OCCUPYING A THIRD PLACE: PRO-LIFE FEMINISM, LEGIBLE POLITICS, AND THE EDGE OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION

by

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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the School of Journalism and Communication
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

September 2020

DISSERTATION APPROVAL PAGE

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Title: Occupying a Third Place: Pro-Life Feminism, Legible Politics, and the Edge of Women's Liberation

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Degree awarded September 2020

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2020

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This dissertation reads pro-life feminism as a break from traditional public perceptions of feminist thought. Through a variety of methodological analyses, it engages three case studies to answer (1) How does pro-life feminism persist as a movement and idea? And (2) What does the existence of pro-life feminists mean for the discursive boundaries of pro-choice feminism? This project included archival research on major feminist, anti-feminist, and pro-life feminist organizations, as well as long-form interviews with founding members of the pro-life feminist organizations. First, a critical discourse analysis of the 2017 Women's March on Washington in regard to the removal of pro-life feminist group New Wave Feminists' publicized removal as march organizers reveals discursive boundaries of contemporary feminist activism. Next, an evaluation of pro-life feminism's coopting of "feminist foremothers," Susan B. Anthony in particular, concludes that pro-life feminists utilize

the mechanisms of producing history through *commemoration* to sustain a shared internal history that diverges from professional historical accounts of the suffragette. Finally, a cross-platform analysis of pro-life feminism's online social life points to the future of fringe social organization through social media and the writable web. The study concludes with a discussion on the social space between public and private spheres (as theorized by Arendt, Habermas, Benhabib, and Butler) as the locus for pro-life feminism to persist while simultaneously undermining and constituting the philosophical boundaries of "mainstream" feminism.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express sincere gratitude to my dissertation committee for their flexibility, support, and inspiration throughout my graduate career. This project was generously supported by the Center for the Study of Women in Society's annual Jane Grant Dissertation Fellowship, as well as years of teaching and research fellowships through the School of Journalism and Communications.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

Chapter Page

I: INTRODUCTION

In March of 2016, a photograph of a determined teenage girl protesting reforms to Texas abortion clinic regulations graced the front page of *The New York Times'* print version (Liptak, 2016). The protests followed a Supreme Court decision striking down strict building code and employment status regulations Texas lawmakers had imposed on clinics that performed abortions. The anti-abortion protesters sought to retain these regulations, which do not ban abortions outright, but reduce the number of clinics at which abortions can be performed. We cannot see the banner she is holding, as the picture is cropped just below her clenched fists. Instead, the girl is flanked by two pro-life protest signs: the one on the right features a newborn posed in a grayscaled allusion to an ultrasound with stark white block-text reading "Life Counts," a familiar and iconic pro-life image. The sign to the left of the girl's face, however, was far less familiar and devoid of the morose imagery we have come to expect from pro-life iconography. The sign advertised a website and, in extra-large black and bubblegum pink font, read: "I Am A Pro-Life Feminist."

Incidentally, this photograph made visible a growing movement beyond the typical political narrative of pro-life versus pro-choice. The organization, the "New Wave Feminists" (NWF), are just one of many politically active pro-life feminist groups that emerged around the debate on Roe v. Wade, and have since battled pro-choice measures in the political arena. The mere existence of the group points to an unnamable space within US political life that cannot fit into the confines of constitutionalism, and exists halfway between the public sphere of legislation and the private sphere of the home and family. As a movement, pro-life feminism is public in the inherent legality of its premise but, since Roe v. Wade, has found little

logical public space to occupy. The evolution of web 2.0 has in recent years provided an outlet and organizing ground for numerous groups that are not easily categorized, and pro-life feminist groups avidly took advantage of the technology. At the moment of writing, for instance, the founder of the NWF, Destiny Herndon-De La Rosa, is crowdfunding a mobile app for pro-life feminists to locate pro-life women's health clinics nearby (Corkins, 2017).

Where the emergence of the pro-life *movement* can be traced to the legalization of abortion, self-proclaimed feminists who disagree with abortion predate Roe v. Wade. Like many political issues that aren't legible until challenged, the issue of abortion as something juridically contestable arose around this and similar historic cases, consequently *creating* the pro-life feminist as a legible figure. While debates on the issue of abortion precede the decision on legalization, it wasn't until this monumental legal turn that the conditions necessary for a pro-life movement to coalesce would evolve. This dissertation takes many approaches to answering questions about pro-life feminism as a phenomenon; through conjunctural analysis, those approaches are woven together to produce a unique understanding of the conditions that make such a counterintuitive identity group possible.

Now more than ever, popular conservative movements demand close analysis, particularly with regard to the formulation of popular memory and historical representation. By analyzing punctuated moments throughout the history of pro-life feminism, seeks to contextualize pro-life feminism's newfound visibility in the current political moment. To this aim, I examine this movement's own internal and public-facing communications, as well as news coverage framing the identity of the pro-life feminists.

Some pro-life feminist critiques echo those of certain pro-choice feminists who argued against many ERA reforms that helped to bring women into the general workforce. As will be detailed in the literature below, some scholars viewed women's mass inclusion in the workforce as the beginning of a capitalist coopting of the women's movement—undermining its integrity and diverting its cause. Moreover, pro-life feminists view this moment as a bargaining off of true progress under the guise of sexual liberation and the freedom to leave the domestic sphere. Feminists of color and labor activists, for instance, warned against and later lamented incremental trade-offs they would sacrifice for sweeping constitutional changes which would typically give rights to middle-class white women before anyone else. Notably, many critiques leveraged by the pro-life feminists today take up the general issues prominent in the pro-choice vs. pro-life debate over its failure to address the racial and class divides intrinsic to the issue. Groups like the New Wave Feminists frequently bring up race-related arguments against abortion, such as Planned Parenthood's increased funding for sterilization and problematic long-term contraceptives in poorer communities and communities of color (Smith, 2005).

Many divergences of the pro-life feminist ilk can be identified in these mainstream political divides, such as labor issues vs. reproductive rights vs. identity politics. This project's goal is not to merely pinpoint the ways in which the pro-life feminists fit into extant historical narratives and turning points of the mainstream movement, but to understand how they persist and constitute/are constituted by mainstream feminism. This will involve looking to major events within both the pro-life and pro-choice movements and reading their histories next to both the mainstream feminist movement as well as anti-feminist and pro-life politics. These distinctions become a bit tricky once the arbitration of what qualifies as "feminist" falls on the

author, but for the sake of this project the definition will apply to those women in particular who are (A) not explicitly anti-feminist, and (B) are concerned with the health, welfare, and agency of women.[1]

This dissertation seeks to answer the following questions: (1) How does this seemingly paradoxical and marginal political group sustain an identity and history in the face of competing popular memories of feminism and the women's movement? And (2) What does the persistence and recent resurgence of this group say about the state and definition of the feminist movement today? That is, what claims (if any) can be made about the discursive boundaries maintained by today's mainstream feminist movement when it is confronted with a "feminist case against abortion"? (Foster, 2013). To this end, the project employs archival and textual analyses to examine the history of pro-life feminists in their own words, and through their media, in the mainstream media, and as represented by academic feminist historians. Additionally, it interrogates the concepts of memory and popular history when challenged, in this case regarding the political stances of feminist foremothers. Finally, this project engages new digital methodology to read contemporary online instances of community among pro-life feminists and that bond's role in sustaining and growing an otherwise niche sociality.

Pro-Life Feminism

[1] Thomas takes this designation a step further by qualifying pro-life feminism as 'cultural feminism,' where "women's different nature and strength in motherhood have been devalued instead of celebrated and embraced" (2012, p. 10)

Like the pro-choice and reproductive justice movements, the pro-life feminist movement is comprised of numerous organized groups. The most prominent and long-standing group, Feminists for Life of America (Heretofore FFL), maintains a generalized role as organizer and historian for the broader movement. This project will examine a range of texts produced by this organization as well as others published by religious or otherwise pro-life media producers. To follow the pro-life feminist histories (Sweet, 1985; Kennedy, 1997; Naranjo-Huebl, 2006), pro-abortion feminisms emerged after first wave feminism. In their pro-life "herstories" rendering, major feminist figures ranging from Mary Wollstonecraft to Elizabeth Cady Stanton were anti-abortion. FFL and its prodigies base this claim on a particular reading of material evidence, namely that these foremothers viewed motherhood as the source of women's moral superiority, and expressed their anti-abortion preferences by denying advertisement space in the suffragist newsletter, *Revolution*, to patent medicines known for being covert abortifacients (Kennedy, 1997). This historical narrative runs contrary to mainstream feminist assertions that these foremothers would have been pro-choice (Thomas, 2012).

As to the selfhood of a fetus, FFL claims that abortion was often a sticking point for early feminists and even served as an allegory for the denied personhood experienced by women themselves. Philosophically, early feminists argued against the patriarchal treatment of pregnancy as a "disability" that would inhibit women from participation in public and political life. This line of reasoning continues to appear in contemporary pro-life feminist rhetoric, as I will discuss below. Nevertheless, by regularly citing early feminists as foundational to their ongoing philosophies, pro-life feminists have from the beginning claimed an equal stake in the feminist movement that excludes them based on their anti-abortion position.

In the mid 20th century, social and political groups were less-easily aggregated as they are today, and women's movements often circulated around publicity events, such as legislative measures regarding women's labor and health issues. This was the case in 1966 when the National Organization of Women (NOW) was established in part as a response to a public degradation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Legislators' refusal to take women's labor issues seriously awoke a sleeping giant that would ultimately lead to major overhauls in women's rights and protections: "By creating a feminist civil rights organization, NOW members did more than assert their independence from male-dominated liberal politics; they publicly acknowledged that liberal political culture was inadequate to address the reality of women's lives" (Rosen, 2013). The establishment of NOW theoretically produced a discursive public space and political framework for women to occupy, driving previously private matters into the public sphere.

This narrative, much like that of the Seneca Falls origin story for "first wave" feminism, is of course problematized by the history of intersectional struggles communities of color: first fighting for the rights to vote that most men and white women had now enjoyed for decades, and second, battling for legal parity and civil rights protections for both their racial and gender communities. This is analogous to the decades of activist work preceding the origin of the NWSA, particularly the efforts of men and women of color fighting for women's suffrage alongside efforts for abolition—the latter providing much organizational structure as well as knowledge and experience in activism and public support for the former. These are the complexities of public political culture that become collapsed when speaking of the history of feminism and women's rights. Scholars like Nancy Hewitt (2010) or Louise

Michele Newman (1999) have produced excellent works detailing the often-untold histories of civic racial histories and the ways in which those narratives become folded into metanarratives about feminism, and obscured behind mythology supported by white supremacist outlooks and a structural avoidance of counternarratives.

Accounts of the accomplishments of NOW are well-documented (Echols, 1989; Tong 1989; Barakso, 2004), though less so is the history of the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), which split from NOW upon the latter group's insistence on abortion rights as a political platform. Notably, many women left NOW for WEAL on the basis of political plausibility and not personal philosophies; they thought that such a controversial issue might spell the end of the women's movement's momentum. Other groups of individuals consisted of conservative feminists looking to maintain the direction of the women's movement within the scope of labor and civil rights. While WEAL and NOW would continue to work together to push through the ERA, their division forebode the ensuing rift in women's movements surrounding the issue of abortion.

How then, did a labor policy-minded group of pro-woman attorneys like WEAL eventually morph into the present iteration of anti-abortionism, which is in many ways mobilized around the single issue of reproductive rights? In other words, how did the political divider of abortion shift from an issue of political expediency to one of religious dogma? Many scholars look to the emergence of modern evangelicalism in the 1970's as a turning point for the political world's obsession with maternal life and its definitions. For instance, Carol Mason's (2002) *Killing for Life: The Apocalyptic Narrative of Pro-Life Politics* traces the evolution of militant pro-life history, locating a shift from "right-to-life" rhetoric, to the notion that America would be punished if abortions were not banned, in an

attempt to regain a sense of morality following the war. In her text, she builds a claim that Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative* along with "New Warrior" rhetoric created for the post-Vietnam US a new psychological enemy to fight in the issue of abortion (p. 13). She also employs Jeffords (1989) work on masculinity and Vietnam to argue that abortion restrictions were very much part of an attempt to regain a sense of manhood following the war.

This newfound apocalypticism sat well with conservative women in the 1970's looking to stifle the women's liberation movement. From that moment on, conservative women's actions would be synonymous with pro-life politics. In many instances, conservative women outright rejected the umbrella term of "feminism," and therein sought to push back women's liberation efforts instead of shifting their moral bases. However, a percentage of conservative women have sought to maintain their pro-woman foundation while rejecting liberal feminist ideals such as abortion.

According to scholars on the topic (Gallagher, 1987; Oaks, 2009), the pro-life feminist movement's institutional foundation officially began when NOW's Ohio chapter exiled members Pat Goltz and Catherine Callaghan for their pro-life politics surrounding Roe v. Wade, defined as "heresy" by chapter leaders (though the national board declined the motion to bar the two from the organization). With a staunch belief in the need to maintain a pro-life voice in the larger conversation of feminism, Goltz and Callaghan formed the still-prominent group Feminists For Life of America (FFL), and have since provided resources and inspiration for many splinter groups of a similar persuasion. Not only that, but the FFL has a long history of political participation on key legislative issues regarding reproductive rights.

By including support from progressive pro-lifers, anti-abortion advocates are able to circumvent critiques of the pro-life stance being regressive or misogynist

(McClain, 1994). This approach proved effective in 1993's *Bray vs. Alexandria's Women's Health Clinic*, where a number of abortion clinics sued to stop demonstrations at Washington D.C. clinics on the basis that protestors were depriving women of "equal protection of the laws, or of equal privileges and immunities under the laws" (42 U.S.C. 1985(3)) by inhibiting their right to abortion and their right to interstate travel.

Following the District Court's ruling that Jayne Bray and other anti-abortion protestors (Operation Rescue) did violate 42 U.S.C. 1985(3), the Supreme Court reviewed the case and ultimately overturned it (3v4).[2] Submitting an amicus curiae to the court in support of Operation Rescue, the FFL weighed in on the defense that anti-abortion protesters are not necessarily targeting women, but the act of abortion itself. According to the brief submitted by the FFLA, the women who would have influenced the section of the civil rights protection act being invoked (Ku Klux Klan Act) would not have considered anti-abortionism to be anti-woman: "Opposition to abortion was premised not upon animus against women, but upon the conviction that abortion constituted the oppression of women as well as the killing of children" (Bray vs. Alexandria Women's Clinic, 1993).

Although one cannot know for sure, the evidence put forward by the FFL in 1993 may have influenced the historic decisions of the Supreme Court at the time. The Opinion of the Court delivered by Antonin Scalia points to arguments that are at

[2] The section of the act in question is rather vague and has been used to apply to personal freedom cases like this many times, typically held by lower district courts and later overturned by the Supreme Court.

least supported by those set forth by the FFL: “Whatever one thinks of abortion, it cannot be denied that there are common and respectable reasons for opposing it, other than hatred of, or condescension toward (or indeed any view at all concerning), women as a class-as is evident from the fact that men and women are on both sides of the issue, just as men and women are on both sides of petitioners' unlawful demonstrations.” After coining the rhetorical device “Women deserve better than abortion,” the FFL frames pro-life feminism as a social justice issue, and continually challenges the idea that anti-abortionism is anti-woman.

This rhetoric continues to function as the basis of pro-life feminist logic continuing into the 21st century. The contemporary group in question, the “New Wave Feminists,” offer a charismatic prescription for a world without abortions much in line with the FFL’s argument:

> Look, we don't work to make abortion illegal. We work to make it unthinkable and unnecessary. And we do that by getting to the root of the need for it. No woman ever wants to have an abortion. Both sides unanimously agree on that. So let's work towards a culture that supports a woman so well that she never has to have one. Let's work towards a culture that tells her "You Can," "You **Are** Strong Enough," and "If You Need Some Help - We Are Here," because that is what the sisterhood is all about. (www.newwavefeminists.com, “About”)

Though this group seems self-aware of major critiques of the pro-life movement writ large, it regularly circumvents typical arguments about religious dogma by maintaining a rhetoric of liberation and dissent. In keeping with the FFL, the New Wave Feminists avoid any and all religious affiliations, and in doing so refuse to be barred from the public sphere by virtue of an unwelcome theism. Understanding the

current resurgence of "progressive anti-abortionism" is a step in building a contemporary history of the movement in its entirety. The New Wave Feminists represent one of many instances of pro-life feminists finding support, resources, and momentum on the internet and through social media. One task of this project is tracing a rhetorical lineage between this group and others, as well as the early suffragists that preceded them. The methodological implications of this endeavor will be detailed below.

Methodology

The complex nature of analysis necessary to read pro-life feminism as phenomena requires a relational approach that traces the constantly shifting layers and intersections of socio-political contexts leading to the identity's potential for existence. Hall's (Gramscian) conjunctural framework of analysis allows the researcher to map out the sporadic iterations of progressive and feminist pro-lifeism as a phenomenon always already tied up in a complex of socio-political ontologies and struggles over meaning (1978). In particular, conjunctural analysis is uniquely apt to read social movements in a holistic and dynamic manner, especially those which are presently ongoing. Each "moment" that this project analyzes requires a unique conceptualization of the conditions of possibility and "can only be defined by the accumulation/condensation of contradictions" (Hall, 1980). Perhaps most importantly, conjunctural analyses are in and of themselves political endeavors, framing and crystalizing a 'problem space' that 'makes visible/hearable' the socio-political undercurrents of a conjecture and opening that space up as a site of struggle or resistance.

In his latest conjunctural project, Grossberg (2019) describes the process as an articulation of discrete analytical layers and highlights three imperatives: "the first treats the conjuncture as a complex context viewed politically as a war of positions." The next "maps the multiple 'problematics' that cut across those various positions to construct a certain kind of 'problem space,'" and the final practice and relational construction "attempts to question whether and in what ways that problem space is given its own sense of unity through what Gramsci called 'an organic crisis' (p. 43). A conjunctural analysis allows for this project to span over history in multiple directions at the same time keeping in mind the major conceptual categories that undergird the inquiry's definitional goals. These categories each constitute their own matrices of relational possibilities foregrounding understandings of feminist ideology, popular memory, representation and perception, and overall social organization.

To this end, a foundation of relevant historical contexts will provide one of the material layers of this inquiry. One part of this project's goal to historicize the pro-life feminist movement will be founded on materials produced by sources outside of the typical scholarly purview. Many of the texts from which I have drawn pro-life feminist histories and philosophies are produced by the Feminists for Life organization, or some affiliate/subsidiary thereof. Additionally, a number of texts are produced by Christian and conservative publishers. In multiple academic disciplines, alterity in history is often regarded with deference, such as the growing canonized inclusion of oral history. With this in mind, the project will proceed with an understanding of the inherent epistemic violence in naming, historiographic construction, and "knowledge production" more generally.

During the height of popularity of postmodernism and Cultural Studies, theorists pushed for the "deprofessionalization" of history. This called for a

heightened preoccupation with “non-academic” forms of historical narratives, such as oral history and popular memory. This notion of popular memory, as defined by the Popular Memory Group (1982) refers to both public representations and private memory as constructions of the past. The difference between popular memory and professional history, then, is the producer. Where professional history is recorded and defined by historians in academia, popular memory is produced in the minds of people and in public representations often portrayed through public and civic institutions:

> The various sites and institutions do not act in concert. To make them sing, if not in harmony at least with only minor dissonances, involves hard labor and active intervention. Sometimes this has been achieved by direct control (censorship for example) and by a violent recasting or obliteration of whole fields of public history. More commonly today, in the capitalist West, the intersections of formal political debates and the public media are probably the crucial site. (p. 209)

We can apply this understanding of popular memory to the shaping of popular perceptions of feminism. Within this framework, the passing of the ERA or Roe v. Wade historically legitimizes the movements that rallied for these causes, while those groups against the motions lose visibility and recognition in the public eye. This phenomenon is then exacerbated by the US’s forgetful historical outlook and forward-thinking proclivity (Blight, 1989, 2009). Both the Popular Memory Group, as well as Gordon, Buhle, and Dye (1976) consider women and women’s movements to be precarious in terms of writing themselves into professional history, which produces an even larger role for popular memory through political action.

Following the above efforts, a composite of three media-centric case studies surrounding pro-life feminism today provide a nuanced illustration of the life, persistence, and future of the movement as of now. Each chapter will provide a deeper glimpse into the identities, communities, and memories that support and foster a continually challenged political position. This multitude of articulations, when read atop of the conjuncture of pro-life feminism, will ideally elucidate the "major turning points when interconnected forces at play at multiple levels and spatial scales [...] create new conditions with worldwide implications and reverberations" (Hart, 2020 p. 242). First, it will be useful to situate this analysis among extant scholarship on abortion rights, women and conservatism, and alternative historiographical accounts of the women's movement.

Literature Review

Abortion as a political topic has long been fraught with historical misconceptions and changing definitions in order to serve various political climates. Before the mid 19th century, abortion law in the U.S. revolved around the Quickening Doctrine, as doctors could not make certain a woman was pregnant until she confirmed that she felt the fetus move. As medicine as a practice became institutionalized with the establishment of the American Medical Association (AMA), physicians (spearheaded by Horatio Robinson Storer) forged a campaign to criminalize abortion spanning the second half of the nineteenth century.

Mohr (1979) argues that doctors in the AMA were more interested in criminalizing abortions because it would help to remove their midwife competitors, and that the prosecution of those outside of the medical profession (the AMA had also recently ousted homeopaths) would lend to a professionalization to the field of

medicine which was not yet privileged or elite. Additionally, he makes the argument that doctors, typically white, protestant, and upper class, would often "beat the old nativist drums on behalf of anti-abortion policies" (p. 167), frequently pointing out that immigrant Catholics were having far fewer abortions than the Protestant, "native-born" upper class. Finally, he points to numerous records implying that doctors in the mid-nineteenth century were wary of abortion's implications for women's social roles outside of the home.

In the early 1970s, a small number of pro-life physicians made claims that abortion produced more health problems for the mother than childbirth could. These claims were largely rooted in mental health arguments by psychiatrists, but the particulars of physical vs. mental concerns were obfuscated when pro-life activists took up the arguments for the promotion of their cause. Haugeberg's (2017) exhaustive examination of the contemporary pro-life movement in *Women Against Abortion: Inside the Largest Moral Reform Movement of the Twentieth Century* fact-checks these and other claims of pro-life groups and their publications to showcase the way in which marginal (and sometimes incorrect) opinions can become widely accepted truths.

