

April 20, 2023  
Draft. In progress.

## Why Women Won

Claudia Goldin  
Department of Economics  
Harvard University  
and  
National Bureau of Economic Research

*ABSTRACT:* How, when, and why did women in the US obtain legal rights equal to men's regarding the workplace, marriage, family, Social Security, criminal justice, credit markets, and other parts of the economy and society, decades after they gained the right to vote? The story begins with the civil rights movement and the somewhat fortuitous nature of the early and key women's rights legislation. The women's right movement then formed to press for further rights. Public opinion to strengthen women's status became more favorable in the 1970s. Of the 134 critical moments in women's rights history from 1905 to 2023, almost 50% occurred between 1963 and 1973. The greatly increased employment of women, the formation of women's rights associations, and the unstinting efforts of various members of Congress (mainly women) were behind the advances. But, women became splintered by marital status, employment, region, and religion far more than men. A substantial group of women emerged in the 1970s to oppose various rights for women, just as they did during the suffrage movement, and they remain a powerful force today.

*Acknowledgments:* Lily Seitelman helped compile the Gallup, GSS, ANES, and Virginia Slims survey data as well as the EEOC cases. Christina Zhou worked on court cases and the Google N-gram. Both worked on the timeline. Joy Wang helped with various details. I thank each for their excellent assistance. I am grateful to Larry Katz and Dev Patel for extensive comments, and to Ed Glaeser, Brian Wheaton, and David Yang for helpful advice.

In terms of their rights, women have won. By the end of the nineteenth century, American women had won the right to own property, keep their earnings, write legal contracts, manage their own businesses, and be educated. They added much more in the twentieth century including the right to vote in federal elections, be the equal of men in the workplace and in schools, choose their surnames, sit on juries, obtain credit, and exert control over their bodies (despite recent setbacks).

The advances in workplace, education, and other rights in the late-1960s and early 1970s was somewhat fortuitous. But those gains galvanized the women's movement and set in motion the passage and granting of more rights. Yet, just when the women's movement became a powerful force and had gained, by law or judicial decision, some of women's most important rights, a strong anti-feminist movement emerged—organized and led by women—to reassert a need for protection and to protest equality on account of sex. Similar objections had been offered in 1911 by women who opposed female enfranchisement. The modern version of the anti-feminist movement remains a potent force and has joined with those opposed to abortion.

Men and women still differ along a host of outcomes in the labor market, workplace, and home. But they differ far less in terms of the formal legal rights accorded them and in outcomes than before the 1960s. Many of the rights women gained during the century after 1920 are in the workplace, school, and marriage. As I will show with a chronology of women's rights, most were added in a brief decade some fifty years after women gained the right to vote.

Why the floodgates of gender equality suddenly opened in the 1960s was due to several factors. The most important concerns the complex relationship between civil rights and women's rights, which had been intertwined ever since women advanced the abolitionist cause in the early nineteenth century. Perhaps the most famous moment before the 1960s was with the crafting of the Fifteenth Amendment when the National Women's Suffrage Association, formed in 1869, proposed that the right "to vote shall not be denied ... on account of race" *or sex*.

The relationship between the civil rights and the women's movements finally bore fruit for women in the 1960s. Few ordinary Americans, as well as those in the corridors of power, had perceived that differences between men and women were due to discrimination even if they perceived that differences between Blacks and whites were. That began to change as the civil rights movement advanced in the nation's streets and in Congress, and as the women's rights movement followed.

Not that long ago, the word discrimination was rarely used to describe the treatment of women in the workplace and elsewhere. The term “sex discrimination” began to be used with greater frequency in the mid-1960s. The most likely reason was because the word discrimination was increasingly used to describe the treatment of Blacks. The use of the phrase “racial discrimination” in books published in the US increased in the 1940s, with desegregation in the US armed forces, and it increased again in the 1950s, as can be seen in Figure 1.<sup>1</sup> Discrimination with regard to “sex” (later using the word “gender”) increased around 1965. Both series peak in 1976. The use of the expression “sex discrimination” (or “gender discrimination”) indicates an awareness that women’s rights in the workplace, credit markets, housing, and even marriage were thwarted.

### *A Chronology of Major Women’s Rights Events: When It Happened*

A timeline of major US events regarding women’s rights, including well-known legislation, important court rulings, political milestones in Congress, decisions made by the Social Security Administration and Internal Revenue Service, divorce laws, and critical moments in the women’s movement and their political representation in Congress is provided in Table 1. The full timeline begins in 1846 with the adoption by Massachusetts of a Married Women’s Earnings Act, which enabled married women to keep the fruits of their labor. But the discussion and Figure 2 that graphs the timeline begin some sixty years later with the landmark Supreme Court case, *Muller v. Oregon* (1908).

*Muller* is the earliest case concerning whether women as a group could be restricted in their employment to protect them and the unborn. These restrictions included limits on the number of weekly or daily hours that a woman could work, prohibitions against night work, restraints on the weight a woman would have to lift, and various bans on the employment of pregnant women. *Muller* is at the heart of a controversy regarding women’s rights that raged in the courts, Congress, and the women’s rights movement for much of the twentieth century. It was a critical factor behind the rocky road of the Equal Rights Amendment. Sixty years after the *Muller* decision, *Rosenfeld v. Southern Pacific Company* (1968), determined that women, as one of the protected groups enumerated in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, could not be treated differently in the workplace by the laws of the various states. To do so would constitute unlawful discrimination.

The chronology ends today when several states have passed paid parental leave laws (CT to begin in 2022; OR to begin in 2023) but also when *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* (2022) overruled *Roe v. Wade* (1973). It is a history of many ups, and some downs. It is also a history of deep divisions among women and men regarding the

---

<sup>1</sup> Figure 1 uses the Google N-gram program, which searches over books published, in this case, in the US. The program is limited to searching for contiguous words.

rights for women they believe will further their cause.

Some entries in Table 1 concern state legislation (e.g., divorce laws), and in most cases, I have not counted each state as a separate observation. Rather, I have used the number that had passed legislation at various important junctures. Some entries are major legislative decisions that have affected millions of individuals. Some are events, legislation, and judicial decisions that have affected a much smaller number. Many are landmark judicial decisions. I have based the entries on chronologies and accounts compiled by noted historians and scholars of the women's movement (e.g., Freeman 1975, Alice Kessler-Harris 2001, Harrison 1989, Rosenberg 1992) as well as on my own reading of the vital moments and events in the history (see also Table 1, *Sources*). Although it would be best to weight each entry by the affected group, that is not (yet) feasible.

Each of the entries has been placed in one of four main areas: Workplace, Economic/Social, Political, and Own Body.<sup>2</sup>

- *Workplace* entries are those concerning legal protections in the workplace. They include cases, acts, and orders involving protective legislation, the EEOC, Title VII, equal pay, and affirmative action.
- *Economic/Social* entries include those concerning rights in education, marriage, divorce, marital property, contracts, Social Security, and taxes.
- *Political* items include key aspects of the women's movement, and milestones for women in Congress and the Supreme Court.
- *Own Body* matters include judicial cases regarding contraception and abortion, and landmark moments in the history of birth control and reproductive rights as well as laws regarding sexual harassment.

Several entries straddle two areas but have been, by necessity, assigned to one. The various entries for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), for example, have been placed in the Economic/Social sphere since the portion of the ERA that would have covered the Workplace is already included in Title VII, even though the ERA was first introduced in Congress in 1923 before passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Also, decisions regarding sexual harassment in the workplace are occasionally included under Workplace rather than with Own Body. There are, to be sure, other categorizations that could be employed. I will use these categories mainly to show that the time series for all are similar.

Counts of the entries, and by each of the four groupings, are graphed in Figure 2,

---

<sup>2</sup> I am following Tertilt, et al. (2022) in using four main categories. The World Bank's Women, Business and the Law Index has eight categories: Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood, Entrepreneurship, Assets, and Pension (see Hyland, et al. 2021, 2022).

aggregated quinquennially. The total number of events listed is 134, so there are many years of quiescence surrounding three moments of greater intensity. The first period of activity is from 1916 to 1923 with the formation of the National Women's Party, the passage and then ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, the establishment of the Women's Bureau, and the first introduction of the ERA to Congress in 1923.

The next moment extends from 1963 to 1973 and includes by far the most entries. That decade, tumultuous for reasons distinct from the women's movement, contains the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the publication of *The Feminine Mystique*, the formation of the National Organization for Women (NOW), the shift to coeducation among many of the Ivies and little Ivies, the passage of the ERA in the House and Senate, Title IX of the 1972 Education Act, the spread of no-fault and unilateral divorce laws among the states, the first edition of *Ms. Magazine*, and *Roe v. Wade*, among other highlights. The period also includes the start of a formidable anti-feminist movement, STOP ERA. The final period of activity, from around 1987 to 1993, contains further sex discrimination cases and the passage of FMLA.

The Nineteenth Amendment set the stage for many of the events in Table 1 and Figure 2, particularly those concerning legislation. Three pieces of federal legislation, as well as related ones at the state level, have had outsized direct and indirect impacts on women's rights. These are Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Act, and the Equal Rights Amendment, which was never ratified by the states, but was passed separately by 26 state legislatures from 1879 to 2019.<sup>3</sup> Although it would be useful to know the impact of each of the laws, that is a far larger project, begun piecemeal by many others.<sup>4</sup>

### *Women's Movements: A Framework*

We can model the emergence of the women's movement and the eventual rise of an anti-feminist movement by considering the preferences of individuals (mainly women) for

---

<sup>3</sup> States have legislation on workplace discrimination that expands the list of protected groups, for example by adding marital status, height, weight, genetic information, and ancestry. Groups have been expanded by court interpretation of Title VII and some were added as amendments to Title VII, such as, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (discrimination based on disability), the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, and coverage of state and local government employment. I also discuss the 1963 Equal Pay Act.

<sup>4</sup> The literature on the impact of women's rights is extensive and expansive. See, for example, Bailey (2022), Beller (1979, 1982), Leonard (1989), and Stevenson (2010) on the impacts of the EPA, Title VII, Title IX, and Affirmative Action. See Jacob (1988) and Stevenson (2007) on divorce laws. Miller (2008) assesses the early impact of the franchise. Hyland, et al. (2022, 2021) correlate World Bank Women, Business and the Law data for 90 nations across 50 years with various outcomes.

two related issues: (1) equality ( $E$ ) with men in all spheres and (2) the protection ( $P$ ) of women in the workplace, marriage, and family. For one group, call them “feminists,” complete equality ( $E$ ) with men is valued. For the other group, call them anti-feminists or traditionalists, protection ( $P$ ) is valued. The greater the protection, the less the equality, and vice versa. The two groups initially have latent demands, which get expressed when a viable organization for their views is formed. The model that follows is highly simplified, but it is one that will help comprehend a complex narrative.

Preferences of individual women dictate when they will support and give services to an organization. Every person is endowed with a unit of time (per period) that she can give to a movement or consume as leisure. Each feminist has a desired value of  $E$ , say  $E^*$ , and each will work for the organization as long as the current  $E < E^*$ . Similarly for the traditionalists if  $P < P^*$ .  $E$  and  $P$  are public goods and there is no notion that any one individual can alter the equilibrium.<sup>5</sup> Some women have no (or zero) preference for equality or protection, although each may work for one of the movements when the current value is below the one she wants. Feminists will not actively work to reduce equality and traditionalists will not actively work to reduce protections.

In Figure 3, the  $E$  or  $P$  axis indicates the existing level of equality or protection. It also gives the fraction of women desiring a particular level of equality or protection. The probability distribution  $f(E_i)$  gives the fraction of women who would work (that is, give their unit of time) for the movement at each level of  $E$  (same for  $g(P_i)$ ) if a viable organization to support equality (or protection) had been formed.

The initial (net) level of protection or equality, in say 1962, is given by  $P_1$ , since all states had at the time some form of workplace protective legislation for women. Furthermore, no federal law protecting women’s rights in the workplace had yet been passed and Constitutional guarantees of equal protection contained in the Fifth and the Fourteenth Amendments were not yet used for women.

I assume that no feminist will work to reduce equality and no traditionalist will work to reduce protections. Therefore, all women to the right of  $E_0$  will work to shift the equilibrium to their desired point when a viable women’s or feminist organization is formed. It is not clear how the women can actually change the equilibrium but they may protest, demonstrate, and appeal to their political representatives.

---

<sup>5</sup> Note that the more involved issues regarding “global game theory” are not considered (see Cantoni et al. 2019 section V.A. for a simplified version of Morris and Shin 2003). Each person acts independently even though the arena is one of meetings, demonstrations, and protests in which each individual’s belief about other people’s roles in the collective will be important.

The entire distribution,  $f(E_i)$ , can shift to the right as the fraction of women who want greater equality or fewer protections increases. Such a shift may have occurred as employments that were more gender-mixed increased, exposing women to a greater need for equal workplace rights, or as more women desire employments that are currently restricted by legislation limiting hours and activities. These shifts occurred, most likely, in the 1960s with the rising employment of women, particularly those married, with children, and having higher levels of education.

When workplace rights are increased, for example, to  $E_N$ , all women with  $E_i < E_N$  will curtail their work for the movement but will not work to reduce the existing  $E_N$  level. However, those with positive demand for protection will work to counteract increased equality. This simple formulation will be referred to in the discussion that follows.

### *The Women's Rights Movement: How It Happened*

Women are found in nearly every racial, age, religious, ethnic, education, and income group. They are part of almost every family, and they live in most zip codes. They were, for some time after the franchise was won, difficult to organize politically under one banner. They are often united because they are women but they are divided in most other ways. How did women's rights get advanced?<sup>6</sup>

The framework just offered and the chronology that I will now expand upon construct a narrative that traces the formation of interest groups around two main goals. One was for the protection of women's interests in marriage, the family, and the workplace. The other was for equality with men in all spheres, even at the cost of forgoing advantages from protection.

The story must also involve men since they controlled (and still control) Congress and the Executive branch. Men were mobilized to support women's goals, sometimes equality and at other times protection, when certain women's groups became powerful political forces. But, even then, male senators and representatives often favored the cause of another oppressed group. They were, however, often swayed by displays of power, protests, shows of strength, and of the ability of the few women in Congress and who were part of the administration to sponsor bills and gain their support.<sup>7</sup>

Ever since the 1950s, certain groups of American women became increasingly more

---

<sup>6</sup> Excellent histories include: Chafe (1977), Collins (2009), Freeman (1975), Harrison (1989), Kessler-Harris (2001), and Rosenberg (1992). See Goldin (2014) on women's distinctiveness.

<sup>7</sup> They were also influenced, according to Washington (2008), by whether they had daughters, but see Green et al. (2022) for a long time series that does not find any impact of daughters.

vocal about their unjust treatment in the workplace, school, and home, as well as with regard to their own bodies. The civil rights movement and anti-war protests gave many organizing skills, and their often disgraceful treatment by men in both organizations provided an impetus to demonstrate for their own rights.<sup>8</sup>

But, probably the most important role of the civil rights movement initially was to unite women under the banner of oppression. Betty Friedan's best-selling book may have awakened yet others to their discontent, often in the privacy of their homes.

The recognition that something was wrong also arose from the growing fraction of women who had entered the workplace.<sup>9</sup> It was difficult to complain about labor market treatment when none was experienced.

The greatest increase in employment for women from 1950 to 1960 was among those currently married and in the 35 to 54 years age range, whose children were likely in school and possibly already on their own (see Figure 4, part A). From 1970 to 1980, the greatest increase was for women 25 to 34 years who had children (see Figure 4, part B).<sup>10</sup> That is, the 1950s saw the greatest increase for middle-aged married women, whereas the 1970s saw the largest increase for younger women with children.

Workplace discrimination was rampant in the 1950s and 1960s, when outright discrimination against women was not illegal and women were greatly increasing their numbers in the workforce. A few examples from interviews with personnel officers in the mid-1950s across a wide range of firms in Philadelphia will make the point.<sup>11</sup>

The representative from Equitable Life Assurance noted: "Mothers of young children are not hired" (9/7/56). Penn Mutual Life Insurance Co. did "not encourage married women with very young infants to return to work" (8/22/56). Provident Mutual Life Insurance stated that: "Pregnancy is cause for a voluntary resignation," although "the company is glad to have the women return when the children are, perhaps, in junior high school" (8/14/56). An agent from the Heintz Manufacturing Co. (a steel company) stated

---

<sup>8</sup> Incidences of offensive public statements by important male members of the civil rights and anti-war movements are legion. Many, including Freeman (1975, p. 57), cite the public statement by Stokely Carmichael that the "only position for women in SNCC is prone."

<sup>9</sup> One may wonder why the increase in women's employment participation during the WWII years did not lead to a similar outcry. For some, it did. But most women accepted the notion that returning GIs deserved to have their jobs back. With the end of subsidized daycare and extended school hours for the children of working women, there was less incentive to stay in the workforce.

<sup>10</sup> Figure 4 gives data for the 25 to 29 and 45 to 49 year old groups.

<sup>11</sup> Extensive interviews were done for studies of local labor markets by the Industrial Research Unit of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. See Hussey (1958).



that the “head of the engineering department admitted some women as tracers but not as draftsmen” (4/12/57). These comments were often preceded by ones stating that the company, before the 1940s, had not hired married women but were now pleased to do so. In the words of the Sears, Roebuck official : “the best employee is a married woman with a mortgage on her house and her children partially raised.”<sup>12</sup>

The women’s movement initially coalesced around various well-known figures and political leaders. But by the late 1960s and early 1970s it shifted to younger unmarried women, often less publicly known, occasionally non-white, generally well-educated, and employed.<sup>13</sup> It also moved from a public sphere to one that was local, individual, grass roots, and often in women’s own apartments and homes. It became known as the “women’s liberation movement” and later as just the “women’s movement.”

But many women were not united around the language of oppression and did not believe that they suffered “the problem with no name,” as Betty Friedan had labelled the reason for the unhappiness of full-time housewives and mothers in the 1950s and 1960s. Although, they too, were heterogeneous in their preferences and difficult to reach, they generally desired to build respect for homemakers, keep special privileges for divorced women, maintain workplace protections, and uphold the sanctity of family and the unborn. As the pro-forces gained strength and the ERA passed Congress in 1972, the anti-forces began to organize the STOP ERA drive.<sup>14</sup> The pro-life (anti-abortion) movement was further energized by the *Roe v. Wade* (1973) decision.<sup>15</sup>

### *The President’s Commission on the Status of Women and the Equal Pay Act of 1963*

The story of how the women’s movement emerged begins in 1960 with the election

---

<sup>12</sup> Quotations are from the archival documents for Hussey (1958), examined in the late 1980s by the author in box #167 at the University of Pennsylvania. They are currently housed in the University of Pennsylvania Archives and Records Center in box 14, folder 12 and box 55, folder 29 (see “A Guide to the Wharton School, Industrial Research Unit Records 1900-1996” [https://archives.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/upb5\\_9ir.pdf](https://archives.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/upb5_9ir.pdf))

<sup>13</sup> The first group included the author, Betty Friedan, and members of Congress, such as Bella Abzug Shirley Chisholm, Ella Grasso, Edith Green, Martha Griffiths, and Patsy Mink. Also in the first group and linking it to the second is Gloria Steinem, the founder of *Ms. Magazine*.

<sup>14</sup> STOP was an acronym for “Stop Taking Our Privileges.”

