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Women, Policy, and Party, 1920–1970: A Rational Choice Approach

THE HISTORICAL PUZZLE

The 1970s saw a dramatic increase in the success rate of U.S. women's organizations pursuing congressional support of legislation designed to remove barriers to the progress of women in economic, political, and social arenas. While women's organizations, including both older organizations such as the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (NFBPWC) and newer organizations such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), had lobbied Congress before 1970, that year saw their first major lobbying success. House passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1970 was followed in 1972 by full congressional passage of the ERA and Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act (prohibiting sex discrimination in education), the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and the Women's Educational Equity Act in 1974, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act and the (unprecedented) congressional extension of the ratification period for the ERA in 1978, as well as a host of measures prohibiting sex discrimination in federal programs. The legislative success of women's organizations has continued, albeit with some fits and starts, into the 1980s and 1990s with pension equity reform, child support enforcement legislation, child care subsidies, and parental leave legislation as important examples. As documented by numerous scholars, in all these cases women's organizations provided the primary lobbying support for the successful legislation.[1]

Although seldom remembered, this surge of legislative activity conferring benefits upon women as a group had a precedent, namely a similar

1. See, for instance, Helene N. Silverberg, "Political Organization and the Origin of Political Identity: The Emergence and Containment of Gender in American Politics" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1988); Anne N. Costain, "Women's Claims as a Special Interest," in Carol Mueller, ed., *The Politics of the Gender Gap* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1988).

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albeit shorter-lived trend which occurred between 1920 and 1925. In fact, the entrance of women into the electorate in 1920 had been heralded as a momentous event in American electoral politics. The passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, guaranteeing to American women the constitutional right to vote, had appeared to many contemporaneous observers as only the first step in what would be an inevitable shifting of the political landscape to accommodate the demands of newly powerful women's organizations.

For the first four to five years after the extension of suffrage, the anticipated political clout of women's organizations in national politics appeared to be realizing itself. As historians have amply documented, women's organizations led by the National League of Women Voters (NLWV) were the primary lobbyists for several congressional bills enacted immediately after the passage of constitutional female suffrage.[2] The first and most visible of these congressional victories occurred in 1921 when this coalition of women's organizations successfully lobbied Congress for the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Protection Act. Sheppard-Towner, which provided matching grants to states for pre- and post-natal care under the administration of the Children's Bureau in the Department of Labor, had been the legislative priority of the NLWV and was the first federal social policy measure ever enacted. Also in 1921 women's groups were successful in lobbying for the Packers and Stockyards Control Act, providing for federal regulation of the meat industry, and obtained increased appropriations for the Women's and Children's Bureaus in the Department of Labor.

In 1922 the coalition successfully lobbied for the Cable Act, providing for independent citizenship for married women, and for a bill establishing the U.S. Coal Commission to regulate the coal industry; appropriations for the Women's and Children's Bureaus were again increased. In 1923 the coalition's successes included a "Filled Milk" bill, prohibiting interstate shipment of condensed or evaporated milk containing oil substitutes for butter fat, and the Sterling-Lehlbach Reclassification Act, which *inter alia* instituted the principle of equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex in the civil service. The Division of Home Economics in the Department of Agriculture was raised to Bureau status under lobbying by the NLWV and other women's organizations, and the Women's and Children's Bureaus again received increased appropriations. In 1924 the coalition was able to secure passage of the Curtis-Graham bill, providing for a separate institution for female Federal prisoners, and to win congressional passage of the child

2. Histories of the legislative activities of women's organizations during the 1920s include Clarke A. Chambers, *Seedtime of Reform: American Social Service and Social Action 1918–1933* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963); J. Stanley Lemons, *The Woman Citizen: Social Feminism in the 1920s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890–1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992).

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labor amendment; yet again appropriations for the Children's and Women's Bureaus were increased.

After 1924, however, the success rate for women's organizations in Congress diminished dramatically. In both 1925 and 1926 appropriations for the Women's and Children's Bureaus were reduced, and only one substantive bill supported by the NLWV passed, providing for compulsory school attendance for the District of Columbia. A bill to renew Sheppard-Towner's appropriations was held up in the Senate by a filibuster. In 1927 Sheppard-Towner was extended for two more years but with the provision that the law itself would expire in June of 1929. The subsequent two years saw no more bills supported primarily by women's organizations passed, despite their continued lobbying activity, and the Women's and Children's Bureaus continued to receive the reduced appropriations of 1926. But the real blow to the legislative progress of women's organizations came under the Hoover Administration. Despite a strenuous lobbying campaign to save Sheppard-Towner from repeal, the law was not renewed after its expiration in 1929.

Even more striking, the severely diminished efficacy of women's organizations after 1925 was to last for approximately forty-five years, until 1970. During this period women's organizations were by all accounts simply unsuccessful in influencing the course of policy. During the New Deal years, for instance, although money for maternal and infant health care was restored in the Social Security Act of 1935, in contrast to Sheppard-Towner and over the opposition of women's organizations, this aid was earmarked for "needy" families only.[3] The same Act provided federal money for mothers' pensions in the form of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), but again, over the opposition of women's organizations, the program was means-tested and was administered by the Social Security Board (SSB) as an income-maintenance program. Under the administration of the SSB, clear distinctions emerged between this program for needy mothers and children and programs for male "breadwinners" like Social Security and unemployment insurance.[4] The primary explanation given by those who have documented these distinctions is that the concerns of women's organizations about the program's implementation were easily subordinated to the concerns of more politically powerful groups such as labor unions.[5]

3. Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, 154–55; Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 535–36.

4. See Winifred Bell, *Aid to Dependent Children* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965); Russell L. Hanson, "Federal Statebuilding During the New Deal: The Transition from Mothers' Aid to Aid to Dependent Children," in Edward S. Greenberg and Thomas F. Mayer, eds., *Changes in the State* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1990), 93–114; Barbara J. Nelson, "The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State: Workmen's Compensation and Mothers' Aid," in Linda Gordon, eds., *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 123–51; Christopher Howard, "Sowing the Seeds of 'Welfare': The Transformation of Mothers' Pensions, 1900–1940," *Journal of Policy History* 4 (1992): 188–227; Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 534–39; Suzanne Bridget Mettler, "Divided Citizens: State Building, Federalism and Gender in the New Deal" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1994).

5. See Mettler, "Divided Citizens." Other setbacks for women during the New Deal included Section 213 of the 1932 National Economy Act, which penalized the federally employed

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In the period between the New Deal years and 1970, only two congressional acts were passed which appeared to be designed to provide benefits to women as a group: the Equal Pay Act in 1963, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting sex discrimination in the workplace.[6] However, these two bills are usually distinguished from the wave of legislation which followed in the 1970s because of the odd circumstances that surrounded their passage. The Equal Pay Act was in fact originally a demand of male labor union leaders, who feared the displacement of male wage workers by lesser-paid women. Likewise, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act was originally an amendment to the Act proposed by southern conservatives in an effort to kill the bill.[7] After 1925, we simply do not see a sustained recognition of women as a significant group in policy making until 1970.

EXISTING EXPLANATIONS

What accounts for the variation over time in the political influence of women's organizations? Existing accounts, which unfortunately treat the two periods of these organizations' greatest influence separately, fall into two distinct classes of explanation. The first such class emphasizes the nonelectoral factors which may have influenced the provision of policy benefits for women, of which two have received the most attention in the literature: policy networks and ideological climates. With respect to the first argument, one group of scholars contends that legislators began enacting policies to benefit women both before and immediately after suffrage because of the development of a women's policy network linking the leaders of women's organizations, female academics, and female bureaucrats in the Children's and Women's Bureaus of the Department of Labor; an analogous argument has been made for the late 1960s.[8] If policy conces-

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wives of federal employees (repealed in 1937), the approximately 25 percent of the National Recovery Act codes which allowed lesser wages for women, the 1934 decision of the Attorney General that sex discrimination in the civil service was legal, the refusal of the War Manpower Commission to appoint women between 1941 and 1945, and its concomitant refusal to consider the problems of job training, flextime, and daycare for women wartime workers. Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 79, 90; Judith Sealander, "Moving Painfully and Uncertainly: Policy Formation and 'Women's Issues,' 1940–1980," in Donald T. Critchlow and Ellis W. Hawley, eds., *Federal Social Policy: The Historical Dimension* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 79–96.

6. On the interim period, see Sealander, "Moving Painfully and Uncertainly"; Eugenia Kaledin, *Mothers and More: American Women in the 1950s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984); Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women's Issues 1945–1968* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Patricia Zelman, *Women, Work, and National Policy: The Kennedy-Johnson Years* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982).

7. Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process* (New York: David McKay, 1975), 171–78.

8. Two leading advocates of the policy network approach for the 1920s are Robyn Muncy in *Creating a Female Dominion* and Theda Skocpol in *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, although Skocpol distinguishes her argument by emphasizing the role that women's organizations also played in mobilizing their members to educate public opinion. Both scholars also rely somewhat on a

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sions for women dried up between the mid-1920s and 1970, then there must have been corresponding changes in the strength of these policy networks.[9] Another group of scholars argues that the policy victories won by women's organizations during these periods were due rather to the favorable ideological climates of the late Progressive period and the turbulent 1960s; the general ideological climate in the interim must simply have been hostile to reform legislation of any kind, including that sought by women's organizations.[10]

The second class of explanations for the variation in policies benefitting women relies upon a simple version of strategic electoral politics: women received policy benefits from legislators when legislators believed that women voted as a bloc. Legislators must have believed that women would vote as a bloc immediately after female enfranchisement, but not have believed in women's electoral distinctiveness between 1925 and 1970.[11]

How do these explanations perform empirically? The short answer is, not particularly well. Although it is difficult to construct measures of a "policy network," we can at least ask whether any dramatic variation in such a network occurred which matches the variation in policy outcomes. And while historians of the 1920s have evidently documented a policy network linking women's organizations and key governmental elites in the Women's and Children's Bureaus, historians of the 1930s argue that this policy network continued into the New Deal years.[12] Indeed, students of this period who have placed explanatory weight on the concept of a policy network confess some bewilderment at the abrupt nature of the cessation of policy benefits to the constituents of that network.[13]

Similarly, women's lobbying organizations maintained close ties with administration officials throughout the 1960s without seeing any policy concessions. The woman who was made director of the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor under the Kennedy Administration was even given the brief to strengthen administration relationships with independent

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"climate" explanation for the ebb and flow in the success rate of the policy network (see below). On the late 1960s, see Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberations*, chap. 7; Freeman's text is also in part a "climate" explanation.