This was the case in the 1980s when pro-life content writers began widely circulating anecdotes about "postabortion syndrome," where some women were said to express a sense of loss or grief after receiving an abortion. Regardless of the lack of scientific evidence and even the flat-out refutation of the claims by the AMA and APA, Haugeberg and others argue that the stories were so evocative that even pro-choice women had begun to fear the psychological impacts of abortion. These "regret narratives" became a core tenet in pro-life arguments, and notably brought concern

for the pregnant women back into the debate (p. 41). [3] This is evident in present-day pro-life movements, which have since then become predominantly female, where the notion of redemption through admission of guilt and suffering has become a central issue/focus.

Scholarship on Pro-life Feminism

The pro-life feminist history in particular has scarcely garnered scholarly interest, and only as of the last decade. Though not the earliest, the most widely cited piece is Laury Oaks's (2009) "What Are Pro-Life Feminists Doing on Campus?" In this article she traces the history of the Feminists for Life of America (FFL) in order to examine their relationship to college campuses both as a site for recruitment and as a regular gathering place for like-minded feminists. Oaks built her analysis on previous experience with the rhetorical history of pro-life feminism while studying the "pro-women, pro-life" (PWPL) movement based in Ireland (Oaks, 2000), which, unlike studies on the U.S.-based FFL, is a highly documented social movement due to its weightier social and political impact, as Ireland remains one of the strictest European countries when it comes to abortion rights. Pro-life feminism received some

[3] The longstanding critique of pro-lifeism as anti-woman can be traced back to the late 19th century and the AMA's stance on abortion: "[the Storer committee's report] seems to have thrown out of consideration the life of the mother, making that of the unborn child appear of far more consequence, even should the mother have a dozen dependent on her for their daily bread...the Committee will fail to convince the public that abortion in the early months is a crime, and a large proportion for the medical profession will tacitly support the popular view of the subject" (Mohr, 1952).

attention in the area of women's and gender studies in the mid 1990's (Jaggar, 1994; McClain, 1994), where the notion is evaluated more as a theoretical "blind-spot" in feminism than a movement in and of itself. Since Oaks's 2009 work raised pro-life feminist awareness in the academy, all studies on the topic have been located in the field of sociology, and more particularly within social movement (SMO) literature. Herein, pro-life feminism is approached as somewhat of an anomalous force to use as a case study for the development of sociological theories of the behavior of social movements. For instance, works like Rose (2011) and Trumpy (2014) both discuss the pro-life feminist movement in terms of their "issue frames," or how they outwardly represent their political goals, in order to better refine theoretical models on issue framing in SMO literature. Kretschmer (2014) works in a similar vein by reading pro-life feminism against extant theories on the morphology of social movement boundaries, but deserves special mention for her methodology. She draws close details on the history of the movement from organizational archives and the Tully-Crenshaw Feminist Oral History Project, but also performs interviews with early members of the FFL.

The following section addresses the areas of literature adjacent to the topic of pro-life feminism. Due to the scarcity of research on the movement or group itself, there are considerable gaps in the literature. The areas that build the boundaries within which pro-life feminism as a topic emerges include research on conservative and anti-feminist women, and categorizing historiographies of the feminist movement. The latter refers to texts that have been written over time to parse out dissents, sub-sects, and disruptions within the broader feminist cause. This project is a continuation of such a genre; but instead of thinking about defining histories of dissent and disagreement through lenses of race, class, or age, it thinks through the

possibility of a pro-life feminism as equally revealing of feminism's discursive boundaries.

Conservative Women in the United States

While there is relatively little scholarly work focused on pro-life feminists in particular, the growing field of conservatism studies has etched out a place for work on conservative women and history. This field is perhaps nearest in scope to the interests of this project — where conservative culture and philosophies are analyzed in the tradition of the humanities and occasionally the social sciences. As we shall see, literature in and around conservative women often falls within the purview of nationalism, publics, and their respective private spheres. Even when it passed in 1972, many women opposed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) (Blee and Deutsch, 2012). Their justifications for opposing the ERA changed over the half century struggle to enact it, but more often than not, their fear of the ERA tied back to the idealized American homestead. Since the passing of the ERA and Roe v. Wade, conservative women's movements have become synonymous with pro-life politics. Though some have sought reforms for the ERA, the majority of conservative feminist politics now centers on Christianity and its prescriptive relationship with women's health and welfare. This section focuses on the philosophical foundations of conservative women's groups earlier in the century, as well as the era of conservative women's movements following the passing of the ERA.

As Kathleen Blee and Sandra McGee Deutsch note in their collected volume on conservative women, *Women on the Right* (2012), interest in women's role in conservative politics was scarce until the 1970's. In organizing the work on conservative women, two major analytical frameworks repeatedly arise. These

frameworks, referred to here as “Woman As Nation” and “Public v. Private,” are highly useful analytics for thinking through complex sociological moments in which women play crucial symbolic and material roles in matters of nationalism, identity, and politics. In Feminist political philosophy, the public/private discussion is integral to the conversation on women’s roles and their effect on the political realm, and in many disciplines, the “Woman As Nation” framework contributes a gravity and universality to women’s roles in various nationalistic contexts.

“Woman as Nation” refers to literature which aims to find nationalist or interventionist justification for the regulation of women and their bodies in a given social context. In this formulation, women become a floating signifier for not only nationhood, but purity, freedom, morality, liberty, and a nation’s core values. On top of that, mothering, heteronormativity, and familial values (all of which “produce” the nation) are pragmatically targeted under this framework. The “Woman as Nation” construct is therefore used by nationalists (intra-state groups) as a domain to protect and defend, while interventionists (extra-state powers) target women in campaigns for intervention. For instance, Patrizia Albanese (2006) compares different historical and contemporary European states and their resistance to or regulation of mothering practices: In post-Soviet Russia, progressive liberal policies were rolled back to emphasize the role of the woman in the home and not in the workplace — which would hypothetically lead to lower male unemployment and child delinquency, as well as a higher birth rate in the reforming state. Conversely, in contemporary Italy, the population’s aversion to fascist domestic intervention has contributed to lower national birth rates.

In the public/private framework, women’s roles, or lack thereof, in history are framed by their oppressive relegation to the private, domestic sphere — therein

banning them from public, political, activities. For instance, historian Afsenah Najmabadi (1998) writes on Iranian modernity and the imperative of educating women, to the degree of mastering household finances, which doubly confined women to domesticity (the private) while implementing a caste separation between housewives and servants. Similarly, Middle-Eastern studies scholar Lisa Pollard (2005) writes on colonial Egypt and the focus on Egyptian domesticity as reactionary to Victorian ideology, while still forcing women into the interior. Ruth Schwartz Cowan (1983) parses the role of technology and capitalism in containing the woman in the home within a realm of unpaid, undocumented labor under the guise of progress and innovation in technology at the outset and progression of US industrialization. Mary Poovey (1988) also contemplates the institutionalized division of genders as they shift in different social and economic contexts, highlighting the arbitrary nature of the distinction in spite of its proliferation throughout history. By tracing the contours of shifting gender definitions in mid-Victorian England, she repeatedly points to "border cases" that disrupt straightforward conceptions about gender and domestic life in the middle class.

Feminist scholars have also analyzed moments when the public/private distinction was blurred. This can occur in a multitude of ways. In the literature on conservative feminism, the typical invocation is the use of private subjects in public discourse. For example, Kate Hallgren's "Maternalism Goes to War" looks at conservative women at the beginning of the 20th century who promoted conscription for their sons by making public their strong relationship with them — a relationship that had been kept private and unpublicized (2012). In Amy Swerdlow's *Women Strike for Peace* (1993), the same maternal gravitas is employed to protest the Cold War and its perpetrators when tens of thousands of middle-class mothers went on

strike across the country, effectively circumventing red scare tactics to silence anti-war sentiment. Conversely, conservative women have historically participated in public discourse on the defense of private matters — in the US (as well as globally) this traditionally comes up in matters of state involvement with mothering. Long before Nixon quashed a comprehensive childcare act for the same reason, nationalist women like the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) argued against state welfare for its likeness to socialist regimes, and its potential to break up the traditional family structure by loosening women's dependence on their husbands (Delegard, K. 2012).

Often, these analytics are applied together in a recursive move that reifies both frameworks. For instance, Partha Chatterjee (1993) famously complicates the reactionist characterization of feminizing the private sphere by detailing the Bengali response to Western modernity by protecting the spiritual advantage of the East within the chaste internal sphere separate from the public and political world that men inhabited. In his and many other depictions, the justification for relegating women to the private sphere is to protect the inner-most ingrained aspects of national identity — that of the family, and of mothering. In effect, the strength of either of these thought projects is reliant on the other: "Woman as Nation" embodies national identity, spirituality, morality, and any number of other signs needed in various nationalist contexts, while the public/private division confines all of these important values to be protected in the home. These two ideas in concert underline the unique relevance of a group like the pro-life feminists, who in many ways subscribe to "woman as nation" rhetoric in the form of morality and maternalism, but persistently function in between the public and private domains. A further discussion on the implications of the public/private debate will be detailed later in this introduction.

Histories of the Feminist Movement

As with many moments in community and social movement formation, infighting and dissent are inherent to the process and play a key role in the identity formation of the dominant side's narrative. The case of the feminist movement is no different, if somewhat less publicized than say, the American Revolution. Echoing the opening to Ruth Rosen's (2000) influential *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*: "Bursts of artillery fire, mass strikes, massacred protesters, bomb explosions — these are our images of revolution. But some revolutions are harder to recognize: no cataclysms mark their beginnings or ends, no casualties are left lying in pools of blood" (p. xi), we see that historical accounts of the women's movement are not numerous in many bookstores. Then it should be no surprise that the history of dissent within the women's movement is even less visible. In the following pages, I will review work that details dissent, infighting, or simply historical incongruence within the women's liberation movement. This exercise will ideally aid in pinpointing philosophical divergences which may be analogous to or illuminating of the pro-life feminists splintering from the mainstream feminist movement. I do so with conscious concern of developing false equivalences between various overlapping groups of women, thereby categorizing experiences that obfuscate the intersectional historical contexts complicated by myriad experiences of women of different ages, races, and social classes.

A number of historiographic accounts have been published in the last decade in response to the slowed momentum of the women's movement and its gradual migration into the academy. Often these accounts look to clear binary issues that split the movement: particularly age and race. These accounts differ from the thorough

depictions of the evolution of the movement from mainstream perspectives (e.g., Rosen, 2000; Echols, 1989; Davis, 1999; Brownmiller, 2000; Woods, 2000), in that they aim to argue an alternative causality for the movement's current formulation. In reviewing this literature, it seems that there are two to three major frames or lenses employed to narrativize the history of the feminist movement: (1) the "waves" or eras of feminist politics where, like a paradigmatic shift, any given epoch inherently conflicts with the one that precedes or follows it. In this conceptualization, the lack of coherence is viewed as a failure of sorts, where the force or momentum driving a monolithic (albeit broad) movement is slowed and depreciated due to infighting. It is in this range of critiques that blame consumerism's feminist appropriations for the movement's decline; (2) generational gaps as culturally incommensurable: this framework could be mistaken for or embedded within the previous one, but differs slightly in that scholars look to the anesthetizing power of progress to dull young women to the importance of feminist work. In this framework, the assumption is that the women's movement slows or risks obsolescence if the contemporary instantiation does not read the previous generation's work as a prescription or justification for moving forward.

The final (3) historiographic frame, which is perhaps most related to this project's goal, and most relevant in politics and feminist movements today, is the exclusion and exploitation of lower-class women and women of color in the goals, scope, and historical narratives of mainstream feminist histories. The frameworks employed in this task are vast and varied, as they attempt to account for all racialized groups (read: non-white) throughout the entirety of the feminist movement. This project risks furthering that marginalization by relegating these histories to only one section in this review, when the breadth of literature in this area is immense. Keeping

this in mind, the following review aims to paint broad strokes of each "category" in an attempt to position this study on the philosophical divide in mainstream feminist politics on the issue of abortion.

In the early 1970's, writing women's history faced similar limitations in the scope of analysis as it pertains to groups outside of the popular narrative; according to Gordon, Buhle, and Dye (1976), women's history to that point was limited to three major frames. The most prominent and problematic frame in the eyes of the authors was the tendency for historians to focus on feminist organizations as the main site of record: "although the abundance of source material on the women's rights movement helps explain why historians have devoted so much attention to it, this fact alone does not fully explain why scholars have paid so little attention to women who were not involved in organized feminism" (p. 76). They critiqued historians' widespread focus on politically organized women's groups as limiting the writing of women into history "only when women are behaving in ways usually regarded as masculine — that is, politically and collectively," and argued that the obsession with social movements buys into a prescribed teleology about American progressivism. Since then, women's and feminist histories have bloomed into a major field of study in the academic realm — addressing not only organizational feminist movements, but the ruptures and constraints therein.

Many histories recording the women's liberation movement trace the same series of events but make claims to different outcomes. As noted above, the extant histories of the pro-life feminist movement might fall into such a teleological conflict. Christine Stansell's *The Feminist Promise* (2011) reads the women's movement since 1792 through a liberal feminist lens, where the institutional and legislative headway of the second wave are considered largely successful progressions in women's

history. However, Hester Eisenstein's *Feminism Seduced* (2015), makes the often-invoked neoliberal critique on second wave feminism's sacrifice to consumer capitalism. In her book she aims to pinpoint the moment at which the women's movement "got it wrong," by tracing its evolution through globalized trade and labor practices. Perhaps nearest to this project, Ellen Messer-Davidow (2002) traces the effectual split in the women's movement from the street to the university. By breaking down various intellectual iterations of feminist studies, *Disciplining Feminism* traces the sterilization of the feminist movement within the academy as it moved from radical activism to moderate institutionalism. This undergirds the idea that feminism, as a mainstream endeavor, had moved into the university following the passing of Roe v. Wade in 1973. Messer-Davidow expands on this notion and in doing so concludes that both sides of the split suffered for this departure. In her words, feminism became "disciplined" in the academy through institutionalization, confining feminist work to canonical boundaries within the comfort zone of students and administration alike.

Alternatively, Deborah Siegel and Jennifer Baumgardner's *Sisterhood, Interrupted: From Radical Women to Girls Gone Wild* (2007) seeks to locate the rift between the liberal feminist "mothers" and their ostensibly post-feminist daughters, only to find the construct to be an echo of infighting from the second wave. Their work can be considered a further response to texts like Stansell's, where their critique of generational polemics aims to dismantle the narratological history of feminism and replace it with a phenomenological conflict. Lynn Spigel (1995) applies this presumed generational disconnect to an interrogation on 50's television sitcoms and popular memory of and around young women and perceptions of feminism.

By studying her female women's studies undergraduate classes, Spigel muses on the

use of popular memory, here in the form of curated syndicated sitcoms, to interrogate the contemporary disdain for the feminist movement in younger generations.

Where ages or waves split the paths of the women's movement for some, perhaps the most glaring and presently relevant division is that of race and the whiteness of liberal feminism's written history. Breines's (2006) *The trouble between us: An uneasy history of white and black women in the feminist movement* is one of many critiques by feminists of color that takes on the most prominent critique of the women's movement today, notating each step along women's liberation that opportunities for equity were sidestepped under the guise of political expediency (Ware, 1970; La Rue, 1970; Caraway, 1991; Joseph & Lewis, 1981). hooks's *Aint I a Woman* (1981), and later *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (2000), precedes Breines's work with a more explicit critique on the feminist movement and its avoidance of women of color. She skillfully argues that white feminists have always excluded black women, often due to stereotyping that carried over from the era of slavery. While hooks's work is not necessarily of the same format as the other histories listed above, it presciently addressed concerns and critiques that would later become fodder for the work in the scope of this project. Additionally, her project as well as this one was to write recent history — the complexities of which are detailed above in Methodology. Finally, collections like Hewitt's *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of US Feminism* address race, class, and sexual and gender normativity from a variety of subaltern perspectives, primarily from the black, indigenous, and people of color communities.

The aim of these various historiographies is to write a "thicker history" of an already well-documented movement. They tend to work (not uncritically) within a teleological framework that highlights successes and failures, but do not always

produce a conclusive narrative of the latter. The impetus to write the "where we went wrong" story often underlines the critiques of anti-feminists, or in this case, pro-life feminists. That is, those writing historical accounts of the feminist movement are often doing so from a critical standpoint, and are therefore aiming to shine a light on flaws in the movement. Similar to the third category of historical work listed above, this project looks to read a timeline that has coexisted with mainstream feminist iterations of the movement's history. This is not to compare the participation of pro-life feminists to historical contributions by and the exploitation of women of color in the women's liberation movement, but to analytically compare the persistent presence of a part of the larger feminist whole as opposed to the first category, where the same homogenous group is divided by political subtleties.

Background [4]

[4] The following section is a narratological review of histories written about the pro-life movement's emergence and life in U.S. society and politics. It is a compilation of secondary materials, interviews with founders of pro-life feminist organizations, and archival research from the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America. The library, housed by Harvard University, contains one of the U.S.'s largest collection of articles of women's history and in a way validates the pro-life feminist movement as a relevant topic in history. Even though the inclusion of primarily the Feminists for Life is located within the pro-life movement's finding aids, its archival presence alongside NOW and major historical pro-life groups like The National Right to Life Committee confirms a rhetorical space for a crossover identity like pro-life

Origin of Pro-life Progressives

Until very recently, two versions of the history of the pro-life feminist movement existed: the scant reference to it as a fringe pockmark on the broader history of contemporary US feminism, and that described by self-identifying pro-life feminists. Little mainstream or scholarly attention was paid to non-extremist anti-abortion groups. In 2016, Daniel K. Williams published an exhaustive study of all-that-was pro-life preceding the case of Roe v. Wade. According to him, nearly all histories anachronistically written about the abortion debate place the emergence of pro-life politics around the 1972 court case. He argues instead that progressive pro-life politics began in the 1930s during the New Deal, when Catholic Democrats in North America were finding their institutional footing. Because of their basis in American liberalism, these Catholics looked at the right-to-life as one of the inalienable rights afforded by the U.S. Constitution. Much like the pro-life feminist rhetoric of today, the early U.S. Catholics considered abortion to be an exit strategy for mothers who were forced to choose between poverty and motherhood, and that the otherwise far-reaching welfare state of the New Deal stopped short when it came to mothering.

Williams builds the argument that the near century-long persistence of pro-life politics over all other conservative political efforts (prohibition, school prayer, etc.) is its diverse, bi-partisan base, rooted in liberal, Constitutional rights. He traces the ups and downs of the various angles Catholics argued from, and the corresponding

feminism. This section, then, is a winding history of how that liminal space was created and later pushed to the margins as an inexplicable entity.

abortion-rights critiques. For example, economic drain in the 1960s by state welfare programs led both liberal and middle-class conservative voters to approve of abortion liberalization in order to cull the dependent lower-class. In a backlash to the Civil Rights movement, these voters (incorrectly) often stereotyped welfare recipients as black single mothers having children as a means to earn government support checks—a strategy employed to this day to exacerbate racial divides in attempt to strengthen a middle class defined by structures of white supremacy. Conversely, in the 1970s when psychoanalysis reigned supreme, abortion-rights activists, particularly the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL) (inaccurately) claimed that unwanted children were more likely to be abused and grow up to become a danger to society (113). In the face of pragmatic pro-abortion arguments and the ease with which politicians on both sides of the aisle were willing to accept such arguments, pro-lifers would make humanist appeals, warning against the social engineering approach to population control: "If you start talking and thinking about a child as a 'wanted child' you cannot help but put the idea into people's heads that children exist and have a right to exist only because someone *wants* them. And, alas, the opposite conclusion is there waiting for us; if it's an 'unwanted child' it has no rights." "After comparing the 'unwanted child' to the 'unwanted' black, 'unwanted' Jew, or 'unwanted' woman, she concluded, 'The powerful (including parents) cannot be allowed to want and unwant people at will" (Callahan, 1971 in Williams, 2016).

Catholic pro-life activism thrived after World War II, and took the shape of general anti-violence campaigns which concomitantly protested the war and nuclear proliferation. Haugeberg (2017) traces the radicalization of Juli Loesch, a founder of the 2,500 member "Prolifers for Survival," who had been a social justice worker from a young age and began her pro-life bent after college. Loesch dropped out of the

historically radical Antioch College for not being politically active enough, and instead worked with farm labor activists in California, becoming a close family friend of the Chavez's. Therefore, the direct-action approach that Catholic women were taking, like chaining themselves to medical equipment in abortion clinics, appealed to Loesch. Haugeberg adeptly follows Loesch's story to examine how extremist groups like Operation Rescue came to be — these Catholic activists were veterans of the Civil Rights movement and were able to teach direct action techniques of protest to a growing body of Protestant pro-life activists. To many of these self-proclaimed feminist Catholics, protesting abortion was part and parcel to social justice activism; as Williams points out, for Catholic Democrats, abortion was an issue of civil and constitutional rights. The Protestant counterpart to this story believed abortion to be an act of pure evil, and approached the activist work from a much more moralistic standpoint. Loesch's move from ambivalently pro-choice labor activist to communications director for the evangelical Operation Rescue, illustrates the complexity of collective action when it concerns politically amorphous issues like abortion.

The progressive and feminist pro-life movements were very much developed in the context of the post-civil rights moment. Accounts claim that the Loesch's Prolifers for Survival was born of a hurried phone call with organizers of the 1980 civil and eco-rights movement "Mobilization for Survival" (MfS), as Loesche was unprepared when prompted for an organizational affiliation: "So Juli hung up, cooled down a few degrees, and then thought, 'Oh, Lord. Now I've got to organize a group'" (Crossed, 2015). The MfS was established in order to: "abolish nuclear weapons and power; stop military intervention; reverse the arms race; meet human needs." It served as an organizing body for a number of grassroots peace movements and faced major

internal conflict with the petition from Prolifers for Survival to join. A number of other peace movement groups reportedly protested and threatened to withdraw from the coalition if anti-abortion groups were brought onboard. Though Loesche ultimately withdrew the petition, Prolifers for Survival lived on as one of the earliest organizational bridges between the pro-life and peace movements.

It was in the Prolifers for Survival that Loesch met Rachel MacNair, who soon after went on to become an influential president for the Feminists for Life of America (FFL). MacNair, a vegan Quaker who has spent over 4 decades working in various peace and pro-life movements, brought a basic level of organizational logic to the FFL at the time of her 10 year tenure. In an interview she recalls the meager beginnings of the organization after she was thrust into a leadership position:

> when I became president it was a pretty rag-tag group. I was handed a set of members. We had fewer than a thousand, members, and I was handed them on index cards. So one of my first tasks was to get them all set up on a computer list. So we could properly get…and then you know, getting a newsletter out quarterly, and um, you know just, putting reply envelopes into the newsletter with a little pitch for funding, and I mean…some of the most basic, basic things!

