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When Do Movements Matter? The Politics of Contingency and the Equal Rights Amendment

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Data on the state-level ERA ratification process are used here to address leading theoretical debates about the role of social movements, public opinion, and political climate on policy outcomes, the goal being to test the claim that these factors depend on each other. Social movement organizations, public opinion, and political party support all influenced the ratification process. But the effects are modified when the interactive nature of public opinion and electoral competition, and political party support and movement organizational strength, are tested. In particular, the effect of social movement organizations on ratification was amplified in the presence of elite allies, and legislators responded most to favorable public opinion under conditions of low electoral competition. These findings are used to suggest a more integrated theory of policy outcomes that considers interactive and contingent effects of movements, public opinion, and political climate.

In March 1972, the United States Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and sent it on to the fifty states for ratification. By 1979, three-fourths of the states were required to have ratified the proposed Twenty-Seventh Amendment for it to become part of the U.S. Constitution (this date was later extended to 1982). The pace of ratification was uneven. After a brief flurry of successful votes in 1972, ratification gradually declined and then stopped entirely. By 1982, it became clear that the ERA would be just three states short of becoming part of the United States Constitution.

The ERA is often discussed in the scholarly literature as an example of policy failure (Berry 1986; Mansbridge 1986; Burris 1983; Boles 1982).[1] In one sense, of course, it should be seen as a failure, because the ERA did not become part of the U.S. Constitution. Nevertheless, thirty-five of the fifty states did ratify the amendment, so it may also be seen as an example of a successful policy outcome at the state level in those states that ratified it. Although the

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[1] For example, some of the central treatments of the ERA referenced in this article use the words "loss" or "failure."

amendment was initially framed as a national issue, it soon became a matter for intense state debate during the ratification process (Berry 1986). In this article, we seek to understand the process of state-level ratification of the ERA.

During the early 1970s, the women's movement was enjoying widespread support in the United States, and public opinion polls supported women working outside the home, female political candidates, gender equality in schools and sports, and the Equal Rights Amendment itself (Ferree and Hess 1995; Mansbridge 1986; Daniels and Darcy 1985). Also during the early 1970s, the amendment received support from several past U.S. presidents, many national associations, and women's organizations (Boles 1979). The history of ERA ratification at the state level is extremely useful for exploring theories about the relationship between social movements and policy outcomes. Because the ERA mobilized efforts by social movements and political party allies against a backdrop of increasingly galvanized public opinion, we can use it to evaluate several leading theories about the role of social movements, public opinion, and political climate on policy change.

Most scholars of U.S. policy change agree that to varying degrees political climate (or opportunity structure), social movements, and public opinion all influence policy (Burstein and Linton 2002). However, the literature on this subject suffers from two related problems. First, until recently, the empirical literature has tended to emphasize a single causal factor, such as the role of public opinion (Burstein 1991a, 1991b, 1998, 1999) *or* collective action (Kriesi and Wisler 1999) *or* political climate (Jenkins and Perrow 1977) *or* social movement organizations (e.g., Skocpol et al. 1993).[2] As Burstein and Linton (2002) have noted in their meta-analysis of scholarship in this area, few studies contain all of these key measures, and it is even rarer to find studies in which measures of electoral competition, public opinion, and political climate are observed over time or compared across some large number of relevant units with respect to some policy outcome. Because of this, it has been very difficult for scholars to discern the relative importance of each of these factors to policy change.

A second problem is that scholars have not thoroughly considered the interactive and contingent effects that each of these factors may have on the policy process. An exception is the *political mediation model,* which suggests that mobilization by adherents has positive effects on policy when mediated by advantageous political opportunity structures (Amenta, Carruthers, and Zylan 1992; Amenta, Dunleavy, and Bernstein 1994; Amenta and Young 1999; Cress and Snow 2000). While we applaud this effort, we believe there is ample room for research on the contingent and interactive effects of public opinion, political climate, and movement activity on policy change.

Given these two problems, we wish to offer a new argument that systematically builds in explicit interaction effects among factors indicating the strength of social movement organizations, supportive public opinion, and welcoming political structures (Burstein 1998; Burstein and Linton 2002; Weakliem 2003). In so doing, we attempt to solve the first problem by showing models that can assess the relative impact of each of these on policy change. But beyond this empirical advance, we also attempt to move toward solving the second problem by developing an integrated theory that considers the contingent and interactive effects of public opinion, political climate, and social movement activity on policy change, thus substantially advancing our understanding of social movements and their outcomes.

Using a quantitative longitudinal panel research design, we investigate how state-level characteristics of political and gendered opportunity, public opinion, and social movement organizations on both sides of the ERA debate affected the rate of ratification of the ERA in the 1972–1982 period. Paying close attention to key hypotheses articulated by Burstein and Linton (2002) regarding the relative importance of these factors, we evaluate the extent to which each factor affected the rate of ratification while controlling for all of the others. Then we explore how the political climate mediated chances of

[2] Furthermore, even when social movement researchers have included measures of movement activity in studies of policy adoption, they rarely pay attention to both movement and countermovement effects on policy outcomes (but see McCammon et al. 2001, Andrews 2001, Soule forthcoming, and Meyer and Staggenborg 1996 for exceptions).

success for both sides of the ERA issue. Finally, we test the idea that public opinion has more potent effects on policy outcomes under conditions of political contestation (i.e., when electoral competition is high).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

In March 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment was passed by the U.S. Senate and sent on to the states for ratification. The amendment declared: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex" (Stevens 1984:64). The 1972 congressional vote was the culmination of efforts by women's groups that had begun in 1923, in Seneca Falls, New York. Throughout its history, the ERA received varying support from the National Women's Party and professional women (such as Amelia Earhart). However, from its inception the ERA had its detractors. Yet by 1940, both the Republican and Democratic platforms had endorsed the amendment, and by the mid-1960s organized labor finally joined in supporting it. Although the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed equal protection of all laws, the rights of equal protection were not directly extended to women until Reed v. Reed. After this significant 1971 ruling, the Supreme Court ruled that the equal protection clause made laws that distinguished different rules for women and men unconstitutional. With this ruling, legal scholars found even more reason to support the passage of the ERA (Mansbridge 1986:48–50).

This shift in legal history partially explains why the ERA, which had been introduced in every Congress in the United States since 1923, was not actually debated on the floor of the House until 1970–71 (Brown et al. 1971). By 1972, according to most legal scholars, the situation had changed so that proponents of the amendment believed that ratification was attainable (Brown et al. 1971; Mansbridge 1986). Indeed, as Table 1 shows, twenty-two states ratified the amendment almost immediately, in 1972. But after that the pace of ratification slowed, with only eight ratifications in 1973, three in 1974, one in each of the years 1975 and 1977, and none after that. By the 1982 deadline (which had been extended from the original date of 1979) thirty-five of the required thirty-eight states had ratified the ERA, not enough for it to become part of the Constitution.

Supporters of the ERA echoed the demands of those who supported the civil rights movement, in this case asserting that a person's sex could not be used in determining the legal rights of any citizen of the United States. The limitations on the political and civil status of women had their origins in nineteenth-century British common law, which held that women were essentially stripped of their rights when they married (Brown et al. 1971). In her "Declaration of Sentiments" presented to the 1848 Seneca Falls convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote that married women were "legally dead" in the eyes of the law (http://www.legacy98.org/move-hist.html 2001).[3]

The ERA was designed to ameliorate these aspects of discrimination, as well as discrimination stemming from governmental action and any private sector activities subject to public regulation (Boles 1979). As such, the amendment would be indicative of support for equality of the sexes at the federal, state, and local level. It received support from past presidents, many national associations, interest groups, and women's organizations (Boles 1979).[4] For example, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) was a chief supporter of the ERA and spearheaded a movement of other national organizations to ban holding conventions and meetings in states that had not ratified the amendment (Joyner 1982). National public opinion was also generally in favor of removing legal barriers to equality, at least when expressed in vague terms (Mansbridge 1986).

Yet by 1978, it was clear that opposition to the ERA was highly organized and was arguing

[3] Common law did not address the rights of unmarried women because it was generally assumed that the "natural" role of a woman was that of wife and mother (Brown et al. 1971).

[4] An anonymous reviewer reminded us that prior to 1972 some labor unions were opposed to the ERA because it threatened legislation guaranteeing workplace protection for women. However, Mansbridge (1986:10) notes, "In 1970 . . . Labor opposition was fading. . . . In April [1970] the United Auto Workers convention voted to endorse the ERA. . . . In May [1970], the U.S. Department of Labor supported the ERA." Thus, during the period of our study, many key labor unions supported the ERA amendment.

Table 1. Year of States' Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, 1972 to 1982.