9. Thus, for example, Skocpol suggests that the women's organizations composing the first policy network grew weaker over the course of the 1920s; *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 519.

10. For the 1920s, see William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920–1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 29; Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, 129–35; Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 521. For the 1960s and 1970s, see Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, 229.

11. For the 1920s see Chafe, *The American Woman*, 29–30; Lemons, *The Woman Citizen*, 157, 174; Michael McGerr, "Political Style and Women's Power, 1830–1930," *Journal of American History* 77 (December 1990): 864–85, 882; Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, 126; Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 338; Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 521. On the 1970s, see Silverberg, "Political Organization and the Origin of Political Identity."

12. See Ware, *Beyond Suffrage*, for a discussion of the women's New Deal policy network. Also see Ware, *Holding Their Own: American Women in the 1930s*.

13. Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 520–21.

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women's organizations.[14] Kennedy's 1961 President's Commission on the Status of Women was directed by Kennedy himself to work primarily through independent women's organizations.[15] Yet no congressional policy concessions were forthcoming from this policy network.

The ideological climate argument is likewise not convincing. The most thorough study of the relationship between ideological "climates" and legislative output concludes that the Progressive legislative "surge" at the national level may be dated to 1906–1916.[16] Yet women's organizations continued to make legislative gains until 1925. This same study documents that the New Deal legislative "surge" actually began in the second half of Herbert Hoover's tenure in office.[17] Yet women's organizations did not fare any better under the resumption of a more progressive ideological "mood" in 1931 than they had in the supposedly conservative mid-1920s. Similarly, this study dates the ideological surge of the 1960s from approximately 1963 to 1975 or 1976.[18] But the pattern of benefits for women as a group is not neatly demarcated by those dates.

The simple strategic explanation for the variation in the success rate of women's organizations relies on a story about the behavior of female voters: legislative elites responded to women's lobbying efforts when they feared that women would vote as a bloc, and ceased to respond when this fear was proven groundless. But this argument is largely untested, as we cannot know precisely how women voted given the absence of reliable voter surveys during this period. However, we can use the private correspondence of electoral elites as a surrogate for such surveys. Being in the business of winning votes, such elites would have had strong incentives to gather as much information as possible about the voting behavior of significant electoral groups. Did national party elites, for instance, indicate in their records a belief that women in fact constituted a distinct and significant voting group?

Although neither party kept records during the 1920s, Republican presidential papers give us at least partial documentation of the electoral concerns of national party elites. By reviewing those records for the period of 1920–1930, we can gather the best available information as to whether national Republican elites in fact considered women to be a strategically important voting group.

These elites' beliefs about women as a voting group are first recorded for the fall of 1920, after the Republicans' victories in the Maine elections. Both state and national Republican elites attributed their electoral success to their early and strong organization of women.[19] Similarly, in 1922 "orga-

14. Silverberg, "Political Organization and the Origin of Political Identity," 53–58.

15. Ibid., 61–65; Esther Peterson oral history interview, 23, 55, 59, 71, 93, John F. Kennedy Library.

16. David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations 1946–1990* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 157.

17. Ibid., 154. 18. Ibid., 81–91.

19. "Republicans Sweep Maine by 65,000, With Women Casting a Heavy Vote," *New York Times,* September 14, 1920, 1; Warren G. Harding to Anne M. Gannett, Augusta, Maine, Sep-

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nization" candidates for Republican gubernatorial and U.S. senatorial nominations in Pennsylvania and Indiana were defeated by insurgents who attributed their victories to their endorsement by the leaders of the women's party organizations.[20] This explanation for the primary upsets was also voiced by President Harding and other national male Republican elites.[21] After these primary upsets, national Republican elites specifically urged greater attention to the "Woman Vote" for the 1922 fall elections.[22]

By 1924 the Republican National Committee (RNC) had begun to use crude analyses of election returns to try to predict the voting behavior of various electoral groups, and women as a group figured prominently in these analyses. In the fall of 1924 Washington statistician Simon Michelet used a variety of sources across the states to estimate the percentage of women who had voted in the 1920 election (his estimate being 43 percent nationally of native and naturalized white women of voting age), and predicted to Republican elites that "women will be the controlling factor in the 1924 election."[23]

Even after the 1924 elections, that is even after Republican congressional leaders had stopped making policy concessions to women's organizations, Republican elites continued to document their belief in women as a distinct electoral group. In 1926 RNC leaders turned again to Michelet for an analysis of the results of the 1924 election.[24] Once again he noted the importance of women as an electoral group. Michelet claimed that turnout in the 1924 election had increased from 49.5 percent of the voting-eligible population in 1920 to 52.5 percent, and that as the largest unmobilized group, women were potentially primarily responsible for the increase.[25] A

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tember 13, 1920, Warren G. Harding Papers, reel 44, frame 513; Anne M. Gannett to Warren G. Harding, September 14, 1920, Warren G. Harding Papers, reel 44, frames 511–12; Simon Wolf to Warren G. Harding, September 14, 1920, Warren G. Harding Papers, reel 44, frame 520.

20. "Pinchot by 15,000, Machine Hard Hit in Pennsylvania," *New York Times,* May 18, 1922, 1; Esther Everett Lape, "Women's Vote Revolt," *New York Times,* May 28, 1922, VII, 2; "Progressives Seek to Reform Party," *New York Times,* May 19, 1922, 19.

21. Harriet Taylor Upton to Warren G. Harding, May 6, 1922, Warren G. Harding Papers, reel 197, frames 254–57; Harriet Taylor Upton to George Christian, May 17, 1922, Warren G. Harding Papers, reel 236, frames 853–54; Warren G. Harding to Harriet Taylor Upton, May 18, 1922, Warren G. Harding Papers, reel 236, frame 855; "Republicans Find Young Men in Revolt," *New York Times,* June 9, 1922, 2.

22. Warren G. Harding to Harriet Taylor Upton, September 30, 1922, Warren G. Harding Papers, reel 232, frame 685; Reginald Wright Kauffman, "Her Whims as Voter," *New York Times,* October 1, 1922, VIII, 3.

23. Simon Michelet, "American Women at the Ballot," October 5, 1924, Warren G. Harding Papers, reel 132, frame 473; "Says Women's Votes Could Decide the Issue," *New York Times,* October 5, 1924, 8. See "To Bring Out Stay-At-Home Vote," *New York Times,* May 11, 1924, I pt. 2, 5, for an earlier analysis done by Michelet which was commissioned by the Republican National Committee.

24. Edward T. Clark to Simon Michelet, April 3, 1926, Calvin Coolidge Papers, reel 132, frame 473; Simon Michelet to Edward T. Clark, April 5, 1926, Calvin Coolidge Papers, reel 132, frame 473.

25. "Republicans Seek Stay-At-Home Vote," *New York Times,* April 26, 1926, 5.

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senior Coolidge advisor acknowledged receipt of Michelet's analyses by writing that they were "even more interesting and useful than I supposed."[26]

In 1928, a focus on the potential influence of women's votes was even more pronounced in the correspondence of male Republican elites. The first Republican primary of that year was held in Ohio, and Michelet again predicted that women could very likely control the result.[27] The Indiana primary was likewise closely watched by Hoover's campaign managers, with the women's organizer sent into that state from California claiming that "I believe the Indiana women will be the deciding factor in swinging the state into the Hoover column."[28] The effort to mobilize women in these early primaries appeared to pay off according to Hoover's managers:

> From the viewpoint of the student of politics, the most illuminating thing about the Indiana voting was the large part played in it by the *women* voters. They went to the polls by thousands and registered their conviction that Hoover was the right man for the Presidency.[29]

By the end of the 1928 campaign, Republican elites felt confident that their focus on women would pay big dividends on election day. Michelet reported to these elites in late October that women would in all likelihood turn out as a group more than they ever had before: "of this increase [over 1924] all the signs are that the biggest increase will come from the women . . . This time it looks as if by hundreds of thousands they will vote regardless of the views held by their male kinsmen. . . . Watch for a record-breaking vote by the women."[30]

After Hoover's victory, Republican male elites largely attributed the election's favorable outcome to the mobilization of women. The post-election report of the women's Hoover clubs noted this fact with some pride: "For the first time in the history of the Republican party, it has been unhesitatingly acknowledged that women were a telling factor in the last election."[31]

For example, RNC Chairman Hubert Work declared that Hoover would

26. Edward T. Clark to Simon Michelet, April 6, 1926, Calvin Coolidge Papers, reel 132, file 473.

27. "Women Voters in Ohio," *New York Times,* February 25, 1928, 16.

28. Clara Burdette, President, California Federation of Women's Clubs, quoted in Press Release, Hoover-for-President New York State Committee, May 1, 1928, Campaign and Transition Papers, box 210, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Library; "Says Women Are Backing Hoover," *New York Times,* May 2, 1928, 17.

29. William H. Hill, President, New York State Hoover-for-President Committee, in Press Release, New York State Hoover-for-President Committee, May 9, 1928, Campaign and Transition Papers, box 210, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Library.

30. "This Year's Woman Vote to Set a High Record," *New York Times,* October 21, 1928, X, 8.

31. Estelle MacChesney Northam, Assistant Director, Hoover-Curtis Organization Bureau, Western Headquarters, Republican National Committee, 1928, Lou Henry Hoover Papers, box 25, Hoover Library.

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not have won the election if it had not been for the part played by women.[32] Earle Kinsley, Republican National Committeeman from Vermont and Chairman Work's personal aide, proclaimed that "the women were to a large extent responsible for the results,"[33] while the male director of the western Hoover clubs described the mobilization of women through these clubs as spreading "like wild-fire."[34] Hoover himself, in letters to Republican National Committeewomen thanking them for their efforts on his behalf, wrote that "Particularly are we indebted to the women who have shown such devotion to our cause;"[35] his letter to Republican State Committeewomen declared that the election results were due "particularly the women who have played so large a part in our success."[36]

While "unhesitatingly" attributing to women an important electoral role in the 1928 presidential election, national Republican elites desired a more systematic analysis of the precise dimensions of that role. A few statistical analyses were performed immediately after the election, but these mostly concerned turnout. Simon Michelet estimated that approximately 60 percent of the increase in turnout over 1924 was due to previously unmobilized women.[37] Irving Fisher, an economist at Yale University, also performed some rudimentary statistical analyses of the election return and listed as the primary factor determining the outcome "the women's vote." However, Fisher also noted that "it is impossible to demonstrate from the statistics what effect, if any, the women's vote had on the results."[38]

To further clarify the factors contributing to Hoover's election, the RNC's Research Bureau, "as requested by the President-elect," conducted an extensive survey of local Republican elites in the hope that they might be able to shed light on questions which remained murky in national analyses of election returns.[39] This appears to have been the first such survey on the part of national Republican elites, who inquired after specific voting groups, including "finally, but very important, let us have your estimate of the alignment of women."[40] Significantly, the survey was for the

32. Minerva Allen, President, Kentucky Women's Republican League, to Herbert Hoover. January 2, 1929, Campaign and Transition Papers, box 87, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Library.