She had been otherwise unfamiliar with the work of the FFL before her involvement with Loesche at the National Right to Life Rally of 1984. It was her commitment to peace movements and her experience with activism that instead drew the FFL to her.

Both Loesche and MacNair hail from long backgrounds of activism in the peace movements, eventually being drawn to progressive pro-life movements under the rubric of the "Consistent Life Ethic," a pacifist approach to political activism that opposes killing of any kind (including that of the unborn fetus or the elderly in the

form of euthanasia) and is often aligned with nuclear disarmament and anti-war movements. While the two women eventually diverged politically in the pro-life battle — Loesche moving to the more conservative and radical Operation Rescue, and MacNair continuing consistent life ethic work in both peace and pro-life arenas — both influential figures in the pro-life movement developed within and later drew from their earlier work in the peace movement culture of the 1970s. Loesche's transition to more radical means of pro-life protest reflects a broader shift in social arrangements surrounding abortion rights, feminism, and politics in general. Where pro-life advocates were once otherwise politically progressive, at least in traditional understandings of the term, evolving gender norms and new political alliances would ultimately force the position into a bipartisan platform issue that would never reverse course.

Pro-Life Moves Right (and stays there)

There exist a range of theories as to when and how the pro-life movement moved to the right. Williams (ibid.) traces the struggles the movement began to face in the early and mid 1960s when the topic of abortion and abortion politics broke through to the surface of acceptable public discourse. He frames abortion policy in the 1960s as a religious conflict between the right and left, respectively between protestants and Catholics. At this point, the majority of Catholics are Democrats, and most politicians on both sides of the aisle would have been considered to be "pro-choice." Many issues factored into abortion rights finding favor in both the public and political spheres. The affinity for social planning of the 1960's made abortion an attractive solution for a surge in non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants (p. 63). Politicians throughout the US began to move toward liberalization following a 1965 investigative

special on illegal abortions by the most trusted man in America, Walter Cronkite, who spoke out against abortion regulations' role in pandemic illegal abortion practices. Since 1959, "therapeutic abortions," or abortions in the case of rape, incest, or harm to the mother, were legal in most states, and by 1967 this notion of "harm" extended to psychiatric measures as well. With medical professionals and politicians alike supporting the liberalization of abortion rights, the aforementioned progressive pro-life movement had little sway and influence, even the National Right to Life Committee was $25,000 in debt by 1978 (Ziegler, 2013).

Conservative Women Draw Divide

As abortion rights expanded into the early 1970's, and *Roe v. Wade* was at the cusp of being decided, feminist groups sought to ride the momentum and reanimate the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The general political support for the ERA spurred the organization of a number of new grassroots anti-feminist groups. Spearheaded by Phyllis Schlafly, a well-known conservative politico and activist, groups like STOP ERA and the Eagle Forum turned women and men against the women's movement by arguing that specific measures of the ERA would dismantle the family structure, and remove women from their rightful place in the home with the protections and dependencies that entails. In a heightened effort to turn voters against the ERA, pamphlets began to promote the idea that "abortion-on-demand" was inextricable to the ERA and the platforms of its feminist supporters. Beyond that, Schlafly and other anti-ERA groups worked to appeal to women and argue that the women's movement was intolerant of any woman with pro-life leanings, fostering a sense of alienation for pro-life feminists at the time, and helping to draw a permanent line between the women of the US based on a single-issue policy. The pro-choice

rhetoric framing the ERA and abortion politics evolved as well, beginning as an accusation of a religious minority pushing a dogmatic agenda on the rest of the country. By 1975, both NOW and NARAL had codified anti-abortionism as decidedly anti-feminist, and therefore backwards or misogynist (ibid). In addition to the divide driven by abortion politics, conservative women throughout the country grew to resent the notion that their lifestyles were being scrutinized as backward, and feared their status within the home and society was under threat of extinction. They moved to work against "women's lib" under the flag of "pro-family" intentions.

This was a major strike in the dissolution of pro-life feminism and set the political stage for abortion politics to become a mostly partisan issue. While the more progressive pro-life groups struggled to find a place in this widening divide, a burgeoning conservative movement was simultaneously devising a strategy to reshape the republican party to look more like the one we know today. In 1976, less than 40% of Republicans were anti-abortion, as the Protestant-majority party favored family planning and personal freedoms (Williams, 2015). It had been decades since a Republican-majority, and conservative members of the GOP were posturing to overhaul the party to give the most conservative members the loudest voice.

The Religious Right

At the same time, a massive new voting block had been growing in the Southern and Western parts of the country (the "Sunbelt") following a combination of white backlash to the civil rights movements and increased affluence in those communities, enabling a migration from cities to suburbs and spurring resentment toward the Democratic party's focus on urban-centered social welfare and civil rights programs (McKeegan, 1992). Political strategists and wealthy conservatives seized

the opportunity to turn the Republican party toward social issues that spoke to the rising evangelical population, such as prayer in school or abortion. Two such conservatives who are often mentioned by name are Paul Weyrich, savvy politico and co-founder of the Heritage Foundation, and Richard Viguerie, a computer-mailing mogul. These two, along with a few other key figures, are said to have founded the "New Right," with Weyrich's connections and political know-how combined with Viguerie's financial backing and direct-mailing expertise, the two created a political machine credited with resuscitating the Republican party (Critchelow, 2005).[5]

Finally, the evangelical movement contemporaneously blossomed in the newly populous US South and West, producing the new "Religious Right" which worked in sync with New Right politicians to push for a hyper-conservative Republican agenda. Mason (2002) posits that this New Right spiritualism was born of the "New War" zeitgeist that followed the failures of the Vietnam War. This mindset assumes that a "self-imposed restraint" of American soldiers led to their defeat, spurring a Barry Goldwater-fueled push for a "new warrior" — one unconfined in the face of ideological and spiritual beliefs:

> New War culture is thus a 'cult of the warrior' that tries to make extremism reasonable and bring it into the mainstream. Manifestations of New War culture include conspiracy-minded militia groups

[5] The New Right's direct-mail techniques were infamous for utilizing the US Postal Service to reach millions of "rank-and-file" conservatives for individual donations amassing millions to bankroll the party. "Because politicians are heavily dependent on the mail for a sense of their constituents' views, the right's capacity to generate mail helped it wield an influence disproportionate to its real numbers" (McKeegan, 1992 p. 5)

> organized to oppose the New World Order; macho pulp stories, [...] men's movement events such as the rallies of the Promise Keepers; and televised paramilitary games such as Combat Missions and Boot Camp. (p. 11)

In *Killing for Life: The Apocalyptic Narrative of Pro-Life Politics*, Mason makes the argument that the evangelical (and subsequently violent) turn of pro-life politics is part and parcel of this rightist push for the "remasculinization" of America, producing the extremist abortion warriors who ostensibly stop at nothing to fight for their cause. While a boon to the Republican voting bloc, this turn struck another blow to the pro-life feminist movement. Much like Julie Loesch's move to extremist group Operation Rescue, pro-life feminists at this time were couched in the politics and tactics of the peace movement.

This philosophical evolution in the GOP subsequently shifted the abortion question from the liberalist Catholic-Democrat position defined earlier as the "right-to-life" approach to a stricter more "genuine" conservatism than organizations like the National Right to Life Committee were presently pursuing. Mason posits that the conservative evangelical New Right reframed debates over social issues within the dogma of divine right, meaning that the driving philosophical force behind the movement was rooted in assumptions about divine "laws of nature." In this framework, hyper-evangelical apocalypticism overrides the liberal subject, and egalitarianism is considered merely a social construct. Protection of the unborn is no longer a right to selfhood guaranteed by the constitution, but a battle between the forces of good and evil, where "every life is providential because it plays a unique role in the Great Plan of the almighty" (p. 18).

Other theories insist that the NRLC's right-to-life philosophy played a larger role in the evangelical turn of the Republican platform. Lewis (2017) adeptly argues that rights-based politics spread to the right through a series of political moves surrounding the issue of abortion. Prior to the late 1970s, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the largest contingent of the umbrella group of the Baptist Joint Committee, favored the limited abortion rights approach, and publicly supported Roe v. Wade, particularly for its clarity on supporting the separation of church and state. This centrism continued into the late 70s until a conservative coup similar to that of the GOP fought for and won leadership of the SBC, arguing instead for "government accommodation" of religious liberties.

The ensuing split from the Baptist Joint Committee coincided with an uncharacteristic alliance with Northern evangelicals and Catholics - the latter being a longtime opponent to Southern Baptists on social and cultural issues. Prior to the conservative move, Southern Baptist groups widely supported the Establishment clause of the First Amendment, fearing a Catholic hold on the federal government. After the conservative takeover, emphasis in the Baptist platform shifted to the Free Exercise Clause, which framed First Amendment rights to protecting and accommodating religious practices (ibid). Lewis argues that the rights-based logic of the Catholic church combined with the growing push for religious liberty over the separation of church and state of the SBC meant for a rights-focused argument against abortion seated within the framework of religious freedom: "these two rights based streams — right to life (abortion) and religious liberty — have formed the basis for conservatives to learn about individual rights and claim them" (5).

The pro-life movement's migration to conservative politics has an evidentially complicated origin story. To summarize, some of the factors include: (1) the

reemergence of the ERA and the consequential anti-feminist women's political uprising; (2) the population boom of the sunbelt and subsequent split of the Baptist Joint Committee; (3) a post-Vietnam apocalyptic identity crisis; and (4) the ultra-conservative shift of the Republican party to the "New Right," along with its efficacious direct-mail technology. This series of events is just one element in the alienation of progressive pro-lifers trapped between the bipartisan political system of the U.S.

Pro-Choice & Pro-Life Working together

While pro-choice and pro-life feminist groups maintained different fundamental reasons for pursuing specific legislation around women's rights, the improvement of the condition of women's lives remained a steadfast goal on both sides of the abortion issue. For pro-life progressives, civil rights advancements for women and mothers were a necessary battle in the war against abortion. The similarities between the two sides stopped at issues of abortion, and the divide subsequently widened during the culture wars of the sexual revolution. It was at this point that the Feminists for Life of America (FFL) came to be.

Before partisan lines were so sharply drawn between progressives on either side of the abortion debate, a number of pro-life organizations worked with and for ostensibly feminist causes. In Ziegler's (2013) work on the pro-life movement, she traces pre- and post- *Roe* stances of pro-life political groups. For example, the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) advocated for the destigmatization of unwed mothers, and the removal of the illegitimacy notation on birth certificates. In August, 1974 the American Citizens Concerned for Life (ACCL) diverged from the NRLC to work across the political divide with pro-choice groups on issues of sexual

discrimination and procuring government-funded contraception. This group sought to appeal to both sides of the abortion debate to reach common ends that would, in their minds, eventually reduce or ideally make abortion unnecessary.

Most of the ACCL's short-lived work in D.C. focused particularly on welfare services for young and unwed mothers. They later joined the collective of women's groups, Coalition to End Discrimination Against Pregnant Workers (CEDAPW), headed by (future Justice) Ruth Bader Ginsburg and ACLU Women's rights attorney Susan Deller Ross. The progressive feminist coalition joined NOW, the ACLU, and ACCL, among others, to push for the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) as backlash from the Supreme Court's 1976 overturn of *Gilbert v. General Electric* (Pedriana 2009; Weldon, 2011). The case overturned a decision by district courts which claimed that G.E.'s policy not to cover disability in the case of pregnancy violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The Supreme Court decided that the language in the policy did not constitute sexual discrimination. CEDAPW's diverse coalition developed bipartisan support for the PDA following the court's decision, and the act moved easily through congress in 1978.

Decades later, pro-life feminists joined pro-choice groups to push through the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The act was introduced in 1984 by the Women's Legal Defense Fund and was vetoed repeatedly until Clinton's administration in 1993. FMLA ensures 12 weeks of (unpaid) workplace security in the case of major illness in the family or the birth or adoption of a child, and it wasn't until a Democratic majority in the Senate that it could be pushed through. The Feminists for Life of America (FFL) joined many pro-choice organizations along with pro-life representatives to pass the act. Both Democrat Lindy Boggs and Republican Henry Hyde appealed to pro-life members of congress to support the FMLA on the

basis of its potential to lower abortion rates. When I interviewed Rachel MacNair, then president of the FFL, she fondly remembered an interaction with Boggs at a political rally on the issue of support for the FMLA: "I went up to her and I said '[Representative] Patricia Schroeder says that you're an IF vote on…a MAYBE vote on Family and Medical Leave…' and she says 'oh for heaven's sake I would no more vote against that than a black person would vote against civil rights legislation, that's just ridiculous'."

These stories illustrate the complicated space that pro-life feminists have long occupied, particularly in regard to matters of the state. While the pro-life feminist movement of the past was regularly recorded trying to participate in and influence feminist calls to action, the pro-life feminists of today are either explicitly excluded from such calls, as was the case in the 2017 Women's March, or choose to work inward on projects deemed sufficiently pro-life and sufficiently feminist, such as the Guiding Star project which aims to unseat Planned Parenthood by providing accessible women's healthcare sans abortion procedures.

Chapter Summaries

This collection of case studies constitutes a multi-pronged approach to understanding the role of pro-life feminism in the broader women's movement, mechanisms by which the public remembers the women's movement, and the pro-life feminists' current and future group identities. Each chapter utilizes a unique methodology and theoretical foregrounding. This is not necessarily a strategic choice, but an organic evolution of each topic's different heuristic needs. Chapter One, for instance, began as a textual analysis looking to compare the media coverage of the International Women's Year Conference in 1977 to the Women's March on

Washington of 2017. As data were collected, it became clear that the important questions about these events would not be answered in this way. Instead, the chapter uses the former event as an ideological precedent to the latter, where the media coverage of the Women's March, according to this discourse analysis, elucidates the identarian boundaries drawn then, and in early events of the women's movement like the IWY Conference. The findings indicate that, like in the IWY Conference, the notion of pro-life feminism is incompatible with the discursive sphere of contemporary (and past) feminism. Consequently, the debate of hypotheticals around feminism and abortion politics takes place in the conservative arena, often perpetuating misinformation and becoming fodder for 'whataboutism.'

Chapter Two of this dissertation asks how and why feminism is collectively and popularly remembered as a strictly pro-choice identity, echoing the conclusions of the previous chapter. To this end, I examine the pro-life feminists' controversial claim to many of the feminist foremothers, where early popular figures associated with women's suffrage presumed to be pro-life based on various readings of speeches and writings produced by them. In particular, I ask why and how Susan B. Anthony, for whom the pro-life feminists have one of the weakest arguments for pro-life leanings, is most frequently invoked in this argument. I describe the origins of the Susan B. Anthony List, a prominent pro-life political lobbying group, brought about by fellow Quaker, Rachel MacNair. In tracing this history, it became clear that the historical use of *commemoration*, defined in more detail in Chapter Two, and more specifically the memorialization of Anthony through institutions like the SBA List and the pro-life Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum, sustained Anthony as pro-life in the legacy of pro-life feminism for members of that group. Indeed, the actualization of Anthony as a pro-life heroine, through various institutions, contributes a strong

sense of historical justification for the pro-life feminist identity as a more *authentic* brand of feminism (Oaks, 2009).

Chapter Three then asks how today's community of pro-life feminists maintain and evolve that group identity, particularly through their use of digital technology. I ask this question under an assumption that the persistence of a paradoxical identity group like the pro-life feminists is due not only to a manipulation of popular memory, but to a sense of community where otherwise controversial ideas and norms are confirmed by one another in a discursive sphere facilitated by digital safe spaces. This chapter bridges research on digital communities, online safe spaces, and networked counterpublics to determine the strength of various sites to facilitate this affirmation and cultivation of a group identity, and goes one step further to ask if those discursive spheres can constitute a networked counterpublic. The latter question particularly refers to each site's capacity for political influence on the broader public. I determine my results through an experimental methodology I call here "Cross Platform Critical Discourse Analysis" (CPCDA), which I developed specifically in order to read digital communities across multiple platforms (Facebook groups, websites, Twitter threads, etc.) in the same study. Results using CPCDA led to the conclusion that the three sites — The "New Wave Feminists" Facebook group, the "Feminists for Life of America" website, and a Twitter hashtag thread surrounding the aforementioned 2017 Women's March on Washington — do not individually provide strong frameworks for safe spaces or networked counterpublics (of the three, Facebook scored the highest). Instead, the collective use of all three sites by a community provided all of the necessary affordances for an online safe space and even a networked counterpublic.

Like the collective use of online sites of community, the following case studies attempt to provide a wide-reaching discursive account of pro-life feminism as an identity, movement, and concept. Individually, each chapter combats a particular aspect of that inquiry, providing in-depth analyses of the various mechanisms by which pro-life feminism evolved and persisted throughout a history that otherwise minimized the rhetorical likelihood of such an identity existing, let alone thriving. Together with this and the concluding chapter, the three chapters paint a complex picture of an identity group that occupies a liminal socio-political space: one with political influence that goes relatively unacknowledged by the political
world, and whose mere persistence provides discursive boundaries for both feminists and pro-lifers alike.

A note on language:

In utilizing the terminology of the "pro-life feminist movement" or the "mainstream," feminist movement, this project is participating in a similar act of inclusion and exclusion to that which is being analyzed. There are inherent epistemological concerns when homogenizing a diverse ideological group for the sake of economizing page counts. For that matter, much critique is levied against both the umbrella terms of *pro-life* and *pro-choice*. The rhetorical recursion of naming these groups obfuscates the main dividing issue of "abortion," while simultaneously producing group identities to be adopted or else. While the use of "life" to mean anti-abortion had been employed early on as an association to inalienable constitutional rights (Williams, 2016), the term was weaponized in Anti-abortion groups mobilized around the decision of Roe v. Wade to reactively introduce the Human Life Amendment, concretizing their claim to "life" as a notion. Abortion rights activists

from then on were able to frame their cause in moralistic terms: abortion rights = anti life. The term pro-choice was then hastily chosen in response, forever crystalizing the incommensurable frames of pro-life and pro-choice—two terms that are lexically incompatible, creating from the start a debate occurring in two different conversations (Greenhouse and Siegel, 2010). For that matter, the term "pro-choice" arguably ignores the limitations on classes of women for whom "choice" is not the major impediment, erasing all other gendered inequalities that contribute to reproductive health issues. Splinters of the pro-choice movement have therefore begun to espouse the term "reproductive justice" to account for the intersectional lives of particularly women of color in the pro-choice constituency (Smith, 2005).

With all this in mind, this project aims to ascribe names that groups or individuals would themselves employ broadly: "Pro-life feminists" in this regard are those people and groups who seek social justice and progress for women and retain an anti-abortion stance as a core political and philosophical tenet. Though pro-life in name, backers of anti-abortion measures hold strong feminist beliefs about both women's reproductive health, as well as on issues of welfare and education. For this reason, I will be referring to this movement as "pro-life feminism" from here out, and with it implying the compound political subtleties therein. Within the timeline in question (Roe v. Wade onward), "mainstream feminism" refers to the people and groups which fight for women's equality and justice, including liberal freedoms through legislative and institutional means — a major platform of which is the right to abortion on demand. This broadly paints a diverse group with one brush, but conceptually refers to those people and groups at the forefront of institutional policies of leading feminist groups such as NOW, and the constituencies that support them.

While this notion might invoke the term "liberal feminism,"[6] in reference to a rights-based political philosophy often maligned in contemporary discourse surrounding intersectional and black feminist thought, the zeitgeist I am attempting to portray reaches more broadly. Similarly, "popular feminism" might seem an equally appropriate classification, as Banet-Weiser defines it, existing in and through discourse in popular culture (2018). While her delineation of popular feminism involves the assumption that struggles over power and meaning occur therein, it does not necessarily include the mechanisms of the state and constitutional democracy as one of its major actors.

I employ the term "mainstream feminism" then to enfold definitions of liberal and popular feminism into a broader arena where the participants, thought leaders, and cultural productions interplay with constitutional and juridical power structures. With this designation, I am collapsing a number of complex political intersections in the women's and feminist movement. For instance, the "women's movement," "women's lib," and "feminist movement" are arguably discrete non-contemporaneous social movements, replete with intellectualizations, institutionalizations, popular recognition, etc. For the sake of expedience, I will generally refer to these collective movements as the "feminist project," even

6 Gilbert and Sewpaul succinctly describe the problems with as well as inclination to use the term and argue that since rights-based feminist ideals often get mapped onto anachronistic contexts, "women are not seen in the context of their social milieu, and how they affect, and are affected by those around them when making the abortion decision" (2024, p. 89)

though the term “feminist” and its contemporary implications were not heavily used in the first and early second waves.

II: CHAPTER ONE: PRO-LIFE PUSSYHATS? MEDIA PERCEPTION AND THE BOUNDARIES OF FEMINIST DISSENT IN THE 2017 WOMEN'S MARCH ON WASHINGTON

A complicated history of interdependent forces has led to the division of women into camps of feminist and anti-feminist, and later "pro-choice" and "pro-life." The association of pro-life or pro-choice politics naturally aligning with the right or the left is on closer examination, a historical construct produced through a constellation of rhetorical, organizational, and legal events. In this chapter I examine two of these decisive moments in the battle over the pro-life/pro-choice binary: First, a brief review of the National Women's Conference of 1977, where the outright exclusion of "pro-family" participants from conference organizing drew an early boundary between feminists and anti-feminists with the implication that the latter is ultimately anti-woman. Second, the 2017 Women's March on Washington where self-described pro-life feminists were publicly accepted as march organizers and later removed amid controversy.

The remainder of this chapter examines the consequent galvanizing effects on women's activism – paying particular attention to exclusionary decisions of the mainstream movement and how those decisions shape the definition of present-day feminism. This includes a critical discourse analysis of coverage of the Women's March on Washington[7] as it pertains to anti-Trump, conservative, and pro-life feminist women who did or did not participate in the event. According to march

[7] Heretofore referred to as Women's March

organizer Mrinalini Chakraborty, “the Women’s March was a turning point in the current sociopolitical climate, a reset button of sorts” (Tambe, 2017). In particular, it examines partisan media coverage of the event and the fallout from the New Wave Feminists, a pro-life feminist group, being removed from the march’s organization coalition following threats of protest by pro-choice participants.