Year	States Ratifying (N = 35)
1972	Alaska, California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin (N = 22)
1973	Connecticut, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, Wyoming (N = 8)
1974	Maine, Montana, Ohio (N = 3)
1975	North Dakota (N = 1)
1977	Indiana (N = 1)

Source: National Organization for Women and *The Book of States* (Council of State Governments 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1983). Nebraska (1973), Tennessee (1974), Idaho (1977), and Kentucky (1978) later rescinded their ratification.

that the amendment was quite damaging to women (Mansbridge 1986). In particular, Phyllis Schlafly and members of her "STOP ERA" organization argued that passage of the amendment would force women into active military combat and require all women to join the labor force, regardless of their own desires. Moreover, opponents argued that the ERA would remove protections guaranteed by state-level domestic relations and labor laws (Boles 1979; Lunardini 1996). Using these arguments, opponents argued that the ERA would increase divorce rates, alcoholism, suicide, and be generally disastrous to society (Boles 1979). Some scholars have claimed that the widespread dissemination of these arguments led to a decline in public opinion favoring the ERA between 1972 and 1982.[5]

Despite its failure to become part of the U.S. Constitution, the goal of ERA ratification has not yet disappeared from the political landscape in many states. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the ERA was reintroduced in four state legislatures that had not ratified it in the first round: Missouri, Illinois, Florida, and Virginia. At first, its future looked promising, especially in Missouri, where pro-ERA supporters had been very active. However, by mid-2004, the ERA had failed to achieve public support in most of these states.[6] One possible explanation of this lack of support is that the anti-ERA movement was revitalized by these recent campaigns. One interesting footnote to the twenty-first-century ERA campaign is that both sides made skillful use of the Internet for communicating information about the timing of the votes, supplying template letters to be used in contacting state senators, and transmitting informational essays. For instance, in September 2003 Phyllis Schlafly's "Eagle Forum" Web site offered no fewer than fifteen essays arguing against the return of the ERA campaigns in states (http://www.eagleforum.org). Thus, local and state organizations representing either position on the ERA can now rely on a centralized and relatively low-cost method for disseminating information.

Several lessons for the study of policy outcomes may be drawn from this necessarily brief history of the Equal Rights Amendment. First, the ERA has been a key goal of the women's movement and its opponents for close to a century. The ERA continues to be surprisingly relevant to major women's organizations; NOW (the National Organization for Women), for example, states on its Web site that the passage of an expanded version of the ERA, the Constitutional Equity Amendment (CEA), is one of its core objectives. Second, efforts to ratify the ERA at the state level continue to stir strong emotions and mobilize groups that support and oppose it. Third, the history of the ERA suggests that local-level political environments can affect policy decisions, despite ini-

[5] For example, see Daniels and Darcy (1985). But the reverse causal effect may also hold. Thus, Mansbridge (1986:203) reports that in Oklahoma in 1982, legislators' failure to ratify the ERA *preceded* a decline in public support, suggesting that legislative action influences public opinion, and not vice versa.

[6] On May 21, 2003, the Illinois House passed a bill (HJR CA0001) to ratify the amendment (Parsons 2003). As of April 2004, it was still under consideration by the Illinois Senate.

tially favorable national public opinion and strong positive support by leaders.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

By far the most common approach to studying ERA outcomes has been to analyze socioeconomic background factors associated with individuals' support for the amendment. Researchers analyze the effects of social class on attitudes of pro-ERA and anti-ERA activists and background characteristics of voters statewide, including religion and occupational differences.[7] In general, these studies find that educated, professional women and women who worked full-time in the labor force were more likely to support the ERA than others (Rosenfeld and Ward 1991). Yet Rosenfeld and Ward (1996) find individual-level analyses of ERA disappointing because the results are often contradictory. Furthermore, because measures of women's educational attainment, professional status, and labor force participation are so highly correlated, results using these measures often vary from study to study (Meyer and Menaghan 1986).

The disappointment with individual-level analysis has led some researchers to focus on a small set of key social and political characteristics of states that effectively predicts ratification outcomes among states. The evidence from these studies suggests that politically conservative states were less likely to support the ERA and that innovative states, urban states and states with more economic wealth and competitive party systems were more likely to support it (Boles 1982; Meyer and Menaghan 1986; Mathews and De Hart 1990; Wohlenberg 1980; Daniels and Darcy 1985).

Other researchers examine how social movement activity in a state affected the ratification process (Brady and Tedin 1976; Deutchman and Prince-Emburg 1982; Mansbridge 1986). Much of this research focuses on the concerted efforts of ERA foes to block state ratification by examining the social and religious background of these opponents (Brady and Tedin 1976; Deutchman and Prince-Emburg 1982). However, Mansbridge (1986) posits that the ERA was lost because proponents became too radical in their claims and alienated "middle of the road" legislators and voters; in other words, pro-ERA efforts unintentionally accelerated opposition to the ERA.

In an insightful treatment of the ERA process, Boles (1979:11–20) proposes a sequence of events in which successful mobilization by women's interest-group organizations was later countered by anti-ERA organizations. According to Boles, initially at the national level interest-group lobbying efforts produced effective organizational alliances with political leaders in Congress. However, lobbying efforts by pro-ERA organizations waned once the initial set of supporting states had ratified the amendment. At that point, conflict generated by ERA opponents dominated the political landscape of the remaining states.

Despite the fact that many excellent histories of the ERA exist, few have analyzed the ERA ratification process using time-varying measures of the political climate or opportunity structure, public opinion, and social movement activity in a panel design. Moreover, with the exception of Daniels and Darcy (1985), no research has explored variation in adoption of the amendment as a function of temporal processes. In this article, we offer a more comprehensive treatment of the factors affecting states' decisions regarding ratification of the ERA. We expand existing theory and research on social movements and policy outcomes by explicitly focusing on temporal processes of change in public opinion, political climate, organizational infrastructure, and contested elections among states and by examining the ways in which these factors interact and combine to produce policy change.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY AND POLICY OUTCOMES

Previous social movement theories of policy outcomes contend that political opportunities provide new advantages and disadvantages to social movements that attempt to influence public policy. These theories emphasize how adherent groups take advantage of the presence of allies, build social movement organizations, or exploit the competitiveness of electoral sys-

[7] See Brady and Tedin (1976), Deutchman and Prince-Emburg (1982), Mueller and Dimieri (1982), Lilie, Handberg, and Lowrey (1982), Hill (1983), Burris (1983), and Meyer and Menaghan (1986).

tems to gain leverage over elites so as to achieve their goals. We briefly review these theories below. While some have argued that these perspectives are incompatible or even mutually exclusive, we believe that these perspectives can be analyzed as part of an integrated theory. Nevertheless, for simplicity and clarity in the following discussion, we distinguish each perspective by its core component.

Social Movement Organizations

Most scholars of social movements assume that social movements have some impact, whether that impact be direct or indirect (Cress and Snow 2000), intramovement or extramovement (Earl 2000), intended or unintended (Earl 2000), or conceptualized as "new advantages" or "acceptance" (Gamson 1990). In particular, social movement theory and research emphasize how the strength of supportive social movement organizations can affect policy decisions at the state, local, and national level (Skocpol et al. 1993; Cress and Snow 2000; Andrews 2001; Minkoff 1997, 1999; Soule et al. 1999; Soule forthcoming). The "access influence" model further argues that social movement organizations should affect policy outcomes in a number of important ways beyond their effect on mobilization capacity and protest (Andrews 2001). Essentially, in this view, social movement organizations (especially more formal ones) influence policy makers because they strategically use institutionalized tactics, such as litigation and lobbying. This model suggests that movements with a greater organizational capacity will meet with more success compared to those lacking a strong infrastructure.

Political Opportunity Structure

Tarrow (1994:85) defines the political opportunity structure (POS) as the "consistent ... dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure." Thus, POS theory contends that social movement mobilization is a function of changes in the level of elite receptivity to protesters, changes in elite ability and willingness to repress movements, and the presence of elite allies. While POS theory has been used to explain protest mobilization in a number of contexts, including the women's movement (Costain 1988, 1992; Soule et al. 1999), researchers argue that the concept should also be used to understand policy outcomes (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995; Tarrow 1994; Soule et al. 1999; Andrews 2001; McCammon et al. 2001). Essentially, the same set of factors that stimulate protest should in turn affect the outcomes sought by the movement. In other words, POS theory suggests that the political climate, independent of movement mobilization, strongly affects the potential outcomes sought by movements.