<sup>15</sup> Members of the anti-forces of the past were mainly, but not solely, women. The recent anti-woke activities in schools, libraries, and civil discourse continues the group’s efforts. Another moment when antis were formed to defeat an expansion of women’s rights was in the 1910s. The National Association Opposed to Women’s Suffrage, founded by women in 1911, worked to defeat the Nineteenth Amendment, which they succeeded at until June 1919.

of President John Kennedy and the realization that the women's vote could be pivotal.<sup>16</sup> With that in mind and with the prompting of labor activist and Women's Bureau director Esther Peterson, Kennedy in 1961 established "The President's Commission on the Status of Women" (PCSW) in 1961 (US Commission 1963). Its report demonstrated the many ways women were unequivocally discriminated against in federal and state laws and the degree to which the law restricted their employment in the public and private sectors.<sup>17</sup> The Commission set up fifty state Commissions, and the meetings of these commissions later facilitated networking by groups of women across America who met together.

The report did not advocate passage of the ERA, which had been floating around Congress since 1923. But the Commission did endorse the use of Fourteenth Amendment to prohibit states from discriminating against women and the Fifth Amendment for cases regarding the federal government (US Commission 1963, pp. 44). Neither had previously been successfully used in cases regarding sex discrimination. The Fourteenth had been reserved for cases regarding race. But in 1971, it was cited in the case *Reed v. Reed*, in which the US Supreme Court overturned an Idaho law that gave the administration of a child's estate to his father rather than his mother. The Fifth Amendment was similarly used in *Frontiero v. Richardson* (1973) regarding sex differences in the military's dependency allowances. Ruth Bader Ginsberg, as a lawyer, brilliantly argued both landmark cases.

The Commission did promote the Equal Pay Act. In February 1962, "the Commission endorsed the policy of equal pay for comparable work" and also noted that: "State laws should establish the principle of equal pay for comparable work" (US Commission 1963, p. 37). The final bill, signed into law by President Kennedy in June 1963 was an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which made it more palatable to opponents from the business community. Even more important to those groups was the substitution of the term "equal" for "comparable."

Passage of the 1963 Equal Pay Act (EPA) might be viewed as a gain for women. It had been proposed in 1945 and 1960 and failed to be passed. Equal pay, however, had been desired by men in affected jobs at various key moments in US history. When women were hired in positions identical to men's, especially during wartime, equal pay for equal jobs

---

<sup>16</sup> According to Cascio and Shenhav (2020, p. 30), women were the majority of the electorate by the 1960 Presidential election because women were more than half of the voting-age population even though they were still less likely to vote than were men, a gap which closed in about 1980. Women's turnout had greatly increased from the 1948 election to that in 1960. But Kennedy lost the female vote to Nixon, something he needed to shore up for the future. The growing importance of the female vote does not necessarily mean that women changed their preferences.

<sup>17</sup> See US Commission on the Status of Women (1963).

would protect men's wages.<sup>18</sup> In addition, there was overwhelming consensus at the time, we will soon see, regarding equal pay for equal work. Furthermore, the 1963 EPA covered pay discrimination only for the same work, not for "comparable" work.<sup>19</sup> And it was limited in scope and did not cover discrimination in hiring, promotion, retention, and other terms and conditions of work. Finally, the EPA (also later Title VII), excluded professional, administrative, and executive positions due to its reliance on the Fair Labor Standards Act, although the EPA was amended in 1972 to cover these excluded groups.<sup>20</sup>

### *Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the EEOC, and the Formation of NOW*

The civil rights movement did far more for the women's movement than galvanize women, give them a lesson in organizing, and provide an awareness of "oppression." It handed the nation's women and the women's movement a critical piece of legislation. That happened when the word "sex" was fortuitously inserted in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The addition of that one word to the title that dealt with private-sector employment was an amazing feat. It involved a bit of free riding, some clever negotiating, and a lot of luck. One cannot overestimate what it gave American women—the potential for workplace protection from discrimination.

The act was nearly passed without the mention of the word "sex." But two days before passage, the word "sex" was inserted in the list of protected groups by Congressman Howard Smith (D-VA), a known opponent of civil rights. The initial reason was probably to deal a deathblow to the entire bill. But the ensuing debate on the floor led to a bizarre switching of political positions, with progressives opposing workplace rights on account of sex and conservatives arguing for them.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> See Freeman (1975, pp. 174) on the history of equal pay and the notion that equal pay mandates and acts often protected existing workers from an influx of low wage women. That occurred during World War I when the War Labor Conference Board enforced an equal pay policy and again during World War II when the National War Labor Board did the same. Rosenberg (1992) notes that the 1963 EPA was less than its supporters hoped since it applied to businesses "engaged in," not "affecting," interstate commerce and was for "equal" not "comparable" work.

<sup>19</sup> The Equal Pay Act: "prohibits sex-based wage discrimination between men and women in the same establishment who perform jobs that require substantially equal skill, effort and responsibility under similar working conditions."

<sup>20</sup> The exemption for Title VII is implicit through a reliance on section 6(d) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended (29 U.S.C. 206(d)).

<sup>21</sup> It is often claimed that the insertion of the word "sex" was a "joke" that Congressman Howard Smith (D-VA), an opponent of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, added it to kill the bill. But Bird (1997), see also Rosenberg (1992, p. 187), tells a more nuanced story in which the National Women's Party, perhaps with clever intent, got Smith to add the word "sex" to demonstrate the impact of the bill. Although Smith did intend to kill the bill, the addition of the word "sex" led prominent liberals to argue that it would endanger protective legislation. Conservatives argued for and liberals against

Meaningful support for the addition came from a group of pro-ERA congresswomen, and the word stayed in Title VII but was not added to other titles, including Title VI on education. The fact that it took so much finagling to add the word “sex” to one of the titles shows the overwhelming importance of race to progressives in Congress and to President Lyndon Johnson. As mentioned earlier, discrimination on account of sex was simply not a major policy issue, although women’s issues were getting somewhat more attention.

Title VII set up the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to enforce Title VII. But its inaction—worse, the actual hostility of its Executive Director—with regard to cases of sex discrimination in its initial years gave rise, in 1966, to the formation of National Organization for Women (NOW), “the first avowedly feminist organization to emerge since suffrage.”<sup>22</sup> NOW would provide a real break with the past and allow women and men to work for women’s rights outside the constraints of being official members of governmental agencies and beholden to an administration.<sup>23</sup>

NOW succeeded in pressuring President Johnson to include women in affirmative action and to prohibit sex discrimination in the federal government. In 1970, NOW filed a “blanket” complaint against 1,300 companies for sex discrimination. It warred with EEOC concerning the “bona fide occupational qualification” (BFOQ) exemption, specifically with regard to state protective legislation and in particular with regard to marriage bars for stewardesses and in 1968 on the issue of separate help-wanted advertisements for men and women.<sup>24</sup>

The formation of NOW had several effects. Most important is that it gave women’s rights activists a viable organization formed and led by prominent feminists, like Betty Friedan and Pauli Murray, Washington D.C. insiders, like Richard Graham and Shirley Chisholm, and public intellectuals and academics, like Carl Degler and Alice Rossi. NOW

---

the inclusion of the word “sex.” Congresswoman Martha Griffiths (D-MI) then supported the Smith amendment, noting that Black women could be protected but not white women. Other Congresswomen joined the pro-forces; the word remained, and the bill passed.

<sup>22</sup> NOW was founded in June 1966 at the Third National Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women (the group that took the place of the PCSW). See Harrison (1989, pp. 187) on statements by EEOC Executive Director Thompson Powers and Herman Edelsberg, who succeeded him in 1965, about not wanting the EEOC to be known as the “sex commission.”

<sup>23</sup> At the June 1966 meeting 28 signed on as founders of NOW and 21 did at the October 1966 conference. The original officers were Betty Friedan (president), Kathryn Clarenbach (board chair), and Aileen Hernandez and Richard Graham (VPs). Hernandez and Graham had been EEOC Commissioners and protested the laxity in the enforcement of the sex provision of Title VII.

<sup>24</sup> The BFOQ exemption to EEO laws allowed employers to use factors such as height, sex, strength, and religion, if these characteristics could be shown to be essential qualifications for effective performance on the job. Most marriage bars in teaching and office work had largely disappeared by the 1950s with little court or legislative fanfare. See Goldin (1992).

was partly responsible for the passage of various laws, such as the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and the ERA, and a host of landmark judicial decisions. But, because NOW was perceived as an elite organization, it also fostered dissent and more radical women's organizations.

With pressure placed on the EEOC and with its new-found ability to initiate charges on its own, after passage of the EEO Act of 1972, the fraction of EEOC cases "on account of sex" rose (see Figure 5). In 1966, when the number of new charges was low, the fraction due to sex discrimination was about 28%. But charges due to race grew rapidly and the fraction due to sex discrimination fell to below 20%. After 1972, the fraction due to sex rose to 32% where it remained, with some ups and downs, to 1995, the end point of the series shown. The shift was due to the priorities of the EEOC rather than the underlying events.<sup>25</sup>

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act intentionally excluded employees at educational institutions and the word "sex" was not included in Title VI, which covered educational institutions and others that were federally funded. That omission would be partially fixed with the passage of Title IX.

But Executive Order 11375 in 1967, one of the many achievements of NOW, extended affirmative action in federal contracts to include sex and gave the newly formed Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) in 1970 the ability to sue 160 universities and colleges for sex discrimination in employment.<sup>26</sup> The relationship between the board of WEAL and those eventually connected with amendments to the 1972 Education Act led to the crafting of Title IX of the 1972 Education Act.

#### *Title IX of the 1972 Education Act*

Title IX of the 1972 Education Act had originally been drafted to correct the omission of the word "sex" from Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Title IX read: "No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in ... any educational program receiving Federal Financial assistance." Few individuals, it appears, realized what a game changer those words would mean for women's sports. Their eventual meaning, however, was not thought out as a stratagem for that end.

Bernice Sandler, who helped draft the 1972 amendments as a central player in

---

<sup>25</sup> According to Kessler-Harris (2001, p. 277), the Department of Justice did not prosecute any case on account of sex until 1970 but had taken 45 regarding race.

<sup>26</sup> See Freeman (1975, pp. 75) on the difficulty in getting the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) to implement the new guidelines, which occurred in the Nixon administration.

WEAL, recalled that no one gave any thought to how Title IX would affect sports. According to “original testimony for Title IX in 1970 ... there is no mention whatsoever of sports” and, in addition, “Title IX,” noted Sandler, “was seen as a very minor bill” (Sandler 2007, p. 478). When Title IX was finally passed, with a host of exclusions for private universities and colleges, Title VII had already been amended to cover employment in higher education.

### *Equal Rights Amendment and the Rise of the Anti-Women’s Rights Movement*

Yet another apparent success for the women’s movement was passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) by Congress in 1972. The ERA had hung around Congress for half a century, from the time it was first introduced in 1923, to 1972 when it passed both houses by overwhelming majorities. It had been introduced into every session of Congress from 1923 to 1970 and gained momentum after the formation of NOW in 1966.<sup>27</sup> Even though the federal amendment was ultimately defeated in 1982, when it fell three states short of ratification after being given a three-year extension, equal rights amendments have been passed by 26 states and remain parts of their state constitutions.

The wording of the amendment is simple: “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.” The meaning is more complicated. The ERA was championed by feminists working to advance equality by sex. It was also supported by business and industry interests that wanted to end protective legislation and regulations at the state and federal levels that had originated legally with the landmark decision *Muller v. Oregon* (1908).

Protective legislation solely for women, as was codified in *Muller*, was originally intended as an opening wedge to lower hours and gain protections for *all* workers. *Lochner* (1905) effectively prevented states from passing minimum hours laws and *Muller* (1908), by arguing that women needed protection, was actually viewed as progressive. The lawyer who won the case before the US Supreme Court was none other than Louis Brandeis.<sup>28</sup> But by the 1940s, as hours had declined for workers and as the union movement was nearing its peak, protective legislation for women was no longer needed for the cause of all labor. Although it was often passed to protect female workers, it also limited their employment options and was occasionally passed to protect male workers from competition.

The ERA was part of the Republican platform as early as 1940 and remained as one

---

<sup>27</sup> The discussion in Freeman (1975, p. 212) links the political rebirth of the ERA to Title VII, changes in union and employer views with the demise of protective legislation, the writing of an important analysis of the ERA by a NOW founder Mary Eastwood of the Justice Department, and the work of Rep. Martha Griffiths to get the memo in the Congressional Record and be seen by Nixon.

<sup>28</sup> See Goldin (1988) on the *Muller* case as a reaction to *Lochner* (1905).

of its stated goals to 1976 (except 1964 and 1968, though Nixon supported the ERA before he became President and when it passed Congress in 1972). Interestingly, the ERA was also part of the Democratic Party platform from 1944 and is included in the 2020 platform.

Liberal forces and unions were almost uniformly against the ERA, until the late 1960s.<sup>29</sup> They argued that the amendment would strip working women of needed workplace protections. But in the late 1960s that began to change. Those who argued for equality between the sexes began to gain the upper hand in progressive circles and convinced liberal and union elements to join them.

But, perhaps of more importance is that protective legislation at the state and federal levels, as previously noted, was effectively ended by the landmark decision *Rosenfeld v. Southern Pacific Company* (1968). More decisions followed *Rosenfeld* to end protective legislation once and for all. By 1973 only Nevada had hours restrictions for women.<sup>30</sup> The main reason why liberals and union members were against the ERA was no longer an issue. Protective legislation was essentially dead.

In 1972, when it breezed through Congress, it seemed as if the ERA would be ratified in short order. Even though the ERA would eventually die, its passage may have had long-lasting impact on the use by federal courts of the due process and equal protection clauses in the Fourteenth and Fifth Amendments to include women.<sup>31</sup>

Though many of the legislative acts and court decisions in the critical decade from 1963 to 1973 were fortuitous, they greatly expanded women's rights. They created a national women's movement that led to even greater rights. But the successes of the women's movement also produced two changes that reduced the movement's impact.

---

<sup>29</sup> The inclusion of the ERA in the Democratic platform, with 1944, does not negate the fact that although most in the liberal wing were for equality they were against jettisoning many protections

<sup>30</sup> Legal cases concerning state protective legislation continued for many years, some having begun prior to the *Rosenfeld* (1968) decision. *Weeks v. Southern Bell T&T*, for example, is similar to *Rosenfeld*. Weeks lost her case in 1967 but won on appeal in 1969. The BFOQ defense was first struck down by the US Supreme Court in *Dothard v. Rawlinson* (1977).

<sup>31</sup> According to Mansbridge (1986, p. 55): "It is difficult to determine whether or not the Supreme Court would have broadened its interpretation of the Fourteenth [and Fifth] Amendment[s] to include women as rapidly as it did had Congress not passed the ERA in 1972." Justice Brennan in *Frontiero v. Richardson* (1973) argued: "Congress itself has concluded that classifications based upon sex are inherently invidious." *Frontiero* involved a violation of the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment since it concerned a federal law.

One was the splintering of the women's movement. Women were united because they were women, not necessarily because they had the same goals. As the movement succeeded in Congress and the courts, many women returned to their ordinary lives.

The other change was the organization of an effective anti-women's rights group—STOP ERA—spearheaded by Phyllis Schlafly and the Eagle Forum. It eventually helped to halt ERA ratification at 35 states. Even with a Congressional extension of three years, ERA ratification died in 1982.<sup>32</sup> The anti-feminist movement gathered strength in ways that are similar to, but in the opposite direction from, the women's movement. The women who wanted to protect their lives as homemakers and to maintain differences between men and women in society and the economy were also difficult to organize. They united under the STOP ERA banner and were also joined by pro-life supporters ignited by *Roe v. Wade*.

Abortion reform arrived unexpectedly in the form of *Roe v. Wade* (January 1973) after the passage of the ERA. The decision was a success that none of its supporters could have predicted. In fact, members of the women's movement had argued vociferously for the inclusion in the 1972 Democratic platform of a plank on abortion rights. They lost that bid, but just a few months later, that no longer mattered.<sup>33</sup>

Returning to the model of Figure 3, passage of the ERA shifted the equilibrium. Those in the interval from  $E_0$  to  $E_{ERA}$ , if they believed that ratification was fairly certain (and 30 states had ratified it in the first year), would no longer take part in the movement's activities. The voices of the movement would then be dominated by more extreme ones to the right of  $E_{ERA}$ . Recall, as well, that various radical groups, incensed by NOW's stance on various matters, formed groups and engaged in demonstrations, such as that at the 1968 Miss America Pageant. Although bras were never burned (as some had claimed), this and other demonstrations were seen as anti-male. As the movement began to tilt in a more extreme direction, dominated by those to the right of  $E_{ERA}$ , the term "feminist" became a less honorable title. As we will soon see in Figure 12, by the mid-1980s, just a small fraction of Americans considered themselves "feminist," and although women did more so than men, that fraction was still small.

In an extraordinarily brief ten-year period, women's rights had changed for good. But the potential that the ERA would become an Amendment to the US Constitution and the *Roe v. Wade* decision, led the anti-feminist and traditionalist group to take up arms in short order. In terms of the framework, once that group had an effective organization in STOP

---

<sup>32</sup> See Mansbridge (1986).

<sup>33</sup> They did succeed in including the statement that "maternity benefits should be made available to all working women."



ERA, they would try to shift the equilibrium to  $P_M$ , the median for its group.

The fact that radical elements had become more vociferous in the women's movement was also used to unify the anti-feminist group. Schlafly noted in reports and speeches that: "The women's libbers are radicals who are waging a total assault on the family, on marriage, and on children."<sup>34</sup> The traditionalist group likely contributed to the defeat of the ERA and probably stymied a host of equality measures, such as paid family leave and subsidized childcare.<sup>35</sup> It did not, however, greatly roll back the equality gains of the women's movement with the exception of the right to abortion.

Defeating the ERA did not take much more than preventing a few states from ratifying the Amendment. Of the 15 states that did not ratify by 1982, ten were in the south (AL, AR, GA, FL, LA, MS, MO, NC, SC, VA). IL had been targeted, early on, by the STOP ERA movement. UT, NV, OK, and AZ were the others. The vast majority of Americans, both men and women, supported passage of the ERA. According to the GSS, of the almost 90% who had heard of the ERA, 73% supported the amendment in 1977 and about the same percentage did in 1982. Women were slightly more in favor of it than were men.<sup>36</sup>

#### *Views Regarding American Women at Mid-Century and Beyond: Why It Happened*

A vast amount of public opinion polling data exists from the 1930s to the 2000s from Gallup, the General Social Survey (GSS), the American National Election Surveys (ANES), and the Virginia Slims polls (see Appendix). In some cases, a question with approximately the same wording covers an extensive time period. In others, I have used polls on important questions that cover few years. The polling organizations often attempted to get nationally representative samples, but in some instances wanted a representative sample of the electorate. In most cases, I have either used existing sample weights that attempt to return the sample properties to a population-based one or have constructed them (see Appendix).

Public opinion surveys from the 1940s to the 2000s show that, at least by the early 1960s, wide-ranging support existed for women to take an active role in the workplace and politics, even at the highest levels. But support for expanding women's rights was not extensive for much of the period even when these rights had been expanded, say by 1970. Initially weak support, however, eventually increased. For some issues increased support

---

<sup>34</sup> Schlafly (1972).

<sup>35</sup> Leading feminists in the movement, such as Gloria Steinem and Eleanor Smeal, insist that insurance company lobbyists, not Schlafly, defeated the ERA.

<sup>36</sup> Data are from population-weighted tabulations using data from the General Social Survey. Gallup data for 1975, 1976, 1980, 1981, and 1982 are similar and show decreasing support after 1980. Women are slightly less in favor and nonwhites are about 10 percentage points more in favor.

occurred by the early 1970s but in others by the mid-1980s or early-1990s. Even though we don't know the precise reasons why change occurred, it is likely that women with a latent demand for equality could express it once a viable organization for women's equality was established.