Though the National Women’s Conference of 1977 is considered a definitive moment that helped separate feminism and anti-feminism into distinct social movements. Indeed, historians have contended that the conference and its affiliated events receive too-little attention in relation to its impact on women’s history in the US. In the same vein, little work has been done on the public reception of these events, and how their presentation in the media shapes non-activist sentiments about these political philosophies. While media perception and audience studies on the 1977 conference would be challenging at best, there exists an open opportunity to read the influence of media representation on public perceptions of social movements in the case of the 2017 Women’s March. This chapter will emphasize the impact of media coverage in transformative events particularly as it serves as the avenues via which the decisions of influential social movements are disseminated to the general population. To that end it not only analyzes the discourse *within* the political confines of the Women’s March but maps the framing of the march by partisan news outlets which act as windows to the political activist world for a large portion of U.S. citizens.

IWY Conferences: State Definitions of “Pro-Woman” Politics

The United States National Women's Conference of 1977 (IWY)[8] was the result of President Ford and later President Carter's orders for a commission on the status and future agenda for women in the US. It came after nearly a decade of political struggle over the definitions of womanhood, ostensibly "won" by the women's liberation movement, where prominent feminists like Betty Friedan sought to expose the problematic position of women as second-class citizens, and conservative women like Phyllis Schlafly fought to retain the social acceptability of traditional gender roles. This battle played out in every social arena. From grassroots activist campaigns to Supreme Court cases, feminists sought to obtain equal treatment in employment and higher education while anti-feminists worked to retain protectionist laws threatened by the proposed Equal Rights Amendment.

By the mid-seventies, anti-feminists were all but moved to the margins in the federal debate over women's roles in society, illustrated in one instance by the IWY Conference; President Ford signed Executive Order 11832 in 1975 establishing the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year (NCOIWY), and in 1977 Carter enlarged and replaced the commission with 42 new members including Representative Bella Abzug, the initial sponsor of the bill, and noted feminist and civil rights activist. Carter's update also called to allocate funds for an IWY conference in the US, following the United Nation's International Women's

[8] Heretofore referred to as the IWY conferences in keeping with other researchers due to the conferences' early connection to the UN sponsored International Women's Year of 1975 (Spruill, 46)

Year (and later decade) Conference first held in 1975 in Mexico City.[9] Thereafter, the 1975 congress commissioned a (five-million dollar) federally funded conference that would ultimately result in the highly contested 1977 National Plan of Action.

Two-thousand delegates, chosen from 150,000 participants in state committees' elections convened in Houston, Texas to participate in meetings, panels, and presentations based on topics voted on at the local level, including economic discrimination, political representation, health issues, childcare, violence against women, and so on. State delegations also adopted a number of additional progressive debate topics including reproductive freedom, lesbianism, minority women, prostitution, women with disabilities, and women in the military. The public plenaries drew over 10,000 attendees, stacked with progressive feminist organizers and high-profile presenters including First Ladies Rosalynn Carter, Betty Ford, and Lady Bird Johnson as well as many prominent civil rights figures like Coretta Scott King. Absent from the roster of presenters and organizers were any conservative pro-family or anti-feminist women, spurring a reactionary campaign that would further politicize the conference.[10]

The IWY quickly became a lightning rod for anti-feminist groups, and because the conference was held in Houston, Spruill (2018) argues that the event helped to unite Southern anti-feminists, creating a voting bloc influential enough to

[9] UN sponsored conferences for the "The Decade for Women" also included Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995).

[10] Notably, the state committee meetings became a rhetorical battle ground between feminists and anti-feminists surrounding issues like the ERA and Roe v. Wade, for more on specific case studies see Kempker (2018) or Sontag Brady (2005)

push the GOP to support “pro-family” platforms, such as opposing Roe v. Wade or the ERA. Scholars have also noted that this backlash helped to mobilize and train conservative women in grassroots activism and political organization “so much so that participation in the IWY amounted to a ‘crash course’ in the practicalities of political organization” (Kempker, 2018 p. 117). The National Pro Family Coalition, including groups like the National Right to Life Committee, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Mormon Church, rallied in Houston against the National Women’s Conference. Housed nearby in the Houston Astrodome, the pro-family rally drew the public eye with an attendance of 15-20 thousand (varying reports) to protest the members and platforms of the National Women’s Conference (and subsequently big government and homosexuality) (Klemesrud, 1977; Klatch, 1988). Pro-family and conservative leaders like Phyllis Schlafly claimed to be excluded from conference organization through conspiratorial measures: “Due to the tactics used by the IWY at the various state conferences, including total control of the delegate election machinery and steamroller parliamentary tactics, there were only about 20 percent pro-family delegates among the some 2,000 IWY delegates” (Schlafly, 1977). This outrage was only one of countless occasions Schlafly would endeavour to rhetorically pit the GOP and pro-lifers against the modern feminist movement.

Spruill (2018) uses the National Women’s Conference to center the rhetorical and organizational conflict of the “culture wars” that began in the 1960s and continues today. She contends that as overt racism became less socially acceptable, the feminist movement (into which many civil rights activists funnelled) became a dog whistle to anti-civil rights communities looking for a target to openly oppose. Additionally, she notes that anti-communist sentiment was easily applied to women’s

lib: “many viewed feminism as just the latest manifestation of efforts by saboteurs within the USA, a plot by secular humanists or communists or both, unwittingly or deliberately undermining America by turning it away from God…” (p. 44). In excluding non-feminist organizers, the conference became a particularly politicized issue for the women on the right, as well as a public stage on which to articulate the scope and aims of the conservative women’s movement.

Erin Kempker (2012) writes extensively on conservatism and anti-feminism in US history, and in the case of Indiana in particular, the IWY’s connection to the politics of the ERA created microcosms of the national debate, “ERA ratification had the ironic effect of fostering a burgeoning conservative movement while dividing the liberal coalition of feminists in NOW, women’s rights activists in the League of Women’s Voters, and liberationists active in urban collectives” (p. 150).

For years to come, conservative activists like Schlafly would be able to claim martyrdom for overcoming the odds when being left out of the conversation about the state of womanhood in America. Scholars and activists alike have argued that the IWY and affiliated conferences were a turning point in the women’s movement (Kempker, 2012) (Schlafly herself referred to the event as the ‘Midway’ of the battle between the Pro Family movement and Women’s Lib), as media outlets spotlighted the event and the sensationalist anti-feminist rally close by: “The conference's high public profile was generated by its official governmental status, $5 million in federal funds, rhetorical support from the executive and judicial branches, the ERA's proximity to ratification, the wide range of controversial social issues under consideration, and the mandated participation of women at local and state levels” (Sklar and Dublin, 2004). As such, pro-life feminists like the now-active FFL further

struggled to straddle the line separating feminists and anti-feminists who oppose abortion.

Not since 1970 and the founding of the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) has the feminist position on abortion been internally contested. Even then, The split of WEAL from NOW was not rooted in any sort of personal or religious opposition to abortion – the members of WEAL regarded NOW's foregrounding of the abortion platform as a poor political move that would draw all attention and side-line platforms and projects already in motion.[11] By the 1980s, WEAL included reproductive health in their list of legal concerns.

One could argue that even in this case, the feminist movement's position on abortion was not up for debate. Since the (at that time) controversial platform of "abortion on-demand," the issue has performed the role of feminist border patrol – demarcating for the public who can be considered for or against women. On a rhetorical level, abortion rights have become synonymous with feminism and therefore by being against abortion, a person is considered to be anti-woman. The "pro-family" politics since the 1960s, from protectionist clauses to prayer in school, become wrapped up with abortion politics in the same manner as dominant feminist ideologies. In other words, the two sides of the abortion debate are now the exemplary of a political divide driven by moral imperatives. While it was not always the case, traditionalist and conservative politics are now collapsed behind a single-issue – an

[11] There also appeared a clear cultural divide between the Ohio-based members of WEAL, and the coastal feminists like Betty Friedan who tended to dominate the organization (WEAL Records, Schlesinger Library)

issue that is often the force behind large voting blocs in the United States. With the ousting of pro-life feminists, the constellation of progressive and feminist political concerns become collapsed behind the same issue.

The 2017 Women's March on Washington

Teresa Shook, a retired lawyer living in Hawaii, created the "Million Women's March" Facebook event after the election of Donald Trump on Nov. 8, 2016. She was a member of the secret Facebook group "Pantsuit Nation,"[12] the members of which were distraught with the electoral upset that night, and developed the idea of the march through discussion in the group. Shook invited about 40 of her friends to march on Washington on January 17, 2017 the day after Donald Trump's presidential inauguration. The event went viral overnight and boasted more than 10,000 virtual RSVPs, drawing the attention of other similar efforts cropping up around the United States.

The simultaneous organization efforts of fashion designer-turned-activist Bob Bland combined with the potential event's surging popularity moved the protest planning forward. Bland took the helm from Shook, and began planning the march

[12] "Pantsuit Nation" is a private Facebook group created in 2016 as a cultural reference to Hillary Clinton's ubiquitous pantsuit outfits during the 2016 election cycle. The group was invitation only, with "a commitment to creating a troll-free space in which Clinton supporters could enthusiastically support their candidate" (pantsuitnation.org/mission). It has since evolved into a national organization with chapters in 41 states and the District of Columbia.

alongside three seasoned organizers and activists: Tamika Mallory, Linda Sarsour, and Carmen Perez. The name was quickly changed to the Women's March on Washington after significant backlash over the appropriation of the title for the 1997 Million Women's March — a historical mass demonstration for and predominantly by black women in the US. From the outset, the march was mired in critique by a number of identity groups and organizations — the original Facebook organizers were almost entirely white women, and when Mallory, Sarsour, and Perez (all women of color) were brought on, critics accused march organizers of deploying them as tokens shielding an always already white liberal feminist event (Huber, 2016). For instance, the affiliated follow-up event, "International Women's Strike," also referred to as "A Day without a Woman," which called for an international general strike by women, garnered quick criticism as a form of protest only accessible to women privileged with of a flexible work environment, childcare, and to those who could afford to lose a day of work (Kenney, 2017; Shaw, 2017).

In addition to branding issues, a significant number of state-level organizers stepped down early on for a variety of reasons, but primarily over issues of transparency, diversity, and liability. According to the vocal activist and one time state leader of the Pennsylvania's Women's March chapter, Rosie Campos, the onus of fundraising and organizing being pushed to the state and local level by the national organizers put inexperienced, unincorporated groups at risk for legal liability. Citing a legal encyclopedia, she asserts that national leadership must have known about the issues that autonomous local organizations would face with fundraising efforts: "Without nonprofit status, sponsorship or nonprofit liability insurance coverage, state-level organizers can be held responsible should a civil lawsuit be brought against the state 'organization.'" (2016). When local-level organizers began to realize and point

out these issues, many were met with either frustration and criticism, or outright censorship by national leadership. Due to the fragile nature of an "all-inclusive" event like the Women's March, any signs of dissent were quickly met with accusations of divisiveness that could dismantle the efforts of the march organizers, and ultimately the progress of women's rights writ large.

In their collected volume *Feminist Nightmares: Women at Odds Feminism and the Problem of Sisterhood* (1994), Susan Ostrov Weisser and Jennifer Fleischner trace accusations of this nature and determine two ways in which feminists react to the proposition that women experience 'feminisms' differently depending on their race, sex and gender identity, and class. They argue that both reactions, (1) outreach and accommodation of all differing viewpoints, and (2) denunciation of critique as divisive "serve to glamorize the critic or to idealize unity, while preserving the problems in the real world untouched" (4). Instead, they appeal for a feminist analysis of women at odds with other women, as avoiding the conversation opens up a gap for critics who are "unsympathetic to feminism" to fill, examples of which we will see later in this chapter in the form of right-wing and conservative critique.

Fear of threatening the overall unity of the movement might have had a chilling effect on some members taking issue with march leadership, but many remained outspoken despite having comments deleted or being removed from secret or private Facebook groups. Multiple women of color complained about such responses to their issues taken with the early naming and top-down organization of the march (Huber, 2016).

In the section below, I detail a series of political conflicts that arose within and around the 2017 Women's March, most of which are critiques from various identity groups whose problems with the march's leadership, organization, and rhetoric

represent large struggles within the broadly-stated "feminist project." Internal conflict within social movements has always been constitutive of its identity and broader limitations, and below I make the argument that abortion politics exist outside of that deliberative political space where other identity-based issues can be contested. The topics within and beyond the discursive borders of the feminist project are subsequently readable in their respective media spaces: issues of deliberation within acceptable boundaries are self-affirming in their fields of discourse, as is evident below. Those issues that fall outside of the purview, in this case abortion politics, tend to appear in politically conservative publications, where the movement's discursive limitations are not relevant to the ways in which the right approaches the topic. This idea is exemplified in the case of the New Wave Feminists' appearance in the progressive publication *The Atlantic* – a venue deemed unacceptable for a public deliberation on pro-life feminism.

Stories of Dissent in the Women's March on Washington

The event ostensibly began and was built on social media, where criticism defined the march from the beginning as white, middle-class, and inconsiderate of intersectional experiences. After the initial name change from the "Million Woman March" to the "Women's March on Washington," critics swiftly pointed out that adding "on Washington" merely shifted appropriation from the Million Woman March to the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his historic "I Have a Dream" speech). The march's naming was merely the tip of the iceberg for the issues many had with the composition, organization, and coverage of the event.

In regard to issues of race, one of the most frequent critiques about march organization was the rampant censorship of dissent. Kramer et al (2017) compare these issues (and other factors, such as the pink pussy hats) to Foucault's politics of purity, claiming that the actions of white women organizers produce a "pure" body as it is defined by the impurities evident in the bodies of the rhetorically and organizationally excluded. They describe acts of censorship imposed on the Vancouver Women's March Facebook event page. Event pages are typically managed and mediated by one or more people with special permissions to edit content. When women complained (publicly, by posting directly on the march's event page) that the march's organizers failed to reach out to local activists and organizations for marginalized groups, such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) Vancouver, the page administrators deleted the complaints (713).

Similar acts of silencing on indigenous people and people of color occurred in Louisiana, where Brittany Oliver and Candace Huber eventually resigned as march administrators when their issues with march rhetoric were met with anger, deleted posts, and eviction from private event groups on social media. In this case, their public resignation garnered many complaints from members of the march, accusing the two women of color of dividing the movement and overreacting (Huber, 2016; Oliver, 2016).

This line of critique is par for the course in the history of issues concerning intersectional oppression being side-lined for "women's rights" writ large. Not only along racial lines, the erasure and sidestepping of dissent within the women's movement has historically impacted the civil liberties and movement goals of LGBTQIA people (see: the Lavender menace) as well as the issues fought for by groups involved in labor rights issues. In the case of the women's march, the frequent

attempt to sidestep an already highly visible movement like Black Lives Matter resulted in even more dissent and in some cases the dissolution of entire marches.

Portland, Oregon's march was poorly attended after its endorsement was rescinded by the NAACP of Portland when march organizers refused to make Black Lives Matter issues part of the event's platforms for fear of making the march "too political" (Monahan, 2017). The march's organizers were asked to step down and leadership was replaced just two weeks before the scheduled march with Margaret Jacobsen, a prominent local writer/activist with Black Lives Matter as well as other organizations in the Portland area. Some marches, started and organized by white women however, were shaken up when leadership publicly *opted* to step down to make room for a more diverse organizing body (Campos, 2016).

Critique continued after the march as well, problematizing the media's (as well as the organizations' outward-facing statements) frequent praise of the march for its "peaceful" nature, and repeatedly pointing out that the largest protest in US history boasted zero arrests. Critics argue that the overall whiteness of the marches contributed to the lack of tension with police (Wortham, 2017; Richardson, 2017), and that characterizing the Women's March as "peaceful" subsequently marked other contemporary protest movements as disruptive and violent — a particularly problematic characterization when put into context of black activism historically being rhetorically and physically policed by white culture's definition of acceptable forms of protest (Marston, 2017).

Third, activists and women of color expressed grief and frustration over the sudden willingness of hundreds of thousands of women to exuberantly take to the streets while black women in particular have been organizing and attending events protesting injustice consistently throughout US history (Rose-Redwood, 2017). These

grievances were made poignantly clear in a handful of highly-circulated photographs of protest signs with statements like “Don’t Forget: White Women Voted for Trump” (exit polls confirmed that 53% of white women voted for Trump) (TNO, 2017), or “I’ll see you nice white ladies at the next #BlackLivesMatter march, right?” These signs and accompanying social media posts drew attention to the disdain for calls to action for a predominantly white event when so many of their calls for outrage over racism have gone unanswered — especially calls to protest police violence against marginalized communities over the past decade. Brew and Dundes (2018) deftly point out that the “galvanizing” effect of Trump’s hot-mic “Grab them by the pussy” statement was massively disproportional to mainstream reactions to Trump’s repeated attacks on people of color (Dwyer, 2017).

Many who marched, as well as those who chose not to, criticized the rhetoric of the march as not only white-dominant, but cisgender. In response to Trump’s comments on sexual assault, a number of women at the march carried signs and wore costumes, hats, and t-shirts featuring female genitalia. In particular, the knit pink “pussyhats” that became an icon for the event sparked some critique from within and outside of the trans community for implying that womanhood is intrinsically tied to having a vagina. This “genital-based feminism” can be alienating at best to trans women, and at worst can support the rhetoric of Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminism (TERF) - a subset of radical feminists who believe that trans women are in actuality men on an effeminate end of the gender spectrum. While some vocal members of the trans community were generally unperturbed by the pink hats upon closer examination, (Brighter, 2018), Took (2017) makes the claim that the naturalization of the connection between female genitalia and womanhood instead creates a platform and a pathway for TERF activists to espouse a more extremist and

bigoted viewpoint. Protecting trans women is included in the March's "Unity Principles," though as Greer (2017) recalls, only three of 60 presenters at the D.C. event represented the trans community. Many trans people claimed feeling unsafe and/or uncomfortable at the event and therefore felt excluded or opted not to attend marches for a variety of gender-based concerns (such as the fear of arrest and misgendered jailing practices) (Solis, 2017).

Women's March leadership was also faced with calls of anti-Semitism from early on from other organizers for not explicitly including "Jewish women" in their list of women to march on behalf of (a list that has now been updated to include Jewish women), spurring an argument amongst the organizing board over notions of precarity and urgency among various marginalized communities. One member of the organizing body, Vanessa Wruble, left amid controversy and formed a new organization called March On, which made fighting anti-semitism a more central platform and supported a simultaneous Women's March in NYC through the Women's March Alliance (Stockman, 2018).

In addition to this early problem, march leader Tamika Mallory, was revealed to have ties to Nation of Islam (NOI) firebrand Louis Farrakhan, a noted anti-Semite.[13] After this revelation, Mallory refused to immediately denounce Farrakhan and the NOI leading to a public Facebook post by the original march creator, Teresa Shook, asking the leadership of two past Women's Marches (2017 and 2018) to step down for this and other reasons: "In opposition to our Unity Principles, they have

[13] Controversy arose around Mallory's Instagram account where a photo of her with the reverend was captioned "GOAT," implying Farrakhan to be the "Greatest Of All Time."

allowed anti-Semitism, anti- LBGTQIA sentiment and hateful, racist rhetoric to become a part of the platform by their refusal to separate themselves from groups that espouse these racist, hateful beliefs" (Shook, Nov 19, 2018). What's more, the original march contracted security firms that staff NOI paramilitary members, often referred to as the Fruits of Islam (FOI) — though March leadership claimed that they were unaware of the company's affiliations, and that a "large number" of security firms hire NOI members, and so it was possible (Stockman, 2018).

The Women's March's "race problem," "trans problem," and "Jewish problem" exemplify inevitable cracks in any big-tent social movement. Some of these issues have plagued the feminist movement since its inception, while some are unique to present day socio-political context. The splintering off of certain social groups from a mass organization of women not only defines new social movements adjacent to feminism, it simultaneously changes the makeup and parameters of the contemporary feminist project. As Cassie Brighter, trans writer and educator on gender diversity, points out in her opinion piece on the Women's March:

> In the seventies, racially-insensitive Second-Wave feminists forced Black women to make a hard decision: Are you a Woman-first, or are you Black-first, and then a Woman? Many chose Black-first, and poured their energies into the Civil Rights movement instead, leaving feminism to White women. Today's trans women are faced with a similar hard choice. And because of the massive amount of discrimination and rejection we face, many of us choose Trans first.

These dissents are typically spurred internally, and become divisive through unofficial channels, often slowly and amorphously. The barring of pro-life feminist organizers from the Women's March, however, was a top-down organizational

decision reminiscent of the 1977 National Women's Conference's overt exclusion of "pro-family" women in the event's organization. And while the overall splinter away from the feminist movement takes similar shapes, in the particular context of the Women's March on Washington, the defining lines of the institution of feminism are drawn very deliberately.

What appears different between these varied identity groups is their relationship to particular historical issues within the confines of feminism. At this point in feminist history, the infighting detailed above has spurred an internal dialogue that has lead to organizational navel-gazing and on occasion, an uncomfortable unseating of an overriding mission. Jennifer Nash's groundbreaking work examines institutionalized feminism (in the form of Women's and Gender Studies departments) as a neoliberal process where the recent embrace of black feminism (read: intersectionality) is made to play a corrective role: "its way of naming and labeling (even if not performing) a correct, ethical, and virtuous feminism." There is indeed conflict, but conflict permitted in the purview of feminist discourse – it is *safe* conflict – reproducing a series of conflicts and resolutions that do not radically change the project of feminism but conveniently provides it with a direction and a goal. Nash argues that Women's Studies' uptake of intersectionality appropriates the concept and turns it into "a term that is obsessively signalled by the field as precisely what is required to remedy feminist histories of racism and exclusion. In other words, intersectionality is imagined as the flip side of 'white feminism,' the kind of ethical, inclusive, and complex feminism required for feminists to revive — and to complete — their political project" (Nash, 2019 p.13). Abortion politics however have not created the same internal unease within feminism, broadly defined.

