flippen, 2011: 185, 242; Schreiber, 2017: 323). Conservative strands of public opinion were only as politically powerful as the ability of GOP activists to activate them.

Just as Schlafly had given a public voice to the growing reservoir of cultural resentment against the ERA, the New Right gave the so-called 'silent majority' – including, in

large part, disaffected Southern Democrats (Freeman, 2008) – a sense of cultural identity, rhetorically capitalizing on the belief that they represented the ‘common person’ whose values were being encroached upon by a liberal elite (Omi and Winant, 2015: 191; 236). This powerful new GOP offensive channeled ‘public’ resentment into a political resource, setting the stage for the ‘Reagan Revolution’ in 1980. Reagan would pick up where Carter left off, forging an even more unabashed connection with the New Right. Caught between the fault lines of a civil sphere increasingly polarized between frontlash and backlash, Carter had been unable to become a ‘collective representation’ of America, attempting to find a middle position on deeply polarizing issues (Mattingly, 2015). Failing to align political with civil power, he increasingly appeared only a weakly civil figure and was forced out of office.

Ronald Reagan and the New Right

As the 1970s drew to a close, the civil sphere culture wars solidified along party lines. Recognizing the electoral potential of socially conservative organizations like Eagle Forum and Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority, which by 1980 had over two million members (McVicar, 2016), Reagan forged what would become an enduring connection between the GOP, the ‘pro-family movement,’ and the Religious Right (Milkis and Tichenor, 2019). These groups’ concerns were channeled directly into the 1980 GOP presidential platform, which included support for a ‘human life’ amendment to federally prohibit abortion and failed to endorse the ERA (Freeman, 2008).

Throughout his presidency, Reagan used the ‘bully pulpit’ to advance anti-feminist policies, including restricting abortion access and funding; appointing outspoken opponents of *Roe* to the Supreme Court (Walker, 2012); cutting social programs that benefited single mothers and poor, minority women (Eisenstein, 1987; Coste, 2016); and defunding federal agencies designed to support women and minorities (Sapiro, 1986). Adding insult to injury, by 1982, the ERA had officially failed, falling three states short of ratification (Soule and King, 2006).

These developments evince the close tie between the GOP and powerful strains of religious and cultural conservatism. Yet, while ‘pro-family’ activists would have the upper hand in many policy battles throughout the 1980s (Sawyers and Meyer, 1999), feminist activists competed on equal terms with social conservatives in the effort to leverage public opinion. For instance, public opinion polls consistently indicated that only about 20% of all Americans supported a complete ban on abortion (Ferree and Hess, 1995: 165), and abortion rights activists referenced this opinion data in protest events and lobbying efforts (Bashevkin, 1994: 693). Fearing that a strong commitment to banning abortion would alienate millions of voters, presidential advisors warned Reagan to give ‘the lead’ to Congress (Coste, 2016: 8) and individual states (O’Connor and Epstein, 1985; Sapiro, 1986; Walker, 2012).

The fact that organized feminists were able to sustain such influence demonstrates that revived cultural conservatism in the American electorate co-existed with a widespread acceptance of liberal feminism (Eisenstein, 1987) and the idea that women were fully ‘civil’ individuals. Debates that erupted between second-wave feminists and conservative women activists in the 1980s focused on the contours of what ‘civil inclusion’

actually looked like and whom it implicitly excluded. A key terrain of this debate among organized feminists, 'pro-family' activists, and moderate Republican women activists was the 'gender gap' in public opinion.

Reagan and the Gender Gap

As the mainstream and grassroots wings of the second-wave feminist movement united under a common threat, the movement 'institutionalized' and began to play defense (Whittier, 1995).⁸ Facing what they viewed as the dangers the Reagan administration posed for women, organized feminists triggered a public outcry that transformed the president's anti-feminist agenda into a political asset (Costain and Costain, 1992). Analyzing polling data from the 1980 election, NOW activists identified a gendered discrepancy in voting patterns, in which more men than women voted for Reagan – 54% versus 46% (Bonk, 1988: 85) – and they heralded this disparity as a newly emerged women's voting bloc. NOW coined the 8% difference the 'gender gap' (Wolbrecht, 2000).