33. "Gains in Congress Will Help Hoover," *New York Times,* November 8, 1928, 9.

34. Nathan William MacChesney, Director, Hoover-Curtis Organization Bureau, to Herbert Hoover, November 7, 1928, Campaign and Transition Papers, box 163, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Library.

35. Herbert Hoover form letter to Republican National Committeewomen, November 13, 1928, Campaign and Transition Papers, box 75, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Library.

36. Herbert Hoover form letter to Republican State Committeewomen, November 12, 1928, Campaign and Transition Papers, box 75, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Library.

37. "Figures 39,000,000 Voted on Tuesday," *New York Times,* November 11, 1928, 11.

38. "Fisher Analyzes Hoover's Victory," *New York Times,* November 25, 1928, II, 1.

39. J. Bennett Gordon to Lawrence Richey, January 3, 1929, Campaign and Transition Papers, box 157, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Library.

40. J. Bennett Gordon, Research Bureau, Republican National Committee, form letter to Miss Mary B. Sleeth, November 12, 1928, Campaign and Transition Papers, box 157, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Library.

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private consumption of party elites, thereby lessening the probability that the resultant reports were inflated for publicity reasons.[41]

The questionnaire was sent to twenty-three state and local male Republican elites.[42] The summary of the collected reports was striking in its conclusions:

> 1) Most conspicuous and important was the tremendous support given President-elect Hoover by the women. No matter how variant were other influences, or how the support from other groups of voters fluctuated, according to local conditions and political cross-currents, the militant support of Mr. Hoover by America's womanhood was constant in every state . . . Hoover's support by women was the one constant, dominating factor in every state making a report – in many states women offsetting all losses of normal Republican votes due to variously assigned causes. Without this support, Hoover undoubtedly would have lost some states he carried, his margin of safety would have been dangerously narrowed in others, and his defeat in those few states he did not carry would have been overwhelming.[43]

As the foregoing should make clear, political elites' estimates of the significance of women's votes, if anything, grew more definite and became more widespread between 1925 and 1929, a period after the point at which women had ceased to receive policy concessions. The argument that those concessions depended simply on the electoral behavior of women is not well supported. Electoral elites both publicly and privately proclaimed women to be an increasingly important electoral group throughout the 1920s, yet policy concessions did not keep pace with these electoral calculations.

Conversely, national Democratic elites were concerned about women as an electoral group as early as 1952, yet did not begin acting upon that concern by developing policy initiatives until 1970. Immediately following the 1952 presidential election, Democratic elites as well as political commentators began remarking on the significance of an apparently materializing "women's vote" which was significantly more Republican than the men's vote. According to future Kennedy advisor Louis Harris, in 1952 women as a group "broke with the Democratic Party way of voting which they had taken to enthusiastically under Roosevelt": women turned out at a higher rate than men and voted for Eisenhower significantly more than did men.[44] The combination of the apparent emergence of this women's vote, primarily among middle class women, and the defection of suburban Democrats were thought to have thrown the election to the Republicans.[45]

41. Ibid.

42. J. Bennett Gordon to Lawrence Richey, January 3, 1929, Campaign and Transition Papers, box 157, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Library.

43. Ibid.

44. Louis Harris, *Is There a Republican Majority? Political Trends, 1952–1956* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 104. The estimated increase in turnout for women between 1948 and 1952 was 22 percent; the comparable figure for men was 11 percent. Roper-NBC surveys in November of 1952 showed that women preferred Eisenhower to Stevenson by a margin of 17 percentage points; the comparable figure for men was 5 percentage points. Ibid., 108, 116.

45. Silverberg, "Political Organization," 42.

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Harris warned electoral elites of the significance of this development, arguing that the election demonstrated the emergence of women as "a potent, more independent force in politics . . . perhaps less predictable than some other groups, and . . . apt to have standards for voting different from men."[46] Democratic leaders did not necessarily need Harris's warning; even before the publication of Harris's book in 1954, Democratic party leaders were well aware of "the reported trend of women voters toward the Republican ticket,"[47] and discussed this trend in party meetings held after their loss in 1952.[48]

Following the Democrats' defeat in the 1956 presidential election, Chairman Paul Butler told the DNEC that women as an electoral group were the source of the Democratic party's woes: "the most important segment of the electorate, so far as the future plans of the Democratic party is [sic] concerned, is the women of America. I think that we have failed to keep pace with the Republican organization in our appeal to the women."[49] A lengthy discussion was held on how best to win more of this group for the party.[50] The following spring, the leader of the party's national women's organization reminded Butler of his arguments:

> Emphasis is continually placed on the importance of the role of women. You have been a most determined spokesman for this thesis. You have pointed out on many occasions that women and young people are the segments of the population with which we need to do the most work.[51]

In preparation for the 1958 congressional elections, a national Democratic women's meeting was held for the first time in many years and candidates were urged not to overlook women in their campaigns.[52] Again in 1960, Democratic party elites focused on trying to win women as an electoral group.[53] Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy had even expressed the belief that women would hold the balance of power in the 1960 election as early as 1957.[54]

After Kennedy's election, his advisors continued to be concerned about women as a voting group. A confidential strategy memorandum from presidential advisor Clayton Fritchey to Kennedy in 1963 noted that "Women

46. Harris, *Is There a Republican Majority?*, 117.

47. Stephen Mitchell, "Report to Members of the Democratic National Committee and State Chairmen," January 20, 1953, Democratic National Committee (DNC) Papers, box 113, John F. Kennedy Library.

48. Transcript of Democratic National Executive Committee (DNEC) meeting, April 1, 1953, DNC Papers, box 119, 97, 103–8, 111, John F. Kennedy Library.

49. Paul Butler, in transcript of DNEC meeting, November 27, 1956, DNC Papers, box 119, 177, John F. Kennedy Library.

50. Ibid., pp. 169–79, 187; Transcript of DNC meeting, February 15, 1957, DNC Papers, box 119, 85–88, John F. Kennedy Library.

51. Katie Louchheim to Paul Butler, confidential memo, June 26, 1957, DNC Papers, box 442, John F. Kennedy Library.

52. Office of Women's Activities, "Report to the DNC on Women's Activities," February 21, 1958, DNC Papers, box 121, John F. Kennedy Library; Office of Women's Activities, "Candidate Memo-Gram," 1958, DNC Papers, box 442, John F. Kennedy Library.

53. Silverberg, "Political Organization," 45. 54. Ibid., 42.

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now compose a majority of the electorate and this majority is constantly increasing," and that "Some now say that women are indifferent to political recognition of their sex, but I think this is also a miscalculation."[55] The President's Commission on the Status of Women, established in late 1961, was apparently urged by Vice President Lyndon Johnson as a forum for attracting women to the party, and was picked up by the White House as such.[56] In 1964 Johnson himself embarked on a well-publicized campaign to end "stag government" as yet another electoral ploy to attract this group.[57]

By the mid-1950s, then, the Democrats' electoral strategies clearly included women as a distinct electoral group. According to the simple strategic account, electoral calculations should have resulted at least in part in attempts by congressional lawmakers to cater to the policy preferences of women in efforts to win the group's votes. And those efforts did in fact begin occurring in 1970. But there was a gap of approximately twenty years between the reemergence of women as a distinct and significant electoral group and the response of legislators and party elites to women's policy demands.

A RATIONAL CHOICE ACCOUNT OF POLICY CHANGE

The underwhelming explanatory power of existing explanations is perhaps related to their purely theoretical shortcomings. Specifically, both the policy network and the ideological climate arguments do not take into account the electoral constraints facing legislative elites. What incentives do political elites have to respond to some networks, and not others, or at some times, and not others? What leeway do political elites have to pursue their own (possibly ideologically driven) policy preferences rather than the policy preferences of their constituents? Given that these elites must compete for survival in an electoral "game" well-defined by existing political institutions, it is somewhat implausible that electoral or strategic concerns would not be at least the proximate cause of legislators' decisions about which policies to support. Yet proponents of these explanatory approaches rarely seem to consider the electoral incentives of legislators.[58]

The simple strategic approach recognizes the electoral constraints facing legislators, but ignore those facing voters. That is, despite their own preferences about public policy, the discipline of periodic elections supposedly forces legislators to worry first about the preferences of voters. They thus

55. Clayton Fritchey to John F. Kennedy, July 22, 1963, Presidential Subject Files, box 374, John F. Kennedy Library.

56. Esther Peterson oral history interview, 59, 71, 93, John F. Kennedy Library; Silverberg, "Political Organization," 61.

57. Esther Peterson oral history interview, 93, John F. Kennedy Library; Silverberg, "Political Organization," 79–80.

58. See David R. Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 16; John H. Aldrich, *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Party Politics in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 14; John Mark Hansen, *Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919–1981* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), for similar criticisms.

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are likely to instrumentally support the package of policies that maximizes their chances of reelection. Voters, on the other hand, are assumed to rather straightforwardly use their policy preferences as a guide to choosing between competing candidates or parties. But this assumption requires voters who are not instrumentally rational, who do not see how their ability to realize their preferences is constrained by political institutions. If voters in large electorates *were* instrumentally rational, then they would simply never vote on the basis of their policy preferences alone: a single vote has too little impact on the eventual outcome of any election to justify even small opportunity costs of acquiring electoral information and voting (otherwise known as the collective action problem in voting).[59]

Assuming instrumental rationality on the part of both legislative elites and voters, and in the absence of any other mechanism, legislative elites will have negligible incentives to provide policy concessions to voters who cannot be motivated to vote by such concessions. Any explanations for policy change which hypothesize legislative response to voter pressure must thus take into account this implication of the collective action problem in voting.

There *is* a way to account both for positive voter turnout, and for legislative production of policies responsive to the preferences of at least some groups of voters, while retaining an assumption of instrumental rationality for all actors in the explanation. The explanation requires, however, three groups of actors rather than only two: voters, office-seeking legislative or party elites, and benefit- or policy-seeking interest group elites.