Gendered Opportunity Structure

In a recent relevant extension of POS arguments, McCammon et al. (2001) introduce the concept of the "gendered opportunity structure" as a determinant of policy outcomes affecting women. They argue that, as women began to take more active roles in the "public sphere" (e.g., politics and business), public and legislative opinion about women shifted, leading to policy changes that favored women. McCammon et al. (2001) hold that the while the political opportunity structure is an important determinant of policy in general, the gendered opportunity structure facilitated the passage of suffrage laws because it caused lawmakers to alter their views on what the appropriate role of women in society should be.[8]

Public Opinion

Burstein (1999) rightly criticizes social movement researchers for making the (largely untested) assumption that social movements actually produce desired outcomes. Instead, he urges researchers to include measures of public opinion in analyzing policy outcomes. Burstein's (1999) argument about the potency of public

[8] We should note the similarity of this argument to broader arguments about the role of public opinion on policy outcomes, which are discussed below. In both, the mechanism driving policy change is public opinion. Because we compiled public opinion data on both the general notion of women's roles *and* on the ERA specifically, our analysis allows us to adjudicate between arguments about how public perceptions of women's rights and public perceptions of the controversial amendment each affect policy.

opinion rests on assumptions embedded in the democratic theory of politics. According to this view, officeholders often vote consistently with the majority of the public because they almost always want to win reelection (Page and Shapiro 1983; Downs 1957; Stimson et al. 1995; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002; Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993; Arnold 1990; Dahl 1989; Mayhew 1974; Manza, Cook, and Page 2002; Fording 1997; Weakliem 2003). The basic insight from this tradition suggests that when the majority of the public supports a policy, other political factors (e.g., party balance, political party in power, etc.) recede in importance (Burstein 1999; Burstein and Linton 2002). According to this perspective, running against the majority view carries the risk of losing elections. Thus, the democratic process becomes a natural check on the tendency of members of any elite to hold views (or vote) counter to their constituents.

Political Mediation

As noted earlier, most of the literature on policy outcomes fails to consider the broad range of dimensions embedded in the concept of "political environment." A positive step in redressing this problem is offered by the political mediation model. Amenta et al. (1994) argue that while the openings in the POS may be an important stimulant to protest, these openings also dramatically influence the possibility of challengers' success. According to this view, movement mobilization and organizational strength provide necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for social movement activists to achieve their desired outcomes (Amenta et al. 1994). As Cress and Snow (2000) add, the political mediation model suggests that successful mobilization by social movement actors depends on the presence of sympathetic elites and state bureaucrats, who can be critical in determining policy outcomes of movement activity.

This brief discussion has highlighted many of the core elements of social movement theories of policy outcomes.[9] To thoroughly understand policy change, we must consider all of these factors together as well as the ways in which they interact and combine to produce policy change sought by movements. Along these lines, the next section develops our argument and hypotheses with respect to state-level ratification of the ERA.

TOWARD AN INTEGRATED THEORY OF POLICY OUTCOMES

One possible reason that studies of the effects of movements on policy change have produced inconsistent results is that factors such as organizational strength, gendered opportunity structure, POS, and public opinion have been considered independently rather than as an integrated set of measures (Burstein and Linton 2002). Moreover, we find it misguided to focus only on the impact of one side of a social policy issue, as many studies of particular social movements have done. Rather, we think that the dynamics between a movement and its countermovement are likely to be significant determinants of policy outcomes (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Soule forthcoming). To confront these problems, we begin our analysis by examining indicators of the gendered and political opportunity structure, movement and countermovement strength, and public opinion *together*. Following this, we argue that policy outcomes are likely to be the result of a number of contingent and interactive forces over and above the main effects of movements, public opinion, and political and gendered opportunities. To test our argument, we construct several key interaction terms designed to explore how these factors interact and combine to produce policy change.

Our first set of hypotheses is derived from arguments about how the POS and gendered opportunity structure impact policy outcomes. As discussed earlier, McCammon et al. (2001) argue that when studying policies affecting women, it is important to consider how the structure of gendered opportunities affects legislative outcomes. According to their argument, as more and more women left work in the "private" sphere for work in the "public" sphere, public and legislative opinions of women changed, opening the way for women's suffrage

[9] Recent research (Cress and Snow 2000; McCammon et al. 2001) also emphasizes the role of cultural frames on movement outcomes. This is a promising area of research, but beyond the scope of this article.

legislation. To these scholars, the root of this favorable policy change for women was a change in gender relations (caused by women's entry into the public sphere), which led to a deeper feminist consciousness on the part of women and to changes in public and legislative perceptions of the appropriate role of women in society. However, in the time period we study, women had already entered the paid labor force at relatively high rates. We thus argue that a more relevant indicator of the gendered opportunity structure in the 1970s and 1980s is women's advancement into professional occupations, which opened more opportunities for women in a variety of endeavors (Ferree and Hess 1995). Thus, we include a measure of women in professional occupations and hypothesize that this will lead to a positive change in the gendered opportunity structure, which in turn should increase rates of ERA ratification.[10]

McCammon et al.'s (2001) argument considers the effect of changing public perception of women's roles on policy outcomes. Accordingly, we argue that a second, and perhaps more direct, indicator of gendered opportunity structure is public opinion about women's roles, broadly defined. Thus, we also include a measure of favorable public opinion on equality of women's roles in society and expect that this aspect of the gendered opportunity structure will also raise rates of ratification across states.

The general political climate is also likely to affect policy outcomes. From the POS perspective, the presence of influential allies encourages challengers to act collectively, as allies signal that repression may be unlikely or, at the very least, that there are "friends in court" (Tarrow 1994:88).[11] There is some scattered evidence that the ERA benefited from having allies in power. During the period in question, members of the Democratic Party were generally more sympathetic to women's concerns than were members of the Republican Party (Soule et al. 1999; Minkoff 1997; Costain 1992; Lilie, Handberg, and Lowrey 1982). In fact, nationwide in the late 1970s, 62% of Democrats and 42% of Republicans favored the ERA (Mansbridge 1986:215). Moreover, most policy scholars assume that political parties are an important determinant of policy change, with Democrats generally promoting more liberal policies (Huber, Ragin, and Stephens 1993; Amenta and Poulsen 1996; Burstein and Linton 2002; Barilleaux, Holbrook, and Langer 2002). For these reasons, we consider Democratic legislators to be allies of the pro-ERA forces, and we include the percentage of the state legislature in the Democratic Party in each year, expecting this to increase the rate of ratificaion.[12]

In addition to Democrats, women in office may also be considered allies of the pro-ERA forces. While we do not wish to argue that *all* female elected officials in this period were liberal and/or pro-ERA, Lilie et al. (1982) found that, as a group, female elected officials were heavily in support of the amendment. Burrell also reports that in a somewhat later period (1992) 87% of female U.S. Senate and House candidates took feminist positions and concludes that a "clear connection exists between the election of women to office and pro-women public policies" (Burrell 1994:173).[13] Like Democrats, then, female legislators might be considered potential allies by pro-ERA forces, so we include a measure of the percentage of each state legislature in each year that is female, expecting this to increase the rate of ratification.

Another dimension of the political climate that may shape the ERA ratification process is how innovative the state has been historically with regard to civil rights policy. Political scientists interested in the adoption of policies

[10] We discuss specific measurement issues and data sources below.

[11] But see Kriesi et al. (1995) for an opposite argument.

[12] Yet highly Democratic legislatures in the South, once labeled "Dixiecrats," often espoused views that counter the assumption that Democratic legislatures should be considered allies of the ERA. To examine this issue, we also test for an independent effect of southern location.

[13] While some studies have shown that women legislators are more liberal than their male counterparts, research has shown that the ideological gap between men and women legislators has declined (Welch 1985), varying across issues and Democratic party affiliation (Mansbridge, personal communication). Nonetheless, Lilie et al. (1982) present evidence that female legislators were, by and large, supportive of the ERA, and so we believed it important to test this hypothesis in our analysis.

theorize that innovativeness may be a pervasive characteristic among certain states (Walker 1969; Gray 1973; Eyestone 1977; Savage 1978; Soule and Zylan 1997). That is, states tend to be fairly consistent over time with regard to policy decisions; early adopters of one type of policy tend to be early adopters of other, similar policies (Soule and Zylan 1997). Thus, we expect that states that have been innovative in the past on other civil rights policies should be quicker to ratify the ERA, and we include a measure of the civil rights policy innovativeness of the state in our analysis.

