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“We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men *and women* are created equal (Foner 1967:13). This statement, first drafted in 1848 at the Seneca Falls Convention, is a key statement in the struggle for women’s rights. In 1920, Alice Paul drafted the first constitutional amendment to secure women’s rights. It read, “Men and Women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and in every place subject to its jurisdiction. Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation” (Mansbridge 1986: 8). This Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was introduced into Congress in 1923 and was immediately opposed by unions and progressive organizations that feared “protective” legislation for women, such as shorter working hours and break privileges, would be lifted (Berry 1986). This opposition helped defeat the amendment. It split the liberal voting bloc and put unionists and feminists at odds.

After the ERA’s defeat in 1923, support for women’s rights, more specifically the ERA, faded (Ferree and Hess 1994). While feminists have worked for women’s rights they have not always agreed on what women’s rights mean or how to achieve equality for women. The vote and the ERA are only two ways feminists fought for equality. Many feminists do not believe that a system based on patriarchal values could ever include women. On the other hand liberal feminists believe fighting structural types of inequality, making laws and social policy more equitable, is the best way to achieve women’s equality. The battle for the ERA is grounded squarely in the liberal feminist tradition. They see “social policy as an important force in establishing access to

economic opportunity and civil rights (Ferree and Hess1994:50). While support for the ERA waned from 1920's until the 1960's, feminists were still fighting for equality in the home, work and politics.

While most feminists had redirected their energies to other issues, Alice Paul and the national woman's party continued to lobby for the ERA for the next fifty years. It was not until 1966 and the founding of The National Organization for Women (NOW), that the ERA became a feminist priority again. NOW is grounded in liberal ideals such as personal rights, personal independence and equal opportunity. NOW's leadership quickly decided that the ERA could bring about many of their ideals and goals. Kensinger (1997:2) in her article "(In)Quest of Liberal Feminism" states "there is powerful agreement about who and what should be relied on for an understanding of liberal feminism." NOW is one of these uncontested liberal feminist organizations. The ERA is primarily a liberal goal and NOW is a liberal feminist organization.

Recent ERA History

In 1970, twenty members of NOW stormed the hearings of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments and demanded the ERA be brought to the Senate floor (NOW WebPages). Later that year, Representative Martha Griffiths called on all of her political favors, recruited enough Senators' signatures and filed a discharge petition to pry the Equal Rights Amendment out of the House Judiciary committee (Freeman 1975:213). In 1971, after an hour of debate on the floor, the ERA passed the House with a vote of 350 to 15 (Boles 1979). On March 22, 1972, the Senate passed the ERA with a vote of 84-8 (Boles 1979). This was only the first step in the amendment process. The ERA was passed on to the states where a two-thirds majority would have to approve the Amendment in seven years. In 1979 ERA proponents won a

three year extension allowing state legislatures to continue voting on the Amendment. By 1982 time had run out for the Amendment, and it was three states short of being ratified. While the Amendment failed to be ratified in the time allowed, it is reintroduced into every session of Congress. It has never been back to the Senate floor for a vote.

The ERA was not simply a debate among feminists. In 1972 Phyllis Schlafly formed the organization Stop-ERA. Its sole purpose was to oppose the ERA. Schlafly and her supporters saw the ERA as a threat to traditional families and women's role as mother and wife (Mansbridge 1986). The Stop-ERA also included many women who believed in women's equality and many feminist principles but did not agree with any legislation to bring about equality (Klatch 1987). Stop-ERA quickly caused problem for the Pro-ERA movement. ERA proponents could no longer convince legislators that the ERA would benefit all women, as there was now a large organization of women campaigning against the ERA (Mansbridge 1986). Schlafly and her supporters forced the Pro-ERA movement to defend its position and talk about issues in new ways. I will argue that the framing contest between Stop-ERA and Pro-ERA social movement organizations (SMO's) over the meaning and possible effects of the ERA had an impact on the failure of the ERA.

ERA Research

Why, when a majority of Americans supported an amendment that would give women equality, did the ERA Amendment fail to be ratified (Mansbridge 1986:1)? Many different activists, theorists and researchers have tried to explain why the ERA failed. They have analyzed public opinion, the political climate and the ratification

process, yet no one has analyzed how the Pro-and Stop ERA SMO's presented problems, goals and solutions.