Such a gendered reading of polling data was not necessarily evident at first glance, since women's votes in the 1980 election were nearly perfectly split among both candidates – 45% for Carter and 46% for Reagan (Bonk, 1988: 85). The gender gap had to be 'discovered' before it could become politically consequential. 'Public opinion' could not exert an independent influence without first being crystallized by activists in the civil sphere and then filtered through its communicative institutions. NOW launched a mass media campaign designed to publicize the gender gap, commissioning public opinion polls and circulating them in newspapers, at Democratic National Committee meetings, and in books (Bonk, 1988; Wolbrecht, 2000). Prominent liberal feminists argued that the gender gap and Reagan's low approval ratings among women resulted from his hostility to the ERA, abortion rights, and gender equity (e.g. Abzug, 1984; Smeal, 1984). Yet, scholars and political analysts have largely agreed that the root causes of the gender gap were not tied to these specific feminist issues (Beal and Hinckley, 1984; Mansbridge, 1986; Bolce, 1985; Wolbrecht, 2020). Despite this tenuous empirical link, the media were receptive to the feminist interpretation, and exhortations about the gender gap helped brand the Reagan administration as anti-feminist (Costain, 1992; Mueller, 1988).

The gender gap put the Reagan administration on high alert, for it created the impression that failing to embrace women's rights initiatives would reap electoral consequences. As Reagan himself admitted of his so-called 'woman problem', 'I have a hunch that part of it has been inspired by the ERA movement' (Ryan-Hume, 2012: 466). Warning that the gender gap 'could prove dangerous for Republicans in 1984' a memo prepared by one of Reagan's appointees suggested that 'new, bold, and creative ideas' were required to deal with the president's 'woman problem.' The memo pointed to pollsters' claims that recent GOP gubernatorial losses could be attributed to the 'the female vote.'⁹ The GOP would thus have to heed NOW's warning that 'if Republican candidates pay lip service to women's rights, they too will find they have a woman problem' (in Bonk, 1988: 93). Vocal criticisms by Republican feminists, many of whom publicly exited the GOP, added fuel to the fire (Cummings, 1983; Endicott, 1984; Hume, 1984).

While Reagan publicly denied¹⁰ the relevance of the gender gap, privately he and his strategists worked to transform the public perception of his administration (Sanbonmatsu,

2002). The administration created policy boards and task forces dedicated to eliminating sex discrimination (Sanbonmatsu, 2002), and Reagan made highly visible female appointments to his cabinet (Bonk, 1988). The avowedly anti-affirmative action Reagan also made good on his campaign promise to appoint the Supreme Court's first woman, Sandra Day O'Connor, who had previously voiced support for *Roe* (O'Connor and Epstein, 1985). Despite the vitriol of the Religious Right, the president got personally involved in the push for the Senate to confirm her nomination (Coste, 2016: 9).

While these changes were by no means unwelcome, feminists of the late second-wave were concerned with far more than high-profile appointments. They honed in on polling data indicating that women were more likely than men to support social welfare spending (see Wolbrecht, 2020: 188-9). Emphasizing how a disproportionate number of women – especially single mothers, poor women, and Black women – relied on such government benefits as food stamps, Medicaid, social security, and income support, NOW launched a 'feminization of poverty' campaign (Ryan-Hume, 2012), arguing that Reagan's slashes to domestic budgets in favor of increased defense spending represented a direct attack on women (e.g. Smeal in Bonk, 1988: 92; Abzug, 1984).

In order to counter the perception that his administration did not care about the economic precarity of 'women,' Reagan supported congressional legislation centered on child support payments, increases in child care tax credits for working mothers, reductions to the 'marriage penalty' on income tax for households with two wage-earners, the abolition of estate taxes on widows, pension reform, and the creation of Independent Retirement Accounts (IRAs) for non-working women (Beck et al., 1984; Sanbonmatsu, 2002). His advisors flaunted these achievements, hoping to narrow the gender gap.¹¹

Ultimately, however, these policies benefited primarily middle-class, upwardly mobile, and economically secure professional women (Chappell, 2012). In promoting these legislative achievements, Reagan 'hew[ed] to the narrowest interpretation of liberal feminism,' as Chappell (2012: 117) argues, promoting a kind of 'free-market feminism' centered on equal opportunity. This reflected his adherence to the New Right's commitment to tax cuts, deregulation, and decreased social spending, and to competing interpretations of the gender gap on the part of women on the Right. Indeed, even as the interpretive malleability of the gender gap was a boon to groups like NOW, it left room for counter-interpretations. Moderate Republican women from grassroots Republican organizations including the National Federation of Republican Women related the gap to the weakness of the economy rather than to budget cuts and concerns over social security (e.g. Basler, 1984; Cooper, 1984; Horstman, 1983; Hume, 1984; Oates, 1984).¹² 'Pro-family' activists, for their part, were principally concerned with how the politicization of the gap obscured the fact that most American women were 'actually' anti-abortion and anti-ERA (e.g. Whitlock, 1984; Gartner, 1984; Williams, 1983). Both groups believed that the electoral importance of the gap was exaggerated by scheming feminists and that most women actually supported Reagan.