For most of the key issues, men and women were generally in agreement. But, even though there were few differences between the sexes in the aggregate, women were considerably more divided by personal characteristics, such as marital, parental, and employment status and also by geography. In expressing their opinions, some--term them "feminists"—argued for equality, and others—term them "anti-feminists"—argued for protection and more traditional ways. These groups can be discerned in the polling data that have information on personal characteristics, such as those from the ANES.

By the 1960s, the majority of Americans believed that married women could be employed for pay and that the US would be governed better if women were more politically involved. Even in the 1940s, the majority of Americans stated they were in favor of electing a competent woman if she ran for President in their party. Women, it appears, were deemed capable of handling the double and even triple shifts that they were just beginning to assume in the 1960s.

In the early 1970s most wanted to strengthen women's status; somewhat later a majority warmed to the women's movement (also termed the women's liberation movement). Yet, only by the 1990s did a majority of Americans believe that women should be granted an equal role running businesses, industry, and government.

Despite a growing sentiment favorable to the women's movement, Americans never embraced the concept of feminism. Some of their reluctance may have come from the radicalization of the movement in the 1970s, but may also have been influence by the emergence of the anti-feminist and traditionalist group. There wasn't much belief before the 1970s that women were treated poorly in the labor market in the same sense that Blacks were. And even in the 1970s and 1980s public opinion polls show that there was little consensus on these points.

I begin with relevant questions from the Gallup and GSS surveys, many of which were initially asked before the 1960s.<sup>37</sup> The issues addressed by these questions concern whether respondents: approved of a married woman's working when her husband could

---

<sup>37</sup> Some of these questions have been used in related research. For example, Cascio and Shenhav (2020) use the question on voting for a female president in their analysis of political participation by sex. Charles, Guryan, and Pan (2018) construct a sexism index using questions from the GSS including that on a married women's working for pay and on voting for a female President.

support her (Figure 6), felt women would improve government (Figure 7), would vote for a competent woman who ran for US president in their own party (Figure 8), and believed that men and women should receive equal pay for the same work (no figure).

I then turn to public opinion questions asked by the GSS, Virginia Slims, and the ANES, starting in or after 1970. Among the most revealing with regard to women's rights are whether respondents wanted to grant women an equal role in running business, industry, and government (Figure 9), favored efforts to strengthen women's status in society (Figure 10), felt positive toward the women's movement (Figure 11) and toward feminism (Figure 12), and whether respondents considered themselves to be feminists (no figure). I also analyze responses to questions about whether respondents believed women were subjected to discrimination in jobs and in education.

The responses to these survey questions are summarized in Table 2. Baseline agreement with the question posed is provided for the closest year to 1970 by sex and age group (younger and older). In most of the cases, survey respondents will be divided by age (younger is 20 to 34 and older is 35 to 64 years) and sex (male, female) to form four groups, although not necessarily of equal size in the population or electorate. The year when more than 50% of each of the four groups (two genders × two ages) agreed is also provided. When possible, I also provide the polling data separately for college graduates.

#### *Should married women be employed for pay?*

The Gallup question most germane to the topic of workplace rights is: "Do you approve or disapprove of a married woman earning money in business or industry if her husband is capable of supporting her?" The question was asked in 1938, 1945, 1970, and 18 of the remaining years to 1998. There is considerable information after 1970, but none for the 1950s and 1960s. The mean responses for two age groups, 20 to 34 years and 35 to 64 years, are graphed in Figure 6, parts A and B; responses for college graduates are in Figure 6, parts C and D.

With the exceptions of the 1938 and 1945 data, for which women relative to men were more inclined to approve of a woman working, there are few differences by sex. The fraction agreeing is around 30% early on and rises to 80% by 1970 for the younger group and to 60% for the older group. By the 1980s approval exceeds 80% for all ages given. College graduates had high levels of agreement by 1970 and experienced little change after.

It is likely that the increase in approval was somewhat continuous from the 1950s since other Gallup polling data on women, for which more years exist, show little sudden change in the 1960s.

By 1970, the vast majority of Americans, both men and women, and around 85% of those who had graduated college, saw no problem with a married woman's working for pay even if her husband could support her. None of these results should be surprising since labor force participation rates of women had increased substantially in the 1960s. The figure for currently married women 30 to 34 years old was 29% in 1960 but was 39% in 1970; that for women 30 to 34 years old with children had been 29% in 1960 but was 40% in 1970, almost identical to that for married women, which is not surprising given the high fraction of married women with children in the 1960s. The greatest employment gains in the 1960s were for these groups.<sup>38</sup>

A related question, for which sample sizes are quite small, is whether the respondent preferred to work under a male or female supervisor ("boss") or was indifferent. Gallup data exist for 1953, 1975, and various years after. Until the 1980s, the majority of either men or women preferred to work under a male supervisor. In 1953, a greater fraction of women than men (23% of men and 41% 35 to 64 years old) answered that they would work under a woman (or were indifferent), but men rapidly caught up and both groups had more positive answers over time. How the change was influenced by where women were supervisors or whether respondents were employed is not clear.

*Would the US be better off if more women took a greater role in politics?*

Another question with responses that traverse the 1950s to the 1970s is whether the respondent thought the US would be a better place if more women were politically active or in charge. The question was generally phrased: "Do you think that the US would be governed better or worse if women had more say in politics?" It isn't clear what "more say in politics" meant and whether respondents interpreted the question to mean that women governed better generally or that getting more women into political positions from the very low level that existed would be beneficial.

Although many women were involved in local politics, the average person in 1950 would have known few women who held an elected federal office. Fully one-third of those who had served in Congress before 1950s succeeded their husbands. Eighteen women were elected to Congress in the 1950s, but just five were in the 1960s (although that group included Patsy Mink and Shirley Chisolm). Many would have known that Frances Perkins had served as the Secretary of Labor under Franklin Roosevelt and almost everyone would have known of Eleanor Roosevelt, who is still the longest serving First Lady in US history

---

<sup>38</sup> These data come from the 1960 and 1970 US Census of Population IPUMS. See also Goldin and Mitchell (2017), which uses the CPS-ASEC beginning with 1963. The data for nonwhite women, regardless of marital and motherhood status had much higher participation rates.

and held various appointed positions up until her death.

By the mid-1970s, as can be seen in Figure 7, around 80% to 90% of men and women for both age groups believed that having more women in political positions would benefit the nation, and perhaps they even thought that women were the equals, or better, than men in running the country.<sup>39</sup> But in the early 1950s the fractions were much smaller. As in the responses for women working, there is a large increase in the 1950s and 1960s, and the responses are almost identical by sex. As for the previous series, the data do not reveal whether an inflection point existed in the 1960s or there was a more continuous increase from 1953 to 1969. Answers to the next question provide some guidance.

*Would you vote for a female presidential candidate?*

The survey question on whether the respondent would vote for a female candidate has considerably more years and several in the 1960s. The question was carefully worded so that the respondent was given information that the hypothetical female candidate would be an exceptional individual running in the respondent's party.<sup>40</sup> Therefore the respondent would hypothetically have to vote for the candidate in the opposing party, or not at all, if the respondent did not want to vote for a woman.

Whatever the interpretation given to the question, the answer seems clear from Figure 8. There are few consistent differences between men and women, except in the early years when women had a stronger preference for the female candidate. Around 30% to 40% of male and female respondents, respectively, approved of the female candidate starting in the 1930s. About 90% did by the mid-1970s among the younger group when 80% did for the older group.

The 50 to 60 percentage point gain first began in the 1940s and 1950s. But from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s agreement increased by 30 percentage points. The bottom line is that considerably more men and women were willing to vote for a female candidate from the late 1930s to the early 1980s. In addition, the greatest change is in the 1970s and any that occurred before was in the 1940s.

---

<sup>39</sup> The fraction who say that with more women in politics the US would be governed better, rather than equal, greatly increases from 1984 to 1995.

<sup>40</sup> The question in 1937 was: "Would you vote for a woman for President if she qualified in every other respect?" In 1945, 1949, 1955, the question was: "If the party whose candidate you most often support nominated a woman for President of the United States, would you vote for her if she seemed best qualified for the job?" All other years have a similarly-worded question.

The more expansive group of years for the question on President suggests that change for that on women's work, for which no data exist from 1945 to 1970, also began to increase in the late 1960s. The increase expressed by both younger and older women from 1970 to 1975 was 10 percentage points.

*Should women be paid the same as men for the same work?*

The answer to the question on whether women should be paid the same as men was a resounding "yes" in all years from the 1940s to the 1990s. The question was generally worded: "Do you approve or disapprove of paying women the same salaries as men, if they are doing the same work?" The responses reflect the notion that if people are doing equal or nearly identical work (in the same firm, same establishment, same job) they should be paid the same amount.

It was also a way for men during World War II, for example, to protect their salaries by not having their replacements paid less. In fact, in 1942 respondents were given the hypothetical: "If women take the place of men in industry, should they be paid the same wages as men?" But even for that less-direct question, since it does not state that they are doing the same work, the vast majority of men (about 80%) and somewhat more women said they should. In 1962, almost 90% of men and 92% of women agreed. The answer to the question shows the overwhelming support that the limited guarantees of the 1963 Equal Pay Act had just before its passage. But does not mean that the vast majority of Americans supported the far broader workplace rights for women that were implicitly guaranteed by Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act or that they would be in favor of the broader concept of "comparable work."

*Should women be granted an equal role in running business, industry, government*

The ANES asked voters whether "women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government." The question began with the statement: "Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights." The question was first asked in 1972, the year the ERA was overwhelmingly passed by Congress, and then almost every two years to 2008.<sup>41</sup>

Among the younger group of women, about 40% were in agreement with the statement in 1970 and 50% were in 1990, as seen in Figure 9. Among the older group, 30% agreed in 1972 and 50% did in 1990. Women were slightly more in agreement with the statement than were men, and all groups increased their belief in equality of roles to the

---

<sup>41</sup> "Equal role" is defined as giving 1 as the answer. Respondents could give rankings from 1, meaning an equal role, to 7 meaning "women's place is in the home."

2000s, winding up with 70% of the younger group and 60% of the older group in agreement. Being employed, not married, not having children, and being college educated all increased support for improving women's status.

The absence of data before 1972, as in some of the other cases, probably means that much of the initial increase in agreement had already occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Yet, it is not until the 1990s that the majority of women, even younger ones, agreed with the statement that women should have a greater rights putting them on a more equal standing with men. Moreover, women, of any age group, were not much more likely to agree with the statement than were men.

The electorate as a whole does not appear to have thought that women should be granted more power in the economy and polity until the late 1980s or 1990s. There were exceptions, but even the most liberal men (young, from the northeast or west, college graduate, single) were not fully on board until the 1990s. And those from the opposite groups (young or old, from the south or the northcentral regions, not college graduates, married) were not largely in agreement until 2004. Women, themselves, were not that different in their views from men with the exception that the younger group was 5 to 10 percentage points more in favor of granting women a greater role ever since 1980.

#### *Support for strengthening women's status*

The question on support for strengthening women's status was asked by the Virginia Slims survey from 1970 to 1989 in, approximately, five-year intervals. Respondents were asked: "On the whole, do you favor or oppose most of the efforts to strengthen and change women's status in society today?"

In 1970, about 40% of women supported an expansion of efforts to improve women's status, as seen in Figure 10 (no data were collected for men in 1970). Whereas more than 50% of the youngest group did, about 35% of the oldest group did. By 1990, around 80% of women across all ages supported these efforts, and the increase occurred primarily in the early 1970s, similar to the Gallup data regarding the vote for a female President. Recall that the female President data precede 1970, whereas these do not. Once again, it is likely that support for change in women's status increased in the late 1960s.

By 1974, virtually all age groups and both genders wanted to uplift women's status. Those in the south and Midwest were less eager (about -7 pp) and the college educated

were more enthusiastic (about + 9 pp).<sup>42</sup>

### *Warmth to women's (liberation) movement and to feminism*

The ANES asked respondents how warmly they felt toward various social movements, among them the women's (liberation) movement and feminism.<sup>43</sup> Warmth toward the women's (liberation) movement increased greatly from 1970 to 1974 for both men and women, as seen in Figure 11. There was a dip in regard for the movement around the formation and rise of STOP ERA but the women's movement regained approval among the majority of women and men in both age groups by the mid-1980s.<sup>44</sup> Not surprisingly, a larger fraction of younger than older women favored the movement.

Gallup also asked a variety of questions about the women's movement. These differed by year, were often asked only of women. They demonstrate generally positive views toward the movement. By 1985, around 75% of women and 65% of men held either very or mostly favorable opinions of the women's movement, somewhat higher than in the ANES data. Despite the STOP ERA movement's gains and the Reagan revolution, just 20% of women thought that the women's movement was "anti-family" in 1986.

When women were asked by Gallup in the years around 1990 whether they were personally helped by the women's movement—then about two decades old—most agreed that that they were, to a moderate degree.<sup>45</sup> More than 70% thought that they were "made better" personally, but just 16% thought they were "greatly" helped. About 90% thought the movement helped "professional" women and almost 40% thought the movement gave that elite group a large boost. But just 34% thought it helped "poor" women and a mere 6% thought it greatly helped that group.<sup>46</sup> That is, they saw the movement as fairly elitist.

---

<sup>42</sup> These values are from a regression for post-1974 due to data limitations. The base level is around 0.7. In addition, those who viewed that there was discrimination against women, were far more in favor of efforts to strengthen women's status.

<sup>43</sup> After 1984 the question changed from the "women's liberation" to just "women's" movement and support remained about the same.

<sup>44</sup> The first of the questions on the women's movement was in 1975 and asked whether the movement was responsible for bettering women's position. More than 70% of women said that it was and 84% did among those who view women's position as having improved. The question did not specify any time period for the improvement.

<sup>45</sup> In 1986, 53% said "fairly well" and 17.5% said "very well" for a total of 70.5%. In 1992 the total was a bit higher at 73%.

<sup>46</sup> These insights come from questions on the women's movement asked only of women in 1986 and 1992. The results are weighted and are provided for women 20 to 64 years old. In most cases the fraction stating that the women's movement did "very well" decreased somewhat from 1986 to 1992. The small group with no opinion are excluded.



In addition, around half of all women around 1990 believed that the movement made men's lives harder than in 1970 at the inception of the movement. The men, moreover, generally agreed with that assessment. But although most women (54%) thought the movement made women's lives "easier," a substantial group (42%) thought it made women's lives "harder." Furthermore, although 80% thought it made their personal lives somewhat easier, fewer than one in five believed their lives were greatly improved by the movement.<sup>47</sup> It was clear by the 1980s, that the women's movement had been a force, creating divides and ambiguities along many lines.

Americans may have viewed the women's movement in a generally positive manner, but neither men nor women in either of the two age groups was keen on the concept of "feminism," however they interpreted the word. Both the ANES and Gallup asked questions on feminism: the ANES asked how respondents felt about the movement and Gallup asked whether individuals identified as feminists. The ANES responses show that around 30-35% of men and 40-50% of women had "warmth" toward feminism with an increase for all groups in 2016.<sup>48</sup>

Beginning in 1986, Gallup asked a question about identifying as a feminist. Responses, given in Figure 12, show little support. Rarely did more than 30% of either the younger or older women respond in the affirmative. Only with the 2008 survey did the younger group come close to having a majority identifying as "feminist." Men responded 5 to 10 percentage points lower when information from them was asked.

#### *Were women subjected to discrimination?*

The Virginia Slims survey asked whether women were discriminated against in their employment. In the case of discrimination against women for "top jobs in the professions," about 50% of the respondents—both men and women—answered in the affirmative, even as early as 1970. There was little change in the answers to 1990, and the overall fractions stating there was discrimination was only slightly higher for female than male respondents. The older group gave answers that were 10 percentage points lower than the younger group in 1970 but they were not much different by 1990. The younger group had aged and became the older group. Those who believed there was greater discrimination against women expressed a greater desire to strengthen efforts to uplift women's status.

---

<sup>47</sup> These values are computed for the 20- to 64-year-old group (weighted) and do not change much for an older group, who would have known life as an adult in 1970.

<sup>48</sup> The fraction of articles in the *New York Times* that used the terms sex or gender discrimination were substantial in the early to mid-1970s and then declined to around 2014 and then started to rise again. The same change can be seen in the Google N-Gram in Figure 1. The #MeToo movement did not attract much attention until 2017.

Interestingly, the fraction stating that women were discriminated against in college education was miniscule: around 15%, in 1970, declining to 10% by the 1980s. No one seemed to think that women were discriminated against in “getting a college education” despite the fact that, at the time, a tiny fraction of professional school enrollment was female, and women were, until 1980, still a minority among the graduates of four-year institutions. Furthermore, in 1970 many of the Ivies and the “little Ivies” had only just begun to open their doors to women, and some first admitted women later.

*Who supported the expansion of women’s rights?*

An insightful set of papers has explored why men would have supported women’s rights when men were politically necessary for that expansion. There are several forms of the argument regarding who would have gained from the expansion of women’s rights in employment, education, property ownership, and the ability to enter contracts.

In one version, (see Doepke, et al. 2009, 2012) a sufficiently large group of men decides to expand women’s rights after the return to education has increased. Men vote their own self-interest to bind other families regarding how others educate their daughters.<sup>49</sup> The men who vote for the expanded rights have little to lose personally because their own wives are already less educated and would apparently remain suitably docile since they are dependent on them. But their sons would gain from having more-educated wives, and their grandchildren would gain from having more enlightened mothers. Thus, the men who grant the rights would gain. In another, related version (see Fernández 2014), men want to give women more rights when fertility levels have fallen and, thus, when the probability that they will have a surviving son has decreased.<sup>50</sup>

The premise of these models, however, is not applicable to mid- to late-twentieth century America when women had the vote. The political will of some men would have been essential, admittedly, but they would not have been as critical when women also had the vote. In addition, returns to education had begun to increase long before the 1960s.

A critically important part of the story told here is that women were not unified, certainly not in the later third of the twentieth century. In fact, dissimilarities in their support for women’s rights were considerably larger than were those between men and women, and larger than similarly constructed within differences were for men.

---

<sup>49</sup> Washington (2008) provides a different mechanism for why men with daughters would want to expand women’s rights and present evidence that members of Congress did just that.

<sup>50</sup> Geddes and Lueck (2002) argue that changes in women’s rights occurred because of the contemporaneous gains to families.

The proponents and opponents of the expansion of women's rights were divided less by gender than they were by education, marital status, parenthood, employment, race, age, and region. In fact, as I have shown, many of the polling questions after 1970 had few differences by gender.

I explore the notions in Table 3 through an analysis of the responses to two ANES questions: (1) whether women should be granted a more equal role in running business, industry and government (see also Figure 9) and (2) whether the respondent had warmth for the women's (liberation) movement (see also Figure 11).

Each of the regressions is run separately by gender. Note that the dependent variable means by gender for "equal role" are very similar; those for "women's movement" have larger differences as was clear from Figure 11. But the coefficients on characteristics that might type a person as traditional or not mean that differences within women are even more different than those for men.

For example, currently married respondents were far less in favor of granting women an equal role than those who were not and were less warm to the women's movement.<sup>51</sup> But the coefficients for women were larger. College graduates and those currently employed were more in favor of giving women an equal role and warmer to the women's movement. But differences were greater within women than within men.

Simple conditional means will make the point by comparing more versus less traditional groups. Among young, non-Protestant college graduate women who were not currently married and were employed (the less traditional group), 71% were in favor of more equality and 69% had warmth to the women's movement across all years in the sample. Among older Protestant women who were not high school graduates, were currently married, and were not employed (the more traditional group) 25% were in favor of more equality and 29% had warmth to the women's movement.

The differences between traditional and less traditional men, particularly with regard to increasing equality, were more muted.<sup>52</sup> The difference for the equality question

---

<sup>51</sup> Hunt and Rubin (1980), in a state-level analysis, find that single women were more in favor of the ERA than were married women. Married women, to them, would have gained from the higher earnings of their husbands but single women simply lose from statistical discrimination. My interpretation is more that married women were less likely to have been employed than single women and more likely to have wanted to protect their status as homemakers.