The New Wave Feminists and the Women's March Controversy

The New Wave Feminists (NWF) is a self-described pro-life feminist group established in 2004. One of the group's original leaders, Destiny Herndon-De la Rosa, tells the story of being a pregnant teen and choosing to keep her baby despite all of the hardships she would surely face because of it. She later founded the group with Kristen Walker Hatten, whom she ultimately distanced herself from due to white supremacist beliefs Hatten had later developed (Valens, 2018). It started with a blog about pro-life feminist issues — a blog clad in hot pink and black, graffiti-esque fonts, and a tiled Rosie the Riveter background, highlighting the 'feminist' position a bit more than the 'pro-life' one. The blogspot site evokes a blend of 90's Riot Grrrl aesthetics and contains 136 posts covering a wide range of issues, often opinion pieces of ripped-from-the-headlines woman or life-related news. Destiny, the main writer for the blog (at least since the NWF had been scrubbed clean of all-things Hatten) punctuates frank opinions with levity and a sense of the time. This is the common format for her musings, either in blog-form or video-blog, and more than often on the group's Facebook page, which now boasts over 46 thousand followers. When asked about reckoning feminist ideologies with the pro-life position, Destiny's general response is that the two notions are highly compatible, if not intrinsic to one another: "If you believe that abortion ends the life of another human being and half the time that human being is female, then you believe that this is a human rights issue. So, just like I can be a feminist and be opposed to murder, rape, and anything else that would violate another human being's existence, I am a feminist who is opposed to abortion" (Herndon, in Johnston, 2017).

According to numerous sources, the NWF signed on early in the process to partner with and help organize the march, and as of January 15, 2017, The New Wave

Feminists were publicly listed as partners to the march. Partnerships with the Women's March imply a dedication to organizing and recruiting efforts at local levels, as well as a public display of affiliation between the March and the group in question. This public affiliation is why many pro-life organizations opted out of partnering, though members of various pro-life groups were nevertheless reported to have attended. The other deterrent for pro-life participation was the march's taking on of Planned Parenthood as a co-sponsor (later called "premier partner") of the march, along with the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), Pro-Choice America, and EMILY'S List — all organizations categorically opposing the pro-life agenda.[14]

On January 17th, 2019, prominent long-form journalism site *The Atlantic* published an article on the NWF's partnership with the march, portending the controversy with the subheading: "Is there room in the movement for people who morally object to abortion?" Journalist Emily Green aimed to highlight the diversity of the march's participants, perhaps to highlight the diversity of membership in the anti-Trump camp, and quotes Women's March top organizer Bob Bland's decision to include pro-life groups like the NWF: "Intersectional feminism is the future of feminism and of this movement [...] We must not just talk about feminism as one issue, like access to reproductive care" (Bland, in Green, 2017).

Following this piece, a number of participating marchers, as well as prominent public feminist figures reached out to the organizers via social media to object to the inclusion of any pro-life/anti-choice groups in the march. Most often cited are Jessica

[14] Other sponsors include the AFT, ACLU, Human Rights Campaign, and Moveon.org

Valenti, a feminist author, journalist, and founder of Feministing.com, and popular feminist writer Roxane Gay, who tweeted their disagreement that same day, both engaging in long twitter threads on the topic, arguing that pro-life perspectives are not intersectional and that feminism is not a catchall for political activities of women. Within 90 minutes of Gay's initial tweet (now with 11k "likes"), the Women's March removed the NWF from their list of partners and released the following statement:

> The Women's March's platform is pro-choice and that has been our stance from day one. We want to assure all of our partners, as well as participants, that we are pro-choice as clearly stated in our Unity Principles. We look forward to marching on behalf of individuals who share the view that women deserve the right to make their own reproductive decisions. The anti-choice organization in question is not a partner of the Women's March on Washington. We apologize for this error. (@womensmarch, 2017)

The Unity Principles in reference above have always included reproductive rights as against "any federal, state or local rollbacks, cuts or restrictions on our ability to access quality reproductive healthcare services" ("Mission and Principles").

In the following week, two other pro-life organizations were pointed out by marchers over twitter and subsequently removed by march organizers (Chretien, 2017). Both of these groups, however, were admitted as a partner *after* the controversy surrounding New Wave Feminists.[15] That said, these groups as well as

[15] Abby Johnson is the creator and head of "And Then There Were None," a pro-life women's group dedicated to converting abortion clinicians into pro-life activists. At this date, the major film "Unplanned," about the life of Abby Johnson leaving her management position

many other pro-life contingencies went through with their established plans to attend the march in spite of the march's public decree of its pro-abortion stance (McArtor, 2017; Murphy, 2017; Guidos, 2017). This implies that the Women's March's stance on abortion did not in essence pit pro-life feminist groups against pro-choice groups, but instead drew an official line in the sand where one was once intuited but never publicly enforced.

If the NWF and other pro-life groups were removed as partners but still attended without pushback, what relevance does this moment hold in the broader story of the feminist project? In 1977 and long-after, few scholars considered the National Women's Conference a highly relevant, let alone pivotal moment in the conservative women's movement. With today's technological affordances, we can in real-time observe the field of discourse surrounding the event: from overt declarations made by prominent feminist figures on twitter, "Intersectional feminism does not include a pro-life agenda. That's not how it works! The right to choose is a fundamental part of feminism" (Gay, 2017) to the subtle phrasing of local news stations in Texas, "Late Monday afternoon, the protest's organizers appeared to *retreat* from its earlier embrace of the group" (Alfaro, 2017, emphasis mine).

Media Coverage of the Women's March Controversy

Similar to the National Women's Conference of 1977, the media's spotlight on the event may be the most relevant actor in the causal effects of division and

at Planned Parenthood after witnessing an abortion, was in the works to be released in the coming year or two.

galvanization.[16] Prior to the event in 2017, the New Wave Feminists and pro-life feminism more broadly received very little media attention and publicity. The sensationally public nature of the NWF's removal from the march changed that drastically. According to Former Feminists for Life of America[17] president, Rachel MacNair, "I mean, a week apart you had the march for women and the march for life, and we were a set of organizations that attended both. And we got press that was interested in the fact that we were attending both."[18]

Herndon-De La Rosa seized the opportunity to promote pro-life feminist philosophies, accepting interviews from anyone who requested one:

> I probably did like 200 hundred interviews in a 2 week period. Like I said, my phone would ring, I would pick up and answer it, and like…I think this is like, somebody's HOA newsletter that they're interviewing me for…in the meantime like the New York Times is leaving me voicemails…and I have to call them back and stuff. But, I just…I thought this is a once in a lifetime

[16] Though outside of the scope of this project, research on intersectional influences on media reception by "non-activist" women is key to positing on audience participation. For work targeting audience reception of specifically abortion-related media, see Press and Cole (1999).

[17] The Feminists for Life of America, created in 1972 by pro-life defectors from the Ohio chapter of NOW, has since become the umbrella organization for all things pro-life feminism. For an excellent account of the FFL's contemporary role and outreach activities see Oaks (2009).

[18] MacNair, Rachel (Former president of Feminists for Life of America). In discussion with the author. June 22 2018.

> thing, I'm not gonna sleep and eat for two weeks, and I'm just gonna answer everybody and get this message out as much as I can.[19]

In fact, Herndon-De La Rosa explained that she had a vested interest in talking to pro-choice audiences because she believes the consistent life ethic philosophy[20] "can challenge pretty much everybody" and ideally bring more feminists over to the pro-life side of the abortion argument. The platform led most importantly to the acknowledgement of her unique political position, if not legitimizing their cause, at least confirming their existence and status within the abortion debate:

> a lot of people were telling me like 'oh yeah we saw that on the news, we were talking about that at the dinner table' so I'm like, this literally started a national conversation, so then *now* by the time I tell someone I'm a pro-life feminist, they're like 'oh okay' you know, they were already kind of familiar with it. So

[19] Herndon-De La Rosa, Destiny (Founder, "New Wave Feminists"). In discussion with the author. June 23, 2018.

[20] The Consistent Life Ethic is the philosophy of most pro-life feminists, spread in the 1980s as a place for pro-life progressives and Catholic Democrats to continue protesting war, nuclear proliferation, the death penalty and euthanasia, and violence — including against the unborn — after peace activist efforts during Vietnam. Subscribers to the Consistent Life Ethic work as outreach and educators for their mission statement: "We are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, abortion, poverty, racism, the death penalty and euthanasia. We believe that these issues are linked under a 'consistent ethic of life'. We challenge those working on all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace, reconciliation, and respect in protecting the unprotected" (consistentlifenetwork.org/mission)

> even if they disagree with it, there was a starting point. Prior to this, there wasn't really a starting point.

The story caught on across a range of media platforms, from twitter firestorms to the *New York Times*. This was in part due to the incendiary nature of the accusation that the women's movement, otherwise considered a highly inclusive big tent within US social movements, may only be inclusive to a point. For anti-feminist media, the story reinforced the notion of the "intolerant left," leaving open a potential gap in the left's moral high-ground often attributed to its inclusivity:

> The Women's March claims to be for anyone "who believes women's rights are human rights." And yet...anything less than complete agreement about abortion and the group doesn't even want you participating in the rally. Nevermind if you're with the group on any or all of its myriad other principles—identify as pro-choice (but against sex-worker rights) or the cool girls don't want to sit with you. (Brown, 2017)

In a frame analysis of four prominent right-wing news sites, this critique and other trends appeared following the controversy with the NWF. Journalists, op-ed writers, and podcast interviewers tended to emphasize ethical inconsistencies, critique political expediency of exclusionary tactics, and attach those critiques as intrinsic characteristics of the Women's March. The purpose of a frame analysis is rooted in the idea that certain subtextual aspects of a story are made "more salient," according to Entman (1993), "in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p. 52). This means that framing is a way in which to direct the connotative decoding of texts by the audience while simultaneously presenting the content of the piece. Gamson (1987) developed a constructionist model of frame

analysis that includes media and public as "part of the same cultural system" (Baylor, 1996, p.1), implying that both the producers and the consumers of media generate and reify frames. In this vein, frames construct a discursive reality within which audiences can classify their interpretations of texts based on their experiences; Goffman (1974) refers to these systems of meaning-organization as the "schemata of interpretation." With that in mind, the below analysis is intended to provide not only a snapshot of the public's understanding of the events that took place at the Women's March, but also an examination of the field of conservative reportage when the topic in question provides an opportunity to criticize the left.

One of the ethical inconsistencies that conservative and right-wing media sites refer to is the conundrum of inclusivity mentioned above. Pro-life feminists seem to be the only outlying feminist group at the Women's March after all of the dissenting identity groups are accounted for, though this is not the only issue taken with the march's ethical consistencies. Because march organizers and prominent political activist Angela Davis[21] aimed to make Palestinian statehood a major platform of the debate, critics decried the exclusion of the NWF's as a double standard, or that the feminist movement "showed their hand," presumably as radical and anti-Semitic. Oppositional media grabbed onto as many ethical inconsistencies about the March as they could, linking offhand the exclusionary nature of the women's march to pro-lifers while criticizing the march for featuring Donna Hylton, a convicted murderer and torturer who turned a new leaf after her conviction: "Organizers of the march,

[21] Herself a controversial figure, Davis was prominent member of the Black Panther party who participated in acts of violence but has turned to radical academic activism

who banned pro-life women from participating, did not return The Daily Caller's request for comment regarding Hylton's participation as a featured speaker" (Hasson, 2017).

In terms of political expediency, two major points emerged throughout the conservative media literature. First, that had the controversy not taken place, many more women would have felt comfortable and welcomed attending the march.

> This march doesn't have to be an opportunity to stereotype and separate. This doesn't have to be an opportunity to call "pro-life" women "anti-choice." That doesn't capture the spirit, the heart of what we're about. And to use such rhetoric is to only make this event another opportunity to divide into "us versus them," to adopt the mean-hearted exclusionism that Trump has wholeheartedly embraced. (Olmstead, 2017)

Second, multiple sources criticized the political move of excluding pro-life women from the march: "Intersectionality caused them to fail the broad inclusivity test - you know, how those things end up shaking out is entertaining" (Gillespie, 2017). This critique is built on the implication that the Achilles heel of the left is identity politics' tendency to atomize, and that according to polls by pro-life organizations like the Susan B Anthony List or the Knights of Columbus, the majority of women are in favor of abortion regulation after 20 weeks of pregnancy: "When the rise of Donald Trump may be shattering the bonds that have tied so many pro-life women to the Republican Party, why not do everything possible to encourage these women to make a complete break and join the opposition?" (Linker, 2017). To Ben Domenech of *The Federalist*, the notion of turning away an ideology that "over 65% of women" subscribe to, is incomprehensible when viewed through the lens of representational politics (Domenech, 2017).

Finally, the NWF themselves were absorbed into the conservative narrative. Due to Herndon-De La Rosa's open-door interview policy, she often landed in positions where she and her story about the march were weaponized against feminists and the left more broadly. In our interview she recalls her experience talking to *The Daily Caller*:

> we were talking about um, you know, the systemic issues that lead to abortion – and you can't just talk about 'oh there's more black babies aborted, you have to look at the fact that maternal-infant mortality rate among black communities and among black women and look at all these different thing that lead this to being viewed as a necessary evil in those communities – so we were talking all about this to daily caller…of course they cut almost all of that, yeah and just had us talking about the women's march. Cause, conservatives they want us to bash liberals – that's it!

In another on-air interview with Fox News host Tucker Carlson, Herndon-De La Rosa gives into Carlson's goading about the exclusivity of the feminist club, but soon after is cut off and ignored when footage cuts to the stage on which Donald and Melania Trump were about to dance for the inaugural ball.

She also notes that following her interviews, the video comments would be scathing anti-feminist trolling, confirming for her that the conservative side of the media has a more-closed echo chamber than on the left:

> you could tell people hadn't even watched the video. They saw the word feminist that was it and it was like 'pft-do you have to be fat to be a feminist? Do you have to have stupid hair to be a feminist?' Like, every single comment was just so…and I'm like… 'would you listen to what we were even saying?' It was incredibly frustrating to me. So I find that they're almost more stuck in

> this like, you know, particular worldview than liberal feminists because I mean, feminism at its core is about listening to women's voices – even the ones you disagree with! And you at least, you know, owe them the respect of considering their opinion…so…I find that [liberal feminists are] much more open to it.

She also points out during our interview that regardless of all of the press attention the NWF was receiving at the time, they were never asked to speak with a pro-life group or publication. Herndon-De La Rosa believes that this is likely due to funding concerns — as pro-life organizations are usually donor-driven and religious — and that the NWF are too controversial to risk upsetting potential and returning donors.

Coverage of the pro-life feminists' rejection from the Women's March spurred exponentially more media coverage than they had previously enjoyed. Neutral to liberal sites and news agencies took to the topic as a navel-gaze of the state of feminism — teasing out the implications of this defining event and how they relate to broader popular conceptions of feminism. Social movement literature refers to the unintended consequence of sympathy for the opposition as "backfire," more colloquially referred to as the "Streisand Effect." This theory is typically applied to instances of censorship where the media is involved and reveals that censorship, but applies to the March within this literature, the "perception of something unjust" in combination with the "communication to receptive audiences" can turn public opinion to favor the perceived transgressed. According to Jansen and Martin (2015), "media coverage is crucial to triggering backfire. The value orientations of media practitioners and Internet activists make them potential allies in struggles against censorship, but they need to be approached strategically, ideally by respected third-

party individuals or groups." Additionally, the notion of a "transformative event" can mean an entirely new historical trajectory for the group(s) in question.

In the case of the National Women's Conference, the transformative event structured future relationships between feminist and non-feminist women. In the case of the Women's March, pro-life feminists received recognition, publicity, and a recruiting platform. According to multiple sources, many who were planning to attend the Women's March on Washington cancelled their plans after hearing about the NWF's removal. For some, the plans were broken in solidarity and to make a political statement within the abortion debate. For others, particularly people of faith and pro-life people, the controversy signalled an unwelcomeness at best and at worst an outright prohibition from the event (Domenech, 2017).

Prior to this event, pro-life feminists like Herndon De La Rosa are quoted as feeling involved in the feminist project, rarely connecting with otherwise conservative news agencies. The involuntary and public exclusion from that project in 2017 had pushed many straddling the line of the two worlds further to the right, or into a defensive position. In the words of Rachel MacNair, "The basic thing is that we were on an all hands on deck situation, and they were slapping away some of the hands. And that was the first time the media kind of caught that there was a problem here." In this transformative event, the group New Wave Feminists alone doubled their membership size within two months (from approx. 20k to 40k).

Since the inaugural March in January 2017, organizers have faced continuous backlash and infighting regarding race and religion in particular. Leaders in the Jewish community have rallied against the March's organizers over accusations of anti-Semitism. As of 2019, many marches around the U.S. have either distanced themselves from Women's March Inc. (the current organizational title for the original

movement) or dissolved their movement entirely for reasons listed above. Complaints were particularly directed at organizer Tamika Mallory's reticence to condemn Louis Farrakhan, along with rumors of anti-Semitic remarks made in early organizational meetings by a disgruntled organizing board member. The charge of anti-Semitism was the major reason stated for the altogether dissolution of the Women's Marches in both New Orleans, and the state of Washington, while backlash from the controversy has hindered fundraising across the country, causing Chicago to cancel its 2019 march (Hill, 2018; Oster, 2019). Fears of the March becoming representative of radical anti-Semitism spurred the exodus of over 200 original partners as of 2019 including founding partners NARAL, EMILY's List, and the AFLCIO. The NAACP along with SEIU, the Human Rights Campaign, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and allegedly, the Democratic National Committee, all pulled their public affiliation with the march by its third instantiation in January of 2019 (Crowe, 2019; Serges, 2019; Silva, 2019).

Issues of identity politics have continued to erode the numbers of participants in the march over the years. Perhaps the most elucidating example was the cancellation of the 2019 march in Humboldt County, California where organizers cancelled the third annual march due to a lack of diversity in the organizing body. Because the county is 74% 'non-Hispanic white,' according to the Census Bureau, many who planned to march pleaded with organizers not to cancel the event. The organizers felt that they "failed to have the type of collaboration needed to be inclusive of some of the most underrepresented voices in our community, namely, women of color and people who are gender non-conforming" (Brice-Saddler, 2019). The perception of political accommodationism conveyed by these events and by the media coverage and critique of them has clearly played a key role in the disbanding of the Women's March over time, both rhetorically and numerically.

Conclusion

This case study does not in itself purport causality between exclusionary politics and partisan political success, but instead reaffirms that even before Roe, the legislative issue of reproductive rights has acted as the dividing wall between modern and mainstream feminisms. In crucial "big tent" feminist moments – the empowering success and momentum of the women's liberation movement and establishment of NOW, the affirming acknowledgement of the International Women's Year and National Women's Conference, and the powerful enormity of the Women's March on Washington – the subject of abortion has been the recurrent signifier of what is and what is not considered feminist. Even amid the numerous identitarian dissents, the Women's March movement's conviction on abortion politics decisively reproduces the modern feminist movement as one defined by the political constructions of "pro-life" versus "pro-choice."

III: CHAPTER TWO: REMEMBERING FEMINISM: THE CONTESTED LEGACY OF SUSAN B. ANTHONY

What the Foremothers would have wanted

As mentioned in this project's introduction, pro-life feminism has from its early institutionalization lay claim to "feminist foremothers" as early as Mary Wollstonecraft, citing various proclamations and publications made by many suffragettes. In the publication of multiple texts, a dedicated section of the FFL website, and a recurring article in the FFL's biannual magazine, *The American Feminist,* FFL's community and its founder, Rachel MacNair, have built a body of citable content claiming (often on shaky grounds) that were the suffragettes alive today, they would stand against abortion rights. These arguments have since been taken up as a major legitimating factor in the entire pro-life feminist movement by underwriting feminist arguments against abortion like social justice and economic parity.

In this chapter I look at the case of Susan B. Anthony's legacy, struggled over in the abortion debate, as just one of many cases of foremother appropriation by The FFL along with other pro-life feminists. As one of the most popular public feminist historical figures, Anthony's legacy commands respect in most feminist circles, regardless of their stance on abortion. This is in part because she founded the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) which served as the major unifying body behind the fight for and success in obtaining the vote for women. Like other feminist foremothers, her record of abolitionist work preceding her suffrage endeavors arguably impacted the early women's rights movement and laid the foundation for the

civil rights-adjacent egalitarianism of the feminist project. As one of the few widely identifiable foremother visages, Anthony's image has become a signifier for the feminist project of the "original" sort. The short-lived Susan. B Anthony silver dollar iconized Anthony's Quaker style of hair and dress to later be easily invoked in the popular US sketch comedy show *Saturday Night Live*.

The January, 2017 sketch pokes fun at the empty glorification of the feminist founder when five female friends take a tour of the Official (Rochester, NY) Susan B. Anthony Museum & House, raise the ghost of Anthony, and then promptly ignore her feminist aphorisms while trying to call a cab back to the city (Lopez, 2018). The sketch received praise for ending the scene with Anthony reminding the young women that "abortion is murder!" While multiple pro-life articles and blog posts came out applauding the truth-telling ghost of Anthony, only a brief counter-tweet from Deborah Hughes, the president of the Susan B. Anthony Museum & House, took issue with the quote, stating simply that Anthony and her cohort never took a stance on abortion. This asymmetrical response is common in the debate over feminism and abortion — where those presently on the side of abortion rights feel little need to defend their position or even acknowledge the views of pro-life feminists, who until recently have held very little of the public's attention.

This is in part because Susan B. Anthony's legacy has historically lived safely in the house of the more mainstream pro-choice feminism, with little concern for its uptake by pro-lifers (it also might be to avoid giving a platform to pro-life feminists). That said, the pro-life claim to many suffragettes, and Susan B. Anthony in particular, has recently seen a broader and more public reach. In 2017, The official Susan B. Anthony Museum & House in Rochester, NY organized a week-long event celebrating the centennial of women's suffrage in New York State, concluding with a

"Suffragist City Parade." Prominent pro-life feminist group Feminists Choosing Life of New York appeared in the parade unexpectedly, dressed as suffragettes and carrying a banner that read "Celebrating 100 Years of Pro-Life Feminism: Susan B. Anthony," their purple sashes declaring: "Pro-Life and Pro-Woman" (Carroll, Kray, and Mandell, 2018). Furthermore, the massive annual "March for Life" in Washington D.C., which varying reports estimate has drawn anywhere from 20,000 to 650,000 participants since 1974, and now doubly serves as a counter-protest to the anti-Trump "Women's March on Washington," which occurs on the same weekend, is themed "Life Empowers: Pro-Life is Pro-Woman" in celebration of the centennial of the 19th Amendment. In a promotional video for the 2020 march, a lone woman performs a slam poetry piece reciting the current talking points of the pro-life feminist community: 30 million females have been aborted, the abortion industry targets marginalized and vulnerable women, and a quote by Alice Paul and Susan B. Anthony calling abortion "the ultimate exploitation of women." This attribution is half-accurate, as Alice Paul, author of the 19th amendment, was more frequently recorded making reference to the topic of abortion, while Susan B. Anthony made little public mention of the issue.