Voters. Given the collective action problem in voting referred to earlier, voters will not have sufficient instrumental incentives to vote on the basis of collective policy benefits. Yet positive turnout does in fact exist. Many solutions to this puzzle have been proposed, and many of these solutions have been discarded over the years. An emerging consensus, however, seeks the source of positive turnout in the selective benefits which flow directly from the act of voting itself, as opposed to the collective policy benefits which are dependent upon the outcome of the election. Some forms of selective benefits cannot help us explain positive turnout: material selective benefits such as cash or jobs for voting are no longer extensively used, and intrinsic selective benefits such as a feeling of civic duty do not seem to explain much variation in turnout and, in any case, are inconsistent with the assumption of instrumental rationality. Solidary selective benefits in the form of winning the acceptance of others in some group, however, can form the basis of a good instrumental story about voting.[60]

59. For an overview of the large literature on the collective action problem in voting see John Aldrich, "Rational Choice and Turnout," *American Journal of Political Science* 37 (February 1993): 246–78.

60. This triad of selective benefits for political participation dates to James Q. Wilson's *Political Organizations* (New York: Basic Books, 1975). For a more recent discussion of selective versus collective benefits in voting see Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993).

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Voting in this story is often a social act, in that many voters are likely to talk about elections with others whose approval is often important to voters' social and/or occupational lives. By turning out to vote for the candidate or party who is approved by one's family members, neighbors, coworkers, or even much larger groups such as ethnic, ideological, or racial groups, a voter can win the acceptance of others, or solidary benefits. Conversely, if the individual ignores the wishes of his or her family, friends, or coworkers with respect to voting, or if the individual tries to lie about whether and/or how he or she voted, the individual risks incurring costs in the form of shunning, or diminished social and economic opportunities.[61]

Office Seekers. Social networks organized around family members, friends, and workplaces, however, do not necessarily make voting for a particular candidate or party one of the conditions of group acceptance. Yet those who seek votes clearly have incentives to capitalize on the potential these networks possess for dispensing benefits and inflicting costs for voting.[62] These office-seeking legislative or party elites, or office seekers, will often invest financial and/or organizational resources in coordinating the electoral mobilization of such groups.[63] Indeed, political parties as organizations may have developed precisely in order to coordinate locally based social and economic groups into the provision of solidary benefits for voting.[64]

Note, however, that instrumentally rational office-seeking elites should not have strong incentives to grant policy benefits to any group mobilized to vote under the auspices of the parties or other organizations created by office seekers. If voters can be motivated to vote exclusively by solidary benefits, and if promises of policy concessions garner few additional votes then office seekers have only negligible incentives to make such promises.

Benefit Seekers. Under what conditions *would* office seekers have incentives to make policy concessions to groups of voters? The answer to this question is quite simple, when we consider a third critical group of electoral actors, namely interest group elites or benefit seekers.[65] Unlike office seekers, who

61. Many scholars have written and continue to write about the potential for solidary benefits from voting; see for example Aldrich, *Why Parties?*, 45–50; Rosenstone and Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America;* Carole J. Uhlaner, "Rational Turnout: The Neglected Role of Groups," *American Journal of Political Science* 33 (May 1989): 390–422; Amihai Glazer, "A New Theory of Voting: Why Vote When Millions of Others Do," *Theory and Decision* 22 (May 1987): 257–70; Stephen Knack, "Civic Norms, Social Sanctions, and Voter Turnout," *Rationality and Society* 4 (April 1992): 133–56.

62. Rosenstone and Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America.*

63. The term and its implications are defined by Joseph A. Schlesinger in "The Primary Goals of Political Parties: A Clarification of Positive Theory," *American Political Science Review* 69 (September 1975): 840–49. Schlesinger includes in this category both candidates and those professional politicians such as party elites who run their campaigns. Also see Schlesinger, *Political Parties and the Winning of Office* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

64. Aldrich, *Why Parties?*, 180–93.

65. Schlesinger, "The Primary Goals of Political Parties"; id., *Political Parties and the Winning of Office;* Aldrich, *Why Parties?*, 19–21, 180–93. The important role of benefit-seeking as opposed

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are interested only in maximizing votes, benefit seekers have a personal (profit) interest in obtaining collective policy goods, and know that vote-maximizing candidates and legislators will not have incentives to provide those goods unless the benefit seeker can provide electoral resources such as votes in return.[66] Office-seeking party elites are thus not the only individuals who may seek to coordinate group voting; interest group elites as well have incentives to make investments of time, money, and organizational resources to coordinate group voting through the provision of solidary benefits during electoral campaigns.

Such benefit seekers capitalize on the link between loyalty within a group and power without.[67] If a voter values acceptance by other group members, and if she believes that other group members are going to vote for candidate Y, then the voter will have strong incentives to also vote for candidate Y. If other group members reason similarly, then the group will largely vote for candidate Y. The group will therefore have demonstrated the coordinated group electoral behavior that will win them collective goods from vote-maximizing candidates, even though group members did not vote *because* of those collective goods.

Why would benefit seekers have an interest in obtaining collective policy benefits? Although policies are collective goods, they often contain the potential for the extraction of a small number of private goods in the form of government contracts, administrative positions, and the like. Benefit seekers may see the potential to reap private goods for themselves and their associates through the administration of group collective goods. Probably more importantly, even if a policy contains no possibility for the extraction of private goods, benefit-seeking elites can profit from the status which accrues to group leaders successful in obtaining policy benefits for the group. Success in obtaining policy concessions desired by the group enhances leaders' stature within (and visibility without) their groups.[68]

Electoral leverage, then, is as much a function of the presence of organized benefit seekers as of the receptiveness of a group to mobilization

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to office-seeking elites was also anticipated by Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, 249. A literature also exists on the role of interest group entrepreneurs in solving the collective action problem more generally; see Richard Wagner, "Pressure Groups and Political Entrepreneurs: A Review Article," *Papers on Non-Market Decision Making*, ed. Gordon Tullock (Charlottesville, VA: The Thomas Jefferson Center for Political Economy, 1966), 161–70; Robert H. Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 13 (February 1969): 1–32; Norman Frohlich and Joe A. Oppenheimer, "I Get By With a Little Help From My Friends," *World Politics* 23 (October 1970): 104–20; Norman Frohlich, Joe A. Oppenheimer, and Oran Young, *Political Leadership and Collective Goods* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971).

66. Benefit seekers can also donate money directly to candidates and parties without seeking to coordinate group voting. However, this is typically only the case for groups involving few members, which do not face collective action problems. Those groups which are large require the expenditure of resources merely to solicit funds, and such groups will usually be cash-poor and vote-rich. Jeffrey Berry, *The Interest Group Society* (New York: HarperCollins, 1989).

67. Uhlaner, "Rational Turnout," 392.

68. Frohlich and Oppenheimer, "I Get By With a Little Help From My Friends"; Uhlaner, "Rational Turnout," 406. This point obviously applies with most force to the (possibly quite small) circle of group members responsible for choosing leaders of the group.

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appeals during election campaigns. Indeed, in this account both conditions are necessary (although not sufficient) for a group to receive policy benefits from office seekers: the capacity of the group for electoral coordination by appeal to solidary benefits and the actual coordination of the group by organized benefit seekers. Group electoral mobilization through channels other than those provided by benefit-seeking organizations will *not,* therefore, lead to policy change. For example, if group mobilization were performed exclusively by the office-seeking party organizations, we would have no reason to expect any policy change, given the motivation of the office seekers who typically control political party organizations. Voters, however, would not necessarily care to differentiate between a political party making appeals to group-based solidary benefits from voting and an independent benefit-seeking organization making such appeals. It is quite plausible, therefore, that even a distinct and electorally significant group could be mobilized to vote exclusively by the party organizations and not receive any policy concessions in return.

TESTING THE ARGUMENT

The two requirements of policy change under our revised strategic story are that a given group be capable of electoral mobilization through social networks, and that the group be mobilized to vote by independent benefit-seeking organizations. The first condition is thus nearly identical to the simple strategic story, namely whether a group can be mobilized to vote distinctively as a group. In the previous section we reviewed the evidence as to whether office-seeking elites believed that women constituted a distinctive voting group throughout the 1920s and in the decades preceding 1970. The evidence suggests that many of those elites did in fact believe that women constituted a distinctive group susceptible to distinctive electoral appeals.

Our revised strategic story goes beyond the simple strategic story, however, in also requiring that the group have been mobilized to vote by benefit-seeking rather than purely office-seeking organizations. Our independent variable here is thus whether policy-seeking interest group elites have at least the publicly stated intention to engage in mobilization efforts to affect electoral campaigns. What is the value or status of this independent variable with respect to women's organizations between 1920 and 1970?

While little known, the NLWV, formerly the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), began its career in 1920 as a lobbying organization for women with the stated intention of mobilizing women in electoral campaigns if necessary to achieve policy concessions for women.[69] In the fall of 1920, NLWV elites in fact declared such a tactic to be neces-

69. This and the next two paragraphs are from Anna L. Harvey, "The Political Consequences of Suffrage Exclusion: Organizations, Institutions, and the Electoral Mobilization of Women," *Social Science History* 20 (Spring 1996): 97–132.

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sary and sought, in collaboration with their New York affiliate, to unseat Republican U.S. Senator James Wadsworth by coordinating women's votes. In this, the League was unsuccessful, and late that year League elites decided privately and provisionally to repeal the NLWV's candidate endorsement policy. This decision was not publicly announced, however. In 1922 at the annual NLWV convention, an inconclusive debate was held on the League's electoral policy; this debate was reported in the press. In 1923, the NLWV Executive Board decided to continue the suspension of the League's policy of targeted electoral mobilization; this decision was again not announced to the press. Despite several reconsiderations of an electoral strategy throughout the 1920s, the NLWV never again pursued such a strategy.

What could office-seeking elites reasonably have believed about the NLWV's potential to wield an electoral threat? As of 1922, the NLWV was publicly on record as still considering targeted electoral mobilization against candidates who refused to support the League's congressional policy agenda. The League was therefore still a potential electoral threat. But after the League's inaction in any elections in 1922 or 1924, office-seeking elites could have been reasonably confident that the League would not retaliate electorally if the flow of policy concessions dried up.