<sup>52</sup> I did not use "employ" as a condition for the men, since most were employed or in school. About 57% of young men who were college graduates and who were unmarried favored more equality and 39% of the opposite group of young men did. Note that given the other covariates, the presence of children, even very young ones, did not matter.

between traditional and non-traditional women was 46 percentage points but was 19 percentage points for men. The difference for the women's movement question between the two groups of women was 40 percentage points but was 12 percentage points for men.

Women with less traditional characteristics were to the left of men with the same characteristics and women with more traditional characteristics were to the right of similar men. Women demonstrated and voted to protect their identities. Men were apparently less concerned, and non-whites, especially non-white men, had considerably more warmth to the women's movement than did whites.

The battle lines had been drawn among women, not as much between men and women. Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum and the anti-abortion movement were pitted against Gloria Steinem and her *Ms. Magazine*. Betty Frieden, Bella Abzug, and the National Organization for Women clashed with busloads of women campaigning with STOP ERA. Anita Bryant and the "Save Our Children" crusade denounced lesbians, who were also deemed the "lavender menace" by Betty Frieden for supposedly destroying the movement's credibility.

### *Civil rights and women's rights*

The civil rights movement gave energy, organizational talents, and meaning to the women's movement. It also provided a key piece of legislation. There is some evidence that it did even more. It may have caused white men to advance white women's rights. If rights were being given to Blacks, including Black women, why not grant more rights to white women? That was the key rationale offered by Rep. Martha Griffiths for keeping "sex" as part of Title VII after Rep. Smith added the word. But did that type of thinking also change the views of the electorate? Did white men want to increase the rights of white women to balance out the scales? It appears that it did.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 rendered illegal various voting eligibility procedures, such as the literacy test. It was binding in nine states (AK, AZ, TX, LA, MS, AL, GA, SC, VA) and a set of counties in other states, particularly NC. I take these ten states to be "treatment" states to see if the opinions of whites, particularly males, with regard to women's rights became more positive after 1965. The only opinion poll question regarding women's rights or approval that was asked before and after 1965, with sufficient surveys on either side of 1965 to perform a standard difference-in-difference analysis, concerns voting for a female presidential candidate (see Figure 8).

Voting rights states (and the south in general) had about a 6 pp lower fraction of (white) men favoring a female presidential candidate. The increase in that approval after

the Voting Rights Act was passed is 7.5 pp on a base of about 50 percent. There is no change for women. The results, given in Table 4, are for whites of all ages, with age and education controls.

A graphical analysis in Figure 13 explores pre-trends and trend breaks and demonstrates that there was little change before the Voting Rights Act, and that the impact of the act on white men's views of women occurred directly following passage of the act in the late 1960s and then dissipated. Part A uses each of the ten opinion poll years as a separate unit of observation. Because sample sizes for each "year" are small, I create four combined years in Part B. The results are stronger because sample sizes are larger. According to those results, the act increased white men's approval for a female President by 10 percentage points, which is 20% of the base level of 53% around 1958-1963. There was no differential impact for white female respondents in the states constrained by the 1965 Voting Act.

The evidence presented in Table 4 and Figure 13 is suggestive of a response that benefited views toward and about women in states that were compelled to have additional civil rights. These results are consistent with a model in which women have fixed preferences about their own rights but in which white men increased their preference for the rights of white women when Blacks got more rights.<sup>53</sup>

#### *Why Women Won: Making Sense of a Complex History*

Around 1972, at a high point of the flow of acts, decisions, and events concerning women's rights, the majority of Americans believed that married women could work outside their homes and that the US would be better governed if more women were more politically active. But just a third wanted to grant women an equal role running the rest of the system, and it was not until the 1990s that a majority thought women could be trusted with running government, business, and industry.<sup>54</sup>

Most Americans were on board with strengthening women's status by the early 1970s, but there was little warmth to the women's movement among men until the 1980s and women wavered until then as well. Identifying as a "feminist" never generated much support at any point for which these opinion data exist. By 1990, the women's movement was viewed as elite, having improved the wherewithal of professional women but having

---

<sup>53</sup> I thank Brian Wheaton for suggesting the analysis of the Voting Rights Act. See Wheaton (2022) for a model of, and evidence concerning, backlash regarding state ERA laws.

<sup>54</sup> Table 2 provides a summary.

made men's lives more difficult while making women's lives a lot better, although somewhat more taxing.

Given that there was only moderate support for strengthening women's status around 1970, probably less before, and that an even lower fraction of respondents wanted to give women an equal role in running the nation, the history of women's rights is astonishing.

That history began here with President Kennedy's appointment of the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women in 1961. It was followed by a dazzling array of legislative acts in rapid succession: the 1963 Equal Pay Act (EPA), Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Act, passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (1971 House/1972 Senate), the 1972 Equal Employment Opportunity Act, and the extension of the EPA in 1972 to cover professional, administrative, and executive occupations. Furthermore, all these acts passed Congress with wide margins.<sup>55</sup> Add to the list President Lyndon Johnson's 1967 extension of the affirmative action mandate to women, through Executive Order #11375.

Did this flood of women's rights legislation make a difference with regard to their earnings? There isn't much statistical confirmation that it did. Bailey, et al. (2022) find some evidence that the Equal Pay Act and Title VII raised the bottom of the female earnings distribution but not that they moved the rest.<sup>56</sup> Similar legislation, however, did far more for Blacks than for women. The reason is probably that it changed the sectors and the jobs in which Blacks were hired, especially in the South. Did the same laws not have a large impact on women? I rather doubt it but it has been difficult to prove especially since the most effective laws have been national in scope.

The story I have told began with the civil rights movement and the somewhat fortuitous nature of the early and key women's rights legislation. A straight line takes us from the fact that the women's vote became more important than ever before in the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon election to the formation of the Commission on the Status of Women and, in turn, to the greater ability of women to organize for their own rights. Additional formal

---

<sup>55</sup> The vote for the 1963 Equal Pay Act was 362-9 House and a voice vote in the Senate. The vote for the ERA was 354-23 House and 84-8 Senate. The 1972 EEO Act was 303-110 House and 62-10 Senate. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Title IX of the 1972 Education Act were not voted on separately.

<sup>56</sup> Because these laws were national, Bailey, et al. (2022) use, as a control, whether a state had a previous equal pay law. A confounding factor in that study is the extension of minimum wage to service and retail jobs in mid-1960s covering more low-wage women. Leonard (1989) examines the impact of affirmative action on women's progress in the workplace and finds that female labor supply changes rendered the program ineffectual even though it was effective for minorities.

organizations and mobilization produced an even larger movement that rapidly filtered down to the streets, individual homes, and even bedrooms. It also produced a powerful anti-women's rights movement that rapidly joined with the anti-abortion and anti-gay/woke lobbies to remain a potent force in America to this day.

The role of civil rights pervades the discussion, and I am brought back to the relationship between racial and sex discrimination with which I began. The lines in Figure 1 are related in a multitude of ways—through people, events, legislation, and politics. Note that sex (and gender) discrimination did not enter the American lexicon until racial discrimination did. The two lines ascended precisely ten years apart: racial discrimination in 1958 and sex discrimination in 1968. By the mid-1970s they rose and fell together, and both rose again in the 2010s.

Women won some of their most important workplace rights in the 1960s because of a set of fortuitous events. They continued to win in the early 1970s because of a movement that gave them influence. They won yet more because some of the groups that had been supportive of their cause—including college graduates, single women, Black women and men—expanded their numbers relative to others.<sup>57</sup> Yet, women's rights supporters, as in the cases of the ERA and abortion, lost when many women abandoned equal rights for other causes or to protect their own identity. It has also been said that the women's movement was too doctrinaire and lost support of other women.<sup>58</sup> Women won their rights when they kept the support of their own and when they had the political clout to get men, especially those in Congress and the White House, to see that women's rights were as valid as civil rights.

---

<sup>57</sup> On the increase of female college graduates, see Goldin, Katz, and Kuziemko (2006).

<sup>58</sup> Mansbridge (1985).

## References

- American National Election Studies. 2022. *ANES Time Series Cumulative Data File* [dataset and documentation]. September 16, 2022 version. [www.electionstudies.org](http://www.electionstudies.org)
- Bailey, Martha J., Thomas Helgerman, and Bryan A. Stuart. 2022. "How the 1963 Equal Pay Act and 1964 Civil Rights Act Shaped the Gender Gap in Pay." UCLA Working Paper.
- Beller, Andrea H. 1979. "The Impact of Equal Employment Opportunity Laws on the Male-Female Earnings Differential." In C. Lloyd, E. Andrews, and C. Gilroy, eds., *Women in the Labor Market* (NY: Columbia University Press).
- Beller, Andrea H. 1982. "The Impact of Equal Opportunity Policy on Sex Differentials in Earnings and Occupations," *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings* 72(2): 171-75.
- Bird, Robert C. 1997. "More Than a Congressional Joke: A Fresh Look at the Legislative History of Sex Discrimination of the 1964 Civil Rights Act," *William & Mary Journal of Race, Gender, and Social Justice* 137(3): 137-61.
- Cantoni, Davide, David Y. Yang, Noam Yuchtman, and Y. Jane Zhang. 2019. "Protests as Strategic Games: Experimental Evidence from Hong Kong's Antiauthoritarian Movement," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 234(2): 1021-77.
- Cascio, Elizabeth and Na'ama Shenhav. 2020. "A Century of the American Woman Voter: Sex Gaps in Political Participation, Preferences, and Partisanship since Women's Enfranchisement," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 34(2): 24-48.
- Chafe, William H. 1977. *Women and Equality: Changing Patterns in American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Charles, Kerwin Kofi, Jonathan Guryan, and Jessica Pan. 2018. "The Effects of Sexism on American Women: The Role of Norms versus Discrimination." NBER Working Paper no. 24904. (August).
- Collins, Gail. 2009. *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present*. New York: Little Brown and Company.
- Doepke, Matthias, and Michèle Tertilt. 2009. "Women's Liberation: What's in It for Men?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124(4): 1541-91.

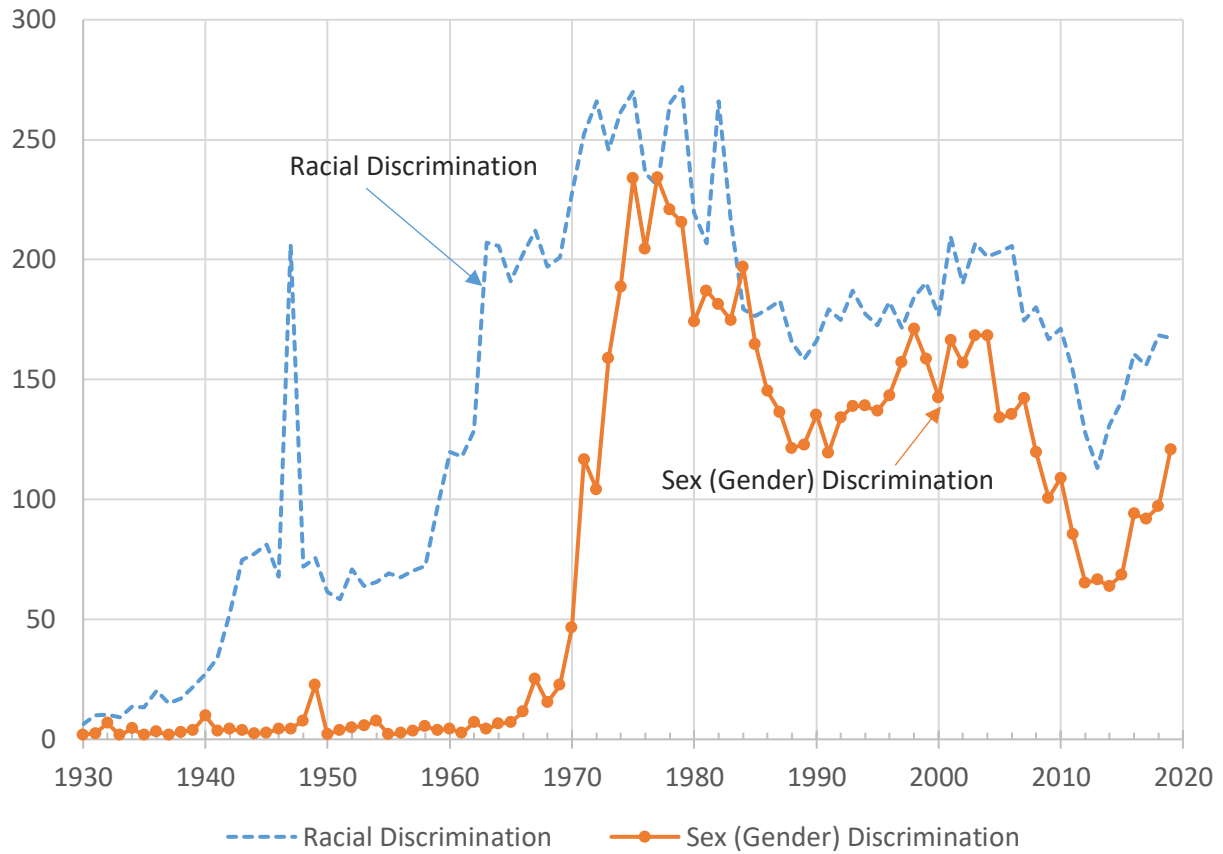


- Doepke, Matthias, Michèle Tertilt, and Alessandra Voena. 2012. "The Economics and Politics of Women's Rights," *Annual Review of Economics* 4(1): 339-72.
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). *Annual Reports, 1966-1995*. Washington, D.C. GPO, various dates.
- Farber, Henry S., Daniel Herbst, Ilyana Kuziemko, and Suresh Naidu. 2021. "Unions and Inequality over the Twentieth Century: New Evidence from Survey Data," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126(3): 1325-85.
- Fernández, Raquel. 2014. "Women's Rights and Development," *Journal of Economic Growth* 19(1): 37-80.
- Freeman, Jo. 1975. *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process*. New York: David McKay.
- Geddes, R. Richard, and Dean Lueck. 2002. "The Gains from Self-Ownership and the Expansion of Women's Rights," *American Economic Review* 92(4): 1079-92.
- Geddes, R. Richard, and Sharon Tennyson. 2013. "Passage of the Married Women's Property Acts and Earnings Acts in the United States: 1850 to 1920," *Research in Economic History* 29: 145-89.
- Goldin, Claudia. 1990. *Understanding the Gender Gap: An Economic History of American Women*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Goldin, Claudia. 1992. "Marriage Bars: Discrimination Against Married Women Workers from the 1920s to the 1950s." In H. Rosovsky, D. Landes, and P. Higonnet, eds., *Favorites of Fortune: Technology, Growth, and Economic Development since the Industrial Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 511-36.
- Goldin, Claudia. 1988. "Maximum Hours Legislation and Female Employment: A Reassessment," *Journal of Political Economy* 96(1): 189-205.
- Goldin, Claudia. 2014. "A Pollution Theory of Discrimination: Male and Female Differences in Occupations and Earnings." In L. Boustan, C. Frydman, and R. Margo, eds., *Human Capital and History: The American Record*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 313-48.
- Goldin, Claudia, and Lawrence F. Katz. 2002. "The Power of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives and Women's Career and Marriage Decisions," *Journal of Political Economy* 11(4): 730-70.

- Goldin, Claudia, and Lawrence F. Katz. 2011. "Putting the 'Co' in Education: Timing, Reasons and Consequences of College Coeducation from 1835 to the Present," *Journal of Human Capital* 5(4): 377-417.
- Goldin, Claudia, Lawrence F. Katz, and Ilyana Kuziemko. 2006. "The Homecoming of American College Women: The Reversal of the College Gender Gap," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20(4): 133-56.
- Goldin, Claudia, and Joshua Mitchell. 2017. "The New Lifecycle of Women's Employment: Disappearing Humps, Sagging Middles, Expanding Tops," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31(1): 161-82.
- Green, Donald P., Oliver Hyman-Metzger, Gaurav Sood, Michelle A. Zee. 2022. "Revisiting a Natural Experiment: Do Legislators With Daughters Vote More Liberally on Women's Issues?" Working Paper.
- Harrison, Cynthia. 1989. *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women's Issues, 1945-1968*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.
- Hunt, J.C., and P.H. Rubin. 1980. "The Economics of the Women's Movement," *Public Choice* 35(3): 287-95.
- Hussey, Miriam. 1958. *Personnel Policies during a Period of Shortage of Young Women Workers in Philadelphia*. Philadelphia PA: Industrial Research Unit, Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania.
- Hyland, Marie, Simeon Djankov, and Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg. 2022. "Gendered Laws and Women in the Workforce." World Bank Working Paper 2022.
- Hyland, Marie, Simeon Djankov, and Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg. 2021. "Do Gendered Laws Matter for Women's Economic Empowerment?" Peterson Institute for International Economics WP 21-5 (March).
- Jacob, Herbert. 1988. *Silent Revolution: The Transformation of Divorce Law in the United States*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Kessler-Harris, Alice. 2001. *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Question for Economic Citizenship in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leonard, Jonathan S. 1989. "Women and Affirmative Action," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 3(1): 61-75.

- Mansbridge, Jane J. 1986. *Why We Lost the ERA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miller, Grant. 2008. "Women's Suffrage, Political Responsiveness, and Child Survival in American History," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123(3): 1287-327.
- Morris, Stephen, and Hyun Song Shin. 2003. "Global Games: Theory and Applications." In M. Dewatripont, L. Hansen, and S. Turnovsky, eds., *Advances in Economics and Econometrics: Theory and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 56-114.
- National Women's History Alliance.  
<https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/resources/womens-rights-movement/detailed-timeline/>
- Rosenberg, Rosalind. 1992. *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Sandler, Bernice Resnick. 2007. "Title IX: How We Got It and What a Difference it Made," *Cleveland State Law Review* 55(4): 473-89.
- Schlafly, Phyllis. 1972. "Women's Liberation and Other Movements," Report 5, no. 7 (February). Reprinted in *America in the Sixties—Right, Left, and Center: A Documentary History*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998.
- Stevenson, Betsey. 2007. "The Impact of Divorce Laws on Marriage-Specific Capital." *Journal of Labor Economics* 25(1): 75-94.
- Stevenson, Betsey. 2010. "Beyond the Classroom: Using Title IX to Measure the Return to High School Sports," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 92(2): 284-301.
- Tertilt, Michèle, Matthias Doepke, Anne Hannusch, and Laura Montenbruck. 2022. "The Economics of Women's Rights." NBER Working Paper no. 30617 (November).
- U.S. Commission on the Status of Women. 1963. *American Women: Report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women*. Washington D.C.: US GPO.
- Washington, Ebonya, 2008, "Female Socialization: How Daughters Affect Their Legislator Fathers' Voting on Women's Issues," *American Economic Review* 98(1): 311-32.
- Wheaton, Brian. 2022. "Laws, Beliefs, and Backlash." UCLA Working Paper.