POS theorists argue that one of the chief dimensions affecting the chances of policy change is the openness or receptivity of the political opportunity to challengers (Kitschelt 1986; Tarrow 1994; Kriesi et al. 1995). According to the literature, an open POS is likely to both induce mobilization and increase chances of policy change in response to movement mobilization. We argue that one key indicator of the openness of a polity is the overall ideology of lawmakers. In particular, when state lawmakers are on average more liberal, pro-ERA forces may have a greater chance of success. In the analysis presented below, we include an index of liberal government ideology and expect this to increase the rate of ratification of the ERA. [14]

Finally, a last dimension of the POS that may shape policy outcomes is the level of electoral competition in a system. The guiding hypothesis in the political science literature is that liberal policies are a function of more competitive electoral systems (Holbrook and Van Dunk 1993). This hypothesis comes from Key's (1949) classic work showing that competitive elections stimulate interest and debate and in turn increase voter turnout. Because voter turnout is greater in competitive elections (Bibby and Holbrook 1999), the interests of *all* members of a society (especially those who are excluded from the political system) are better represented. Thus, under competitive electoral conditions, it is likely that the policies passed will be more liberal, more inclusive, and/or benefit the "have-nots." If this is true, the same logic should hold with respect to legislation in favor of women and a more liberal policy, such as the ERA. Accordingly, we include a measure of electoral competition in each state in each year and hypothesize that states characterized by more competitive electoral systems will have quicker rates of ERA ratification than less competitive states.

In addition to these factors, we argue that public opinion on the Equal Rights Amendment will also shape legislative outcomes (Burstein 1999; Burstein and Linton 2002; Manza et al. 2002; Erikson et al. 2002; Weakliem 2003). As Erikson et al. (2002) and Erikson (2003) suggest, more dynamic models of the effect of public opinion and polity are necessary to test basic assumptions about the political responsiveness of the electorate and elected officials. That is, if public opinion and legislator response were static, the system would be in equilibrium and little policy change would occur. This is obviously not the case. Indeed, evidence on the pro-ERA movement, for example, suggests that upswings in ERA support polarized constituents and helped mobilize opponents (Mansbridge 1986). Thus we include a time-varying, state-level measure of public opinion on the ERA and expect that more favorable public opinion about the amendment should lead to higher rates of ratification.

Yet the effect of social movements cannot be readily dismissed in models of political contest and change. Net of the POS, gendered opportunity structure, and public opinion, we argue that social movement activity, and in particular movement organizational strength, also affects policy change. Some have argued that movement organizational strength matters to policy change because of the direct effect that movement organizations have on lawmakers through their lobbying efforts (Andrews 2001). Others have argued that any effect movements have on lawmakers is a result of the fact that movements serve as a source of information to lawmakers who are puzzling over what their constituencies desire (Burstein and Linton

[14] We recognize that our measure of liberal government ideology may also tap the extent to which the pro-ERA movement had elite allies (Sidney Tarrow, personal communication). However, as described in detail below, the measure is an overall index of the state government ideology based on interest group ratings (rather than the percentage of state legislators who are liberal), thus we consider this to primarily be indicative of the level of receptivity or openness to pro-ERA claims.

2002). Firsthand accounts from social movement activists (Schlafly, personal communication 2002), social movement theory (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Soule forthcoming), and scholarly accounts of the ERA (Boles 1979; Mansbridge 1986) prompted us to consider both pro-ERA and anti-ERA organizations when attempting to explain the outcomes surrounding the ratification process.

On the pro-ERA side, we include a time-varying measure of the strength of the NOW chapters in a state and a time-varying dummy variable on whether or not there was a chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in the state. We include the NOW measure because this organization has been one of the leading champions of the ERA. We include the AAUW measure based on Joyner's (1982) findings that the AAUW was a chief proponent of the ERA, as well as of women's rights to higher education and employment outside of the home. On the anti-ERA side, we include a measure of the number of anti-ERA organizations in the state (per capita). We expect that pro-ERA organizational strength should increase the rate of ratification, while anti-ERA organizational strength should decrease the rate of ratification.

Now let us consider briefly the relative importance of each of these political structure and social movement influences on policy outcomes. Burstein and Linton (2002:385) have recently articulated two hypotheses that are relevant to our study. First, these authors offer a "relative impact hypothesis," which holds that political parties matter more to policy change than do social movements and their organizations. Following this, we expect that in models in which Democratic Party strength and social movement organization are both included, political party will matter more to the ratification of the ERA than social movements. Second, these authors offer a "public opinion hypothesis," which holds that if public opinion is taken into account in studies of policy change, the effect of social movements and political parties will decline in importance. Because our analysis includes measures of all of these factors, we will be able to evaluate both of Burstein and Linton's hypotheses.

In contrast to previous perspectives, we argue that while specific measures of political and gendered opportunity structure, movements, and public opinion are important, these factors themselves interact and combine in specific ways to produce policy change. We specify this argument with a series of related statistical interaction terms.

First, we hypothesize that although social movements are important to policy change, their effect will be stronger during fair-weather political periods, when movement allies are in power. This is a variant of the political mediation model, which in its strongest form holds that movement activity matters to policy outcomes *only* when the political context or opportunity is favorable (Amenta et al. 1994). Instead, we argue that movements can matter to policy outcomes even when they do not have elite allies. We do, however, expect the effect of movements to be greater when they have allies in powerful positions. For example, it is clear that at least at the national level Democrats in power facilitated the activity and success of the women's movement (Costain 1992). If the same is true at the state level, we ought to find that pro-ERA organization was more successful in states with Democrats in powerful positions. To test this idea, we examine the interaction between Democratic strength in the state legislature with the presence (or absence) of a chapter of the AAUW in the state.

Our next hypothesis explores this same idea, but examines the effect of anti-ERA organizational strength during political climates receptive to the opponents of the ERA. To capture the anti-ERA political climate, we include a measure of Republican Party strength in the state legislature. We then examine the interaction of this factor with our measure of anti-ERA organizations in a state to see if elite allies of ERA opponents mediated the opponents' goal of slowing the rate of ratification. We expect to find a negative effect of this measure on the rate of ratification.

Finally, we examine an understudied hypothesis implied by the classic literature in political science on the effects of electoral competition on policy change. Specifically, we argue that if public opinion is important to policy outcomes, it ought to be *especially* important under conditions of electoral competition, because that is the time when lawmakers pay the closest attention to the demands of their constituencies (Barrilleaux, Holbrook, and Langer 2002). While we agree with Burstein's (1999) argument

that public opinion often triumphs over other factors, we hypothesize that the effect of public opinion will be most powerful under conditions of electoral competition. In other words, state lawmakers behave strategically under conditions of competition as they attempt to maximize their chances of reelection. As Burstein and Linton (2002:344) remark, "electoral competition frequently forces elected officials to enact policies consistent with public opinion." If this is the case, under highly competitive conditions public opinion ought to be particularly important to elected policy makers. We therefore include an interaction term for the level of electoral competition in a state with pro-ERA public opinion and expect this to increase the rate of ratification of the ERA.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Several theoretical and methodological concerns motivate our choice of states as an appropriate level of analysis. First (and most obviously), the process we wish to explain occurred within states, so it is reasonable to assume that state-level politics and the organizational activity of proponents and opponents were more closely aligned with a state's political climate than with national-level politics. Despite the ERA's widespread public support at the national level, state politicians evidently became wary of voting on an issue that was increasingly controversial (Mathews and de Hart 1990).

Although it was initially framed as a national policy issue, the debate surrounding ratification of the ERA soon became a key state-level issue in 1972 when states were asked to consider ratification. During the Senate hearings on the ERA, Professor Thomas Emerson commented that in order to succeed the ERA needed "not a nationwide campaign, but several discrete campaigns directed regionally or state by state ... National support was not the only goal, but adoption by separate state ratification, each of which would require a different kind of consensus concerning the amendment's necessity" (Cited in Berry 1986:64). We explore this problem by suggesting that state-level political structures shaped avenues of success and failure for social movements organized around the ERA.

Second, state-level analysis has proven especially useful for analyzing the expansion of regulations embedded in U.S. welfare provisions, social security legislation, and forms of state intervention, suffrage, and hate crime legislation.[15] The decentralized nature of politics in the United States provides us with another motivation for choosing state-level analysis. Between-state differences in the gendered and political opportunity structures, public opinion, and social movement activity are arguably more relevant to political outcomes in the United States than in other countries.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in the analysis presented below is the rate of ratification of the ERA by each state, as shown in Table 1. The data came from the National Organization for Women and were verified using the yearly editions of *The Book of the States* (Council of State Governments 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1983). As discussed in more detail below, we use these data to create a dummy variable for each state, in each year, indicating whether or not the state ratified the ERA.

Independent Variables

The analysis presented below was designed to test hypotheses about the factors that led to the state-level ratification of the ERA between 1972 and 1982. All of the data for our independent variables, unless otherwise noted, are measured yearly, to correspond to the measurement of the dependent variable. (When data were not available for every year, we used linear interpolation to estimate between-year values.) All continuous independent variables are centered at their mean to make the constant interpretable. The appendix lists the descriptive statistics of, and correlations between, all of our explanatory variables.