In the absence of efforts by women's benefit-seeking organizations to coordinate women's votes by appealing to solidary incentives, how in fact were women being coordinated to vote in such a way as to attract attention from office-seeking party elites? The answer is simple: immediately upon female enfranchisement both major parties created women's divisions within the party organizations for the express purpose of coordinating women's votes by appealing to the apparently strong norms among women as to appropriate group behavior (norms made very clear to party elites during the suffrage movement itself). These women's divisions in both parties were very active at all levels of elections throughout the 1920s.[70]

The parties thus began pursuing the electoral mobilization of women as a distinct group immediately upon female enfranchisement, and continued to do so well into the 1960s. Between 1920 and the end of 1924, however, the parties faced potential competition in the mobilization of women from the NLWV. And as long as office-seeking elites faced the threat of competition for women's electoral loyalties from a benefit-seeking women's organization, these office-seeking elites would have had incentives to respond to the lobbying efforts of women's organizations for policy concessions. After 1924, office-seeking elites would no longer have had such incentives. This pattern in the NLWV's potential to wield an electoral threat thus nicely matches the pattern observed in congressional policy concessions to women's organizations.

Between 1925 and 1968 historians tell us that no large women's organiza-

70. Ibid.; Harvey, *Votes Without Leverage: Women in American Electoral Politics, 1920–1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), chaps. 3–4.

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tions participated in electoral campaigns.[71] No significant policy concessions to women's organizations were forthcoming, either. This situation changed in 1968, however. NOW was formed in 1966 out of a conference of State Commissions on the Status of Women to pursue the removal of legal barriers to women's economic, political, and social advancement.[72] In 1967 NOW President Betty Friedan recommended the organization of a feminist voting bloc in the 1968 elections, to punish and/or reward legislators from both parties as needed.[73] NOW's electoral activity was quickly joined by other women's organizations, which in 1970 united in a coalition pursuing congressional passage of the ERA. As articulated by Lucille Shrier, national director of the NFBPWC, the coalition's electoral threat was unambiguous: "If this amendment is defeated, we would cooperate with other major women's groups in trying to get rid of those Congressmen who fought us. That's where we would direct our campaign this fall."[74] The NFBPWC and NOW orchestrated a letter-writing campaign to pressure indecisive Representatives to sign a discharge petition forcing the ERA to the floor of the House for a vote, and the House passed the Amendment shortly thereafter.[75]

For every other piece of legislation during the 1970s which involved conferring benefits on women as a group, independent women's organizations testified at hearings and organized grass-roots activity to pressure vote-minded legislators.[76] Although the conventional wisdom is that women's organizations turned to electoral politics only in the 1980s, most famously with NOW's first official endorsement of a presidential ticket in 1984, in fact all the lobbying activity engaged in by those organizations throughout the 1970s was clearly electoral in nature. And after this wave of independent electoral pressure on political elites began in 1970, policy defeats for these organizations appear to have come not from the inattention of elites to their demands, but rather from the victories of a competing network of independent women's organizations which developed to stop ratification of the ERA and to oppose the liberalization of abortion polices.[77]

Our revised strategic story, based on the implications of the collective action problem in voting, thus appears to fit the pattern of policy concessions better than the stories based on policy networks, ideological climates, or a simple electoral account. But although we appear to have explained the pattern in policy outcomes, we have tested the revised strategic story on only one dependent variable, namely policies for which women's organizations lobbied between 1920 and 1970. We would be able to have much more confidence in the strength of our arguments if they predicted outcomes in other dependent variables which we could investigate.[78] Indeed,

71. See above, fn. 6–8.

72. Betty Friedan, *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (New York: Random House, 1976), 80–86.

73. Ibid., p. 101. 74. *New York Times*, September 20, 1970, 98.

75. Friedan, *It Changed My Life*, 101. 76. Silverberg, "Political Organization," 153–206.

77. Ibid., 223–69.

78. Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 223–4.

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theoretical arguments which did not make predictions beyond the original case they were developed to explain would not be particularly powerful theoretical arguments.

Fortunately, our arguments do make predictions for another set of dependent variables with which we can test the proposition that it was the potential electoral threat posed by women's organizations which produced congressional concessions to those organizations' legislative agenda. Women in the parties throughout the period in question lobbied male partisan elites for *organizational* concessions within the parties themselves. The fact that both parties' elites set up "women's" divisions at the national level and in most states upon female enfranchisement implies that existing party committees became exclusively "men's" committees unless explicit provisions were made for designated women's seats on those committees. Believing (correctly) that the "real" party decisions were being made by the men's committees, female party leaders in both parties throughout the 1920s sought access to the men's committees.[79]

What would we predict would be the response of male party elites to the women's demands for organizational concessions? As discussed previously, we reasonably assume that legislative elites have only negligible incentives to make policy concessions in the absence of good electoral reasons to do so. For the same reason, we can as reasonably assume that party elites would be unwilling to make any organizational concessions which would restrict their flexibility to make strategic electoral decisions, unless they as well had good electoral reasons to do so.

But if the women responsible for mobilizing potential female voters under the organizational auspices of the parties were successful in that mobilization, and could credibly claim to be able to withold turnout, for example, if their demands were not met, would not party elites be forced into responding to their demands? The answer is simple: not if male party elites continued to *control* the women's divisions through their power to appoint female personnel and to provide budgets for those divisions. As long as male party elites continued to control the women's divisions in either or both of these ways, then any threats emanating from the leaders of the women's divisions could be effectively countered by removing these troublemakers from the party organization or by withdrawing funds for the committee in question.

In fact, such male control of both parties' women's divisions was apparent throughout the history of those organizations.[80] It follows that male party elites would have had no internal incentives to respond to any demands originating from within the women's organizations. Only an external threat somehow linked to those demands could have given male elites any incentives to respond favorably. For instance, if the NLWV or its allies lobbied male party elites in support of the female partisan's organizational demands, then while the NLWV was an electoral threat male party elites

79. Harvey, *Votes Without Leverage*, chap. 5. 80. Ibid., chaps. 5–6.

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would have had incentives to respond to those demands. And in fact, one of the issues lobbied for by NLWV elites during the 1920s was the equal status of women within the political party organizations.[81]

Given the foregoing set of facts, the response of male party elites to the female leaders' organizational demands constitutes a new dependent variable on which to test the hypothesis that it was the existence of an independent electoral threat which produced incentives for electoral elites to respond to organized women's demands. Moreover, because we can examine the pattern of organizational concessions in both national parties and also in parties at the state level, we can further multiply the number of dependent variables with which to test our argument. If a pattern like that found with respect to the League's lobbying for policy concessions can also be found with respect to the demands of women from within the parties for greater access to party committees, then the hypothesized causal link between the electoral involvement of women's organizations and their efficacy in congressional lobbying is lent additional support.

For the period of the 1920s I examined the pattern in the grants of access to men's committees which were made to women in four party organizations: both national major party organizations, and both New York State major party organizations. Does that pattern match the pattern in the League's electoral policy? The answer for all four cases appears to be yes: despite ongoing male control of the women's divisions throughout the 1920s, between 1920 and 1925 male leaders in all four party organizations did in fact respond favorably to the demands of female party leaders for greater access to male party committees.

In the New York State parties, winning access to the men's committees meant changing the electoral laws which governed those committees. Yet in the Republican party, for example, between 1920 and 1925 women won support from state party leaders for changing those laws. In 1920 the Republican state leadership announced its support of legislation which would have made women eligible for election to new seats on the state committees, if the parties so desired; this bill did not make it through the state legislature.[82] In early 1922, the Republican governor again endorsed the general principle of granting women more access to party committees. Also in 1922, a bill was passed by the Republican-controlled state legislature which called for the election of at least two county committee members from election districts previously represented by only one seat on these committees.[83] In August, in response to yet more prodding from the wom-

81. "Women's Progress in Year Applauded," *New York Times,* August 26, 1921, 3; "Still Human Beings," *New York Times,* August 27, 1921, 8; September 16, 1925 Executive Committee meeting, in Papers of the League of Women Voters, pt. I, reel 2, frame 728; September 17, 1926 Board meeting, in Papers of the League of Women Voters, pt. I, reel 3, frames 676, 675.

82. "Mack Senate Boom Started by Women," *New York Times,* February 8, 1920, 12; "Puts Women On Committees," *New York Times,* February 23, 1920, 15; "Two Women Urged on 'Big Four' Slate," *New York Times,* February 24, 1920, 1.

83. "Legislature Opens Session With Rush," *New York Times,* January 5, 1922, 4; "Get Bill for

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en in the party, the Republican State Committee voted to change the party rules governing county committee elections so that the doubling of county committee representation would result in one woman being elected for every man.[84] Later that same year, the Republican State Convention endorsed the representation of women on the State Committee.[85]

The following year, 1923, the Republican State Executive Committee adopted resolutions calling for an equal number of men and women on this body, asking the Legislature to amend the election law to provide for two members of the state committees from the larger Senatorial Districts instead of the Assembly Districts, and endorsing the principle of equal representation by sex from those districts.[86] Meeting in September, the Republican State Committee also adopted the recommendations of its Executive Committee.[87] In 1924, after several weeks of conferences, the Republican legislative leadership agreed on a bill to change the basis of representation on the state committees from the one hundred-fifty Assembly to the fifty-one Senate districts, with two members elected from each Senate district.[88] However, this bill was killed in the Democratic-controlled Senate.[89] That year's Republican State Convention reaffirmed the endorsement by male party elites of the principle of female representation on the state committees.[90]

From 1925 to the end of the decade, the Republican State Committee and Republican State Conventions made no new promises as to female representation on party committees. Republican legislators did act in 1925 to fulfill the many promises made by the party in earlier years to provide for women on the state committees; in that year the Republican-controlled legislature enacted legislation permitting the parties to change the basis of representation for their state committees, and allowing for sex-based representation if the parties so desired.[91] Early in the following year the Republican State Committee acted on its own prior promises, moving to amend its

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Party Committee Women," *New York Times,* January 26, 1922, 19; "Report Will Favor Women," *New York Times,* February 8, 1922, 19.

84. "County Committees to Be Half Women," *New York Times,* August 6, 1922, 10.

85. "Platform Pleases Republican Women," *New York Times,* September 29, 1922, 2.

86. "Women Seek Places in State Committee," *New York Times,* June 10, 1923, II, 1; "Republican Women To Press Demands," *New York Times,* June 14, 1923, 10; "State Republicans Dodge Dry Question," *New York Times,* June 15, 1923, 1.

87. "Lehman Named by Republicans, Too; Smith is Assailed," *New York Times,* September 30, 1923, 2.