Warring interpretations over the meaning of the gap came to a head at a conference in San Diego sponsored by the Republican National Committee (RNC) in August 1983, at which some 1000 protestors from NOW and other feminist groups picketed outside the hotel (Horstman, 1983). Activists on each side vied to interpret, and speak on behalf of, 'public opinion.' Groups like NOW represented a 'small vocal minority,' claimed Sara

Katz, president of San Diego Republican Businesswomen: 'I don't go to bed at night and say, gosh, I hope the ERA gets approved. I'm concerned about the economy and inflation and crime.' NOW did not 'speak for the majority of American women,' Betty Heitman, co-chairwoman of the RNC and the National Women's Coalition, likewise asserted. NOW's Diana Cooper responded, 'I'd hardly call a group of handpicked, screened Republican women typical of all American women' (Horstman, 1983).

The gender gap, then, served as a vehicle through which liberal and conservative women activists could speak 'as' half of the members of the public 'to' the public and its legislators. Reagan's presidential aides made efforts to follow their constituents' interpretations of public opinion. The gap in itself could not dictate strategy; it causes were multi-dimensional and at times elusive (Garment, 1983). Faced with conflicting advice on how to manage the gap (Weisman, 1983), Reagan's strategists ultimately emphasized its economic dimensions (e.g. Lake in Basler, 1984; Rollins in Peterson, 1983), concluding in an internal strategy memo that their key electoral targets among women were 'extremely likely to believe the economic program will help the national economy and will also reduce inflation.'¹³ By contrast, Democrat Walter Mondale, Reagan's opponent in the 1984 election, claimed he would close the gap by restoring funding Reagan had cut from social programs and supporting the ERA and abortion rights (Germond and Witcover, 1983), in line with liberal feminist interpretations of the gap. Bottom-up constructions of public opinion, then, dictated the course of presidential politics – not the other way around.

Conclusion

This essay has charted how frontlash and backlash movements work to represent the normative aspirations of the civil sphere. Transforming 'public' concern into political pressure on presidents has occupied the attention of a host of social movements beyond (anti-)feminism. Gay rights activists, for instance, launched a campaign to increase public acceptance of gay marriage and leveraged the poll data crystallizing this support in White House lobbying efforts, successfully pressuring Obama to publicly throw his support behind same-sex marriage (Milkis and Tichenor, 2019: 297-304). A few years later, Donald Trump's misogynistic, nativist, and racist presidential campaign was propelled forward by the moral populism of movements organized by the Tea Party and the Religious Right (Alexander, 2019). In the absence of such activist efforts to activate and channel public support, civil power cannot be transformed into political power.

Couching particular interests as universal civil ones is a performative accomplishment, not a description of an already existing empirical reality. Providing momentum not only for progressive but also reactionary social change, the boundaries of the putatively universal are fraught with exclusions. During the Nixon administration, early second-wave feminists spoke of 'sisterhood' and solidarity while largely prioritizing the voices and needs of white, middle-class women. Even as mainstream women's organizations during the Carter and Reagan administrations attempted to venture beyond the emphasis on race- and class-blind assimilative incorporation toward a recognition of the 'politics of difference' (see review in O'Reilly, 2017), their efforts were often belied by white movement spokeswomen continuing to speak on behalf of all women. The very

idea of the gender gap, as Mueller (1988: 26) observed, was 'based on a vision of women as a category of people who share a set of experiences and interests.' Yet, as many activists and scholars of color have argued, middle-class white women who created second-wave feminist groups like NOW did 'not see poverty from the same perspective' as women of color (Marrero in Louie and Quinones, 1984: 31); in fact, they often shared racial interests with white men (Louie and Quinones, 1984). Conservative women activists also invoked 'women's needs' while implicitly referencing only one particular grouping of women – upwardly mobile women whose economic success depended on eliminating barriers to market competition (Chappell, 2012). By strategically appealing to young, predominately white working women via such economic incentives (Mueller, 1988), Reagan won 64% of the white women's vote in his landslide 1984 victory, while a mere 6% of Black women would vote for him (Ryan-Hume, 2012: 473). Poor, disproportionately Black women on welfare were polluted by Reagan and the New Right as anti-civil figures overly dependent on the state, as 'welfare queens' unwilling to get off their feet (Bashevkin, 1994). In this way, they were excluded from the 'women' that female GOP activists and the Reagan administration worked to incorporate into their right-wing version of the American civil sphere. Indeed, the nation's most economically vulnerable women were ignored in his outreach efforts entirely (Chappell, 2012).