Little past scholarship has addressed the debate over Anthony's stance on abortion. In fact, almost no academic work is dedicated solely to this debate — discourse over the issue has primarily occurred in popular press, addressed below. Instead, conversations surrounding pro-life feminism more broadly at times refer to the phenomenon of pro-life feminists' claims to feminist foremothers. Two legal scholars have in particular broached the topic of the struggle for historical authority in regard to pro-life feminism. Thomas's (2012) "Misappropriating Women's History in the Law and Politics of Abortion" engages with pro-life feminist claims to Elizabeth

Cady Stanton; reading through the controversial texts by the suffragette, she utilizes the claim over Stanton (and briefly mentions similar tendencies for Anthony) as a frame through which to discuss the legal implications of such an assertion. By discrediting the idea that Stanton would be pro-life, at least with the evidence available, Thomas is arguing for a careful handling of pro-life feminism's role in legal discourse around abortion. Ziegler (2013) similarly addresses the issue in one section of her essay "Women's Rights on the Right: The History and Stakes of Modern Pro-Life Feminism," wherein her focus is geared more toward the pro-life feminist organizations participating in the public debate over feminist foremothers. She also concludes that pro-life feminist rhetoric will be highly influential in the ensuing abortion debates, and points to Sarah Palin as emblematic of the risks of these types of historical readings — namely the idea that abortion is bad for women's progress. Similar to the legal scholars' works, this study aims to link the political implications of a contested history to material outcomes and implications. Conversely, it reads this debate as an interrogation of popular memory's role in today's perception of feminism and the women's movement. It is narrower in its scope for data, with a focus on Anthony, but broader in its attempt to paint a more complete picture of how the public remembers feminism and anti-abortionism.

In what follows, I identify other feminist foremothers for whom the argument of pro-life presentism would be much more viable; I also consider the major arguments for and against Susan B. Anthony's pro-life stance on abortion politics and find that the latter far outweigh the former. And yet, pro-life feminist associations and claims to the feminist foremothers have since at least the 1980's been cornerstones to the pro-life feminist philosophy. Using Susan B. Anthony's legacy as a case in point, I draw on studies in popular and collective memory to answer the following

questions: First, why do pro-life feminists emphasize their political claim to Susan B. Anthony, for whom they can only make tenuous arguments about a pro-life political stance? And second, how does a large group of pro-life feminists maintain its commitment to this controversial version of history in the face of the mainstream narrative? By exploring three categories of popular memory through sites of struggle over Anthony's legacy, I argue that a multi-pronged approach to historical appropriation has emboldened and sustained the folk image of Anthony as an early pro-life feminist. Through collective remembering, institutional commemoration, and the memorialization of Anthony's birthplace, I show how a matrix of memory practices has held Anthony up as a pro-life folk hero despite increasing public pushback from pro-choice feminists and historians.

Collective and Popular Memory

Anthony's legacy is in this case contingent on both the *how* and the *why* a given population remembers her. *How* remembrance functions is two-fold: First, what is Anthony's characterization? What aspects of her life and work are made most salient in the collective historical consciousness? Second, the *process* of remembering can imbue that legacy with legitimacy or authenticity, and can even construct and (re)constitute an entirely unique memory of a person or event. We need look no further than the embattled confederate statues of the South to witness the power of commemorative formations to sustain particular historical outlooks. Conversely,

the *why* of Anthony's legacy is what is at stake in this chapter — what Zelizer (1995) refers to as "retrospective nominalization," a renaming of a notion of the past where "at the same time as the use of the old secures and solidifies the new, the new helps

assign and reassign meaning to the old" (p. 222). Below I outline the tactics by which Anthony has been taken up by a minority perspective for a strategic purpose.

Since scholars began critiquing structural power imbalance in social institutions, interest in collective memory has largely been concerned with reading popular histories "from the margins" (Weedon and Jordan, 2011) — and therein more or less interested in upheaving dominant historical narratives which bury the histories and experiences of the marginalized and oppressed. For this reason, its framework is useful for analyzing fringe historical perspectives like those of the pro-life feminist community. This "deprofessionalization" of history began with the likes of E.P. Thompson and the Birmingham school, aiming to complicate written history with narratives not recorded by the elites. Since then, a preoccupation with oral history and popular history has evolved into its own area of study (Tosh, 1999 p. 16). It has since then diverged into myriad branches of "memory" studies within various disciplines: *social memory*, *collective memory*, *community memory*, *popular memory* — all of which orbit around Maurice Halbwachs's Durkheimian proposition that memory is a socially constructed object like anything else, and in particular an act of "constituting the past within the present" (1992).

Memory studies is premised on the idea that objective remembering is not possible — that simply the act of remembering information puts it through a filter shaped with one's experiences, principles, socioeconomic context, etc. and that condition applies to historians as well. In these terms, social memory emerges at the point of *articulation* between subjective memory (mainly experience) and objective memory (mainly knowledge). Objective memory, then, represents shared common understandings about the world, and more pertinent to this case, a given community's history: "Objective memory is simply the better vehicle for the conveyance of

information; it is the aspect of our memory most easily available to others" (p. 7). If we consider these propositions in the framework of semiotics, "objectivity," that is the data itself prior to interpretation, acts at the signified level, while subjectivity determines the signifiers, and the point of articulation, the sign, creates the basis of the plane of shared meaning about collective memories and identities.

Tosh (1999), regards "social memory" as especially susceptible to manipulation in the form of value-laden distortions (nostalgia or progress, ex.) for a directed purpose to serve those in power (Olick and Robbins, 1998). That said, for memory scholars and historical anthropologists like Fentress and Wickham, "the issue of whether or not a given memory is true is interesting only insofar as it sheds light on how memory itself works" (p. xi). The polyvalent nature of memory is then a primary concern for memory scholars, however superseded by the structure of memory. They argue that different communities (defined broadly) remember respective histories in a variable *format:* "however much a novel or schoolteacher's story can affect the *content* of a memory of an event held by an individual or even a social group, it will have much less effect on which *sorts* of events social groups will characteristically choose to commemorate, which are linked to deeper patterns of identity" (Fentress and Wickham, 1992 p. 96, emphasis original).

Zelizer in particular emphasizes the role of "nonsequential temporal patterning" in the field of memory studies: "collective memory is predicated upon a dissociation between the act of remembering and the linear sequencing of time...Time becomes a social construction, the target of strategic rearrangement" (p. 222). The dechronologizing of time implies that people's memories of static events are not themselves static, and instead transform common history to serve their contemporary perceptions about how the social world functions. She argues that although the

passage of time is often a challenge to sustaining communities, due to the inevitable evolution of society and identities of members, collective memory allows for a given community to construct a common framework which acts as a historical referent for the group's identity. For pro-life feminists, this requires a continually reinforced assumption about the feminist foremothers, produced and exemplified through organizational and promotional materials.

Commemorations

These common frameworks are often (though not solely) referenced through social and cultural institutions which collapse swaths of time to "boiling points" or events which then stand in for an entire historical moment or zeitgeist. In memory studies these institutions are typically referred to as commemorations. The most common type of commemoration appearing in memory studies is the material object used to mark or signify something deemed worth remembering. These can take the form of museums, war memorials, library archives, and ultimately anything nameable (highways, university buildings, awards, etc.). In this case, the Susan B. Anthony List, a pro-life lobbying group, acts as a commemorative site through which the symbol and myth of a pro-life SBA can actively promulgate. Commemorations are used and arguably necessary to "stabilize" or "anchor" collective memory, which is otherwise constantly evolving with the passage of time. It functions for community identity in that it creates shared memory reference points regardless of membership, as Zelizer points out: "one does not need to have participated in a war in order to celebrate Veteran's Day" (p. 219).

To the Popular Memory Group, a "sense of the past" is the combined individual remembering experience combined with public representations of memory,

such as those institutions mentioned above. When commemorations are linked to or produced by the state, such as a national heritage designation (Popular Memory Group, 1982), they become public history, and therein a part of what they deem the public "historical apparatus" or "the field of public representations of history" (p. 207). In the structure of patterning, national memories "make up the substructure of national historical consciousness," according to Fentress and Wickham. In the realm of remembering, national memories, and national commemorations in particular, tend to be described more often as invented, constructed, or otherwise manipulated for the aims of building and securing a historical past which best upholds present day political aims: "They are linear in their conception of time, and indeed teleological: very explicitly, all of them lead up to and legitimize the present situation...intended to define that community; but this definition will include a legitimation of its structures of political and economic dominance, by which the elite justifies itself as an elite" (p. 134).

Birthplace Memorials

Within memory studies on commemorations there are specialized areas for various institutions and types of commemorative forms, including an area of study for heritage sites and noteworthy places of birth and death. In his edited volume, *Born in the U.S.A.,* Seth C. Bruggeman compiles a collection of research on birthplace memorials of (broadly defined) famous Americans, from living presidents to bluegrass musicians. The text opens with a review of a history of thought on the proliferation and popularity of birthplace memorials beginning before but surging after the civil war. In it, he makes a fascinating argument for the beginnings of birthplace commemoration in the United States as tied back to European

enlightenment thinking in combination with Spencer's Social Darwinism, wherein a person's origin was very much tied to their adult character and consequently, their success in life. The example of George Washington's Mount Vernon birthplace memorial implicates national identity in the conversation on origin and child rearing. At a historic moment when manuals and magazines for homemaking and "domestic literacy" were integral in the daily lives of American families, birthplace museums became a perfect narratological site for the depiction of an ideal domestic space to "encourag[e] the politically powerless wives of upwardly mobile white men to make their patriotic contribution by cultivating republican virtue in children" (p. 7).[22]

The overriding theory on the popularity of birthplace memorials is tied to a rapidly changing social landscape in the early 20th century. White fears about national identity during a surge of immigration, alongside the industrial revolution saw a marked rise in birthplace memorials and museums, as well as literature in the same vein. At the same time, the U.S. also saw a renewed preoccupation with origin and citizenship in the form of birth certificates and federal databases. Bruggeman traces the ups and downs of birthplace memorials through the latter half of the 20th century, and notes the rushed inclusion of birthplaces of women and people of color

[22] Notably, these depictions typically whitewash the stories of "great men" by implying an absence of domestic help in the form of slaves and servants, and therein external (and non-white) influence on their early development.) "In other words, because we are so impressed by the timelessness of these places, it is easy to forget (or, not to care) that each one was born of the fear that its story about the past might be eclipsed by a competing narrative" (Bruggeman, 2012).

to the list of National Heritage Sites to offset the very white and male predominance thus far. Susan B. Anthony's birthplace is mentioned here for its emergence in 2010, but notably it is not included in the National Registry of Historic Places (NRHP), though the Susan B. Anthony Museum & House in Rochester, as well as a second childhood home nearby are included on the list.

"Sites of memory," explains Winter (2010) offer a unique opportunity for "dominated groups to contest their subordinate status in public"[...] "alternative interpretation of the political meaning of sites of memory emphasizes the multivocal character of remembrance and the potential for new groups with new causes to appropriate older sites of memory" (pp. 316-17). With this definition, one might consider Susan B. Anthony's imago to be a site of memory in itself, let alone the birthplace museum, for the pro-life feminist movement. In the following section, I outline the aforementioned sites of memory, knowledges, and proclamations about Susan B. Anthony that are currently under contestation between opposing groups of feminists (and some non-feminists) on each side of the abortion question.

Susan B. Anthony

Susan B. Anthony is by far the most frequently cited foremother by pro-life feminists, even when the case for other foremothers' pro-life stance is easier to make. For instance, famed suffragette and first female candidate for the US presidency, Victoria Woodhull, along with her sister, Tennessee Claflin, wrote multiple essays specifically on "The Slaughter of the Innocents" (1874) where she explicitly equates murder and abortion:

> We are aware that many women attempt to excuse themselves for procuring abortions, upon the ground that it is not murder. But the fact

> of resort to so weak an argument only shows the more palpably that they fully realize the enormity of the crime. Is it not equally destroying the would-be future oak, to crush the sprout before it pushes its head above the sod, as it is to cut down the sapling, or cut down the tree?

Or even more compelling are quotes from Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony's co-editor and compatriot for women's suffrage and the NWSA, who introduced Anthony to the struggle for women's rights. As a mother of seven children, Stanton was a strong advocate for the value of motherhood and womanhood more generally, and spoke about the topic far more than Anthony. In a piece in *The Revolution*, Stanton makes a case for the relationship between women's ability to work and earn to the quality of family life. She draws a direct connection between women's economic precarity and unhappy marriages and abortion: "Let woman assert herself in all her native purity, dignity, and strength, and end this wholesale suffering and murder of helpless children" (Stanton, Jan 29, 1868). Later that year she used the platform of *The Revolution* to decry the rising number of abortions in rural Maine: "there were four hundred murders annually produced by abortion in that county alone....There must be a remedy for such a crying evil as this" (Stanton, March 12, 1868).

Notably, much of Stanton's writings and legal recourse on the matter revolved around tales of *infanticide*, the killing of post-born babies; she historically fought against death penalties for women who killed their children to avoid the social and economic damnations inevitable for the woman and child alike. Her work was generally more concerned with notions of voluntary versus involuntary motherhood, and more specifically with eliminating the marital clause that enabled unfettered 'access' to a man's wife (marital rape), than it did with the political admonishment of

ante-natal infanticide, or "feticide" (Gordon, 1997; DuBois, 1992). That said, multiple passages exist that imply Stanton's unease with the idea of abortions, and her celebration for womanhood and motherhood in general.

"She will rue the day she forces nature"

The most frequently cited argument for Anthony's pro-life stance (MacNair, Derr & Naranjo-Huebl, 1995; Kennedy, 1997) is Stanton and Anthony's refusal to print ads for patent medicines known to be "covert abortifacients" in their suffrage newspaper, *The Revolution*. *The Revolution* was considered the official newsletter for the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), providing a forum for debate as well as a platform for issue papers and statements from the likes of Anthony and Stanton.

The weekly paper was created in 1868 and ran for three years before it was sold off after accruing $10,000 in debt, which Anthony paid off entirely from speaking fees in the following years. Notably, the reasons cited for the paper's high cost of production were expensive equipment, higher than average pay for female employees, and a refusal to print ads for all alcohol and morphine-laden patent medicines (all of which she deemed immoral) — in addition to the aforementioned covert-abortifacients mentioned in pro-life feminists literature (*The Revolution*, 1868-1872).

This 'covert-abortifacient' reference is not the only argument for Anthony's pro-life stance, however. Pro-life Feminists have cited numerous occasions where in excerpts from *The Revolution,* Anthony references the acts of "infanticide" or "ante-natal feticide." Members of the pro-life feminist movement occasionally cite a reference to abortion in Anthony's journals, wherein Anthony's sister-in-law takes an

above-mentioned abortifacient, after which Anthony notes on her appearance: "Sister Annie better — but looks very slim — she will rue the day she forces nature" (Gordon, 1997). The notion of "forcing nature" in particular helps to illustrate the issue of presentism.

FFL-based book *Prolife Feminism: Yesterday and Today* (1995) cites an exchange between Anthony and a friend on her decision not to have children of her own, "but sweeter even [...] has it been to me to help bring about a better state of things for mothers generally, so that their unborn little ones could not be willed away from them." The quote is followed by an essay published in *The Revolution* entitled "Marriage and Maternity," an editorial in response to an earlier issue of the paper containing an excerpt calling for the banning of abortion altogether. The article speaks to abortion in similar terms as present day pro-life feminists, where making the act illegal "...seems to be only mowing off the top of the noxious weed, while the root remains. We want *prevention*, not merely punishment. We must reach the root of the evil, and destroy it" (p. 60, emphasis in text). This article, cited in *Prolife Feminism* as written by Anthony, has become a point of debate which perfectly captures the conflict of history and memory that this project wrestles with.

"Marriage and Maternity" has been a crucial point of contention between contemporary pro-life and pro-choice feminists, as the original article was signed "-A," interpreted by the pro-life side to be Anthony's initial. Some historians unaffiliated with the FFL have argued against this authorship, claiming that Anthony did not sign letters or editorials in this manner, or that the style of writing does not match Anthony's other works. This debate has carried over into popular press editorials and opinion pieces in *Time, Slate,* and *The Washington Post*, to name just those with the widest circulations. Aside from the occasional investigative-journalism

research piece, these articles act as platforms for one side or the other to pitch their interpretation of Anthony's stance on a partisan debate that had not yet come to be.[23]

On the opposing side of that debate are most often Lynn Sherr, a feminist journalist who published *Failure Is Impossible: Susan B. Anthony in Her Own Words* (1995), and Rutgers historian Ann D. Gordon, who published the six-volume series *Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*. These scholars repeatedly argue against the textual instances that pro-life feminists claim as anti-abortion sentiments in works by Anthony and other feminist foremothers. Aside

[23] While scholarship on pro-life feminism has been minimal, mainstream press and internet publications have been engaging in this debate for over a decade: "No, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton Were Not Antiabortionists" (Sherr and Gordon, 2015); "Setting the Record Straight on Susan B. Anthony;" "Like Sarah Palin, Early Feminists Were Pro-Life" (Dannenfelser, 2010); "Sarah Palin is No Susan B. Anthony" (Gordon and Sherr, 2010); "Susan B. Anthony would never have joined the Women's March on Washington" (Crossed and Anthony, 2017); "Theme for March for Life 2020 Relies on Questionable Women's History, Incorrectly Claiming Early Feminist Leaders as Pro-Life" (Thomas, 2019); "The Battle Over Susan B. Anthony" (Graham, 2017); "Was Susan B. Anthony 'Pro-Life?'" (Feeney, 2012); "What Would Susan B. Anthony Say?" (Schenwar, 2010); "The Suffragists Who Opposed Birth Control" (Khazan, 2019); "Susan B. Anthony, against abortion?" (Clark-Florey, 2006); "Susan B. Anthony's Abortion Position Spurs Scuffle" (Stevens, 2006); "Desperately Seeking Susan" (Schiff, 2006)

from a refutation of the methods and conclusions of the pro-life feminists, their claim is often one of historical neutrality: In a 2006 article on womensenews.org, the two are quoted: “I don’t know what her position on abortion is, and for [pro-life feminists] to pretend that they do is simply flat-out wrong” (Sherr); and “She never voiced an opinion about the sanctity of fetal life, and she never voiced an opinion about using the power of the state to require that pregnancies be brought to term” (Gordon). In a rebuttal in the same article, FFL author Mary Krane Derr and the FFL’s current president, Serrin Foster, make the case for Anthony’s anti-abortionist position as implicit in her publishing of *The Revolution*, which frequently hosted articles with an anti-abortion stance: "You know where people stand by how things are written in their publications. There is nothing good that is ever said about abortion" (Foster).

Susan B. Anthony House

This slew of media attention on the matter came in response to the controversial 2006 purchase of Susan B. Anthony’s birthplace in Adams, Massachusetts by pro-life feminist Carol Crossed. The purchase was made largely for the purpose of highlighting and curating a narrative about pro-life interpretations of Anthony’s history, and Crossed’s purchase of the house was urged on by FFL headquarters (“Susan B. Anthony Was Born Here”) The FFL’s former VP, Sally Winn, soon became the director of the Anthony house, continuing the pro-life feminist maintenance of the property. Crossed was a collector of suffragette ephemera and found the Anthony birthplace house (which was in need of TLC) an ideal project for her, already an owner of a federal-style house and familiar with the maintenance of such an estate. Presently, an entire wall of the museum-eque “legacy” room (originally the dining room) of the SBA house is dedicated to the notion of SBA’s

pro-life stance, with a quote spanning the length of the wall: “When the office of maternity shall be held sacred … then, and not till then, will this earth see a new order of men and women, prone to good rather evil.”

The legacy room wall is one of two “Traveling Walls” available for lease by the museum, which “replicate historical photos and information on display in the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum” with suggested uses for display at schools, libraries, events, town halls, and historical societies. “Winning the Vote! - The Susan B. Anthony Amendment” and “Opposing Restellism” are the two themes each wall presents, respectively — including quotes, photographs, and timelines that outline and support both themes. “Restellism” is the primary term that the birthplace museum employs to convey Susan B. Anthony’s pro-life stance. The term is derived from Madame Restell, a pseudonym for Ann Trow Lohman, who notoriously provided abortions in mid-19th century New York. Lohman was charged for the deaths of women who had died after having abortions, and played a considerable role in the eventual illegalization of abortion. The birthplace museum is here following suit with the pro-life feminist penchant for the term ‘Restellism’ over ‘abortion,’ utilizing historical language and lending further credence to their claims to and about Susan B. Anthony.

Madame Restell’s legacy is another one claimed by pro-life feminist history; by emphasizing the term ‘Restellism,’ the group is highlighting only the criminalized portion of Lohman’s “career” as a “women’s physician.” Where Lohman typically worked within the legal confines of fetal termination (before the ‘quickening’) with the sale of her patent medicines and surgical and medicinal procedures, the changing moral authority of America enacted through Comstock laws of 1873, alongside the professionalization of medicine, had newly criminalized pre-quickening abortions—

whence “Restellism” became a synonym for abortion. Therefore, the birthplace museum’s repeated use of the term to describe Anthony’s stance on abortion equates a specific part of Lohman’s (and abortion’s) history with Susan B. Anthony’s place in history.

Both birth and deathplace memorials collapse history into a plaque, a house, a bench, etc.; however, birthplace commemorations tend to carry more metaphorical weight, even today. They act as a virtual reality experience for the visitor, imbuing a sense of authority and authenticity to the story being told, beyond any museum exhibit’s capacity. The SBA birthplace museum aims to do just that. Although most of the original belongings had been sold or placed in various archives (or are displayed in the Rochester house), Carol Crossed and the curators of the birthplace museum continuously add “authentic period pieces” to recreate what they interpret to be a replication of Anthony’s birthplace and early childhood home (the Anthony family moved to New York when SBA was seven).