88. "Equality Planned on State Committees," *New York Times,* February 14, 1924, 19.

89. "Stand by Film Censorship," *New York Times,* February 29, 1924, 19; "Mrs. Sabin Replies to Mrs. Blair's Charge," *New York Times,* June 22, 1924, 24.

90. "Women Play a Big Part," *New York Times,* September 24, 1924, 2; "Anti-Klan Forces Win by One Vote," *New York Times,* September 25, 1924, 1; "Roosevelt Nominated for Governor," *New York Times,* September 26, 1924, 1.

91. "Lowman to Control Party in Senate," *New York Times,* January 25, 1925, 17; "Finds Leaders Friendly," *New York Times,* January 26, 1925, 2; Women Press Leaders for Equality Bill," *New York Times,* February 10, 1925, 25; "Assembly Passes Measure Affecting Women Politicians," *New York Times,* March 26, 1925, 2.

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internal rules so that of two representatives elected from each Assembly District in the fall primaries to the State Committee, one was required to be a woman.[92]

The combination of the new law, silent on sex-based balloting, and the party's sex-based rules, proved susceptible to legal challenge.[93] It was not until 1929 that a constitutionally permissible amendment to the state election law passed the Legislature which empowered the state committees to "provide for equal representation of sexes from each unit" and added, "When any rule provides for the equal representation of sexes from each unit, the designating petitions and primary ballots shall carry party positions separately by sexes."[94] During this period women served for only a brief time on the Republican State Committee, although the time was apparently long enough to generate resentment among many of the male State Committee members, several of whom called at the close of 1927 for the County Chairmen to run the affairs of the party.[95]

By 1930, then, Republican organization women could finally sit on the Republican State Committee, as had been promised to them as early as 1920 by male state party elites. But also by 1930, male Republican elites had found a way to effectively revoke that earlier grant of access. Male party leaders in Erie County had never acceded to the State Committee's directives that county state committee delegations be evenly split between men and women, and had kept these groups all male. When state party women attempted to rectify this situation in 1930, they invoked the State Committee's rule, passed in 1926, that required all county committees to send one woman and one man from each assembly district to sit on the State Committee. The Secretary of the Republican State Committee, however, flatly denied the existence of such a rule, forcing the women to contest the county organization's nominations in the fall primaries.[96] Moreover, the backtracking by male state elites now left the door open for other counties to again send only male representatives to the State Committee.

After another party reorganization at the close of 1930, this issue was essentially rendered moot. Amidst growing complaints from male State Committeemen that the newly doubled State Committee (now 316 members) was too large to transact party business, the Republican State Chairman announced the creation of an even newer committee to manage the affairs of the party. This new State Executive Committee was intended, said the Chairman, to function much as had the old State Committee during the years prior to the enfranchisement of women. The new committee was

92. "Smith Sticks to Retirement Plan; Says 'It Must Be'," *New York Times,* January 16, 1926, 1; "State Republicans Meet Here in Fall; Wet Victory Seen," *New York Times,* May 22, 1926, 1.

93. "Test on Women Members," *New York Times,* September 26, 1926, 18; "Legislature Delays Adjourning a Week," *New York Times,* March 8, 1928, 3.

94. *New York Times,* April 13, 1929, 6; "Up-State Women in Fight for Place," *New York Times,* August 24, 1930, III, 5.

95. "Republican Chiefs in Up-State Revolt," *New York Times,* December 18, 1927, 26.

96. "Up-State Women in Fight for Place," *New York Times,* August 24, 1930, III, 5; "Women Take Active Part," *New York Times,* September 14, 1930, III, 5.

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appointed by the State Chairman, and consisted of nineteen men and only five women.[97] The long struggle of Republican organization women to gain access to the elected State Committee appeared now to be irrelevant.

A similar pattern may be seen with respect to the New York Republicans' selection of delegates to the national and state party conventions. In 1920, the state party sent four male delegates at large to the Republican National Convention, and only one woman out of four alternates at large.[98] In 1924, women received two out of seven delegates at large and three out of seven alternates at large.[99] in 1928 women received no further gains, receiving again two out of seven delegates at large and three out of seven alternates at large.[100] At their own state conventions, the percentages of women who were delegates and alternates grew from a combined total of 20 percent in 1918 to 29 percent in 1924, but then fell to 24 percent in 1932.[101]

In the New York State Democratic party, a nearly identical pattern in grants of access occurred. In 1920 male Democratic leaders announced their support of legislation permitting women to serve on the party state committees.[102] And after the passage of the 1922 bill doubling county committees, the Democratic State Committee enacted a rule making compulsory the selection of a woman for every man serving on the county committees and calling for the appointment of Vice Chairwomen of those committees.[103] The following year the Democratic State Committee adopted a resolution asking the Legislature to provide for the election of two rather than one state committee member from each Assembly district, "in order that if the electorate so desire the representative from each district may consist of one man and one woman."[104] In 1924 the Democratic State Committee again endorsed legislation doubling the number of seats from each Assembly district on the parties' state committees, with the expressed intent that the new seats would be filled by women.[105] After a bill permitting such representation became law in 1925, the Democratic State Committee voted to double itself by electing two members from each of the states' one hundred-fifty Assembly districts, with a statement that it was "the

97. "24 Named By Macy To Lead State Party," *New York Times,* December 21, 1930, 1.

98. "But One Woman Delegate," *New York Times,* March 2, 1920, 17; "Republicans Finish Up-State Slates–Only One Woman Chosen by the Organization for National Convention Delegate," *New York Times,* March 5, 1920, 17; "Republicans Slate Only Two Women," *New York Times* March 8, 1920, 15.

99. "State Republicans Commend Coolidge and Attack Smith," *New York Times,* April 17, 1924, 1.

100. "Republican Chiefs in Up-State Revolt," *New York Times,* December 18, 1927, 26; "Plan Republican Meeting," *New York Times,* January 9, 1928, 2; "Republican Women Meet," *New York Times,* January 13, 1928, 12; "Republican Women Want 3 Delegates," *New York Times,* January 14, 1928, 2; "Republican Women Gain a Delegate," *New York Times,* May 23, 1928, 2.

101. "Want Roosevelt to Lead in State," *New York Times,* July 18, 1918, 9; Marguerite Fisher, "Women in the Political Parties," *The Annals of the American Academy* 251 (May 1947): 87–93, 92–93.

102. "Mack Senate Boom Started by Women," *New York Times,* February 8, 1920, 12.

103. "Anti-Hearst Women Will Organize City," *New York Times,* June 28, 1922, 19.

104. "Lehman is Named For Appeals Court," *New York Times,* September 29, 1923, 3.

105. "Women Democrats Lose Equality Point," *New York Times,* September 26, 1924, 3.

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sense of the committee" that a man and a woman should be elected from each district.[106]

As discussed previously, the representation of women on the Democratic State Committee would not be legal until 1930. In the meantime, Democratic women saw no other grants of representation by male state party elites. In fact, at the 1926 Democratic State Convention, where women sat for the first time on the State Committee, the Democratic State Chairman sought to remove the leader of the state party's women's organization as the First Vice Chairman of the State Committee in favor of a man, Caroline O'Day holding that post by "courtesy" only.[107]

Male state Democratic elites also displayed a willingness to grant women partial access to national convention delegations during the early 1920s, but had backed away from those grants by the early 1930s. In 1920 party leaders named two women out of a possible four as delegates at large to the Democratic National Convention.[108] In 1924, in response to a nation-wide request from the Democratic National Committee, state party elites made an even male/female split in their at-large delegation to the Democratic National Convention a matter of party policy.[109]

By 1932 the Democratic State Committee was prepared to renege on the even male/female split in the at-large delegation to the Democratic National Convention. In March, 1932, male Democratic state leaders decided to nominate only four women out of sixteen delegates at large to the impending national convention. This action was taken despite the repetition by the Democratic National Committee in its convention call that it advised the equal division of delegates at large between men and women.[110]

Similar patterns can be found for both parties' national committees. In 1920, the Republican National Convention increased the membership of the Republican National Executive Committee from ten to fifteen members, with seven of the newly enlarged committee to be female appointees.[111] In June, 1923, President Harding asked the Republican National Committeemen to each appoint an "Associate" Republican National Committeewoman, who would not possess any voting powers. Harding also promised to request the 1924 National Convention to grant women full voting status on the National Committee.[112]

106. "Smith Sticks to Retirement Plan; Says 'It Must Be'," *New York Times*, January 16, 1926, 1.

107. "Women Fight For Mrs. O'Day," *New York Times*, September 27, 1926, 3; "Democrats Re-Elect Committee Officers," *New York Times*, September 28, 1926, 14.

108. "Democratic Women Win Two Places on Party 'Big Four'," *New York Times*, February 26, 1920, 1; "State Democrats Declare Boldly for Dry Repeal," *New York Times*, February 27, 1920, 1.

109. "Democratic Women Win," *New York Times* April 16, 1924, 2.

110. "Democrats to Pick 16 For Convention," *New York Times*, March 5, 1932, 2.

111. "Recommend Putting Women on the Executive Committee," *New York Times*, June 9, 1920, 2.

112. Charles D. Hilles to Warren G. Harding, May 31, 1923, Warren G. Harding Papers, reel 195, frame 182; Charles D. Hilles to Mary Livermore, May 31, 1923, Warren G. Harding Papers, reel 195, frames 183–86; Warren G. Harding to Charles D. Hilles, June 2, 1923, Warren

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At this convention, Republican women had greater representation than they had had in 1920, with one hundred-twenty female delegates attending the convention compared to twenty-six in 1920.[113] Also in 1924, male Republican elites gave women in the national party organization a specific policy role for the first time in the party's history. The female members on the Republican National Committee's Subcommittee on Policies and Platform were charged with "making suggestions for planks of especial concern to women."[114] The 1924 convention delegates did in fact vote favorably on a recommendation from the Rules Committee to have one man and one woman elected by each state or territorial delegation to sit on the party's National Committee; the active membership of the latter was thus increased from fifty-three to one hundred-six, and the number of vice chairmen was increased from one to three, with the provision that one of those posts would go to the female leader of the national women's organization.[115] Male Republican leaders also named a woman to head the Committee on Permanent Organization of the convention, one of the four major convention committees.