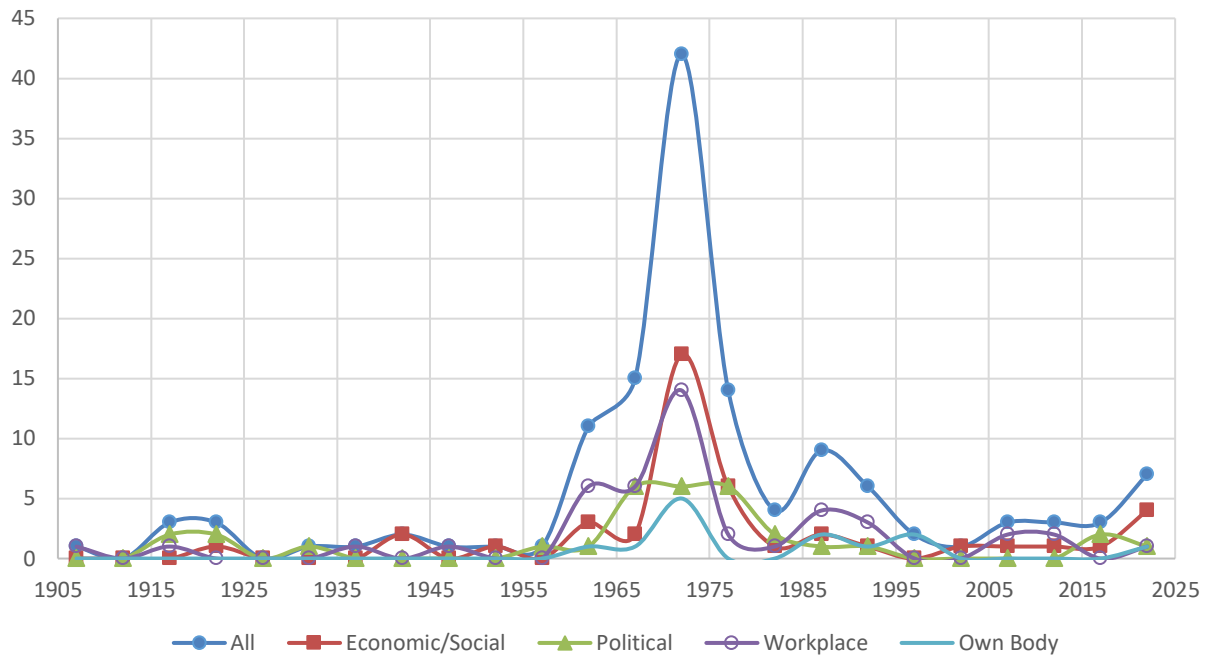
Figure 1: Sex (and Gender) Discrimination versus Racial Discrimination: 1930 to 2019



Source: Google N-Gram, American English 2019 corpus. Computed 12/27/22.

Notes: No smoothing, case-insensitive. Sex (gender) discrimination combines the two separate terms. The vertical scale is multiplied by  $10^8$ .

Figure 2: Timeline of Critical Moments in US Women’s Rights History: 1908 to 2023



Sources: See Table 1.

Notes: “All” is the sum of Economic/Social, Political, Workplace, and Female Body rights. Each point is the number of events on the chronology of women’s rights history given in Table 1. The five-year bins are sums of the number of entries for “all” or in the four separate groupings.

Figure 3: A Framework for Understanding Competing Women's Movements

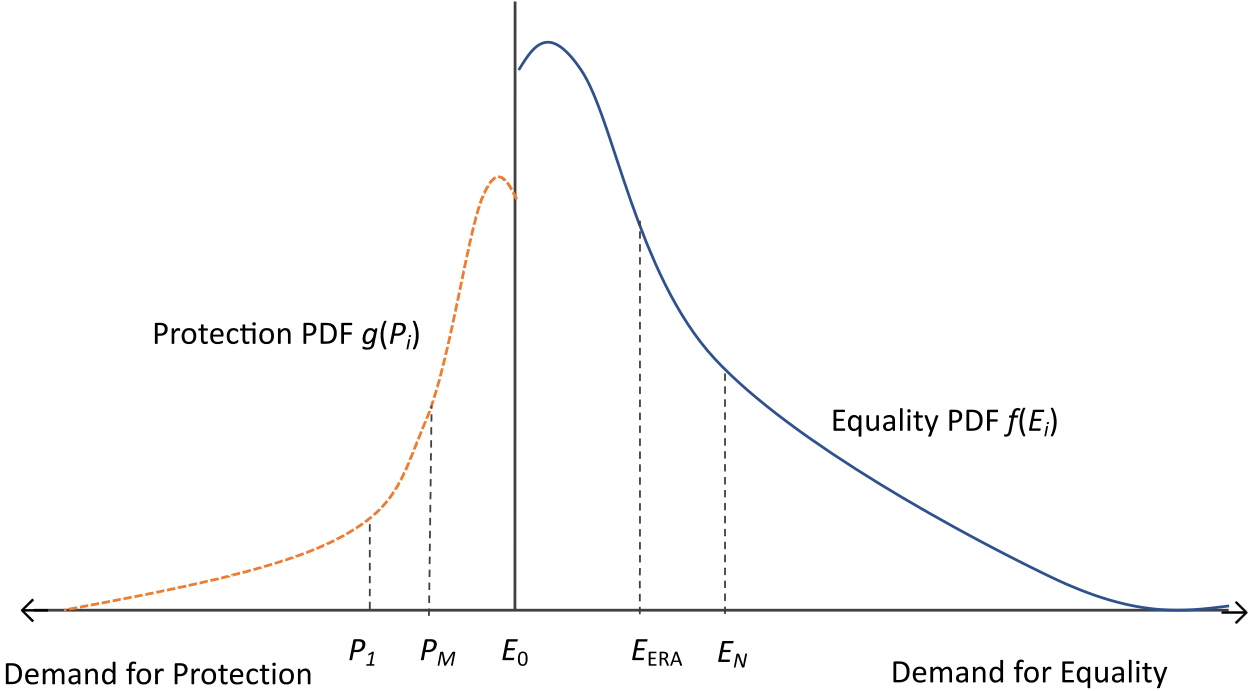
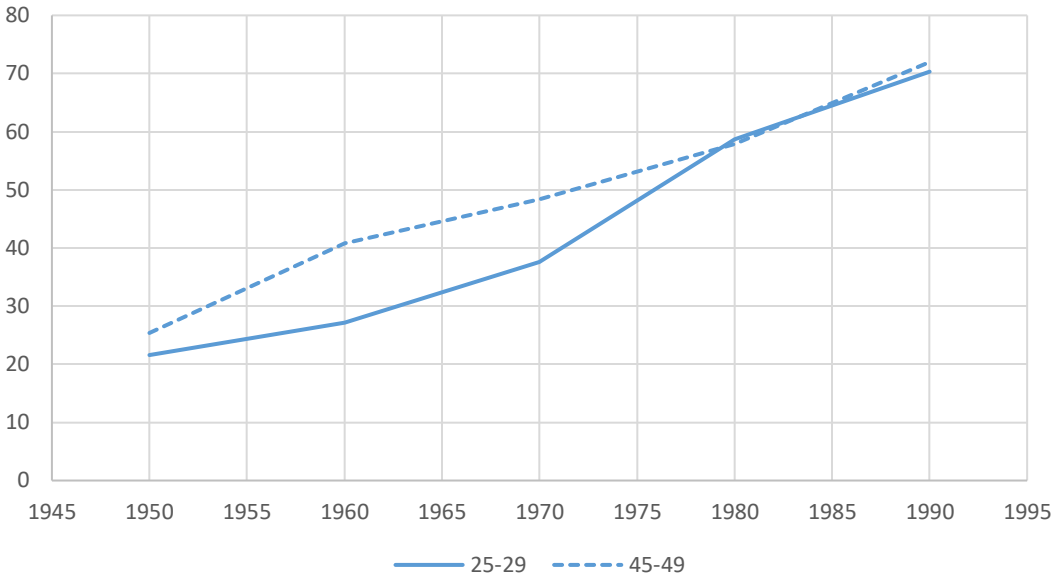
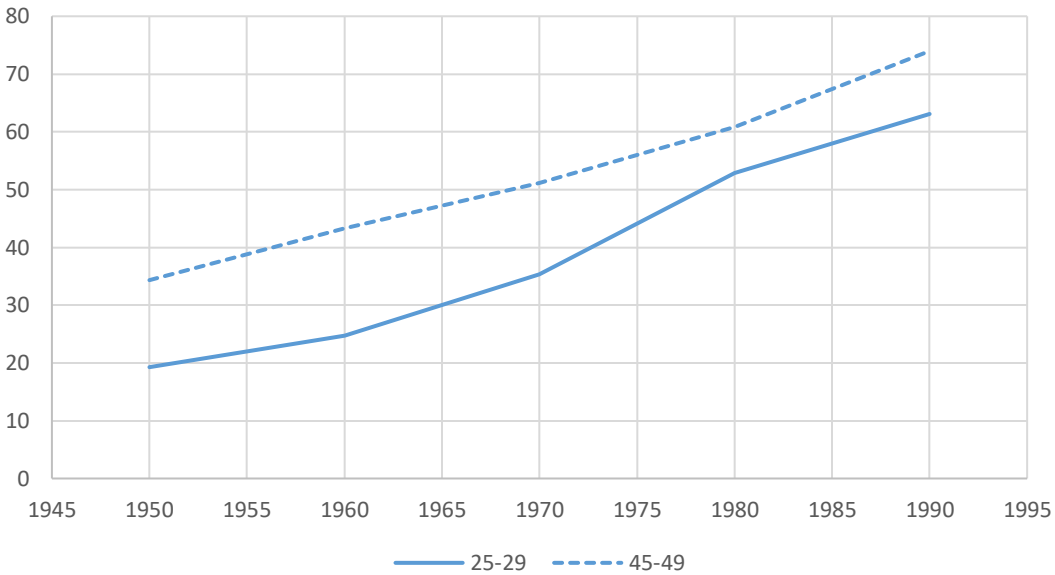


Figure 4: Female Labor Force Participation, 1950 to 1990

Part A: Currently Married

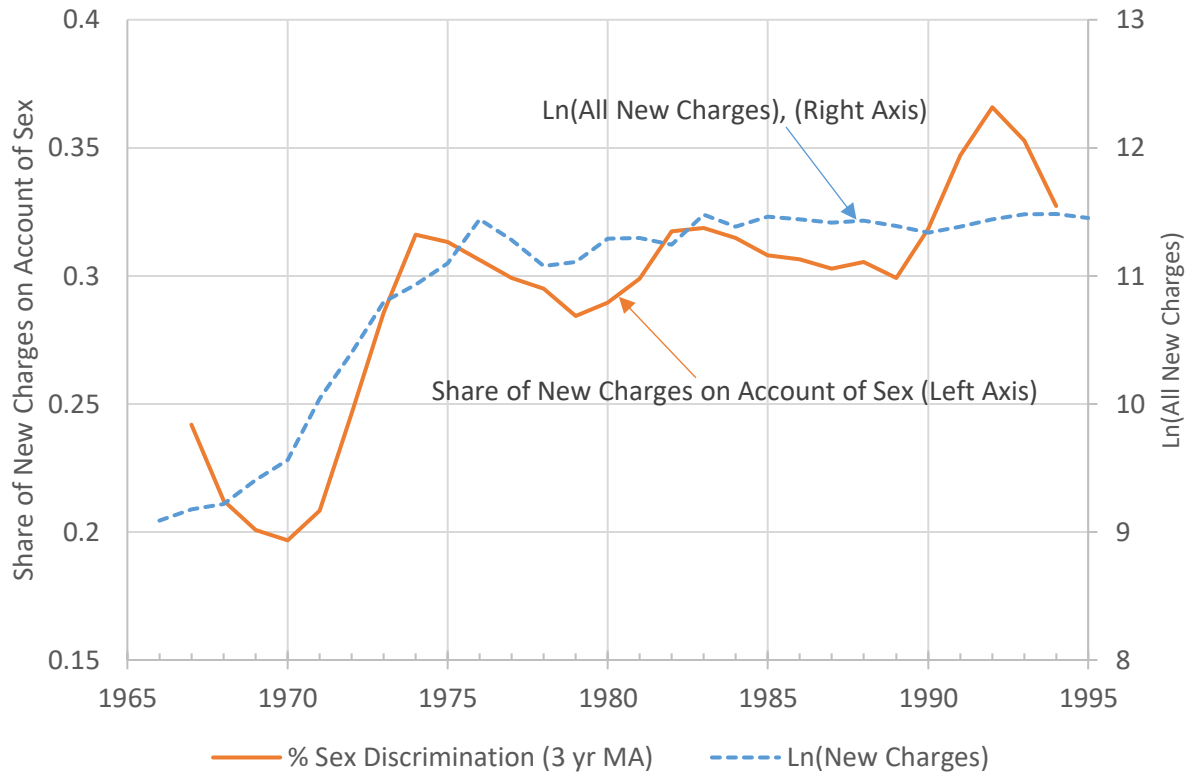


Part B: Having Had Any Children



Sources: 1950 to 1990 US Census of Population, IPUMS

Figure 5: Complaints Filed with EEOC: New Charges (in logs) and Share on Account of Sex



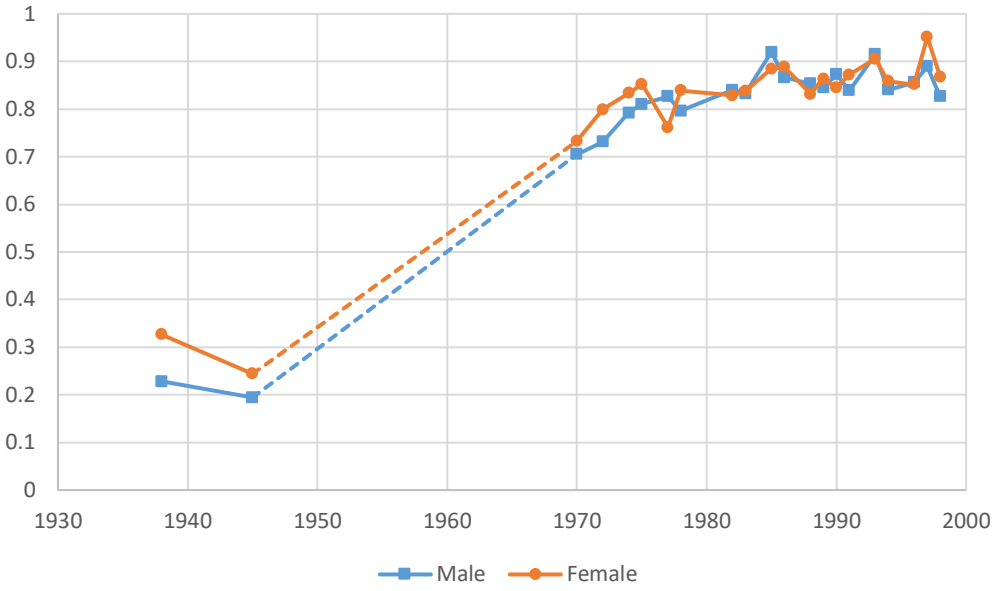
Sources: EEOC, *Annual Reports*, 1966 to 1995.

Notes: Total charges are all new complaints filed with EEOC during the fiscal year given. The proportion of charges due to sex-related discrimination complaints is derived from a different total because EEOC listed the basis of the charge in a manner that involves double-counting. This graph updates the material in Goldin (1990), figure 7.1.

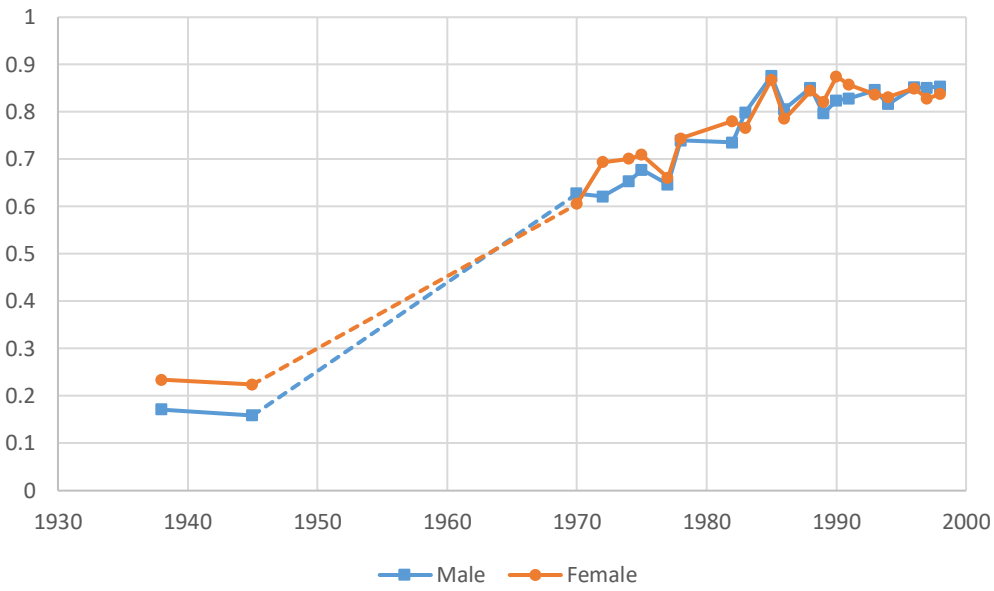


Figure 6: Should a Married Women Work for Pay?