While they appeal to the cultural ideal of a broadly shared and universalizing solidarity, 'real existing' civil spheres are subject to continuous polarization and damaging exclusions. The existence of such glaring divisions, however, should not be taken as a sign that public opinion has lost its influence. As long as the civil sphere remains independent of the state, efforts to push political power to the left or to the right depend on the shaping and reshaping of the 'public's' opinion. This is the work of social movements.

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Notes

1. In contrast, the grassroots branch of the early second-wave movement, a decentralized series of organizations that had emerged from the New Left (Rosen, 2000), largely operated outside of the political arena, given many activists' belief in the futility of electoral politics (Dow, 2014: 171).
2. Second-wave grassroots as well as national organizations were long criticized for excluding the concerns of women of color. While women of color often participated in second-wave organizations, the exclusivity of the second-wave movement prompted the creation of a host of separate feminist organizations by women of color in the 1970s and 1980s (Ferree and Hess, 1995).
3. Charles Tilly (1995, 2002), for instance, argues that movement 'claimants' mobilize discursive frames that demonstrate activists' worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment ('WUNC') in order to sway legislators. Yet for Tilly, WUNC has nothing to do with 'public opinion' or broader cultural meaning, but simply represents an instrumental resource and a learned strategic practice (Tilly, 1995: 40, 354).

4. It is precisely this ambition that the 'counterpublic' approach to social movements underplays (e.g. Eley, 1992; Fraser, 1992). Excluded social groups work to develop oppositional cultural-cum-political resources inside of their own dominated and segregated communities. But it is not as countercultures *tout court* that radical social movements struggle for power. 'Alternative publics succeed because their intragroup activities have allowed them to learn the art of translating their particular injustices into the more universal language of civil justice,' Alexander (2006: 277) writes. 'Counterpublic resources give them the power to project these translations into the surrounding civil sphere.' For recent work that conceptualizes counterpublics in such civil sphere terms, see Kane, 2022.
5. Law and 'office' are also powerful regulative institutions of the civil sphere, patterning the exercise of power in ways that refract public opinion (Alexander, 2006: 107–192).
6. 'Women in 1970.' Report by Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women, March 1971. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d035925408&view=1up&seq=4&skin=2021> (accessed 10 November 2021).
7. In other words, although their campaign was centered on the religious conviction that women's primary role was in the domestic sphere, STOP-ERA activists publicly couched these concerns within the parameters of civil discourse.
8. While the low public visibility of insider politics carried some political costs (Sawyers and Meyer, 1999), the consensus among many political process theorists that the Reagan administration forced the organized movement into retreat (see review in Banaszak, 2010) underestimates its ability to politicize the Reagan threat.
9. 'Gender Gap.' 5 November 1982. Report by Ronald H Hinckley prepared for the White House Coordinating Council on Women. Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Collections, Sara Fritz papers, Box 3, White House Notes – December 1982.
10. See, for example: 'Written Responses to Questions Submitted by Indro Montanelli, Editor of Il Giornale, on Foreign and Domestic Issues.' The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum Archives. Press release, 1 June 1984. See <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/written-responses-questions-submitted-indro-montanelli-editor-il-giornale-foreign> (accessed 4 November 2022).
11. See, for example: 'Interviews with Representatives of San Antonio, Texas, Television Stations.' Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum Archives. Broadcast interview, 2 July 1984. <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/interviews-representatives-san-antonio-texas-television-stations> (accessed 10 November 2021).
12. Analysts argue that the gap resulted from both items, in addition to a larger complex set of factors (Beal and Hinckley, 1984; Bolce, 1985).
13. Memo from Richard B Wirthlin to Michael K Deaver. 'Women's Issues (Conversation 7/7/83/).' Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Collections, Michael Deaver Collection, Box 63.

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