By 1928, however, such advances had ceased. The delegate selection process leading up to the 1928 Republican National Convention resulted in approximately half the number of female delegates as had attended the national convention in 1924, namely seventy female delegates.[116] Assistant Attorney General Mabel Willebrandt was given the chairmanship of the Committee on Credentials; this did not constitute an improvement over the chairmanships of convention committees held by women in 1924.[117] After the convention, the national Advisory Committee named by Hoover to run his campaign for the party contained no women. When it met to plan Hoover's campaign in the East, the Republican National Committeewomen were directed to meet in a separate city to plan the women's campaign.[118]

After Hoover's election, the controversy over Sally Hert, the leader of the

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G. Harding Papers, reel 195, frame 181; "Republican Women Gain Recognition," *New York Times,* June 9, 1923, 1; "Republican Leaders Want Women's Advice," *New York Times,* June 13, 1923, 21; "Republican Committeewomen," *New York Times,* June 29, 1923, 16; "G.O.P. Women To Enter National Committee," *New York Times,* June 26, 1923, 14. This action was approved by the full National Committee in December 1923; "South Wins Back Delegates Dropped by 1920 Convention," *New York Times,* December 13, 1923, 3.

113. "Few Women Named By Republicans," *New York Times,* June 3, 1928, 4. Sophonisba Breckenridge counted twenty-seven female delegates in 1920 (*Women in the Twentieth Century* [New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1933], 289).

114. Harriet Taylor Upton, in "Women Offer Planks for G.O.P. Platform," *New York Times,* April 7, 1924, 3. Women held twenty-nine of fifty-eight spots on this subcommittee.

115. "Butler is Beaten in Rules Committee," *New York Times,* June 11, 1924, 1; "Platform Wins Amid Cheers," *New York Times,* June 12, 1924, 2.

116. Out of 1,089 voting delegates, 64 were women, compared to 120 female voting delegates present at the 1924 national convention. "Few Women Named By Republicans," *New York Times,* June 3, 1928, 4. Breckenridge counted seventy female delegates. Breckenridge, *Women in the Twentieth Century,* 289.

117. "Women Win Plums At the Convention," *New York Times,* June 12, 1928, 4.

118. "Women Plan Fight to Elect Hoover," *New York Times,* July 25, 1928, 2.

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Republican national women's organization, revealed the demotion of the women's organization in the party hierarchy. In both the Democratic and the Republican national organizations, the national leaders of the parties' women's divisions had since 1920 held the position of Vice Chairmen of the national committees. This mirrored the organizational plan in most states, where women served as vice chairmen of county and state committees. And in at least the Republican party, the award of an RNC Vice Chairmanship to the director of the party's women's division had been a rule enacted by the 1924 Republican National Convention. But when Sally Hert resigned her post as national director of the Republican women's organization in early 1930, she was allowed to keep her Vice Chairmanship of the National Committee. Hert's assistant was named the new director of the party's women's division, thereby severing the tie (however nominal) between leadership in the party and leadership of the women's division.[119] A new leader of the national women's organization was subsequently named in August of 1930; she also was not given a Vice Chairmanship of the National Committee, further indicating that these offices had been disassociated.[120] The director of the Women's Division would in the future be referred to as merely an assistant to the RNC Chairman, and would not have a designated seat on the RNC's Executive Committee.[121]

National male Democratic elites also responded favorably to the women's demands for greater access between 1920 and 1925, but not afterwards. Women had already been given seventeen of thirty-four places on the Democratic National Executive Committee before the 1920 national convention. The convention itself then voted to change the composition of the National Committee by adding one woman from each state.[122] The national Women's Bureau remained in existence to operate as the organizational arm of the National Committeewomen and National Executive Committeewomen.[123]

Prior to the 1924 Democratic National Convention, women's division leader Emily Newell Blair was able to win even more access for Democratic women to the national party's deliberations when she convinced the Democratic National Committee to "suggest" to the state parties that they split their at-large national convention delegations evenly between men and women. In order that men would not be displaced from their former positions of honor, where a state had previously had four at-large delegates, it would now have eight, each with a one-half vote (a state could also send more at-large delegates, further reducing the voting power of each).[124]

119. "Mrs. Hert Quits Republican Post," *New York Times,* January 19, 1930, 24.

120. "Mrs. Yost Selected For Dodson Place," *New York Times,* August 14, 1930, 2.

121. Josephine Good, *Republican Womanpower: The History of Women in Republican National Conventions and Women in the Republican National Committee* (Washington, D.C.: Republican National Committee, 1963), 24, 27, 33, 37.

122. "Committee Votes For Full Hearing," *New York Times,* June 26, 1920, 2; "Women Prominent in Day's Session," *New York Times,* June 30, 1920, 2.

123. "To Keep Women's Bureau," *New York Times,* July 5, 1920, 2.

124. "Smith Boom Grows, State Leaders Say," *New York Times,* February 8, 1924, 1.

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Women wound up with 184 votes at the convention, compared with 104 in 1920.[125] Also prior to the 1924 national convention, the Democratic National Chairman appointed a special women's "advisory" subcommittee on the national platform, to be chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, and asked the subcommittee to craft a "woman's platform of legislation."[126] This women's platform committee, appointed before the announcement of the similar Republican women's platform group, was pathbreaking in the party's explicit recognition of the distinctive legislative agenda of women's organizations.

However, such gains in access were not to continue beyond the 1924 Democratic National Convention. In 1928, despite the continuation of the Democrat's affirmative action plan for delegates at large,[127] the Democrats wound up with many fewer female delegate votes than in 1924 (78¾ female votes, compared to 184 in 1924).[128] And despite the pressure of Democratic women at the convention, no women were appointed to the Resolutions Committee by the state delegations; only one woman each was appointed to the Credentials and Rules Committees; and no women received convention committee chairmanships.[129]

After the 1928 convention, Democratic women were shut out of the planning for presidential nominee Al Smith's campaign, as Republican women had been excluded from planning Hoover's campaign.[130] Male party elites created an all-male National Advisory Committee, consisting of ten to fifteen regional representatives who would manage the campaign: only at the insistence of Nellie Tayloe Ross was a Woman's Advisory Committee also named, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt.[131]

After their electoral defeat in 1928, national Democratic elites sought once again to reorganize and strengthen their party organization. Conferences were held between the Democratic National Chairman, the male members of the Democratic National Executive Committee, the male advisory committee from the past campaign, and selected Senators.[132] One outcome of these all-male conferences was that it was decided that the policy commitments of the party would come from the Democratic Senators' speeches and sponsored bills.[133] This was not good news for women within the party organization who were seeking to further their policy preferences by securing more access to previously all-male party committees.

125. "Women to Muster 308 at Convention," *New York Times,* June 27, 1920, 2. Sophonisba Breckenridge counted ninety-three female delegate votes at the 1920 convention (*Women in the Twentieth Century,* 289).

126. "Democratic Women to Help On Platform," *New York Times,* March 31, 1924, 2; "Women Are Slow to Use the Ballot," *New York Times* April 20, 1924, IX, 1.

127. "Democrats Issue Convention Call," *New York Times,* January 28, 1928, 6.

128. "Mrs. Blair Urges a Short Platform," *New York Times,* June 24, 1928, 3.

129. "Few Committeewomen," *New York Times,* June 27, 1928, 2.

130. "Governor Smith Enjoins Aides to 'Get Busy'," *New York Times,* July 13, 1928, 1.

131. "Smith Declares He Will Be Active in State Campaign," *New York Times,* July 19, 1928, 1.

132. "Democrats Confer on National Policy," *New York Times,* April 20, 1929, 2.

133. "Senators to Guide Democratic Party," *New York Times,* April 21, 1929, 13.

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Given the continuing male control of the women's division, what explains the grants of access which *were* made to women in the party organizations up to 1925? The most plausible answer is the same as that given for the analogous pattern in policy concessions to women by national party leaders: the electoral threat posed by independent women's organizations which supported the demands of female party leaders.

For the period after the 1920s, I examined the grants of access made by male party elites to women in both national parties. In the national Democratic party, no major changes occurred in women's status within the party organization throughout the New Deal years. In 1953 the Democratic party officially "integrated" its women's division with its men's organization.[134] This move had not been a demand of the leaders of the women's division; in fact organization women had not been consulted nor even informed of their changed status before the public announcement of such.[135] While this announcement was couched in the rhetoric of equal rights, as admitted by the DNC Chairman the integration was no more than a budget-cutting measure.[136] "Integration" did not mean that women were no longer to be considered a distinct electoral group; as former (now deposed) women's division leader India Edwards said shortly after "integration," "we know there always will have to be some special programs for women."[137]

After "integration" such special programs were to be managed by a greatly reduced staff. Of the six women remaining on the permanent staff of the Women's Division in 1952, three were moved to other divisions and one secretary was fired, leaving an assistant and a secretary for the director of the renamed Office of Women's Activities (OWA).[138] This was to remain the staff of the OWA throughout the 1950s and 1960s, with only a few additional workers hired during election years.[139] The women's magazine, the Democratic Digest, was taken away from the Women's Division and made the publicity organ of the entire party.[140]

The announcement itself occasioned a series of discussions held in DNC and DNEC meetings on the position of women in the Democratic organizational hierarchy. In these meeting it was openly stated by both India Edwards and the national party chairman that women had always been relegated to a subordinate status within the party organization; these statements were not disputed.[141] India Edwards in fact mocked the "integration" language used by male party elites in a mock press release which she read to the DNEC:

134. Press Release, Democratic National Committee, January 26, 1953, DNC Press Releases, box 4, John F. Kennedy Library.

135. Transcript of DNC meeting, September 15, 1953, 25, DNC Papers, John F. Kennedy Library.

136. Transcript of DNEC meeting, April 1, 1953, 114, DNC Papers, John F. Kennedy Library.

137. Ibid., 93–94, also see 97, 103–4, 106–8, 111. 138. Ibid., 118.

139. See Edwards, *Pulling No Punches*, 252. 140. Ibid.

141. See for example transcript of DNEC meeting, February 14, 1953, 58–61, 64–65; transcript of DNEC meeting, April 1, 1953, 91–93, 100–2, 105–6; transcript of DNC meeting, September 15, 1953, 25–26, DNC Papers, John F. Kennedy Library.