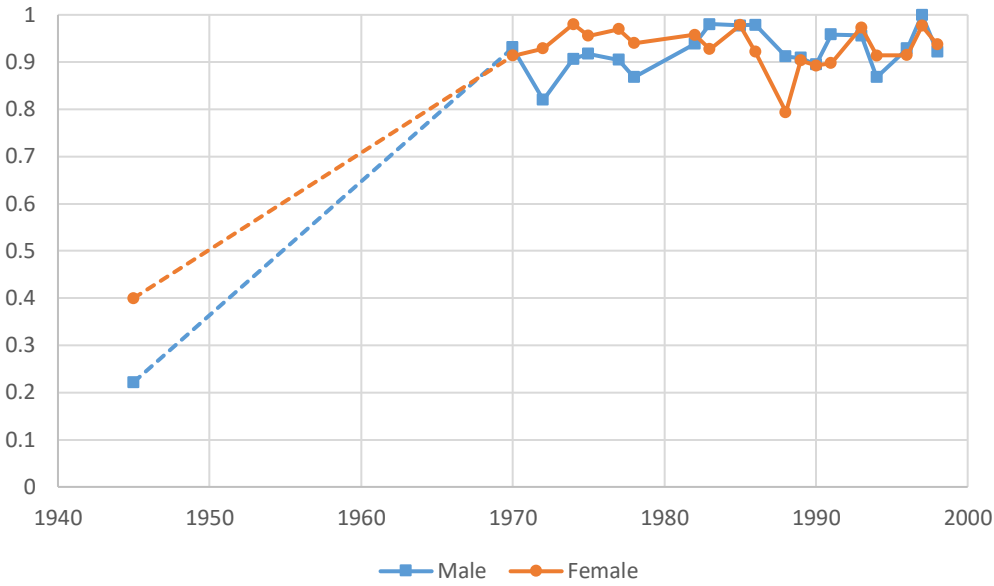
Part A: All individuals 20 to 34 years old



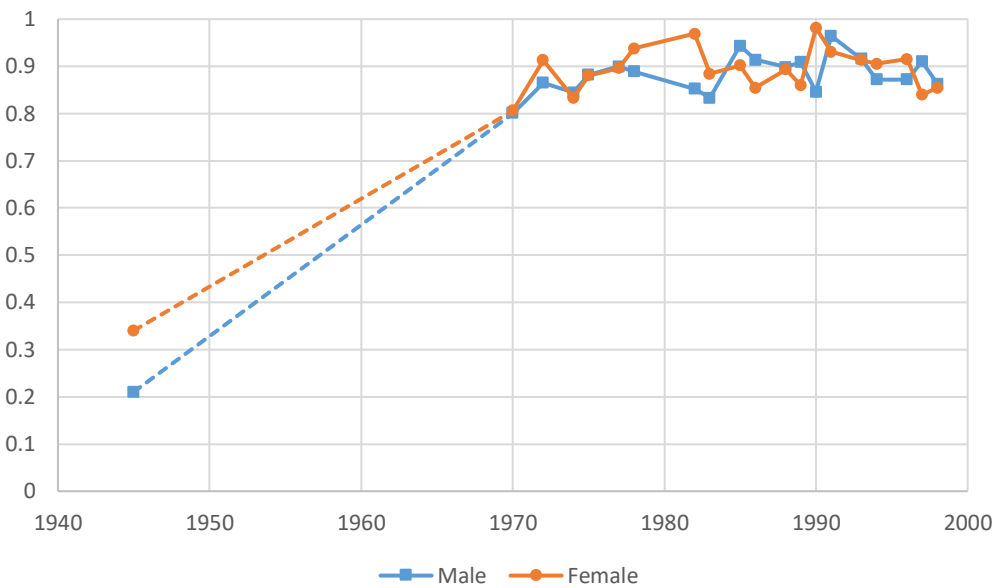
Part B: All individuals 35 to 64 years old



Part C: College graduates, 20 to 34 years old



Part D: College graduates, 35 to 64 years old

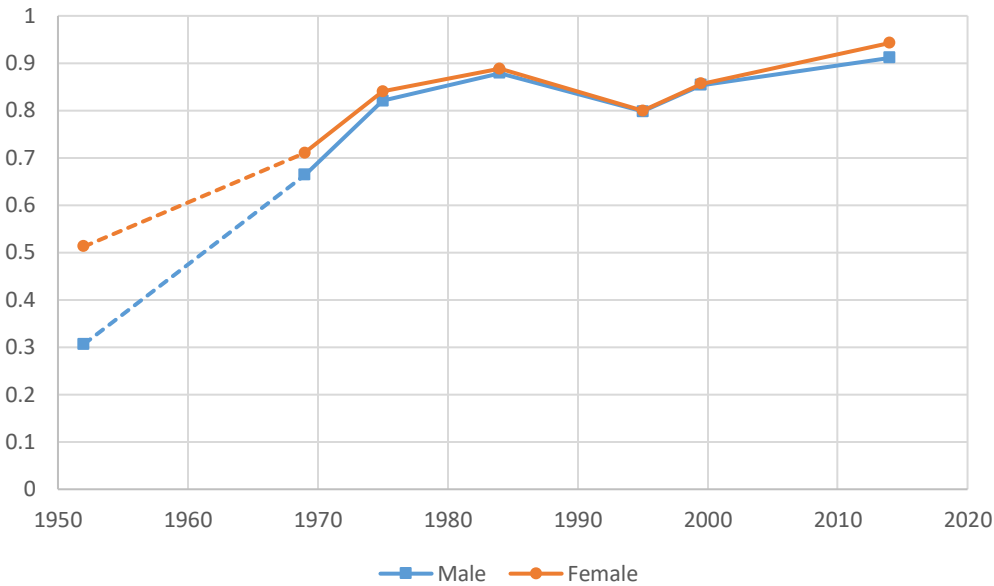


Sources: See Polling Data Appendix. Gallup survey years are: 1938, 1945, 1970, 1975, 1993, 1997. GSS years are: 1972, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998.

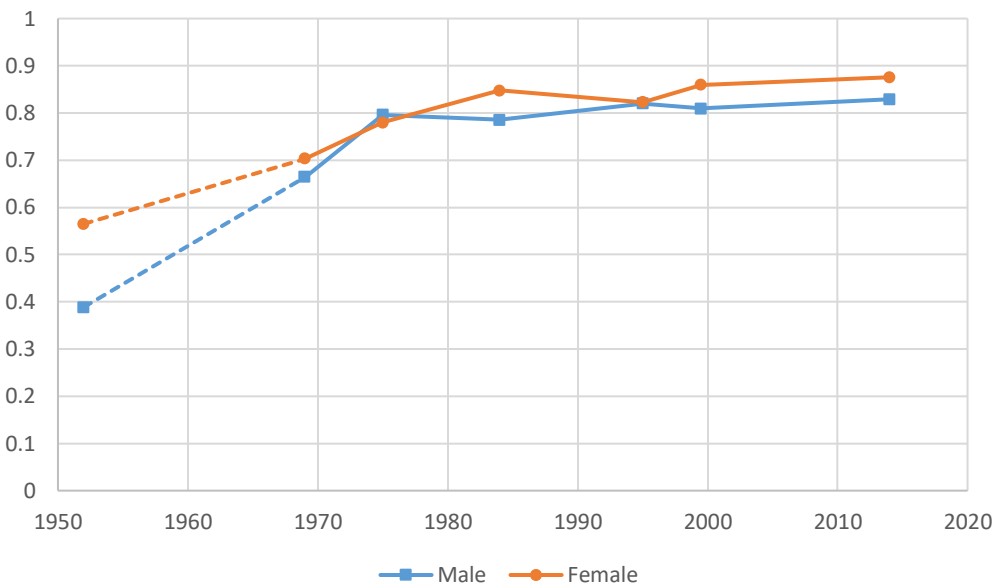
Notes: Graphs provide the answers to the question from either the Gallup or GSS surveys. "Do you approve or disapprove of a married woman earning money in business or industry if her husband is capable of supporting her?" Qualified answers in 1945 are coded as "disapprove." Dotted lines indicate that there are no data points between 1945 to 1970.

Figure 7: Would the US Be Better Governed If Women Were Politically More Active?

Part A: All individuals 20 to 34 years old



Part B: All individuals 35 to 64 years old

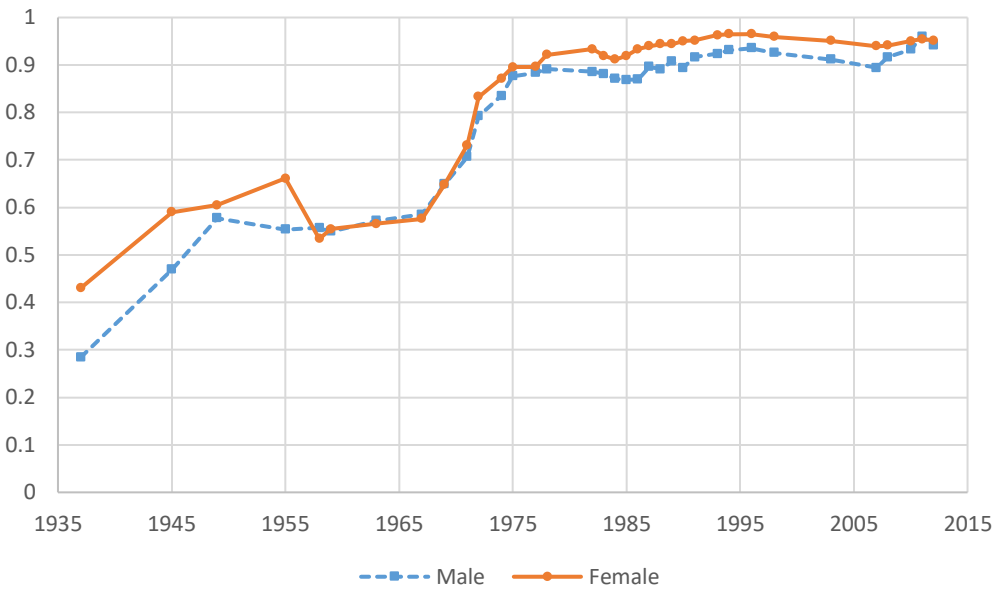


Sources: See Polling Data Appendix. Gallup survey years are 1952, 1969, 1975, 1984, 1995, 1999, 2000, 2014.

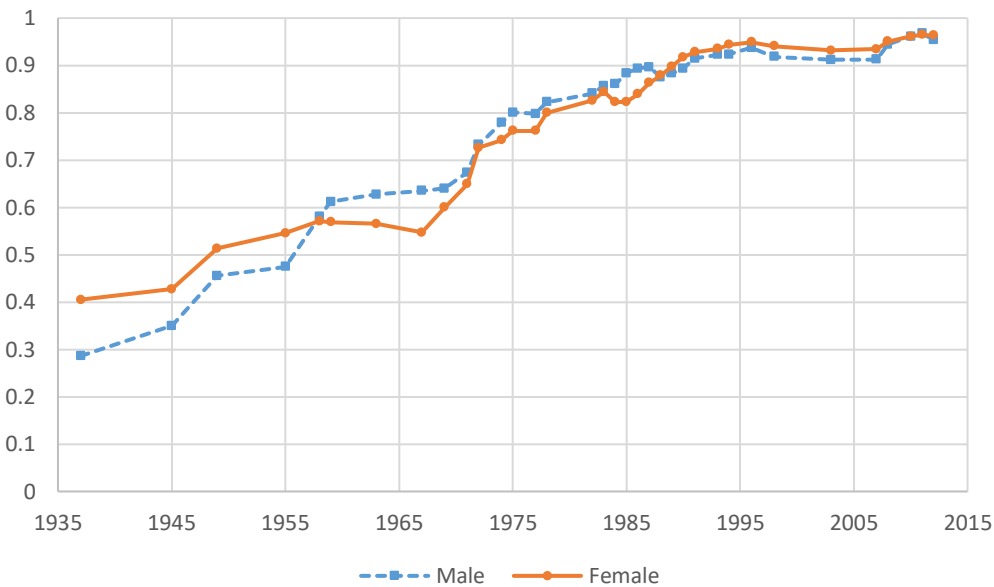
Notes: Graphs provide the answers to the question: “Do you think that the US would be governed better or worse if women had more say in politics?”; the question in 1952 was worded slightly differently. Responses for 1999 and 2000 have been averaged. Dotted lines indicate no data from 1952 to 1969.

Figure 8: Would You Vote for a Woman President?

Part A: All individuals 20 to 34 years old



Part B: All individuals 35 to 64 years old

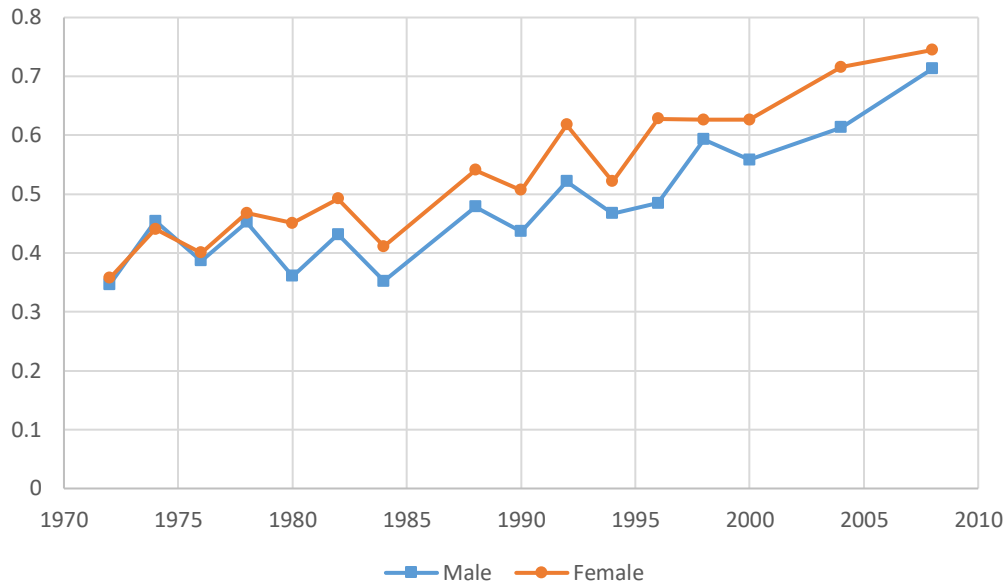


Sources: See Polling Data Appendix. Gallup survey years are: 1937, 1945, 1949, 1955, 1958, 1959, 1963, 1967, 1969, 1971, 1975, 1978, 1983, 1984, and 1987. GSS years are: 1972, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2008, 2010.

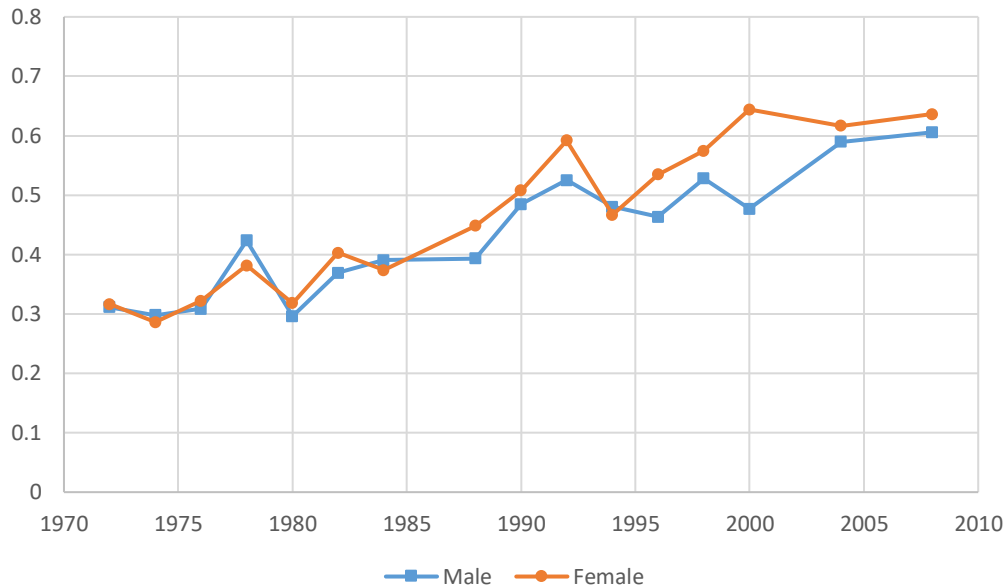
Notes: Graphs provide the answers to the question, which varied slightly across surveys: “If your party nominated a woman for President, would you vote for her if she seemed [were] qualified for the job?” Unweighted results are given and weighting does not make much of a difference. Three-year centered moving averages given after 1958.

Figure 9: Grant Women an Equal Role

Part A: All individuals 20 to 34 years old



Part B: All individuals 35 to 64 years old

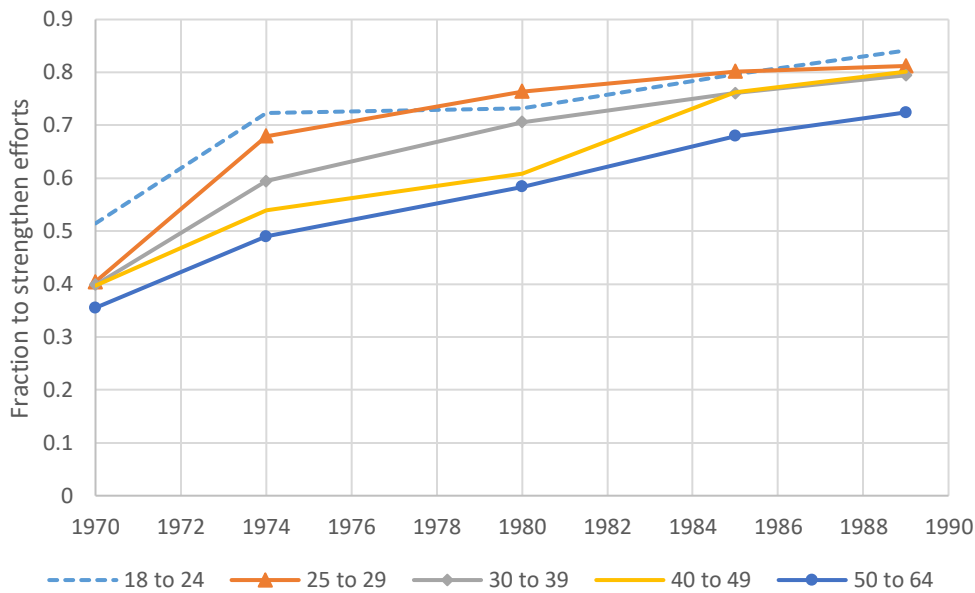


Sources: See Polling Data Appendix. ANES years are: 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2004, and 2008.

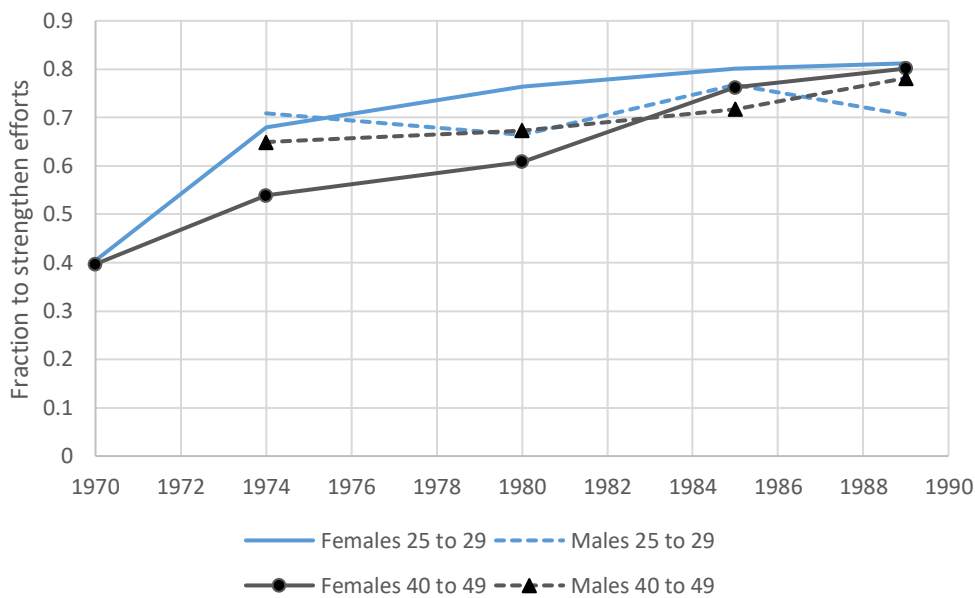
Notes: Graphs provide the answers to: “Recently there has been a lot of talk about women’s rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Others feel that a women’s place is in the home ... some people have opinions ... in between. Where would you place yourself on this scale?” 1 = equal role; 0 = all other answers omitting the small group who had not thought about the issue. Weighted tabulations are given..

Figure 10: Efforts to Strengthen Women’s Status

Part A: Views of women in five age groups



Part B: Views of men and women in two age groups

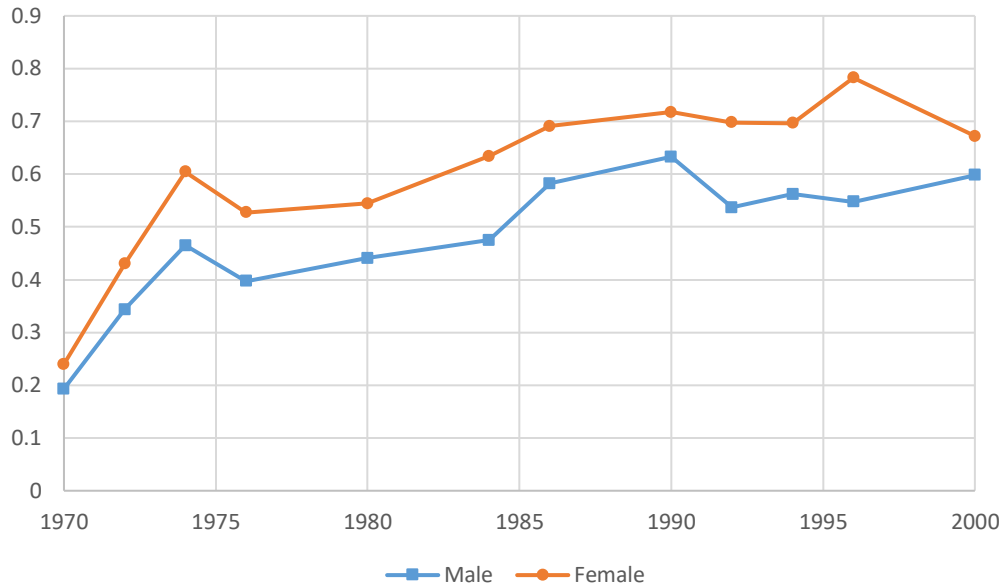


Sources: See Polling Data Appendix. Virginia Slims years are: 1970 (women only), 1974, 1980, 1984, 1989.