The material stake in the claim for Anthony became a point of contention between her *birthplace*, and the official “Susan B. Anthony Museum & House” in Rochester, NY, which until 2006 was considered the only official “Susan B. Anthony House” in existence. The Rochester house is where Anthony lived most of her life and where she passed away in 1906. It is also where the headquarters of the National Woman’s Suffrage Association (NWSA) were located. The National Historic Landmark Museum has since then been forced to confront pro-life claims to Anthony’s life against the new Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum where Anthony was born. This blog excerpt from the official Susan B. Anthony Museum & House’s website, written by the museum’s CEO Deborah Hughes, is featured on the front page

with the title “We’re not THAT Susan B. Anthony” and reveals just how problematic these conflicting versions of history can be:

> Four years ago, a very angry father left a message on my voice mail. He called me names I had never been called. For this pastor-turned-museum-director, it was my first experience at being the object of vitriol from a complete stranger. His tone and language were evidence of deep rage, and he was certain that I was the appropriate target. After all, I was the director of the “Susan B. Anthony” House.
>
> This young father’s rancor was triggered by a phone call. It was the height of election season. His six year old daughter answered their home phone and was treated to a robo-call message that apparently described late-term abortion in graphic detail. The child was confused and frightened by the “murder” she had heard described. Her father was shocked to hear what his daughter had been exposed on their *home* phone. Appalled and enraged, he checked the caller ID, and it clearly stated “Susan B Anthony” had called. He googled the name, and the Susan B. Anthony House popped up on his screen (we are proud to have earned that status). He dialed the number and ended up in my voice mail box. And he let me have it.
>
> Fortunately, we were able to return his call and explain that we are not *that* Susan B. Anthony. ***This*** Susan B. Anthony did not sponsor that robo-call. ***This*** Susan B. Anthony did not endorse Rick Santorum for president (but we did have several people call us to cancel their support of our organization when they heard the announcement and one who told us Santorum was not conservative enough for their

> taste). ***This*** Susan B. Anthony has not promised $10 million to the Mitt Romney campaign (but the calls and emails we received today about that announcement triggered this blog post).

In fact, the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum was ultimately uninvolved in the robocall, though Hughes claims earlier in the article that a number of other Anthony museums are confused with the official one. With no overt correlation to the Birthplace Museum, the Susan B. Anthony List subscribes to the same line of historical logic in their representation of Anthony as a champion for pro-life philosophies.

Commemoration through Institutions

Popular memory persists through the birthplace museum, but the legislative impact of the Susan B. Anthony List (SBA List) is material and often long-lasting. Rachel MacNair founded the SBA List in 1992 as a pro-life feminist response to the success of EMILY's List. MacNair, a progressive, vegan Quaker, began the group as proudly bipartisan, donating "several thousand dollars" to campaigns for pro-life women running for office on both sides of the aisle. The name and affiliation with Anthony was her idea, inspired after watching an episode of "60 Minutes" focused on EMILY's List: "I'm sittin there goin *'Oh* we need a pro-life version of that.' And I contemplated, and I soaked in a hot bathtub and I just thought...Susan B. Anthony List — that's it" (Interview with MacNair, 2018). In fact, it appears as though MacNair may be the catalyst for Susan B. Anthony's affiliation with pro-life politics. The association with feminist foremothers arose with MacNair's uptaking of the presidency of the Feminists for Life of America (FFL) in 1984, and the subsequent publication of the group's periodical, "The American Feminist," along with the first

published collection of pro-life feminist essays entitled *Prolife Feminism: Yesterday and Today* (Derr, Naranjo-Huebl and MacNair, 1995). Prior to these instances, neither Anthony nor the other suffragettes appear to have been invoked by pro-life groups, progressive or otherwise.

MacNair has since publicly admonished the Susan B. Anthony List, citing her embarrassment for having tied Anthony's name to a group that became explicitly conservative. The list's goals shifted dramatically after MacNair's departure in the mid-nineties — the list wanted to move to D.C. to grow more influence in the capital, while MacNair preferred to stay in her hometown of Kansas City. After the move, the group decided to start sponsoring male pro-life candidates for the first time, which ultimately solidified the conservative shift (Sheppard, 2012). In an interview, MacNair expressed embarrassment for her role in creating the SBA List and her historical affiliation with it: "They were supporting men who were running against pro-abortion women, ...it was just one long embarrassment after another." The SBA list has only since grown and its PAC has spent more money on political campaigns in the last twenty years than the National Organization for Women's (NOW) PAC has in every election cycle (Poulson, 2009).

Subsequently, the SBA List is a major actor in the US Legislative lobbying arena - pouring millions into the 2016 election cycle through direct donation to pro-life candidates and their affiliated Super PACs and institutes (Susan B. Anthony List - Summary). They are also frequent contributors of amicus briefs to U.S. Supreme Court cases regarding abortion restrictions. Their current project, "Comprehensive Campaign to Re-elect President Trump and Safeguard Pro-life Majority" is a main focus for their 2020 agenda, which is now budgeted at $52 million. For MacNair, the SBA List's ardent support for the Trump administration and more specifically its

immigration policies toward families with children at the southern border, is inexcusable and incommensurable with the original group's mission: "it was stated on PBS Newshour that the Susan B. Anthony List was taking no position on the family separation issue at the border...okay, so it's not a feminist organization then. It's simply not, it is a single-issue group and it has no business using the name of Susan B. Anthony. Because Susan B. Anthony would have been all over this issue" (Interview with MacNair, 2018). In return, the SBA List has scrubbed any mention of MacNair from their website (Whitehead, 2011). The list's leader since MacNair's departure, Marjorie Dannenfelser, re-wrote the history of the list's origins, stating in a 2010 promotional video:

> The Susan B. Anthony list was started when I and a group of other pro-life women on Capitol Hill noticed in 1992 that the media had dubbed that year 'the year of the woman,' and we were left out. We were not being represented at all. So, a diverse group of women, different faiths, different political persuasions, all came together and decided it's time to put that to an end (Dannenfelser, 2010).

The perversion of MacNair's vision for the SBA List is not unlike the accusations from the pro-choice community of the pro-life feminist appropriations of suffragette history. Repeatedly through pro-life political history (as in all political organizations' histories, presumably), the contemporary memory of abortion politics is black-boxed, creating the illusion of a consistent moral philosophy driving the pro-life or pro-choice movements. As we have seen, politicians and political groups once in favor of abortion rights (Nixon, Reagan, the GOP) frequently shift positions for political expediency — weighing the overall impact of an election against wavering beliefs on personal politics. The same goes for motivations of allegedly pro-woman

groups like the Susan B. Anthony List, who ultimately chose political power over philosophical consistency.

Conclusion

Why, then, the need to construct Anthony as a pro-life champion? Could it be attributable to the role of fellow feminist, peace activist and Quaker Rachel MacNair's role in promoting the association of SBA's legacy with pro-life philosophies? The emphasis on Anthony is no doubt due in part to her name recognition as one of the founders of the suffrage movement, both to feminists of all varieties as well as to the broader public. With early claims to Anthony's abortion beliefs come other positive associations rooted in civil rights success and progressive social movements, both of which are paramount to the present-day claims to pro-life feminism. Anthony began her activism in the abolition movement, developing a close confidant in Frederick Douglass (though later fighting against the 14th amendment because it preceded the vote for women).

Thomas (2019) believes the attraction to SBA by the pro-life feminists is two-fold. On one hand, many people do not know the particulars of the history of feminism, and particularly the issue of abortion. First-wave feminism is therefore an easy history to challenge or outright appropriate. On the other hand, she argues that the fascination with (re)writing feminist foremothers as pro-life "bolster[s] the claim that abortion is not in the best interests of women." This second point is reinforced by a majority of the contemporary pro-life feminist argument against abortion, as prominently displayed on promotional material for the Feminists for Life of America: "Women deserve better than abortion: Abortion is a reflection that we have not met the needs of women." Some of the most compelling arguments made by popular pro-

life feminist group, the New Wave Feminists, are concerned with the idea that abortion bypasses the needs of society to accommodate the female condition — that it acts as a band-aid of sorts on the other social ills that befall women, such as the lack of affordable childcare.

Thomas's point shines a light on another possibility for SBA's uptake in the pro-life feminist community. Anthony, as a founding member of the NWSA as an original suffragette, as well as one of the most prominent "voices" in first-wave feminism, represents an *authentic* feminist ideals. Much like hardline US constitutionalists, or Old Testament devotees, this preoccupation with origin assumes that there is a presumed purity and subsequent exactness to the "true" feminist project. Foucault, in discussing Nietzche (1980) critiques faith in the origin as "the moment of their greatest perfections, when they emerged dazzling from the hands of a creator or in the shadowless light of a first morning" (p. 79). Anthony's position in history, alongside her infallible character, sets her and her legacy up as the "divine birth" of feminism — a prophet of sorts whose dedication to the pursuit of women's rights is made apparent by her stern image and the absence of any distraction in the earthly pleasures of love or family. Any purity of character and identity in the idealized memory of women's suffrage was always already built into the memory of Susan B. Anthony, while her position on abortion remained up for grabs. This makes her an excellent vessel for a stake in the origin of feminism by the pro-life feminist community.

As such, her legacy has provided numerous channels for pro-life feminists to claim, produce and maintain Anthony as a pro-life icon, not only within their own ranks, but to the broader public through institutional reach. The commemorative nature of the Susan B. Anthony List, arguably the most active public representation of

Anthony in current popular culture, collapses the complexities of the feminist figure's political stances into a single-issue purpose. It not only creates a simplistic caricature of Anthony by associating her image's profile with the group, it uses the legitimacy of a pro-woman stance to push for and fund anti-abortion legislation. Meanwhile, The Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum creates an embodied simulacrum of Anthony's developmental years, producing an experiential conveyance of her "origin" story — one that paints her as philosophically pro-life from the start. Finally, the continued discursive push in participatory politics, through marches, op-eds, and demonstrations suspends Anthony's otherwise undocumented position on abortion as a site of struggle over the meaning of what it truly means to be a feminist.

IV: CHAPTER THREE: THE DIGITAL LIFE OF PRO-LIFE FEMINISM

"I consider myself a feminist. But #believeallwomen?

Yeah that's gonna be a hard no from me. You know why? As a woman, I know women. Sadly, some of the most vindictive, manipulative, dishonest humans that I've met are women.

There's a reason why we have BOTH heads & hearts. Let's use both!!"

On September 19, 2020, New Wave Feminists founder, Destiny Herndon-De La Rosa, published an op-ed on DallasNews.com, and then shared the post with her NWF Facebook Page in hopes of encouraging discussion on the topic of now conservative Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh's congressional judiciary hearing regarding the sexual assault allegations of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford. The piece was relatively non-controversial and ultimately concluded that women should not be believed unconditionally about any sexual assault allegation. The Facebook post garnered 320 comments from followers of the NWF page and 52 shares, which presumably spurred countless other comment threads on the topic. The above quote is just one of the middling responses to the article from one of the pro-life feminists who participate on the Facebook page. While not all comments were as problematic as the one above, the vast majority were affirmative, echoing the centrist tone of the piece.

Reactions to this story in particular illustrate the narrow line pro-life feminists must walk — an otherwise fairly radical group like the NWF and Herndon-De La Rosa, when faced with a very public challenge to an already counterintuitive notion like pro-life feminism, are able to quickly and broadly spread ideological messaging

through the affirmational networks in their digital community. Pro-life feminists were presented with a complex issue with this case; on the one hand, the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh was sure to further pro-life agendas at the federal judicial level. On the other hand, Blasey-Ford's testimony about being sexually assaulted by Kavanaugh in their teen years was compelling as a feminist issue to tackle — both in the need to prevent assault against women and in the case of believing women who come forward about it. Responses like the above underscore a misogyny inherent in much pro-life rhetoric, wherein anti-woman sentiment is easily resorted-to in defense of the unborn child. Complicated rhetorical issues like this often force groups on the border to "show their hand" when it comes to prioritizing one aspect of a group's identity over another, and in this instance, pro-lifeism publicly trumped feminist ideologies.

Like the complicated case of pro-life feminist exclusion from the Women's March on Washington, NWF's reaction to this moment when feminism and a pro-life stance were pitted against each other in the figure of Kavanaugh can help illustrate processes of group identity formation. These are the moments during which ideological boundaries are drawn for social movements and groups. Especially in developing and growing movements, such as pro-life feminism, these boundaries serve multiple purposes such as creating an out-group from which the in-group can identify against. The capacity for identity cultivation and reinforcement, along with a number of other qualifiers, are constituent of theorized digital communities and the networked counterpublics they may become. In this chapter, I analyze the nature of the digital life of pro-life feminists by casting a wide net around three different sites/platforms that represent a broad participatory definition of the group.

Review of Literature

Digital Communities and Networked Counterpublics

The concept of community has only been an object of scholarly inquiry since the early 20th century. Hillery (1955) famously developed 94 definitions of what a community could be, while numerous scholars in the 1970s sought to define community in new ways. However, the presupposition of a physically shared location remained central to all of these theoretical positions.

It wasn't until the 1980s that theorists began to think critically about community. Williams (1983) viewed community as an elastic construct that changes and accounts for shifting boundaries and definitions. Cohen (1985) encouraged scholars to interrogate communities from a symbolic perspective in which the *meaning* of a community should override research interests looking to dissect the structure of a given grouping. The first scholarship on cyber communities is indebted to these formulations (Fernback, 1998).

With the move from structural-functional to virtual, discourse on cyber communities became more commonplace, especially with the rise of networked personal computers in U.S. households. The emergence of theories on cyber communities grew parallel to research on social networks, though at the time this area focused largely on correlative relationships between digital social networks and physical social organizations and less on the discrete nature of online social networking (Garton, Haythornthwaite, & Wellman, 1997).

Rheingold's *The Virtual Community* (1993) is a seminal work in the development of cyber community discourse. In it he discusses the implications of virtual worlds to physical worlds and lays down a definition for *virtual communities as* "social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of

personal relationships in cyberspace" (p. 5). While the work of scholars such as Rheingold remains foundational to the discussion on online communities, most theoretical work (including that of Rheingold's) on virtual communities was still bound by the rhetorical parameters used when talking about physical communities (Fernback, 1998).

With the emergence of popularized usage of social networking and social media, social scientists and theorists began to ask questions about what *sort* of communities were being established and whether these communities fit into extant definitions. A number of scholars turned to Anderson (1983) for guidance in understanding these virtual communities (Brabazon, 2001). Anderson's *imagined communities* in this sense refers to perceptions of nationhood by self-included citizens who do not have personal contact or knowledge of other members of the group. The term has also been used to account for nationalist sentiments among diasporic groups, as well as to refer to social groupings by interests or community of interests (Henri & Pudelko, 2007).

Some virtual community scholars have adopted Anderson's notion by emphasizing both the constitution and effect of an imagined community on identity (Paech, 2012). In this sense, "communities are dependent upon the instability and dynamic nature of identity" (p. 101), where the maintenance of a community relies on the projection of symbols of belonging by its members, and the identities of those members are simultaneously constructed through the interpellative process of that belonging. Murthy (2012) engages the German concept *bildung* to apply the notion of a construction of self to the act of regular identity projection through microblogging. He asserts that, not unlike the dual constitution of Anderson's identity and community, the utility of social media relies upon frequent updating by its users,

while those users are simultaneously "inventing the self" through those updates (p. 1062).

McMillan and Chavis's (1986) development of the definition of a "sense of community" (SoC) operationalizes feelings of belonging to a group, McMillan and Chavis defined four required categories of experience for a user to feel a sense of community: (1) "the right to belong," *membership* (p. 9)*;* (2) the potential for *influence*; (3) reinforcement of behavior through communal support, or *integration and fulfillment of needs;* and (4) *shared emotional connection.* Gruzd, Wellman, and Takhteyev (2011) combined the theory of SoC with Anderson's imagined communities and added Jones's (1997) *virtual settlement* to the mix to discern whether Twitter can facilitate an imagined community. Jones theorized that a "virtual settlement" is prerequisite to an online community, and like McMillan and Chavis, compiled four conditions of one: (1) interactivity; (2) more than two communicators;
(3) common-public-place; and (4) sustained membership over time. By testing one of the authors' social networks on Twitter, they concluded that Twitter meets all 8 criteria of a virtual settlement possessing a sense of community. They also note the similarities of Twitter to Anderson's imagined community: the presence of a common language (folksonomy) and linguistic conventions (hashtags, @, via, RT, etc.), as well as a "homogenous time," where Twitter facilitates a "continued imagined consciousness" through contemporaneous activity that exists in a certain window of temporal relevance (p. 1303). This project points to the multitude of communities (and definitions thereof) observable in the digital realm, and the authors concluded that Twitter in particular acts as a double community – collective and personal.

The literature on communities and their move to the internet is fairly limited, but perhaps can be considered under a broader terminology, where Habermas's Public

Sphere is taken up (almost entirely from a critical perspective) as a potentially persistent gathering place for groups with shared interests. In his seminal work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), Habermas discusses the emergence of the public sphere as it relates to power, technology, and the state. According to Habermas, the liberal public sphere emerged as a result of a number of factors which, taken together, led to the public as an apparatus where individual citizens conferred on subjects of public/greater interest in an unrestricted fashion. In Habermas's conception, the public sphere would be an equalizing field, where rank and class were "bracketed" upon entrance, and all voices were considered equal. The public body required transparent access to government documentation (which was a technological possibility for the first time) in order to check the power of the governing bodies which were thought to take cues and issues of state concern from the deliberations of said public. The public sphere was to be a discursive battleground upon which issues were fought over through liberal political papers as an open, democratic ideal. It is this incremental discursive articulation where matters of public interest would theoretically have the opportunity to be brought to head within the dialogic public.

Contrary to this position, a number of critical scholars have taken aim at Habermas's theories. Nancy Fraser (1990) takes issue with a number of the above distinctions of the bourgeois public sphere: the bracketing of class and rank, for example, first only includes propertied white men, and secondly is idealistic and impossible considering the sorts of cultural capital necessary (education, carriage, access) to participate in the public sphere. Aside from these specific critiques, Fraser's major conflict with Habermas's model is the assumption of the mono-public as the only democratic deliberative model. For Fraser there are now and have always

been a multitude of publics where different sorts of issues and different sorts of demographics group together — communities, of a sort. Explaining the need for multiple publics, or "subaltern counterpublics," Fraser brings up the issue of domestic abuse as one that was once relegated to the private realm and therefore not considered an issue of the greater public's interest. She asserts that a concerned counterpublic maintained a "discursive interaction" with the larger public on this issue, finally bringing it out of private homes and private institutions, and into the space of the judicial. The notion of counterpublics has since been invoked in countless projects as a way to talk about the political efficacy of "issue publics" like social movements, counterculture, and, often in the same breath, communities (Dahlgren, 2013).

With the emergence of web 2.0, Habermas's work became an obvious framework for media scholars to examine the democratic and social nature of the internet (Benkler, 2006; Dean, 2003; Castells, 2004). One of the most cited concepts in this regard is dana boyds's (2010) "networked publics," which takes up the general concepts of the liberal public sphere as reimagined by Michael Warner (i.e. an imagined public *produced* around a media object), but argues that the affordances that the digital platform provides produce a qualitatively new type of public. These affordances, made possible by the unique-to-digital "bits" of information, are comprised of (1) *"Persistence*: online expressions are automatically recorded and archived;" (2) "*Replicability*: content made out of bits can be duplicated;" (3) "*Scalability*: the potential visibility of content in networked publics is great;" and (4) "*Searchability*: content in the networked publics can be accessed through search" (boyd, 2010, emphasis hers).

Though almost never explicitly, networked counterpublics in particular are frequently discussed through the language of communities, where the important

conditions for building and sustaining a community, such as the aforementioned *membership, interactivity, shared public place* (etc.) are essential to the existence of a public. boyd's definition of a networked public as "the imagined collective that emerges as a result of the intersection of people, technology, and practice" (p. 1) mapped onto to Gruzd, Wellman, and Takhteyev's (2011) model provides a strong base for theorizing on the digital community. Taking this progression to its logical next step, Renninger (2014) applies the notion of a counterpublic (Fraser, 1990, Warner, 2002) to boyd's networked public to analyze a networked counterpublic of those who identify as asexual. He argues that networked counterpublics can act as a space to "*work out ideas* related to identity, community, and relationships, and an opportunity to *develop tactics* to assert or adapt identities to configure oneself" (p. 1516, emphasis his). Renninger's study on networked counterpublics provides an excellent fulcrum between the otherwise disparate conversations on *publics* and *communities*. This chapter aims to bridge this gap further, and in doing so build a framework through which to understand counterpublics online that also act as identity-strengthening communities and "safe spaces."

Safe Spaces

Another online arena that gets entangled in the definitions of community and counterpublics is the "safe space." Safe spaces online were initially considered such for the anonymity they provided — communities of strangers using avatars and screennames could go unnoticed by the real world as well as the rest of the internet by participating in a "separatist model of counterpublic communication, or an issue-focused anonymous group" (Renninger, 2014). Where safe spaces of the past (both material and virtual) involved isolationist efforts of active concealment (Polletta,

1999), the new safe space persists in broad daylight, so to speak. What is "unsafe" online, in this sense of the word, is the silencing or harassing effects of antagonists (often referred to as *trolls* - see Phillips, 2010). In the case of the sites in this study, their lack of popularity in the global online community effectively protects their space from unwanted attention.

The new safe space is that which is in essence too marginal to pay mind to, and therein garner the potentially negative attention of trolls or antagonists. These safe spaces then can create an echo chamber of sorts within which group norms, ideas, and opinions can "thicken." Occasionally referred to in the same breath as a 'third space,' or a space in the border or margins of dominant discursive spheres, scholars assert a number of affordances these spaces provide for not just the cultivation of social movements through "sites of resistance" (Pennington, 2018), but for the production of community and identity for its users.

Some have written that a safe community provided through the affordances of the web can be a place to communicate personal narratives, build a shared community history, and more or less "be heard" when the mainstream world is less attentive of marginalized groups' experiences. In her analysis of Black communities online, Love (2019) argues that online spaces allow for "Black women and girls to (re) generate their ideas of intellectual community work of Black women and girls, and also define what activism, education, and excellence mean for Black communities" (p. 59). Similarly, Echchaibi (2013) addresses the Muslim feminist blogosphere as one not preoccupied with the task of subverting the meta narratives on women and gender in Islam, but instead focuses on the effect of small communities online where Muslim women "assert their public visibility and engage in a critical interpretation and performance of their religious identities" (p. 853). He asserts, instead, that pockets of

online communities of Muslim feminists open up critical spaces that can slowly challenge and shift mental categorization, a process Echchaibi refers to as 'cultural thickening.'

These shared discursive spaces (Keller, 2016) then not only carve out a space for historically underrepresented identity groups, but allow for those communities to develop their own lexical rules, group memory, as well as many other theoretical requisites for "communities" online. Clark-Parsons (2018) addresses the "discursive boundary-making" of safe spaces on-line and in doing so constructs an analytic with which to think through the three dimensions of community boundary-making in an online context: "(1) what and whom the group provides *safety from*, (2) who the group provides *safety for*, and (3) what the group provides the *safety to* do" (p. 2133, emphasis in text). Within this framework, we can apply a broad heuristic to online communities which enjoy the privacy afforded by small grassroots organizations. Clark-Parson's analytic underscores the communitarian nature of subaltern counterpublics as both a place for a group identity's incubation and cultivation, as well as a standpoint from which to define a social movement.