In all models presented, we include two control variables. First, because twenty-two states ratified the ERA in 1972 (see Table 1), we

[15] See Amenta et al. (1992), Amenta et al. (1994), Amenta and Poulsen (1996), Soule and Zylan (1997), Grattet, Jenness, and Curry (1998), Soule and Earl (2001), Earl and Soule (2001), Zylan and Soule (2000), McCammon et al. (2001), and Burstein and Linton (2002).

include a dummy variable for this year. Second, we also include a control variable for the total population of the state. Data on state population come from the *Statistical Abstracts* (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982).

All models presented below also include two measures designed to tap McCammon et al.'s (2001) gendered opportunity structure. First, we include a measure of the number of women engaged in professional occupations (per total number of employed persons). Data on the number of women engaged in professional occupations come from the *Census of the Population* (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1970, 1980, 1990).[16] In our time period, the percentage of women engaged in professional occupations ranged from 4.62% to 7.22%.

A second indicator of gendered opportunity that taps public sentiment about the role of women in society is the percentage of the state population that believes that women and men should have equal roles in society. These data come from the American National Election Study (ANES), which are available through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (Miller and Miller 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980). Specifically, one of the questions asked of respondents in this longitudinal survey concerns their position on the issue of equal roles for women. The response categories on the ANES scale range from "Women and men should have an equal role" to "A woman's place is in the home." In the analyses presented below, we employ the percentage of respondents who answered "Women and men should have an equal role." In our period, this ranged from 9.52% (Oklahoma in 1976) to 47.37% (Massachusetts in 1972).

In the models presented below, we include a number of measures that are designed to test arguments about how the POS affects policy outcomes at the state level. First, we measure the presence of elite allies with an indicator of Democratic Party strength among the ranks of the lawmakers.[17] Data on the partisanship of state legislators come from the *Statistical Abstracts* (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982). As another indicator of the presence of elite allies, we include the percentage of the state legislature (both houses) that is female. Data on the gender composition of state legislatures come from Cox (1996). Over our time period, the percentage of state legislators that were female ranged from .4% to 21%.

We also include an index of policy innovation to measure a general climate of support for social change in a state. To examine the hypothesis that historically innovative states were quicker to ratify the ERA (Daniels and Darcy 1985), we include a measure of the "civil rights innovativeness" of the state that was compiled by Gray (1973). This is a "ranking of states by the timing of civil rights legislation in three areas— housing, public accommodations, and employment" (Grattet, Jenness, and Curry 1998:294).[18]

As a general measure of openness or receptivity of the POS, we include a measure of state government ideology calculated by Berry et al. (1998), which is available through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. To create their government ideology measure, these scholars first identify the ideological position of each member of Congress in each year by consulting interest group ratings of Congress (e.g., those put out by Americans for Democratic Action and by

[16] In our baseline model, we initially controlled for the level of urbanization of a state (models not shown). Like Boles (1982), we found no effect of urbanization on the rate of ratification. We also included a measure of the strength of religious fundamentalists (models not shown) because previous research (Wohlenberg 1980) had found an effect of this measure. But we found no effect of religious fundamentalism on ratification, so we do not include it in the models that follow. Finally, in models not shown, we included a dummy variable for Southern location of the state. While this factor was weakly significant and negative in initial models, when we include measures of political climate and movement strength, its effect diminishes, suggesting that any effect of regional location is explained by differences in political context and movement activity.

[17] We also analyzed the percentage of Democrats in Southern legislatures separately to capture the effect of conservative Southern Democrats. The results were the same as those presented below.

[18] For ease of interpretation, we take the inverse of Gray's (1973) original score so that *high* values indicate *higher* levels of innovativeness.

the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education). Then they use these ratings to estimate the ideological positions of state legislators, following the assumption that the "average ideological position of a party in a state's legislature is the same as the average position of that party's members of the state's congressional delegation" (Berry et al. 1998:332). Essentially, they assign a ranking of ideology to each of five major actors in state government (both major parties in each legislative chamber, and the governor of the state). Then, they weight these rankings according to the amount of power that each actor has in a given state, in a given year. The weights are based on the assumptions that the governor and the legislative branch are equally powerful, and that the two chambers of the legislative branch are equally powerful within the legislative branch. But the index is also sensitive to the distribution of power between the two major parties within each chamber of the state legislature, with one power in the minority and the other in the majority.[19] The Berry et al. data are available for each state for each year between 1960 and 1999 and thus are suitable for the purposes of our study. The scores for the years of our analysis range from 0 to 82.5, with high values indicating a more liberal government ideology in a state. Thus we hypothesize a positive relationship between this variable and the rate of ERA ratification, as more liberal governments ought to be more open to the claims of pro-ERA supporters.

The final POS variable we include is a measure of the level of electoral competition in the state, which was originally developed by Holbrook and Van Dunk (1993). The Holbrook and Van Dunk (1993:956) measure of "district level competition" includes components of district-level state legislative election results: the percentage of the popular vote won by the winning candidate, the winning candidate's margin of victory, how "safe" the seat is, and whether or not the race was contested. While Holbrook and Van Dunk (1993) argue that, theoretically, any one component could be used as a proxy for district-level competition, it is better to take all of this information into account; they therefore average these components across all districts in a state to indicate the state-level degree of competition. In a recent article, Barilleaux et al. (2002) modify this original measure, first by estimating a yearly (1971–1990) value for each state, and then by defining a "safe" seat as one in which the incumbent won 60% or more of the vote. In the analyses presented below, we use the Barilliaux et al. (2002) measure, which we obtained from the authors. In our period, the value ranges from 3.63 to 87.89, with low values indicating low competition (a value of 0 would indicate that all candidates were unopposed) and high values indicating increased competition.

To assess competing arguments about the relative effects of public opinion on state legislative decisions on the ERA, we include a measure of the percentage of the state population that was in favor of the amendment. These data come from Gallup polls conducted in 1974, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1981, and 1982 (Gallup 1999), which were obtained from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. We follow Weakliem and Biggert (1999) and aggregate individual responses to obtain state-level measures of support. Weakliem and Biggert find that, although public opinion polls are taken at the individual level, sampling procedures for Roper and the General Social Survey generally involve sampling over some regional unit and efforts are generally made to include all states. In our period, the percentage of respondents who reported that they supported the amendment ranged from 1% (Utah in 1982) to 100% (Hawaii in 1974).[20]

We examine two different indicators of pro-ERA social movement organizational activity in a state: the number of National Organization for Women (NOW) chapters in a state publishing a newsletter (per capita), and a time-varying dummy variable for whether or not there was a chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in the state in a

[19] For more extensive discussions of reliability and validity, see Berry et al. (1998).

[20] When using state-level public opinion, the samples from many states are often small. While opinion polls attempt to obtain representative samples from all states, coefficients and standard errors should be interpreted cautiously (Weakliem and Biggert 1999).

particular year.[21] Data on AAUW chapters come from the AAUW Web site (www.aauw.org/about/branches.cfm), which lists state and local chapters of the organization (but only for the year 2003) as well as some basic information, including founding dates of the chapters. Data on NOW chapters that publish newsletters come from a search of the WorldCat database of library holdings worldwide. We conducted a search for serial publications by NOW, which yielded 285 newsletters in our period. We coded each of these by state and chapter of NOW, as well as the dates the newsletter was published. We then used this information to construct a yearly count of a state's chapters that published newsletters. This we consider to be a measure of the strength of NOW in a state. The number of chapters publishing newsletters in the period under study ranged from 0 to 11.

We also include the number of anti-ERA organizations in a state (per capita) and argue that this should slow the rate of ratification.[22] The data on anti-ERA organizations came from a variety of organizational directories as well as histories and reference volumes on the ERA (Conover and Gray 1983; Boles 1979; Miller and Greenberg 1976; Delsman 1975). The number of anti-ERA organizations in a state ranged from 0 to 7.

Estimation Techniques

We use discrete time event history analysis (Allison 1995) to analyze longitudinal panel data with our dichotomous dependent variable (ratification or not in a given year). In this way we are able to estimate the effects of state-level characteristics on the rate of ratification of the ERA. This technique allows us to model the effects of time-varying covariates on the hazard rate of ratification by a given state in a given year. We array that data on ratification in a state-by-year matrix to estimate the likelihood that ratification will take place in a given year in a particular state. Years following ratification in a state are excluded from this analysis, as the state is no longer at risk of ratifying the ERA. To accurately assess years in which state legislatures were at risk of ratifying, we exclude from our analysis years in which each state legislature did not meet.