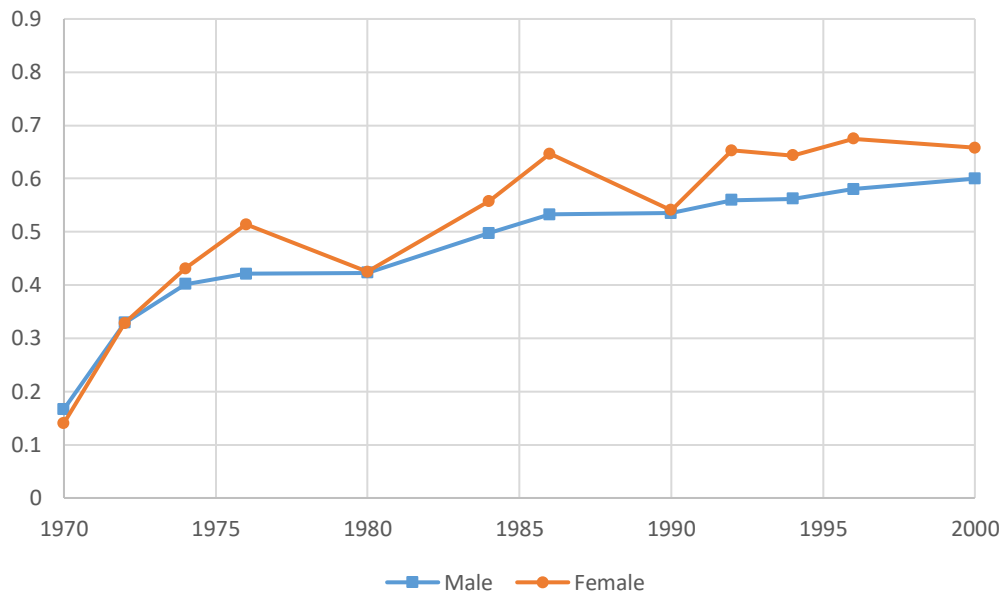
Notes: Graphs provide the answers (unweighted) to the question: “On the whole, do you favor or oppose most of the efforts to strengthen and change women’s status in society today?” Only “Favor” answers are coded as an effort to strengthen; “Not sure” answers are included with “Oppose.”

Figure 11: Warmth for the Women’s (Liberation) Movement

Part A: All individuals 20 to 34 years old



Part B: All individuals 35 to 64 years old

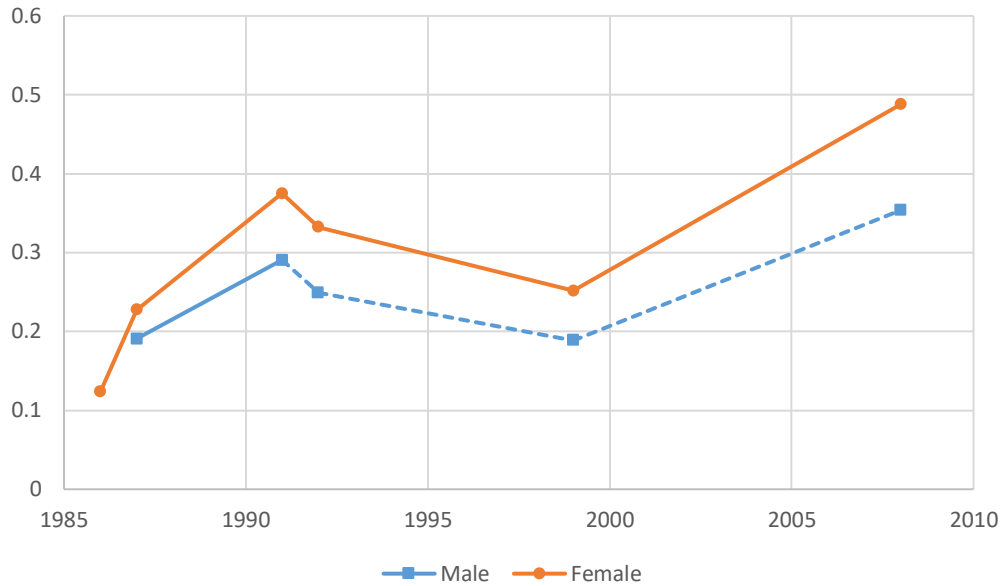


Sources: See Polling Data Appendix. ANES years are: 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1986, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, and 2000.

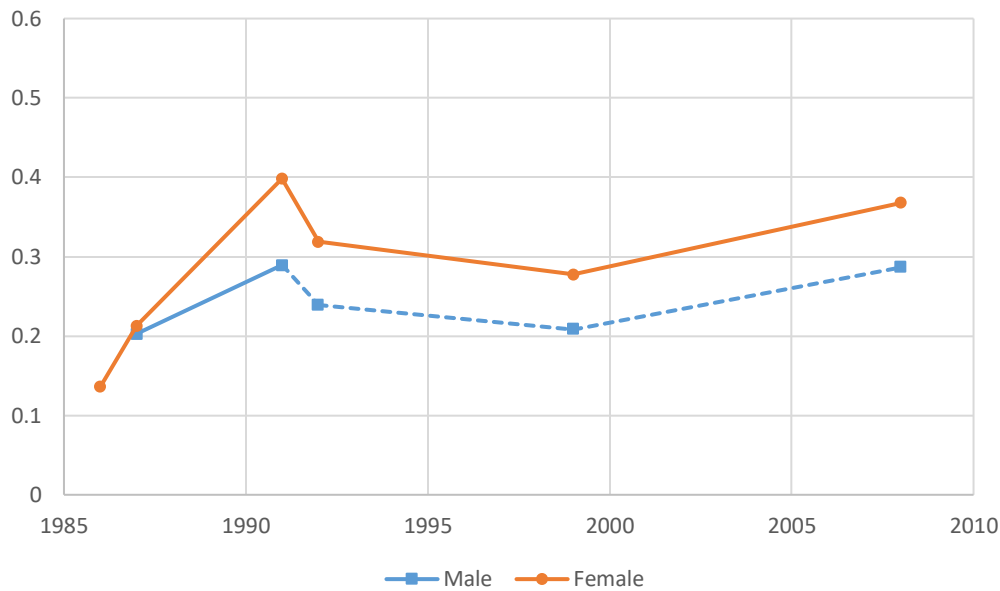
Notes: Graphs provide the answers (weighted) to a “feeling thermometer” question on women’s liberation or women’s movement, where “warmth” or support is indicated by a score > 50. A score of 50 means indifference and one that is < 50 indicates a lack of support. The term “women’s liberation movement” was used from 1970 to 1984 and “women’s movement” was used from 1986 to 2000.

Figure 12: Do You Consider Yourself a Feminist?

Part A: All individuals 20 to 34 years old



Part B: All individuals 35 to 64 years old

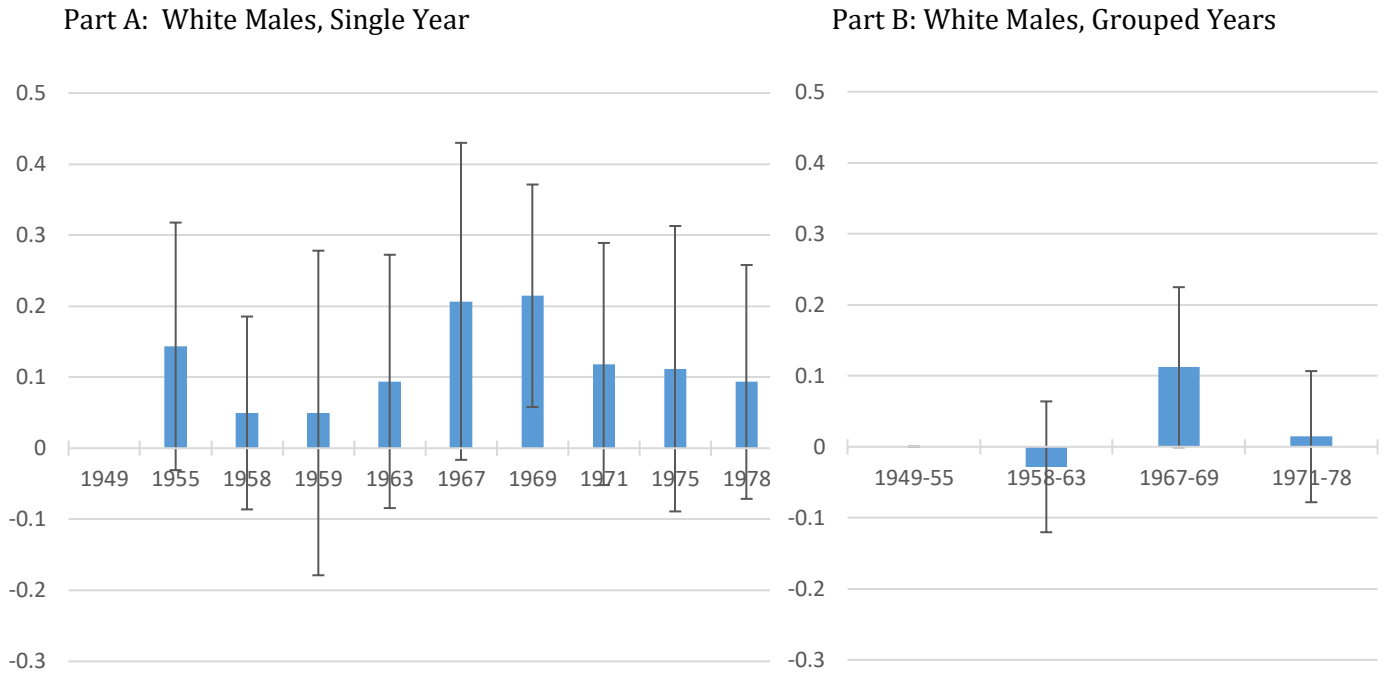


Sources: See Polling Data Appendix. Gallup survey years are: 1986 (females only), 1987, 1991, 1992 (females only), 1999 (females only), and 2008. That is, data for men exist for 1987, 1991, and 2008.

Notes: Graphs provide the answers to the question: “Do you consider yourself a feminist?” Positive answers are coded only for “yes.” Dotted lines for male indicate that data for 1992 and 1999 are constructed by assuming that males are 0.75 the value of females as is generally the case for the three years when both have data.



Figure 13: Pre-trends and Trend Break in the Relationship between Civil Rights and Women’s Roles



Sources: See Table 3.

Notes: The analysis uses the ten states (AK, AZ, TX, LA MS, AL, GA SC, NC, VA) most constrained by Voting Rights Act of 1965 as the treatment and the remaining states as the controls. The outcome is whether a respondent would vote for a (competent) woman who ran for President on the respondent’s party. Part A uses each survey as a separate year. Part B aggregates 1949 and 1955; 1958, 1959, and 1963; 1967 and 1969; 1971, 1975, and 1978. Both use only white male respondents. There was no impact on women. Control variables include: age group dummies and education. Standard errors are clustered by state; sample weights are used.

Table 1: Chronology of Critical Moments in Women’s Rights History

Year	Code	Critical Moments: Legislative, Judicial, Political, Social
1846	E	Massachusetts adopts a Married Women's Earnings Act
1848	P	Seneca Falls convention, Declaration of Sentiments drafted "all men and women are created equal"
1848	E	New York State and Pennsylvania adopt Married Women's Property Acts.
1855	E	Massachusetts adopts a Married Women's Property Act; first state to have both Married Woman's Earnings and Property Acts.
1860	E	NYS passes a Married Women's Earnings Act (by 1900 almost all had passed legislation often modeled on the NYS acts)
1869	P	Territory of Wyoming gives full suffrage to women
1873	W	<i>Bradwell v. Illinois</i> : 14 <sup>th</sup> Amendment does not give a married woman the right to practice law in a state that bars it.
1879	E	California is first state to pass a state ERA
1893	P	Colorado is the first state to give women full suffrage
1908	W	<i>Muller v Oregon</i> (Brandeis brief): Supreme Court upholds (9-0) ten-hour day for females; beginnings of workplace protections for women only.
1916	P	Formation of the National Woman's Party by Alice Paul, which was first a major force in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.
1919	W	First equal pay laws enacted by states
1919	P	Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution passed Congress granting women the vote in federal and state elections.
1920	P	Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution ratified granting women the vote in federal and state elections.
1920	P	Establishment of the Women's Bureau, directed by Mary Anderson from 1920 until 1944.
1923	E	ERA first introduced to Congress by the National Women's Party.
1933	P	Frances Perkins appointed Secretary of Labor; first woman and longest serving in this role.
1938	W	Fair Labor Standards Act: Minimum wage instituted (with no differences on the basis of sex). Exempt sectors are mainly female (see 1973).
1943	E	Lanham Act money is deployed to fund pre-schools and extended hours programs for the children of working women in areas of labor shortage.
1943	E	Harvard becomes coeducational; women take classes in the Yard during WWII rather than in the Radcliffe Quad.
1947	W	<i>State ex Rel. Wood v. Board of Education of City of St. Louis</i> (Dec 8, 1947): Missouri Supreme Court voids dismissal of married teachers.
1954	E	<i>Brown v Board of Education of Topeka Kansas</i> : Supreme Court separate but equal by race is unconstitutional. Important in cases regarding sex.
1955	P	Martha Griffiths elected to the House of Representatives from Michigan; remains to 1975 and sponsors many of the feminist bills.
1960	B	Birth control pill (Enovid) approved by FDA as an oral contraceptive
1961	E	Presidential Commission on the Status of Women established to advise the US President on issues concerning the status of women.
1963	E	Release of President Kennedy's Status of Women Commission Report (initially chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt). It did not give support to an ERA.
1963	W	24 states require that women who do the same or comparable work as men be paid the same.
1963	W	Equal Pay Act (EPA) of 1963 (amended the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938). House 362-9; Senate by voice vote.
1963	P	Publication of Betty Frieden's <i>The Feminine Mystique</i>
1964	W	Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act: prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, and sex.

1964 W Title VI of the 1964 Act prohibits discrimination based on race ... (*but not sex*) in programs that receive federal funds, such as schools.

1964 W EEOC created to enforce the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

1964 W 40 states and DC still have maximum-hours laws constraining women's work.

1964 E Brown University and Pembroke College merge; Brown becomes coeducational

1965 W Executive Order 11246: Federal contractors must undertake affirmative action in hiring minorities. Extended to women in 1967.

1965 B *Griswold v Connecticut*: Supreme Court rules that married couples have a right to birth control under right to privacy.

1966 P NOW formed in response to inaction on the part of EEOC with regard to sex discrimination cases.

1967 W Executive Order #11375 (revision to #11246): Affirmative Action extended to women by President Johnson.

1968 E IRS allows widows and single or divorced women older than 35 to receive head of household status with deductions

1968 W *Rosenfeld v. Southern Pacific Company*: 9th Circuit Court; interpreted Title VII as ending state protective legislation. Sex was not a BFOQ.\*

1968 W EEOC rules help-wanted ads specifying gender no longer permissible (ads specifying race banned in 1965). Ruling challenged; see Pittsburgh (1973).

1968 W Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) founded: A more conservative group, to advocate enforcing anti-discrimination legislation.

1968 P Disruption at Miss America pageant in Atlantic City, NJ by women's liberation groups.

1968 P Consciousness-raising groups spread throughout the country.

1968 P Shirley Chisolm elected to House, first Black woman. Would be first woman, first Black, candidate for a major-party nomination for President.

1968 P NOW issues an extensive Bill of Rights

1969 P Radical feminist groups increase (Redstockings; WITCH, Cell16, Boston's Bread and Roses; 35 groups in SF area; 30 in Chicago; 50 in NY).

1969 W *Weeks v. Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company*: Protective legislation case; Weeks lost case in 1967 but won in Appeals Court.

1969 E Princeton University, Yale University, Wesleyan College become coeducational institutions.

1970 B 12 states by 1970 had legalized abortion, which had become a feminist issue in the late 1960s.

1970 E CA adopts no fault divorce

1970 W NOW sues 1,300 corporations for failure to file affirmative action plans with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC).

1970 E Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) files suits against 160 colleges and universities to enforce EO 11246 (11375); employment not students.

1970 W EEOC contends that AT&T discriminated and should not be allowed a rate hike; AT&T eventually agreed (in 1974) to an AA plan

1970 W Lutheran church allows women to be ordained.

1970 E Williams, Colgate, and Lafayette Colleges become coeducational.

1970 B First edition of *Women and Their Bodies*, which became *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (Boston Health Book Collective).

1971 P Bella Abzug elected to the House from NYS; remains to 1977 and sponsors many of the feminist bills of the 1970s.

1971 E *Reed v. Reed* (RBG lawyer) won rights of a mother to be administrator of her son's estate. First Supreme Crt decision sex case using 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

1971 E Professional Women's Caucus files a class action sexual discrimination suit against every law school.

1971 W *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.*: Tests given for employment were artificial and unnecessary and had disparate. Race case important for sex cases.

1971 W *Phillips v. Martin Marietta Corp.*: Corporation could not discriminate against a potential female hire because she has preschool-age child.

1971 P National Press Club allows women as full members.

1971 E ERA passes in the House of Representatives (Oct. 1971; 354 to 23).

1971 E Revenue Act of 1971: Household services and child care expenses are deductible if incurred to enable employment.

1972 E ERA passes in the Senate (March 1972; 84 to 8), needs to be ratified by the states

1972 W EEO Act: Enabled EEOC to pursue cases on its own without request from an employee; House 303-110; Senate 62-10.

1972 W Title VII amended by the EEO Act to include employees by sex hired by educational institutions. But Title VI was not changed.

1972 E Title IX of the 1972 Education Act: Prohibits sex discrimination in all federally-aided education programs.

1972 W Equal Pay Act of 1963, amended to cover executive, administrative, and professional employees.

1972 B *Eisenstadt v. Baird*: U.S. Supreme Court rules that the right to privacy encompasses an unmarried person's right to use contraceptives.

1972 W *Diaz v. Pan American World Airways*: Airline passengers preferring female flight attendants is not a BFOQ.

1972 E Child Development Act: Congress passes (vetoed by President Nixon).

1972 P *Ms. Magazine*: First independently published edition, July 1972 (an early version was a sample insert in *New York* magazine, Dec. 1971)

1972 E Dartmouth College becomes coeducational

1972 P National Committee to STOP ERA: formed by Phyllis Schlafly, notion that ERA would undermine special privileges for dependent women.

1973 B *Roe v. Wade*: Abortion as a fundamental right guaranteed by the due-process clause of the 14th Amendment and the right to privacy

1973 E *Frontiero v. Richardson* (Supreme Court; argued by RBG): Wives are entitled to same dependency allowance for husbands as husbands are for wives.

1973 W *Pittsburgh Press Co. v. Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations* (1973) ruled that banning ads based on sex was not unconstitutional.

1973 E Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.

1973 P Seven women newly elected to the House.

1973 E 26 states have unilateral divorce laws by 1973.

1973 W *Cleveland Board of Education v. LaFleur*: Illegal to compel a pregnant woman from taking leave on the assumption that they cannot work.

1973 W Domestic workers covered by FLSA, minimum wage law

1973 W Only NV still had a maximum hours law. All other states dropped their protective legislation. See *Rosenfeld v. Southern Pacific Co.* (1968).