In examining public opinion, Jane Mansbridge (1986:22) found that while Americans believe in equality, they were not willing to undergo a change in men and women's traditional roles. Janet K. Boles (1979) focused on the political climate, and believes that legislators voted against the ERA because it had generated such a heated conflict. In comparing the ERA's ratification process to other amendments, Mary Francis Berry (1986) found that while proponents had won consensus in Congress they lacked the resources or strategy to gain consensus in the states. Mathews and DeHart (1990) point to a combination of all of these factors and also note that the Amendment did not have the support of most men.

While I agree with Mathew and DeHart that many factors affected the failure of the ERA, the literature lacks an analysis of how the opposing movements were able to mobilize constituents, transform bystanders into constituents and debunk opposition attacks. These questions are best addressed by social movement theory.

By focusing on a social movement organization we can understand how it constructs collective-action frames. Collective-action frames, or frames, are "action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization" (Benford and Snow 2000:2). In other words how a SMO frames its issues and goals can have a major impact on the SMO's ability to recruit and mobilize supporters and gain converts. In this specific case I will analyze the frames of both the Pro-ERA and the Stop-ERA to find what impact the collective action frames of these movements had on the ERA.

Social Movement Theory

Social movement theorists offer divergent views on what motivates people to organize and work toward a goal. Before the 1960's, most social movement theorists characterized participants as deviant and disassociated with society, thus they were pathological (Hoffer: 1950. Feuer: 1969. Smelser: 1962). In the 1960's, as researchers began to study social movements of the time and participate in social movements themselves, they developed new ways to explain participants' mobilization into social movements. Resource mobilization (RM) theorists stress the rationality of social movement participation and the importance of structural factors, such as money, prestige and social position on social movement success (Klandermans: 1984). Resource mobilization theorists believe that structural resources are the key component to mobilizing social movement participants (Gamson 1975, McCarthy and Zald 1977). These theorists believe that there are always grievances in a society, but that grievances are not enough to produce collective action. Instead, McCarthy and Zald (1977:1215) explain, "there is always enough discontent in any society to supply the grass-roots support for a movement if the movement is effectively organized and has at its disposal the power and resources of some established elite group".

While RM theory concentrates on a movement's organization and resources, it fails to explain how SMO's construct and express grievances and how participants are motivated to participate. Social Psychological (SP) perspectives have provided researchers new ways to study the goals and tactics used by SMO's to mobilize individuals. Researchers using the new social psychological perspective believe that we need to analyze how grievances, ideology and collective identity work to mobilize

constituents (Snow and Benford 1988, Klandermans?). This approach analyzes how SMO's construct meaning, define the problem and legitimate their goals. McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996:5) note, "Mediating between opportunity, organization and action are the shared meanings and definitions that people bring to their situation." In other words, the rationale for participating is an important link in understanding how social movements work.

While there are many different social psychological theories on collective identity, ideology and mobilizing structures, only framing theory analyzes the link between the construction of ideology and mobilization. Framing is described by Snow and Benford (1988: 198) as, "to assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists". In order for smo's to attract and activate members they must present the problem and a solution in a way that indicates a mode of action.

There are many components to framing, though for this research project I will only concentrate on Snow and Benford's (1988) theory of Framing, specifically their first set of factors, the core framing tasks. These are diagnostic framing or identifying and naming the problem, prognostic framing or identifying and naming solutions and motivational framing or providing a rationale for action. The more a SMO develops and integrates these three tasks the more successful their mobilization effort will be (Snow and Benford 199).

In order to identify the core framing tasks of the Pro-ERA and Stop-ERA movements it is necessary to analyze their newsletters to find how they presented their issues to their constituents. By conducting a content analysis of the movement

newsletters it will be possible to find if each movement completely or only partial fulfilled the core framing tasks. I will then do a sample of newspaper articles that cover the ERA debate to see if the frames of the movement are transferred to mainstream media. The ERA was a public debate that was shaped by more than smo's and politicians. It was also shaped by public opinion and media coverage. It is then important to find how the frames of the SMO are translated into a major news source.

In doing this I will be able to answer how and in what ways did the pro-ERA and Stop-ERA smo's use the core framing tasks and how were these frames presented in the New York Times during the 1972-1977 debate over the ERA.