We have chosen this technique for a number of reasons. First, the event of interest (ratification) can only occur at regular, discrete points in time (years). Second, as we discussed earlier, all of our state-level covariates are measured in yearly increments. Third, there are a number of "ties" in our data set created by the fact that many states ratified in the same years. For example, twenty-two of the thirty-five states that ratified did so in 1972. Allison (1995) argues that the logit model for discrete time that we employ is an appropriate method for this particular data structure.[23]

The models presented below were estimated using logistic regression in Stata, Version 7.0

[21] We repeatedly attempted, but failed, to obtain state-level membership data from both NOW and STOP ERA (now called the Eagle Forum). A spokesperson for NOW reports that the organization has no historical records of state organizational membership, and no comprehensive information could be obtained from the state NOW newsletters or in the *National NOW Times*. The Eagle Forum also claims that there is no state-level membership data for their organization for our period, and this information was not published in the STOP ERA newsletter and the *Phyllis Schlafly Report*.

[22] On the anti-ERA side, only a few Eagle Forum presidents (out of fifty) we contacted replied with founding dates of their organizations. In fact, a current state chapter president of the Eagle Forum sent this note in reply to our request: "I would like to be helpful but my concern is I would ultimately be helping the promoters of ERA, a decidedly socialistic, un-American and, in my opinion, an unethically led movement inconsistent with the principles and philosophy of government upon which these United States were founded." (personal communication, chapter president, Hawaii, 2002).

[23] This method also allows for advanced and detailed tests for time dependence. For example, in models not shown, we included dummy variables for different subperiods and examined how the inclusion of these variables affected the overall fit of the model. These tests did not indicate the presence of residual time dependence. Because ratifications do not occur in all years of our analysis, we could not include yearly dummy variables for all years, but we do include a dummy variable coded "1" for 1972, since so many states ratified the ERA in that year (see Table 1).

(StataCorp 2001b). This model is nonlinear and is expressed as:

$$P = \frac{\exp(x_j\beta)}{1 + \exp(x_j\beta)}, \quad (1)$$

where P = the probability of ratification, x is the set of covariates for state j, and β is the set of coefficients (including the constant) (see StataCorp 1999:224). The options available in Stata for logistic regression are particularly useful for this research design because they allow specification of within-group correlation structure for the (state-level) panels in our data set (StataCorp 2001a). Because our data are pooled, cross-sectional, we run the risk of biased results due to unmeasured time-invariant heterogeneity within a state. To reduce this bias, we cluster observations by state, allowing us to assume that cases are independent across states but not necessarily within states. By clustering observations by state, Stata calculates the robust standard errors (also referred to as the Huber/White or sandwich estimates), thus allowing for more conservative estimation of our models.

RESULTS

Tables 2 and 3 present the results of a nested set of models designed to test the above hypotheses. The first model in Table 2 is our baseline model, designed to test the effects of the gendered and political opportunity structures on

Table 2. Logistic Regression Models of ERA Ratification in States, 1972 to 1982

	Models		
Variable	1	2	3
Constant	–2.76***	–3.03***	–3.19***
	(.46)	(.51)	(.48)
% Women in professional occupations	1.03†	.33	.18
	(.57)	(.60)	(.68)
% in favor of women's equal roles	.09*	.10*	.10*
	(.04)	(.05)	(.05)
% Democrats in state legislature	–.75	–2.45	–2.97
	(2.82)	(3.21)	(3.35)
% Females in state legislature	–9.77	–4.23	–14.03
	(7.82)	(7.51)	(11.96)
Civil rights policy innovativeness	.03	.01	.03
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
Liberal government ideology	.03*	.03*	.03*
	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Electoral competition	.04	.03	.03
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
% in favor of the ERA		7.69*	4.02
		(4.04)	(4.48)
Anti-ERA organizations			–.50**
			(.17)
NOW strength in state			–.01
			(.02)
AAUW chapter in state			1.92*
			(.89)
State population			.05
			(.05)
Year 1972 (dummy variable)	. 58	.46	.58
	(.59)	(.58)	(.72)
Model log likelihood	–60.00	–54.96	–48.61
Pseudo R^2	.35	.41	.48
Model 2 vs. 1 (1df)		10.08*	
Model 3 vs. 2 (4df)			12.70*

Note: N = 220 cases. Robust standard errors appear in parentheses.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test); † $p < .05$ (one-tailed test)

Table 3. Logistic Regression Models with Interaction Effects of ERA Ratification in States, 1972 to 1982

	Models		
Variables	4	5	6
Constant	–3.25***	–3.02***	–4.80***
	(.43)	(.51)	(.86)
% Women in professional occupations	.39	.25	.39
	(.75)	(.67)	(.73)
% in favor of women's equal roles	.09	.08	.07
	(.05)	(.06)	(.06)
% Democrats in state legislature	–2.75		–1.95
	(3.33)		(3.31)
% Republicans in state legislature		–.05	
		(3.50)	
% Females in state legislature	–11.61	–13.97	–11.34
	(10.63)	(10.70)	(10.01)
Civil rights policy innovativeness	.04	.06†	.04
	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)
Liberal government ideology	.02†	.02†	.02†
	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Electoral competition	.03	.03	.10*
	(.03)	(.03)	(.05)
% in favor of the ERA	2.86	3.82	19.82**
	(4.39)	(4.28)	(6.44)
Anti-ERA organizations	–.52**	–.32*	–.47*
	(.18)	(.16)	(.17)
NOW strength in state	–4.65E–3	–4.10E–3	–1.15E–3
	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)
AAUW chapter in state	3.78*	1.72*	1.05
	(1.50)	(.75)	(.80)
State population	.05	.03	.08
	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)
Year 1972 (dummy variable)	.66	.69	.83
	(.76)	(.75)	(.76)
Interaction of AAUW and % Democrats in legislature	24.62*		
	(10.13)		
Interaction of anti-ERA organizations and % Republicans in legislature		–2.68*	
		(1.17)	
Interaction of electoral competition and favorable opinion of the ERA			–.70***
			(.24)
Model log likelihood	–46.19	–46.40	–42.80
Pseudo R^2	.50	.50	.50
Model 4 vs. 3, from Table 2 (1df)	4.84*		
Model 5 vs. less constrained model (not shown)		4.42*[a]	
Model 6 vs. 3, from Table 2 (1df)			11.62***

Note: N = 220 cases. Robust standard errors appear in parentheses.

[a] Log likelihood test compares Model 5 to Model (not shown) without interaction of anti-ERA organizations and Republican percentage in legislature.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test); † $p < .05$ (one-tailed test)

the rate of ERA ratification in the 1972–1982 period. According to McCammon et al. (2001:53), changes in women's position (relative to men) often lead to changes in gender relations and in views about the appropriate roles of women. If this is so, states with higher proportions of women in professional occupations should be more favorable toward the ERA. However, we find only weak support for this argument; the coefficient for this measure is only significant at the .05 level in a one-tailed test and loses significance in all subsequent

models. But we do find that overall public support for the notion of equal rights for women increased the rate of ratification. Across all models in Table 2, the coefficient is positive and significant, indicating support for this aspect of the gendered opportunity structure argument.

Our baseline model (Model 1) also examines the argument that the POS strongly affects policy outcomes. As this model shows, we find minimal support for this argument, at least with respect to the ERA. Neither of our measures of elite allies (Democrats and female legislators) is significant, and both are unexpectedly in the negative direction. These results indicate that, counter to POS arguments, elite allies may have not been all that important to this particular policy outcome. (We amend this conclusion later by showing that elite allies do in fact have an effect, but that the magnitude of the effect depends on the strength of state-level social movement organizations.)

We find that the coefficient for the effect of a state's innovation score is in the positive direction, as expected; but it never achieves significance in Table 2, indicating that states that historically were innovators in civil rights issues were not quicker to ratify the ERA. Recall that this measure of policy innovativeness was designed to be sensitive to policies on civil rights (rather than innovation scores that are designed to tap a general propensity to innovate regardless of policy type). The absence of relationship between innovative political climates and ERA ratification chances may be surprising to many in the public policy field. However, this result foreshadows our finding (below) that passage of the ERA might have depended more on current public opinion, movement strength, and electoral competition than on static features of the political landscape.

The coefficient for the state government ideology score is positive and significant (and remains so across all models), indicating that states with more liberal governments were quicker to ratify the ERA. We argue that this measure is an indicator of the general level of openness of the state government to claims made by supporters of the ERA; thus this finding supports claims made by POS theorists.