1974 E Equal Credit Opportunity Act: Prohibits credit discrimination on account of sex or marital status; married women can get credit on their own name.

1974 E 13 states passed state ERA from 1970 to 1974; 4 passed an ERA before 1970.

1974 B In 27 states women 16 and older can obtain "the Pill" and in 43 states the age of majority is 18 years.

1975 P Pres. Ford issues EO 11832 creating a National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year (Rep. Jill Ruckelshaus chair)

1975 P Seven women newly elected to the House of Representatives.

1975 E *Weinberger v. Wiesenfeld*: Supreme Court argued that gender-based differences in the Soc Sec Act violated due process clause of Fifth Amendment.

1975 P *Taylor v. Louisiana*: States cannot exclude women from juries. Sixth Amendment case citing a "jury of one's peers."

1975 E US military academies open to women by Congressional action.

1976 P *Craig v. Boren*: Supreme Court set new standards for reviewing laws that treat men and women differently; disallows different drinking ages.

1977 E ACLU asks Rhode Island Supreme Court to allow women to use their own name instead of that of their husbands

1977 E 35 of the needed 38 states have ratified the ERA.

1977 P National Women's Conference, Houston TX; 26 plank report, but turning point with major pro- and anti-feminist demonstrations

1977 W *Dothard v. Rawlinson*: First US Supreme Court case in which the BFOQ defense was used. Height and weight requirement were discriminatory.

1978 E Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA): Amendment to Title VII

1978 E Congress allocates \$5 mil to the DOL to set up centers for displaced homemakers.

1979 W *Steelworkers v. Weber*: Supreme Court holds that Title VII does not condemn all private, voluntary, race-conscious AA plans (see also Johnson 1987).

1981 P Sandra Day O'Connor becomes first female justice appointed to the US Supreme Court.

1981 W *County of Washington v. Gunther*: Title VII requires "reasonably" equal work for equal pay, akin to Comparable Worth.

1983 E Retirement Equity Act: Mandates equal benefits to women in private pension systems.

1984 P *Roberts v. U.S. Jaycees*: US Supreme Court forbids membership sex discrimination.

1985 W *Berkman v. City of New York* (626 F. Supp. 591): Female firefighters win regarding entry tests tampered with to make women, but not men, fail.

1985 W *Ramona Arnold v. City of Seminole Oklahoma* (614 V. Supp. 853): Sexual harassment of female officer intended to create a hostile environment.

1986 W *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*: Supreme Court held that a hostile work environment due to sexual harassment is a form of discrimination.

1987 E *California Federal Savings and Loan v. Guerra*: Court determined that CA maternity leave under the PDA was like any other leave.

1987 P Congress declares that March is Women's History Month.

1987 W *Johnson v. Transportation Agency, Santa Clara County*: Upheld use of sex in hiring to have affirmative action; similar to Weber (1979).

1988 E Family Support Act: Requires automatic wage withholding for child support

1989 W *Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins*: Employee did not fit partners' idea of a female lawyer. Gender stereotyping is actionable as sex discrimination.

1989 W *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*: Supreme Court upheld MO law forbidding institutions receiving state funds to perform abortions

1991 W *United Automobile Workers v. Johnson Controls, Inc.*: Prohibiting women from potentially hazardous occupations is discriminatory under PDA.

1991 W Civil Rights Act reauthorized: Women can collect back pay in cases of intentional discrimination

1992 W State Farm Insurance Company agreed to pay \$157 million to 814 women denied jobs as agents in the largest sex discrimination case in US history

1992 E 26 women newly elected to the Congress (2 to Senate; 24 to House)

1993 P FMLA passed by Congress guaranteeing 12 weeks of family and medical leave, unpaid but with job protection.

1998 W *Burlington Industries, Inc. v. Ellerth*; *Faragher v. City of Boca Raton*: Supreme Court rules that employers are liable for sexual harassment.

1998 B Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing of America settles EEOC lawsuit over sexual harassment.

2004 E California has paid parental leave.

2007 W *Ledbetter v Goodyear Tire and Rubber*: Supreme Court declined request; pay inequity occurred more than 180 days before case was brought.

2009 E Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act: Congress restored original meaning of EEOC that clock restarts each time a form of discrimination occurred.

2009 W New Jersey has paid parental leave.

2013 W Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA): Discrimination based on sexual orientation passes Senate; dies in House.

2013 W Ban against women in military combat positions ended; Pentagon had decided in 1994 to restrict women from these roles.

2014 E Rhode Island has paid parental leave.

2017 P #MeToo Movement generally dated with the Oct. 2017 accusations against Harvey Weinstein, although Tarana Burke used the term in 2006.

2017	P	Women's March January 21, 2017 day after Donald Trump's inauguration, estimated at 200K in DC and 2.2 to 4.6 million across the US
2018	E	New York has paid parental leave.
2020	E	<i>Bostock v. Clayton County, GA</i> : Supreme Court interprets Title VII as protecting individuals on the basis of sexual orientation.
2020	W	Washington State and the District of Columbia have paid parental leave.
2021	E	26 women newly elected to the House of Representatives.
2021	P	Massachusetts has paid parental leave.
2022	B	<i>Roe v. Wade</i> : Struck down by <i>Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization</i> : the Constitution does not confer a right to abortion.
2022	E	Connecticut has paid parental leave.
2023	E	Oregon will have paid parental leave, making it the ninth state (including DC) to enact and put into effect some form of paid parental leave

---

\*BFOQ = Bona Fide Occupational Qualification

*Sources*: Unless listed otherwise, sources are general. Bird (1997); Freeman (1975); Geddes and Tennyson (2013) on married women's property and earnings acts; Goldin (1990); Goldin and Katz (2002) on contraception; Goldin and Katz (2011) on coeducation; McBride and Parry (2016); National Women's History Alliance website; Rosenberg (1992); Stevenson (2007) on divorce laws.

*Notes*: Codes are E = Economic/Social; P = Political; W= Workplace; B = Female Body.

Add:

1971 EO #11479 (1971, Nixon) All federal agencies and departments directed to establish AA programs

1973 Cleveland Board of Education v. LaFleur compelling pregnant women to take leave was unconstitutional.

1972 Women's Rights Project formed by Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Include the major marches

Table 2: Summary Table of Opinion Poll Responses in c.1970 and When a Majority Agreed

Issue or question [Figure]	Percentage Agreeing, c.1970		Year > 50% Agreed	
	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female	Male
Should women work for pay? § [6]				
Younger (25 to 34 years)	70%	70%	~1960	~1960
Older (35 to 64 years)	60	60	~1965	~1965
College graduates (younger)	90	90	~1950	~1950
Should women be more politically active? * [7]				
Younger (25 to 34 years)	72	68	< 1950	~1962
Older (35 to 64 years)	70	66	<1950	~1960
College graduates (younger)	82	74	~1954	~1954
Vote for a female President? § [8]				
Younger (25 to 34 years)	65	65	~1943	~1948
Older (35 to 64 years)	64	60	~1949	~1956
College graduates (younger)	79	76	<1945	<1945
Grant women an equal role? # [9]				
Younger (25 to 34 years)	36	35	~1982	~1996
Older (35 to 64 years)	32	31	~1990	~1992
College graduates (younger)	49	45	~1974	~1978
Strengthen women's status? ^ [10]				
Younger (18 to 29 years)	46	n.a.	~1972	~1973
Older (40 to 64 years)	38	n.a.	~1974	~1973
College graduates (younger)	53	n.a.	< 1970	n.a.
Warmth to women's (lib) movement? # [11]				
Younger (25 to 34 years)	24	19	~1973	~1985
Older (35 to 64 years)	14	17	~1978	~1982
College graduates (younger)	25	23	~1971	~1973
Warmth to feminism? # [12]				
Younger (25 to 34 years)	38 (1988)	37 (1988)	2001	never
Older (35 to 64 years)	40 (1988)	36 (1988)	2001	never
College graduates (younger)	56 (1988)	41 (1988)	< 1988	never
Do you consider yourself a feminist? * [none]				
Younger (25 to 34 years)	23 (1987)	19 (1987)	never	never
Older (35 to 64 years)	21 (1987)	20 (1987)	never	never
College graduates (younger)	28 (1991)	17 (1991)	2008	never

Sources: See Polling Data Appendix, text, and text figures. \* = Gallup; § = Gallup and GSS combined; # = ANES; ^ = Virginia Slims.

Notes: Year when a majority of the respondents (> 50%) agreed is approximated when surveys are separated by many years. The first [last] survey year for each issue or question is as follows: Work 1938 [1998]; Govern 1952 [2014]; Female President 1937 [2010]; Equal role 1972 [2008]; Strengthen status 1970 (women only) and 1974 (both) [1989]; Women's Liberation 1970 [2000]; Feminist 1986 (women only), 1987 (both) [2008]; Feminism 1988 [2008]. Virginia Slims data reports age in broad age groups. Weights are used when possible; see text figures for more detail.

Table 3: Correlates of Whether Women Should be Granted an Equal Role with Men (1972 to 2008) and Whether Respondent Has Warmth for the Women's Movement (1970 to 2000)

	(1) Equal Role		(3) Women's Movement		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Dependent variable means	0.4792	0.4414	0.5513	0.4766	
Grouped year dummies for					
Cols. (1), (2)	Cols. (3), (4)				
1978-84	1974-76	0.0347** (2.79)	0.0344* (2.40)	0.184*** (11.60)	0.138*** (7.44)
1988-92	1980-86	0.148*** (10.61)	0.111*** (7.12)	0.267*** (16.89)	0.207*** (11.48)
1994-98	1990-92	0.152*** (10.52)	0.125*** (7.61)	0.319*** (19.93)	0.245*** (13.78)
2000-08	1996-2000	0.236*** (14.44)	0.212*** (11.56)	0.301*** (16.31)	0.220*** (10.44)
College graduate		0.144*** (11.96)	0.0759*** (6.23)	0.135*** (10.07)	0.0258 (1.93)
High school graduate		0.0402** (3.20)	0.0219 (1.50)	0.0389** (2.97)	0.0377* (2.50)
Currently married		-0.117*** (-12.19)	-0.0475*** (-4.14)	-0.0851*** (-8.24)	-0.0705*** (-5.63)
Young (20 to 34 years)		0.0521*** (5.60)	0.0273* (2.50)	0.0720*** (7.18)	-0.0164 (-1.39)
Currently employed		0.0604*** (6.33)	-0.0124 (-0.85)	0.0310** (3.02)	-0.0361* (-2.28)
Protestant		-0.0886*** (-9.08)	-0.0544*** (-5.06)	-0.0727*** (-6.88)	-0.0718*** (-6.18)
White		-0.0366** (-3.14)	-0.0249 (-1.82)	-0.125*** (-9.70)	-0.172*** (-11.48)
South		-0.0403** (-3.02)	-0.0109 (-0.73)	-0.0272 (-1.89)	-0.0257 (-1.58)
Northcentral		-0.0728*** (-5.31)	-0.0452** (-2.94)	-0.0413** (-2.80)	-0.0542** (-3.27)
West		-0.00879 (-0.60)	0.000310 (0.02)	-0.0144 (-0.91)	-0.0345 (-1.93)
Constant		0.451*** (23.23)	0.418*** (16.55)	0.447*** (20.27)	0.566*** (19.88)
Number of observations		11,084	9,164	9,255	7,757
R <sup>2</sup>		0.0982	0.0414	0.1181	0.0746

t-statistics in parentheses  
 \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01\*\*\* p; <0.001



*Sources:* See Polling Data Appendix, and Figures 9 and 11.

*Notes:* The dependent variable in cols. (1) and (2) is “Equal Role,” and is the (0,1) answer to whether the respondent believes that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. In cols. (3) and (4), the dependent variable is “Women’s Movement,” and is the (0,1) answer to a “feeling thermometer” question on the women’s (liberation) movement, indicated by a score of > 50. The separate years of the survey have been aggregate into five grouped years due to small sample sizes (1972, 1974, 1976), (1978, 1980, 1982, 1984), (1988, 1990, 1992), (1994, 1996, 1998), and (2000, 2004, 2008) for Equal Role and (1970, 1972), (1974, 1976), (1980, 1984, 1986), (1990, 1992), and (1996, 2000) for Women’s Movement. Young is 20 to 34 years old. Omitted variables are (1972, 1974, 1976) for cols. (1) and (2) and (1970, 1972) for cols. (3) and (4), below high school graduate, older (35 to 64 years old), not currently married, not currently employed, religions other than Protestant, not white, and northeast. Sample weights have been applied.

Table 4: Relationship between Approval of a Female Presidential Candidate and the Voting Rights Act

Variable	White Males		White Females	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Event (year > 1965)	0.121	0.0135	0.110	0.0200
Voting Rights Act state	-0.0561	0.0228	-0.0385	0.0234
Event × Voting Rights Act state	0.0747	0.0253	-0.000829	0.0349
College graduate	0.0705	0.0245	0.0926	0.0206
High school graduate	0.0292	0.0162	0.0212	0.0142
Age group dummies	yes		yes	
Constant	0.601	0.0980	0.830	0.0331
R <sup>2</sup>	0.0283		0.0426	
Number of observations	7,955		8,320	

*Sources:* See sources to Figure 8 for the opinion data and <https://www.justice.gov/crt/jurisdictions-previously-covered-section-5> for Voting Rights Act 1965 covered jurisdictions.

*Notes:* The ten states with the most covered jurisdictions are the treatments (AK AZ, TX, LA, MS, AL, GA, SC, NC, VA) and are the “Voting Rights Act” states. The “event” year is 1965. Years (1949, 1955, 1958, 1959, 1963) are untreated and years (1967, 1969, 1971, 1975, 1978) are treated. The opinion poll series contain more years. I begin after the 1945 survey and stop before the 1983 survey, to provide a balanced group of almost 15 years on either side of the event and not to go out too far after the event. Regressions use sample weights and include age group dummies, where the omitted dummy is 18 to 24 years old. Age group dummies are small (negative) for males but larger (negative) at older ages for females. Standard errors are clustered by state. See also Figure 13 for an analysis of pre-trends and trend break

## Polling Data Appendix

### 1) Data Sources:

Gallup: Roper ipoll

<https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/ipoll/>

1974 onwards from Roper ipoll:

<https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/ipoll/>

Virginia Slims (VA Slims): 1970 UNC dataverse

<https://dataverse.unc.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=hdl:1902.29/H-2050>

GSS: UC Berkeley GSS Cumulative Datafile

<https://sda.berkeley.edu/sdaweb/analysis/?dataset=gss18>

ANES: Cumulative Data File 1948-2020

<https://electionstudies.org/data-center/anes-time-series-cumulative-data-file/>

### 2) Questions:

Question #	Question	Survey	Years Asked	Answers
1: Should married women be employed for pay?	“Do you approve or disapprove of a married woman earning money (holding a job) in business or industry if her husband is capable of supporting her?”	Gallup	1938, 1945, 1970, 1975, 1993, 1997	Yes, No, No opinion (In 1945 choices are: approve, disapprove, no opinion, qualified)
		GSS	1972, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998	Approve, Disapprove, Don't Know
2: Would it be better if women were more politically active?	“Some people say that if there were more women in Congress and ... government positions, the country would be better governed. Do you agree or disagree?”	Gallup	1952	Agree, Disagree, Neither or No Difference, If Qualified
	“Do you think the US would be governed better or worse if women had more say in politics?”	Gallup	1969, 1975, 1984, 1995, 1999, 2000, 2014	Better, Worse, Same, Don't Know
3: Would you vote for a female presidential candidate?	“Would you vote for a woman for President if she qualified in every other respect?”	Gallup	1937	Yes, No, No opinion
	“If your party (the party whose candidate you most often support) nominated a woman for President of the US, would you vote for her if she seemed best qualified ...?”	Gallup	1945, 1949, 1955, 1958, 1969, 1971, 1975, 1978, 1983, 1984, 1987, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2012, 2015	Yes, No, No opinion
		GSS	1958, 1969, 1971, 1975, 1978, 1983, 1984, 1987, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2012, 2015	Yes, No, Wouldn't Vote, Don't Know

4: Should women be paid the same as men?	"If women take the place of men in industry, should they be paid the same wages as men?"	Gallup	1942	Yes, No, No opinion
	"Do you approve or disapprove of paying women the same salaries as men, if they are doing the same work?"	Gallup	1954, 1962, 1993	Yes, No, No opinion
5: Should women be granted an equal role in business, industry, government?	"Recently there has been ... talk about women's rights. Some feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry and government. Others feel that a women's place is in the home. ... some people have opinions in between, at points 2,3,4,5, or 6. Where would you place yourself ... or haven't you thought much about this (code 9)?"	ANES	1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2008	Scale from 1 to 7, with 1 meaning an equal role and 7 meaning a woman's place is in the home
6: Support for strengthening women's status	"On the whole, do you favor or oppose most of the efforts to strengthen and change women's status in society today?"	VA Slims	1970, 1974, 1980, 1985, 1989	Favor, Oppose, Don't Know
7: Warmth to women's (liberation) movement and feminism	"We'd also like to get your feelings about some groups in American society. When I read the name of a group, we'd like you to rate it with what we call a feeling thermometer." – women's liberation	ANES	1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1986, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000	Scale from 0 to 100 where 50 to 100 means "you feel favorably and warm toward the group", 0 to 50 means "you don't feel favorably towards the group", and 50 is that you aren't inclined in either direction
	"We'd also like to get your feelings about some groups in American society. When I read the name of a group, we'd like you to rate it with what we call a feeling	ANES	1988, 1992, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020	Scale from 0 to 100 where 50 to 100 means "you feel favorably and warm toward the group", 0 to 50 means "you don't feel favorably towards the group", and 50 is that

	thermometer.” – feminists			you aren’t inclined in either direction
	“Do you consider yourself to be a strong feminist, a feminist, not a feminist or an anti-feminist?”	Gallup	1986	Strong feminist, Feminist, Not a Feminist, Anti-Feminist, Don’t Know
	“Do you consider yourself a feminist or not?”	Gallup	1991, 1992, 1999, 2008	Yes, No, No Opinion
8a: Were women subjected to discrimination?	"Do you feel women are discriminated against or not in obtaining top jobs in the professions?"	VA Slims	1970, 1974, 1980, 1985, 1989	Discriminated against, Not discriminated against, Not sure
8b: Were women subjected to discrimination?	"Do you feel women are discriminated against or not in getting a college education?"	VA Slims	1970, 1974, 1980, 1985, 1989	Discriminated against, Not discriminated against, Not sure

### 3) Sample Weights:

Gallup: We created census-based weights by modifying code from Cascio and Shenhav (2020), provided in their replication files: <https://www.openicpsr.org/openicpsr/project/117331/version/V1/view> The code creates shares of individuals in the census by year, sex, race, region South, high school completion, and birth cohort. Our steps are identical through #6. Our weight is then the ratio of the share of the population in a given cell in the census to the share of the population in a given cell in the Gallup data, normalized by the sum of that ratio across the entire survey. We follow Cascio and Shenhav (2020) in dropping duplicate observations (both weighted and unweighted), which we only found in the 1962 survey (1962-0660). The weights can be used starting in 1940. Farber et al. (2021) discuss a method to construct weights using occupation, which can be done for years prior to 1940. Weights do not make a substantive difference in the results, a finding shared by the authors of both papers.

GSS: We use compwt, which is the composite weight available for the entire GSS cumulative file.

Virginia Slims: We do not weight the Virginia Slims data. For years 1974, 1985, and 1989 there are no weights provided (or they are not identifiable in the documentation). For 1980 there are some simple weights that when used do not meaningfully change the results.

ANES: We use the weight variable VCF0009z for years 1958, 1960, 1970, 1974, 1976, and 1992 onwards. These are the years the cumulative file has weights.