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> "The Executive Committee of the Democratic National Committee unanimously passed a resolution this morning endorsing the new policy of integration of women into full Party operations at all levels and recommending to the National Committee that henceforth National Committee men and women have equal authority and that there be two co-chairmen, a woman and a man, of every committee, instead of a man chairman and a woman vice-chairman, as the custom now. The National Committee man and woman and the co-chairmen of the committees will share policy-making, fund-raising and all other activities in which they engage as they perform their work of leading the Democratic Party to victory. The Executive Committee also recommended that the Democratic Manual be amended or rewritten to conform to this new policy of integration." April Fool![142]

Needless to say, Edwards' suggestions were not taken seriously. One other suggestion made by Edwards was that, in the spirit of integration, more women who were not members of Congress be appointed to the Democratic National Congressional Committee, as was evidently allowed by party rules.[143] This suggestion was also not followed.

In November of 1955, the DNC added three more male vice chairmen to its executive committee, increasing the number of male vice chairmen from two to five, while only one female vice chairman of the committee remained.[144] This move was made over the protest of that female vice chairman, who had requested that at least one of the new vice chairmen (chosen to represent the House, the Senate, and the state governors) be a women so as not to alter the male/female balance of this decision-making body. In 1957, the DNC created a new Advisory Committee on Political Techniques to consist of six male regional advisors; this move again occasioned complaints from female National Committeewomen about the increasing burden of male supervision of their activities.[145] At the same time the DNC Chairman created a new position of Deputy Chairman of the DNC, which OWA director Katie Louchheim personally opposed because it implied yet another layer of male hierarchy between herself and the leadership of the party.[146]

In addition to these specific instances which were protested by the leaders of the women's division, there were other complaints after "integration" as well. Democratic National Committeewomen complained that they were not consulted on matters within their jurisdictions,[147] and that they should be recognized as "Co-Chairmen" with the men rather than always vice-

142. Transcript of DNEC meeting, April 1, 1953, 91–92, DNC Papers, John F. Kennedy Library.

143. Transcript of DNEC meeting, April 1, 1953, 284, DNC Papers, John F. Kennedy Library.

144. Transcript of DNC meeting, May 3, 1957, 122–24, DNC Papers, box 121, John F. Kennedy Library.

145. Katie Louchheim to DNC Chairman, June 26, 1957, DNC Papers, John F. Kennedy Library.

146. Ibid.

147. Minutes of DNEC meeting, May 6, 1954, DNC Papers, John F. Kennedy Library.

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chairmen to male chairmen.[148] In 1957 the Director of the OWA protested to the DNC Chairman that the female partisan workers would like to work more but that the men would not give them the opportunity.[149] And in late 1958 the former women's Vice-Chairman of the DNC and head of the Women's Division, India Edwards, wrote an angry letter to Chairman Paul Butler complaining of treatment as a "second class person" and arguing that women had a higher status at Democratic national headquarters in the 1940s than they now had ten years later.[150] Edwards was later to write that the "integration" of the party's women's division was "in theory a step up for women but actually a step way down."[151] No further significant changes were made to the status of women in the party organization during the 1960s.

A similar story may be told for the Republican party. While during the New Deal years Republican National Conventions passed rules which appeared favorable to women, in actuality those rules were infrequently implemented. In 1940 the Republican National Convention passed a rule which stated that "when possible," RNC subcommittees would be composed of equal numbers of men and women. According to later reports by women in the national Republican organization, such action was rarely "possible."[152] In 1944 a similar rule was passed with respect to the national convention's Resolution Committee; in subsequent convention years some state delegations would select a man and a woman to sit on this committee but many would not.[153] Also in 1944 the director of the party's women's division, who had once held the title of Vice Chairman of the Republican National Committee, was further demoted from Assistant Chairman to "Assistant to the Chairman."[154]

At the 1952 Republican National Convention the Women's Division of the Republican party was officially abolished, and the position of Director of the Women's Division was thus eliminated as well. From that point on the coordinator of women's mobilization activities for the national Republican party held the title of assistant to the RNC Chairman and Director of Women's Activities, and managed a much-reduced staff.[155] As with the women in the Democratic party, women in the Republican party were not consulted prior to the decision to eliminate many of the organizational resources of the former women's division.[156] Also in 1952 the RNC was

148. Transcript of DNC meeting, February 15, 1957, 87–88, DNC Papers, box 119, John F. Kennedy Library.

149. Katie Louchheim to DNC Chairman, June 26, 1957.

150. India Edwards to Paul Butler, December 8, 1958, DNC Papers, box 439, John F. Kennedy Library.

151. Edwards, *Pulling No Punches,* 104.

152. Josephine L. Good, *Republican Womanpower,* 22, 24, 35. 153. Ibid., 26.

154. Ibid., 24, 27, 33, 37.

155. Clare B. Williams, *The History of the Founding and Development of the National Federation of Republican Women* (Women's Division, Republican National Committee, 1963), 32–33.

156. Eugenia Kaledin, *Mothers and More: American Women in the 1950s,* 84–85.

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expanded to allow seats for state chairmen under certain conditions, thereby undermining the male/female balance on that committee established in 1924, and giving party leaders a justification for similarly imbalanced RNC subcommittee appointments.[157] And in 1960, the Republican National Convention extended the 1944 rule on the male/female balance of the Resolutions Committee to all convention committees ("when possible"), but the Resolutions Committee itself was still imbalanced.[158] No significant changes in women's status within the party organization occurred during the 1960s.

We know that women's organizations renewed a policy of electoral mobilization in 1968. Did those organizations pursue, in addition to policy benefits, an improvement of the status of women within the party organizations? The answer is a resounding yes. The National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) was formed in July, 1971, out of a conference called by NOW to discuss the place of women in politics.[159] At the conference, participants passed a resolution calling for both parties to select women to 50 percent of their national convention delegate positions in 1972.[160] The Caucus' first meeting was held in September, 1971; its first strategy session, held the following month, developed as the Caucus' first priority the lobbying of both parties to ensure a healthy representation of women at both national party conventions.

The Democratic Party's Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection, otherwise known as the McGovern-Fraser Commission, had by this point already generated from among its own ranks a statement prohibiting sex discrimination in the delegate selection process for national conventions. However, the Commission had left unclear the means by which that prohibition was to be implemented: a "reasonable relationship" was to exist between a state's demographic makeup and a state's delegation to the party's national convention, but the criteria for establishing "reasonableness" were left unspecified. A footnote to these guidelines placed the Commission as being on record against quotas.[161] In the fall of 1971 the NWPC lobbied the Commission to amend its guidelines to ensure proportional demographic representation of women on the 1972 state delegations to the Democratic National Convention.

The Caucus, with close links to women's organizations threatening to engage in electoral mobilization, was successful. The Commission issued guidelines, ratified by the DNC, which required state parties to select women as national convention delegates roughly in proportion to their presence in the state's general population. If a state delegation were composed of fewer women than this proportion, then the burden of proof would be on state party officials to prove that they had not discriminated in the

157. Good, *Republican Womanpower,* 36. 158. Ibid., 41. 159. Ibid., 465–66.

160. Tim O'Brien, "Women's Caucus Seeks U.S. Ban on Sex Bias," *Washington Post,* July 13, 1971, A2.

161. Byron E. Shafer, *Quiet Revolution: The Struggle for the Democratic Party and the Shaping of Post-Reform Politics* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1983), 138–42, 169–72.

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delegate selection process.[162] The rule had immediate effects; in 1972, the percentage of Democratic national convention delegates who were women rose to 40 percent from 13 percent in 1968. Explicit quota provisions for women in the Democratic party were then further expanded in subsequent years. Republican party elites acted similarly: a national committee on party reform authorized by the 1968 Republican National Convention recommended the expansion of affirmative action language in the selection of national convention delegates. The 1972 national convention, at which female delegates comprised 30 percent of the delegates compared to 17 percent in 1968, approved this recommendation and created a committee to work with state parties to implement this reform.[163]

In short, the changes in the status of women in the party organizations mirrored the changes in the willingness of congressional legislators to grant policy concessions to women's organizations. In both cases, the best explanation for those changes appears not to be a women's policy network, a favorable ideological climate, or the emergence of women as an electoral group. Rather, the best explanation appears to be the willingness of *independent* women's organizations, rather than *partisan* women's organizations, to coordinate the electoral mobilization of women.

CONCLUSION

Existing explanations are not particularly helpful in explaining the variation in both policy and party benefits extended to women since female enfranchisement in 1920. Moreover, these arguments are also weak on purely theoretical grounds. Happily, when we address the theoretical problems of these explanatory arguments, we find that the revised strategic story appears to do a much better job of accounting for this variation. In short, an explanation for policy change which recognizes the centrality of the collective action problem in voting seems to be our best bet for explaining the variation in which we are interested.

An interesting implication of this analysis is that the decisions of women's organizations to mobilize women in electoral politics, or not, loom large in explaining whether women receive policy benefits from office-seeking elites. Given that such benefits are unlikely to be forthcoming in the absence of such electoral activity, why would not women's organizations *always* have an electoral policy?

As I have explored elsewhere, it turns out that the competitiveness of the parties' own women's divisions was probably a critical factor in the decisions made by women's organizations about electoral policy. Women were enfranchised during a period when elections were primarily labor-intensive

162. Ibid., pp. 466–86.

163. Winifred Wandersee, *On The Move: American Women in the 1970s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), 20, 25; Denise Baer, "The National Federation of Republican Women: Women's Auxiliary or Feminist Force?" (paper delivered at the 1995 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, August 31–September 3), 3.

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organizational contests to mobilize partisan supporters. The organizational capacities of the major party organizations made it difficult for independent benefit-seeking groups to compete with the parties in the mobilization of voters by appeal to other than partisan norms of appropriate group-based behavior. Several such benefit-seeking groups were finally able to challenge the parties in this regard, most notably organizations of veterans, farmers, immigrants, and union members. Women's organizations in the 1920s, however, labored under the unique handicaps borne by an enfranchised group entering the new institutional context of electoral politics: given the transition period required to adjust organizationally to such a context, these organizations could not compete with the head start won by the parties' women's divisions in mobilizing female voters, and eventually left the market in women's electoral mobilization.[164]

By the 1960s, however, the parties had become severely weakened by a series of events, the most crippling of which was the advent of television and other campaign-related technologies which undermined the parties' organizational advantages in mobilizing voters.[165] The parties' women's divisions were weakened as well during this period, and evidently benefit-seeking women's organizations finally saw the opportunity to challenge the hold of the parties on women's electoral mobilization. As the evidence suggests, their challenge was successful.

164. Harvey, "The Political Consequences of Suffrage Exclusion"; Harvey, "The Legacy of Disfranchisement."

165. See Aldrich, *Why Parties?*, chap. 8, for an illuminating discussion of the literature on this issue.

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