The final POS indicator in our baseline model is the measure of degree of electoral competition in a state. It is not significant, nor does it attain significance in subsequent models in Table 2. This is surprising, given the fairly consistent finding that electoral competition leads to liberal policy change (Barrilleaux et al. 2002; Holbrook and Van Dunk 1993). However, we complicate this finding below, when we interact electoral competition with favorable public opinion on the ERA.

Model 2 of Table 2 adds the critical measure of public opinion to the baseline model (Model 1). As the log likelihood test statistic at the bottom of the table shows, the addition of public opinion matters; Model 2 improves the model fit significantly over Model 1. As expected, the percentage of people who favored the ERA increased the rate of state ratification. The coefficient of 7.69 indicates that as public opinion favoring the ERA rises by one standard deviation over its mean, ratification chances nearly triple.[24] This finding lends support to claims made by Burstein (1985, 1991a, 1991b, 1998, 1999) and by democratic theory more broadly that legislators respond to the will of their constituencies. States where more residents were supportive of the amendment were quicker to ratify the ERA.

Model 3 of Table 2 adds our three measures of social movement organization to models of political climate and public opinion. With respect to the effect of movement organizational strength and the access-influence model, we find no significant effect of NOW chapter strength on the rate of ratification, but we do find that the presence of an AAUW chapter increased the rate of ratification. We also find that anti-ERA organizational strength decreased the rate of ratification, as the coefficient for this measure is negative and significant. These effects are net of the inclusion of our measures of the POS. In other words, they foreshadow what we find (below) with respect to the political mediation model; movements appear to have mattered to the ERA ratification process regardless of the mediating effect of elite allies.

[24] Using equation (1), we take a ratio of these probabilities of ratification using the mean level of public opinion compared to the probability of ratification when public opinion is one standard deviation higher, holding all other measures at their means. These probabilities are .048 and .137 respectively, and their ratio is 2.85.

We turn now to our core hypotheses concerning the potency of public opinion on policy change and the contingent effect of elite allies on social movement outcomes. Recall that we argued that social movement organizational efforts are most powerful when political party allies are in power and that public opinion ought to have most potent effects on policy outcomes when electoral competition is greatest. Table 3 examines three interaction effects among public opinion, electoral competition levels, elite allies, and both pro-ERA and anti-ERA forces.

Model 4 adds an indicator measuring the contingent effects of allies and social movement organizations. We specify this effect as the interaction between the percentage of the state legislature that is Democratic and AAUW chapter presence. Model 4 in Table 3 improves significantly over the previous model as indicated by the significance of the log likelihood test statistic found at the bottom of this table (comparing Model 4 in Table 3 to Model 3 in Table 2). This finding supports our argument that elite allies amplify the effect that movements have on policy outcomes. But how should we interpret the interaction effect? Taking all three relevant coefficients for the main and interaction terms into account at different levels of each of the two indicators implies that the rate increases over fourfold when both the number of AAUW chapters *and* the percentage of Democrats in the state legislature are high, compared to when they are both at average levels in a year.[25] Clearly, allies matter.

In Model 5 of Table 3, we conduct a parallel test of the importance of elite allies for the anti-ERA forces. Specifically, we include a measure of Republican Party strength in the state legislature (percentage of Republican legislators) and interact this with our measure of anti-ERA organizational strength. Taking all three coefficients into account to calculate the combined effect, Model 5 indicates that organizational strength interacted significantly with Republican Party strength in state legislatures. Indeed, when these two forces are one standard deviation higher than the observed average, the chances of ratification are diminished by 88 percent (the multiplier on the rate decreases from 1.0 to .12).

Taken together, the results from Models 4 and 5 in Table 3 resonate with movement histories, various accounts by individual state legislators, and the views of activists from both sides of the ERA question. Elite allies matter to movement outcomes because they amplify the effect movements have on policy change. But on both sides of the issue, movement strength affects ratification rates independently of the interaction term. In other words, our findings show support for our slightly modified political mediation model, in which movements can have an effect without elite allies, but that their effect is stronger when they have allies in policy-making positions.

Turning to our argument about public opinion and electoral competition, in Model 6 we examine whether higher levels of electoral competition intensify the effect of public opinion. We specify this hypothesis as an interaction effect between favorable public opinion and electoral competition within state legislatures. The coefficient for the interaction term is negative (and its inclusion significantly improves over the less constrained Model 3 in Table 2), which implies that the rate begins to decline as both competition and favorable public opinion rise above their average levels.

Table 4 helps us interpret the complicated pattern of positive and negative coefficients in a nonlinear logistic regression. We calculated the effects in terms of probabilities of ratification at different levels of each of the two parent terms.[26] At high levels of favorable public opinion, when electoral competition rises the chances of ratification begin to decline. Moreover, and perhaps most interestingly, the

[25] Using equation (1), we estimated the probabilities of ratification when both AAUW and percentage of Democrats in the legislature are at their means and when they are one standard deviation higher (see Appendix). We then take the ratio of these probabilities, which is .229/.047 = 4.81.

[26] These probabilities were determined two ways: we calculated the effects of the two key variables, competition and public opinion, in models where all other measures were held constant at their means; and we used *Spostado* subroutines (available on J. Scott Long's Web site), which were created for interpreting interaction effects in nonlinear logistic regression models. See also Long and Freese 2001:275–77.

Table 4. Expected Probability of Ratification at Different Levels of Public Opinion and Electoral Competition

	High Levels of Electoral Competition	Medium Levels of Electoral Competition	Low Levels of Electoral Competition
Favorable public opinion of ERA	.15	.16	.17
Average public opinion of ERA	.08	.01	.01
Unfavorable public opinion of ERA	.00	.01	5.92E–6

Note: Expected probability calculated from estimates in Table 3, Model 6 (effects of all other variables in the model estimated at mean levels).

estimates suggest that the rate of ratification would peak when two conditions hold: when public opinion is most favorable and electoral competition is low (upper right-hand corner of Table 4). Indeed, using the same multiplier comparisons as we did earlier, Table 4 suggests that the rate of ratification is seventeen times higher when public opinion is most favorable and electoral competition is low, compared to the case when both electoral competition and public opinion are both at average levels (.17/.01 = 17).

What is the relative influence of each of these key processes—electoral competition and public opinion? Calculating the effect of public opinion alone (holding all variables at their mean) when electoral competition is at an average level (at its mean of zero) the effect of moving from low to high levels of favorable public opinion raises the probability of ratification sixteen-fold (.16/.01). In all columns of Table 4, moving from unfavorable to favorable public opinion levels shows a substantial increase in the chances of ratification. The results in Model 6 provide ammunition for those who have been warning us that public opinion should not be ignored in models that examine the effects of social movements and party competition on policy outcomes. However, at high levels of favorable public opinion on the ERA, this positive effect is dampened considerably by increases in levels of electoral competitiveness in the state, as the negative effect of the interaction term implies.

DISCUSSION

In this article we extend existing social movement theory by attempting to explain the conditions under which movement activity, gendered and political opportunity structures, and public opinion affect policy outcomes. Previous attempts to explain state-level ratification of the ERA have been unsatisfactory because they have tended to emphasize only one set of factors (such as protest mobilization by opponents or shifts in public opinion) without considering the possibility that the effect of a given factor may depend on one or more of the others. Following Amenta et al. (1992; 1994) we integrate ideas from various perspectives and we emphasize the contingent and interactive nature of the POS, public opinion, and movement organizations.

When we consider the hypothesis that public opinion is more important to policy outcomes than social movements (the "public opinion hypothesis" advanced by Burstein and Linton 2002), we find the picture more complicated than previous theories and research would have led us to expect. Social movement organizations show effects in the expected directions, even when public opinion on the ERA is included in the model. However, when we consider the interaction of public opinion with electoral competition, we find that public opinion played an important role, but that its strength depended on the level of competitiveness of the electoral system. Recall that we hypothesized a strong positive effect of electoral competition and favorable opinion. But our results show that while the main effect of favorable public opinion is large and positive, when an interaction term is taken into account, this positive effect declines as electoral competition increases. Public opinion influenced legislative behavior on the ERA, but it did so especially under low levels of electoral competition. This is an important finding. In their extensive review of the literature, Burstein and Linton (2002) note that while they had hypothesized public opinion to be more important to legislative decisions than other factors, the empirical literature has not shown this to be the case. We add to this debate by showing that their hypothesis may in fact be accurate in certain situations; that

is, public opinion influences outcomes more at low levels of electoral competition, when one party dominates.

With respect to the details of how movements mattered to the rate of ERA ratification, we find, first, that anti-ERA organizations decreased the rate of ratification and, second, the effect of these organizations intensified when there were more Republicans in the state legislature. Similarly, we found a direct, positive effect of pro-ERA movement organizational strength on ERA ratification rates; we also find that the presence of Democratic elite allies amplified this effect.

These findings lend support to the access-influence model of movement outcomes, which predicts that movement organizations affect legislative outcomes because they are able to mobilize supporters within the existing political structure through litigation and lobbying. They also lend support to political mediation models, which hold that elite allies will condition the effect that movements have on policy outcomes. However, since we find evidence of both a direct effect of movement activity (on both sides of the issue) *and* an effect of the interaction of movement strength with elite allies (again, on both sides of the issue), our results run counter to models that emphasize just one factor.

In summary, although we have found much to admire in both frameworks, we suggest some amendments to both the political mediation model and the public opinion model. First, the strongest version of the political mediation model (Amenta et al. 1994) holds that movement activity will *only* influence policy when there are supportive elite allies. We do not find this to be the case. Social movement organizations were more effective when they had "friends in court," but this was not a *necessary* condition for them to have an influence. In other words, movements mattered to state-level ERA ratification decisions, but they mattered more when there were elite allies present. Thus, we find support for an amended version of the political mediation model.

A second key finding suggests that, at least in the case of the ERA, social movements, along with public opinion, matter, but the importance of public opinion is greatly amplified under conditions of relatively low electoral competition. Why would this be the case? The broadest interpretation of our results is that we find evidence against single-factor theories and instead find that a *combination of factors* influenced the ratification outcome. These results resonate with a number of influential case studies of the ERA. Early on, states with strong allies (and high levels of Democratic representation in the legislature) and favorable public opinion ratified the amendment. Yet, as Mansbridge (1986) and Boles (1982) found, over time, and in those states that had not yet ratified, the debate over the ERA intensified and affected election outcomes that were in question. Furthermore, in states where political dominance was an issue (that is, in highly competitive systems) the ERA debate increasingly mobilized social movement activity on both sides of the question. Thus, at high levels of electoral competition, anti-ERA forces began to counter the effect of (initially) high levels of support for the ERA. In other words, increasing competition in politics becomes a double-edged sword, mobilizing both supporters and enemies of an issue. When electoral competition is low, clearly voiced public opinion will influence policy outcomes because social movement activity is also less likely. Our results suggest that the influence of public opinion peaks when electoral competition is low and social countermovement forces are quiescent. Thus, our findings suggest the importance of taking seriously the contingent and interactive effects of key theoretical arguments when trying to explain policy change.

CONCLUSION

We began by noting that previous attempts to explain policy change as a function of social movement activity have been unsatisfactory because they tend to emphasize only one set of factors (such as protest mobilization by opponents or shifts in public opinion) without considering the possibility that the effects of these factors may depend on each other. Rather than rely on single-factor explanations, we integrate ideas from a number of social movement and political sociology perspectives emphasizing the importance of movement organizations, political climate, and public opinion.

It is tempting to speculate about the nature of support for public opinion, POS, and movement organizational strength on policy change on a more general theoretical level. Do our results have implications for other social move-

ments, or are they constrained by time and place (and ideology)? Let us consider some of the implications of our findings for other contemporaneous social movements.

First, let us suggest some directions for future research based on our findings. We foresee significant payoffs to sociological research that seeks to causally link social movements, public opinion, political climate, and policy outcomes. Although many researchers make assumptions about the political process and the causes of policy change, few studies in sociology have actually examined these processes empirically. This leaves many important questions about the trajectory of social movements and their goals unexplored and unanswered. Although our results seem promising, we have only begun to address some of the key questions about the relationship of public opinion, movement activity, political climate, and policy outcomes with our examination of state-level ERA ratification in the United States.

Second, one might question whether our findings would apply to other countries (or to the United States in other time periods). At least since Alexis deToqueville, many observers have noted that the United States is a country of activism and vocal public opinions where elites seek to gauge public opinion and the public seeks to make their wishes known to elites via movements and organizations. This characterization of American politics suggests that our findings may be less robust in more centralized and less activist countries. But since we now know that the diffusion of social movements and their demands is becoming global in scope (Strang and Soule 1998), it seems natural to begin exploring some cross-national effects of public opinion and movement activity. Clearly there is room for more cross-national research on the effects of public opinion, social movements, and policy implementation.

Finally, we should reiterate our finding that elite allies amplified the effect of movement organizations on both sides of the ERA debate. Implicit throughout our article is a criticism of much past research on policy outcomes that has failed to consider both the movement and countermovement associated with a particular outcome (for notable exceptions, see McCammon et al. 2001, Andrews 2001, and Soule forthcoming). Future researchers in this area should be aware of the countervailing effect that movements and the countermovements they engender have on legislative outcomes. Studies of the effect of movements on policy should attempt, whenever possible, to consider activity by both proponents and opponents of the policy.

Our preceding discussion highlights an important task remaining for scholars developing arguments linking political opportunities to policy outcomes. When designing measures of the POS, scholars need to consider the question "Political opportunities for whom"? We should not expect that the elite allies of one movement will inevitably be allies of all kindred movements, even if the movements are both liberal-left leaning (which is not the case with ERA ratification). Nor should we simply assume that legislators' (or supporters') gender, race, religion, or age indicates blind support for a particular cause. In the case of the ERA, female legislators were not uniformly aligned with the pro-ERA movement, despite research that suggested they would be (Lilie et al. 1982). Future research, then, should take seriously the challenge of designing measures of the POS that are appropriate to the movement in question. Related to this point, we note that the balance of social movement research tends to study left-leaning movements without considering the countermovements and their organizational dynamics. We would like to see more future research considering the joint effects of political mediation and social movement organizations in movements of the right directed at conservative social policy.

Stepping back from the details, we hope we have shed light on some previous analyses that showed relatively weak support for conventional theories of social movements in analyses of policy outcomes. Scholars have not made much progress debating whether public opinion, social movement activity, political climate, or gendered opportunity has a stronger effect on policy change. We have tried to move away from this zero-sum debate by offering an approach that combines the most promising of all of these theoretical explanations. In so doing, we hope we have helped clarify what scholars mean by the somewhat opaque concept of political opportunity and why these opportunities become relevant in political contests over policy outcomes.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of and Correlations Between Independent Variables Measured at the State Level

			Correlations						
Variable	Mean	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) % women in professional occupations[a]	.0	.45	1.00						
(2) % in favor of women's equal roles[a]	.0	6.84	.30	1.00					
(3) % Democrats in legislature[a]	.0	.22	.04	–.04	1.00				
(4) % females in legislature[a]	.0	.05	.03	–.06	–.48	1.00			
(5) Civil rights policy innovativeness[a]	.0	13.67	.04	.17	–.56	.16	1.00		
(6) Liberal government ideology[a]	.0	17.04	.04	–.09	–.14	.03	.35	1.00	
(7) Electoral competition[a]	.0	21.93	–.06	.20	–.82	.28	.62	.24	1.00
(8) % in favor of the ERA[a]	.0	.15	.25	.32	.05	–.34	.31	.14	.17
(9) Anti-ERA organizations[a]	.0	2.37	.11	.28	–.23	.06	.30	.04	.26
(10) NOW strength[a]	.0	12.04	.07	.03	–.29	.13	.15	.22	.32
(11) AAUW chapter in state	.05	.23	.19	.09	–.08	–.03	.22	.15	.17
(12) State population[a]	.0	7.28	.26	.40	.03	–.02	.01	–.16	.05
(13) Year 1972	.10	.30	.07	.07	–.09	–.10	.10	–.01	.14
(14) AAUW × % Democrats	3E–3	.02	–.13	.01	.15	–.04	–.16	–.04	.17
(15) Anti-ERA organizations × % Republicans	.12	.32	–.11	–.22	.36	–.13	.18	–.03	–.28
(16) Electoral competition × favorable ERA	.55	3.16	.20	.07	.02	–.06	.31	.21	.14

Variable	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
(8) % in favor of the ERA[a]	1.00								
(9) Anti-ERA organizations[a]	3E–3	1.00							
(10) NOW strength[a]	.29	–.18	1.00						
(11) AAUW chapter in state	.28	.06	.11	1.00					
(12) State population[a]	–.03	–.06	–.24	.03	1.00				
(13) Year 1972	.21	.04	–.09	.12	–.06	1.00			
(14) AAUW × % Democrats	–.12	–.05	–.21	–.52	–3E–3	–.07	1.00		
(15) Anti-ERA organizations × % Republicans	.02	.23	–.22	–.07	.05	–.03	.03	1.00	
(16) Electoral competition × favorable ERA	.37	–2E–3	.15	.13	–.01	.07	–.16	9E–3	1.00

[a] These continuous variables were centered at their means; see text.

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