The following study assumes the community-cultivating affordances of the safe space online, while considering the safety and political capacity of three online spaces where pro-life feminists congregate on the web. Digital communities that are also safe spaces act as a foundational structure from which members can develop group identities, shared discursive boundaries, and ultimately produce an issue public (much like those Fraser speaks of having impacted social norms and institutions). By collecting data about three different sites used by pro-life feminists, I then apply various qualifications described above to discern the "community-ness" of the sites, including their status as a safe space. Through analyzing these sites, I then conclude

that, together, these sites do act as a networked counterpublic, but individually are found wanting in areas of either safety or community-ness.[24]

Method

Research has had to respond to the rapid evolution of social media platforms and technologies. There of course exists a tired debate around approaching digital media as something qualitatively new vs. another exponential step in the lineage of Media writ large. That said, most developers of digital research methods as well as digital humanities practitioners are increasingly developing adaptive methods for observing, recording, and analyzing interactive media in particular. Rogers (2013) summarizes the multitude of recent methodological assertions made by media theorists in his discussion on "media specificity," and it becomes clear from his "follow the medium" conclusion that we are not to determine fixed qualitative (or even quantitative) methods for researching the web anytime soon. Instead, scholars have proposed adaptive and cumulative approaches to studying a decidedly new type of media content.

For instance, in human geography studies, similar complications arise in attempting to read behavior, movement, and performative content on social media sites. In response to the 'digital turn' in the field, Leszczynski (2018) invokes *triangulation* as a substantiation of multi-method use in qualitative research methods

[24] It should also be noted that the conditions necessary to maintain a safe space might inadvertently break down the very components that lead to, which begs the question of ontological or political relevance to one benefit over the other.

in particular. Roughly defined as "the use of multiple methods [in] an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question," triangulation carries with it a litany of critiques and remediations over the last half-century, as can be surmised by the temporal span of Denzin's citations (Denzin, 1970, 2012). That said, the general concept of adaptive and medium-specific methodology is useful in studying data comprised of "by-products of mundane digital praxes enacted with and through engagements with digital platforms" (Leszczynski, p. 476).

While considerable research exists on digital communities and/or digital counterpublics online, it typically focuses-in on one group on one platform, leading to 'medium-specificity' methodology that either already exists (ex. Twitter hashtag community evaluation described above), or at least approaches that can be built upon to serve specific hermeneutical needs. Goggins and Pedakovic (2014) address the need for standardized metrics of research across multiple online platforms (Twitter, Facebook, and Github) using Big Social Data (BSD), but the topic of qualitative cross-platform research remains uninvestigated. Additionally, neither methodologically nor conceptually are digital communities thought of as cross-platform entities, though logic tells us that they often will be. This is very likely due to the complication of muddling up methodology from platform to platform, and triangulating approaches to digital (and any qualitative) research is already difficult enough to reckon with. Applying a multi-modal approach to analyzing digital communities, which in and of themselves are definitional composites, then exponentially multiplies the challenge of that reckoning.

With this in mind, I found it necessary to develop a tailored approach to qualitative research on digital communities across multiple platforms. This gives me a reproducible format for this particular branch of research, which is then easily

adaptable to different communities, who are inevitably using different social media platforms and often in different ways. To this end, I take a systematic and heuristic approach to exploring each site (and in this case, platform), asking of each the very same questions, and then organizing the answers (along with the questions) along a few thematic lines.[25]

This approach was developed at roughly the same time as Light et. al's (2016) iteration of the "walkthrough method," a singular methodical approach to analyzing software applications (apps) that is theoretically couched in a combination of science and technologies studies (STS) and cultural studies' sensibilities, "establishing an app's environment of expected use by identifying and describing its vision, operating model and modes of governance. It then deploys a walkthrough technique to systematically and forensically step through the various stages of app [usage]" (p. 881). The two methods are considerably different: Cross-Platform Critical Discourse Analysis (CPCDA) involves a sort of backwards approach, where empirical (and some interpretive) data are collected and then thematically organized. There is a nominal query of governance, mission, and operating model, where all elements are treated as equally-informative data points to review in later analysis. The walkthrough method, by contrast, discursively analyzes an app's mission and functionality in order

[25] Some of these questions are obviously imperfect inquiries when applied to certain platforms, for example, asking if a Twitter thread has content for sale or freely available. While this seems at the outset as a waste of time, I have found that difficulty in answering certain questions on one platform or another is quite elucidating in thinking through the affordances and limitations of a given site's structure and design.

to compare an app's intended usage to its actual usage then physically tested by the researcher.

That said, they are similar in a number of methodological logics. Both understand that the governance (mediation, in CPCDA) of a site or app greatly impacts both the functionality and user behavior. They both consider the mission and funding of a site or app as relevant to its creation and persistence; and they both underscore the concession of platform studies in general — that the "physical" allowances of a site or app not only confine, but direct its users' behaviors and uses. The similarities in methods point to an obvious need in digital research to ground qualitative media analysis — both methods are attempts to smooth over a methodological incommensurability of applying the same mode of analysis to vastly variant platforms. "Where generalizability is about scaling up, transferability is about moving between—tracing connections between field sites rather than generalizing or making universal claims." (Lingel, 2017)

Process

I begin my analysis by comprising a list of approximately 25 questions regarding the content, political economy, interconnectivity, and demographic uses of the space. Following data collection, I then organize my findings into non-discrete categories. These frequently include (but are not limited to) *political economy, infrastructure, content, interactivity, users,* and *social media.* The questions are intentionally left out of the categorization process for a few reasons: First, building the questions around the categories leads the inquiry to fit into a pre-existing model, which is expressly the antithesis of the exploratory CPCDA approach. Second, variable sites require variable categories; a rigidity in questions and end categories

does not fit the aim of flexibility and adaptivity needed in digital research. Finally, though many questions seem to have an obvious categorical leaning, for instance, "is anything for sale?" appears to inarguably fit into a *political economy* category, the inquiry can direct the researcher to a "merch" page that is shared with another seemingly unrelated group (as you will see in the coming analysis) or structural affordance that may contribute important information to a different category, such as *content*, or *users* if it directs the researcher to a different site altogether.

Infrastructure and Political Economy as a section looks at the layout, presentation and functionality of each site from a structural standpoint. This category in particular resembles Light et al's walkthrough approach in its assumption of ignorance to a platform. By that I mean that the researcher, who is presumably internet-fluent, needs to de-familiarize themselves with the intuitive functions of a platform. In making the object *strange*, this section of inquiry reveals affordances and restrictions of a given site. Are there multiple avenues leading to "Donate" pages? Are comment threads highly visible and compelling to engage with? These types of questions help to understand the foundation on which online communities have a capacity to operate. They fall within an epistemology of networks, Massanari (2015) defines it succinctly as "'platform politics' to mean the assemblage of design, policies, and norms that encourage certain kinds of cultures and behaviors to coalesce on platforms while implicitly discouraging others" (p. 336). With these affordances in mind, this section serves doubly to describe the political economic interests of the site. This data includes funding and advertising information, whether the affiliated organization has 501c(3) status, as well as any relevant financial information that can be gleaned from the analysis. In exploring these two arenas together, we can view

digital communities as more or less grassroots, more or less encouraged, and therein more or less politically salient.

This study additionally led to a *content* category, which is primarily concerned with the general *use* of the site. It pertains to the type of content that is produced – what is it, and who produces it? Understanding whether or not a site contains mostly user-generated content contributes to assumptions about the "community" nature of the various sites. Some sites contain only user-generated content, such as tweets in a hashtag thread, while other sites produce cohesive and curated material for entirely different purposes. This category and those to follow are inevitably influenced, and sometimes dictated by the first category. The *content* category is useful for discerning the elements that do or do not qualify the site as a virtual community. When users can create their own content, or comment on content they did not create, a sense of belonging and reciprocation of that sense is possible. User-created content can also be conceptualized as a "reflexive circulation of discourse" central to producing and sustaining a public (Lindtner et al, 2011). Reflexive acknowledgement of in-group status is tantamount to developing a group identity.

The *users and interactivity* section further develops the line of inquiry from the *content* section. Using data obtained from various analytics utilities, I use this section to report the demographic information of who is using these sites, and the potential affordances for interactivity therein. This not only includes numerical data about usage and popularity, but also the qualitative intention of each space. Determining who is using the site, and how they are allowed to use it provides a glimpse not only into a digital community's makeup and size, but also the outcomes of those "platform politics" revealed earlier. Some sites provide this information readily, such as the number of "likes" on a Facebook page. However, some

demographic information requires third-party software like Alexa.com. One can pull demographic data through the Twitter API, but only for the previous 7-30 days depending on your level of access. Because this analysis is of a hashtag thread more than a year ago, a paid developer account is required to retrieve the information that Twitter has stored regardless. *Interactivity* refers to a site's capacity to cultivate social interaction, as well as the type and volume of those interactions on a given platform. For Facebook, this looks like comments, posts, and "reactions," a Facebook specific set of emotive responses beyond a simple "like" button. For Twitter, this includes retweets and replies in particular. Again, according to the models used by Gruzd, Wellman, and Takhteyev (2011) defined above, interactivity and acknowledgement of membership are key factors in determining candidates for a community.

Finally, the *social media and public messaging* section of my analysis looks firstly at the nature of interconnectedness through social media in each site, as well as the prominent uses and effectiveness of those uses of various social media platforms. Questions asked within this section include those about interlinking social media platforms, other media sites that are linked, and any real-world organizations that the sites might associate with. While not all sites examined with CPCDA can be considered social media sites or even "web 2.0" (an internet that allows users to actively produce their own content and engage in socialization with others in real time), their use of social media interconnectivity defines their role in the network of a community online. The aim of this section of inquiry is to both construct a perceived network as well as observe the new type of community formation (and the qualitative implications therein) that emerges with the use of social media.

Similarly, this section pertains to outward-facing definitions on the sites. *Public messaging* refers to the type of content that is not necessarily intended to foster

community building, but instead is used as either a recruitment tactic, an organizational norm, like a mission statement, or messaging intended explicitly for public relations. While not directly related to the aforementioned qualifications of a networked digital community, a description of a site's outward messaging provides important information about group identity and purpose. Was this site *intended* to be a node in a networked community? What are its stated core values? Is it trying to recruit or proselytize for political aims, or is it a spontaneous collecting of like-minded individuals creating a shared discursive space? These sorts of questions, along with inquiry on *social media,* coalesce to inform on the intentionality of a site and that intentionality's relationship to community status or even social movement tactics.

Sites

In an ideal study, Twitter threads would be captured in real time, or within a few days, as tweets can be deleted or made private after the fact, and employing Twitter's API to pull tweet data can be costly. Capturing a *community* moment in all its ephemerality and spontaneity, however, is a guess at best, and often the assumption of a community conversation will lead to a scattered and diluted collection of tweets by in and out-group members, or the topic will comprised primarily of bots and hashtag spider bait (which means: always be collecting!). That said, for this study I am accessing an older thread using date-to-date parameters and multiple hashtag inquiries.

I chose to follow the pro-life feminist community on Twitter surrounding the 2017 Women's March on Washington, analyzed in great detail in Chapter Two. The Women's March on Washington was organized as a show of female solidarity and protest against the inauguration of Donald Trump. Early in the planning process

between November and January, popular pro-life feminist group, New Wave Feminists (NWF), joined the call for march organizers, and were later removed after a public backlash both on social media sites and popular press covering the subject. According to the group's leader and founder, Destiny Herndon-De La Rosa, their Facebook group, discussed below, began small until "everything happened with the women's march and we doubled in size and went up to like 42,000."

My second and related site is the New Wave Feminists' Facebook Page. Facebook "Groups" and "Pages" are home to some of the most obvious visible community markers. With spaces and opportunities to contribute, tag one another, and discuss on various "posts," which act as threads of their own sort, Facebook Groups in particular outlines an ideal model for online community participation. Groups contain individuals with self-identifying profiles voluntarily opting into a community of presumably like-minded people. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Facebook Group infrastructure does not encourage bipartisan spaces for debate or discussion — instead, the structure of friendship networks alongside the increasingly private nature of interest groups coalesce to streamline a process of echo-chambering on the platform.

Finally, I look to the maintained but static website of the Feminists for Life of America: feministsforlife.org. As will be explained below, the inclusion of a static website amongst social media sites (meaning sites that include public visitor interactivity) can provide not only a receptacle for larger content pieces that are not suitable for social media platforms, but also a curation of values, mission statements, group finances, and access to non SMS-specific affordances. Organizationally-maintained domains are rich sites of information that can undergird the analysis of looser, or more ephemeral networks found on social media. I believe that websites

should be included in appropriate contexts to ground group identities to real-world events and organizations.

Analysis

Pro-life Feminist Twitter

As a catalyst moment for the pro-life feminist online community, the Twitter conversation surrounding the march provides a dense analysis site which arguably acted as groundwork for the current online community of pro-life feminists. To limit my results, I set the parameter for the month of January, 2017, and searched for a specific combination of hashtags: #WomensMarch, and either #feminist or #prolifefeminist, and either #prolife or #prolifefeminist. The complex parameters ensure that certain tweets containing the wrong combination of hashtags don't fall through the cracks, so that a tweet including "#WomensMarch #prolife #feminist" would be considered in equal measure to "#WomensMarch #prolifefeminist," and any number of combinations therein. The dates account for the admittance of the New Wave Feminists as march organizers which has been placed at various times from "early January" to January 15 at the latest.

Infrastructure and Political Economy

Twitter's infrastructure is somewhat limited in comparison to the other sites listed here. That said, there are some unique forms of governance that allow for quick, spontaneous debates, protests, or conversations that could contribute to community formation. Twitter does not verify identities of user accounts, so they can be created, used, and deleted or removed at any time. This feature proves especially useful for protest organization in nations with repressive governments, but can also open the

door for trolls and bots. Additionally, tweets can be deleted at any time, though it is possible to find archived and cached versions of tweets if the contents and user information is known.

Twitter's functionality is fairly straightforward for anyone familiar with micro-blogging. A logged-in user's homepage displays an updating feed of tweets and advertisements beneath a text prompt box where users can write tweets, add image objects like gifs, post polls for their followers, or set a schedule for the tweet's eventual publishing. The home page toggles from a sidebar on the left to a search page, an inbox, a notifications page, saved twitter lists, and a number of analytic options. Twitter allows users to post, reply, retweet, and "like" others' tweets, all of which can be viewed publicly unless said user has privacy settings to dictate otherwise. Finally, Twitter is free to use and does not sell purchasable goods (aside from developer access to data and business analytics), and instead employs targeted and paid advertising which sometimes appears native, but is always stamped with a "promoted" icon.

Content

Twitter threads consist entirely of user-generated content. By user-generated content, I am referring to the message itself, not necessarily the content within. In fact, most of the media content circulated on social media sites like Twitter and Facebook are retweets, shares, or just a coopting of content found elsewhere on the internet. In the case of this thread, the posted content takes three general forms: First, in the same vein as pro-choice coverage of the women's march, the thread includes a number of posts with handmade signs from both the women's march and the "March for Life," which occurs every year on the following weekend. One sign read, "Hey

Trump: Torture is NOT Pro-Life!" The second type of content was links to op-eds and personal blogs on one side of the debate or the other, such as a pro-life think tank's piece: "Why True Feminism Means Skipping the Women's March on Washington." Finally, the third most common type of content took the form of meme-cards (which were also prominent on the Facebook page), displaying quotes or adages meant to be impactful without any context. One was shared multiple times and read "It's the saddest thing in the world to watch thousands of women march for the right to kill their own children #womensmarch," superimposed over CNN coverage of the march in D.C.

Not all content in this thread contained media and instead (true to Twitter's original form) consists of users chiming in on the case of the New Wave Feminists' removal from the organizing body: "It's sad to hear that I wouldn't have been welcome at the #WomensMarch today because I am #ProLife. #prolifefeminist #allvoicesheard" (@SarahMichelleRC). Due to the publicness of the women's march and the fallout from the NWF's removal, users outside of the pro-life feminist community also joined the conversation to express similar sentiments, or else to troll the conversation with antifeminist and #MAGA vitriol. Typically, these are members of the broader pro-life community who were already unlikely to attend the Women's March.

Users and Interactivity

As discussed above, many of the participants in this thread are self-described pro-life feminists. Some others are solely pro-lifers, some are simply anti-feminist, and some may very well be bots or trolls, as Twitter notably does not require any sort of identity authentication like Facebook. That said, the users with the most

substantive tweets, including those with the highest numbers of comments and retweets, are seemingly real people with real personal information on their profiles, like Sister Julia Walsh who retweeted an open letter from catholic feminists: “I am one of the signers of this letter. I am a #Catholic #ProLife #Feminist and tomorrow I am going to participate in the #WomensMarch.” The low percentage of unidentifiable users in this thread implies that there is potentially a network already in place that members of this thread were drawn from.

Though some might consider Twitter threads to be the most interactive of all social media platforms, the structure of the site lends less to community conversations than, say, Facebook. Unlike Facebook, Twitter users must manually click an icon to view replies and hashtag threads as they are not visible by default. That said, unlike Facebook, Twitter users can engage in a conversation with any other Twitter user, as there are no “groups” or “pages” that require an invitation or opting-in.

Social Media and Public Messaging

The enmeshed use of social media on Twitter is fairly limited, as Twitter’s designers have little to gain by making it easy for users to jump to Facebook or Instagram. Tweets can be shared elsewhere in the same way that any site with a url can be shared, but there is no direct button to easily share Twitter content to other social media accounts. On a user’s profile page, there are spaces to share a personal website (which incidentally could just be a Facebook page or profile), but nothing built-in to explicitly connect to other social media platforms.

Finally, a hashtag thread conveys little in the way of intentional public messaging. Instead, the public-facing messaging is intertwined with user-created content at the individual level. Aside from paid advertising, Twitter merely acts as a

platform for an individual's stance or an entity's agenda. There are a few groups participating in this thread in particular, such as "Rehumanize International" and "March for Life UK," whose image can be impacted by what their Twitter account participates in, but otherwise the arena of public messaging on Twitter is relatively chaotic.

New Wave Feminists Facebook Page

Choosing a representative site for the New Wave Feminists (NWF), a major focus in this project, proved difficult as the group is actively engaged on multiple platforms, and unlike the FFL, offer different and adapted content and engagement on each platform. The group has a blog with original content, a static website, a highly active Instagram account, a relatively active Twitter account, and now a paid Pantheon account for more direct engagement with dedicated group members. I chose to look at the group's Facebook page for a few reasons: The page is the first space that the NWF used to connect with members, and thus represents a core community space for the group. Second, a great deal of original content, most of which has been commented on, has been produced on their Facebook page, allowing for a closer look into the community workings. Finally, Facebook is arguably a main hub for most social media communities — the lack of anonymity combined with the privacy of in-group status with invitation-only groups and pages creates a unique "groundedness" (Rogers, 2013), while the platform's affordances, like high-functionality commenting, replying, tagging, emoting, etc. provide the greatest allowance for user engagement.

Infrastructure and Political Economy

All Facebook "Pages" are developed with the same base functionality — a "Home" page, and about ten tabs for other sorting purposes, such as "Events" or "Shop." Page admins can then choose which tabs to use and can add personalized tabs. The NWF page has the standard tabs ("About," "Photos," etc.) as well as a "Groups" tab and an "Email Signup" tab. While once a combined functionality, the "Community" activity and "Posts" tabs are separate zones now; instead of "followers" posting in the same area as admin, user posts are relegated to the Community tab, which does not appear by default when navigating to the page. Therefore, the main page, as well as the posts that appear in general feeds are only those posted by the page's admins (in this case, Herndon-De La Rosa). That said, any followers are capable of commenting on or reacting to any of the posts, though Herndon-De La Rosa moderates the page and can and sometimes does delete comments.

While Facebook pages are free to make, and come with a surprising amount of free analytic data, admins can pay to have their pages advertised more frequently or prominently on Facebook feeds. While there are no ad dollars to be made on individual Facebook Pages (targeted advertising for other products does not appear on Facebook Pages), there are a few mechanisms on Facebook pages for making money. A group can sell a product directly through the page, though the NWF does not do so. There is also a "shop" button directly on the page that can lead to any URL of the admin's choice. For the NWF, it leads to their home website's merchandise page, where donations can be made and branded t-shirts, tote-bags, and stickers can be bought. NWF is listed as a 501c(3), and Herndon-De La Rosa notes in a post promoting her new paid Pantheon page that she earns $15,600 per year by running the NWF.

Content

Content on this page is by and large created by Destiny, the founder and admin of the page. Posts include three sorts of content — sometimes original posts, sometimes they are promotional or calls to action, and sometimes they are "shared" third-party content — all of which include comprehensive original commentary by Destiny. Original posts typically consist of Destiny vlogging or writing a long post regarding a current issue related to feminism/pro-life feminism or her personal thoughts and experience, which often share personal details about her life (stories about her children, her recent foray into sobriety, her search for a paying job, etc.) along with conversation-provoking questions that are then answered and engaged with by community members. Promotional posts and calls to action are regularly created, either pointing "followers" to purchasable or free content to use in the pro-life feminist movement, or more often calls for donations or participants for charitable causes. For example, the NWF is based in Dallas, TX, and has been actively engaged with immigration issues during the Trump presidency. They often hold widespread donation campaigns for women and children affected by or interned due to immigration policies. Finally, Destiny often shares third-party content (sometimes from other progressive pro-life groups, such as "Secular Pro-Life"), often in the form of op-eds, videos, and meme-cards which she then writes extensive commentary on in the post.

While the most visible content is that posted by Herndon-De La Rosa, a "Community" section allows for posts by "followers," which presumably have to be approved by admins. These include similar third-party shared content, typically with commentary alongside it, which is intended to spark conversation or opinions on the topic. Often, incendiary material is shared multiple times through the mechanism of

"tagging" the New Wave Feminist page. The most frequent repost appears to be a shared post originally by Destiny, calling for donations to purchase items on a baby registry to support a woman who was convinced not to abort her baby by Destiny.

Users and Interactivity

According to the NWF's Facebook "Community" tab, the page has 50,642 "follows," meaning Facebook users who receive regular updates about the page on their home feeds, and 48,897 "likes," implying that some number of likers do not receive updates unless they seek out the page. Little information is available about the demographics of the page followers, as Facebook data is notoriously difficult to obtain. Although user posts are relegated to a sub-page, followers can comment on, tag, and "react" (love, like, dislike, saddened, surprised, and amused by) to all posted content, allowing for much discussion between followers, as well as non-followers who can comment on posts, often leading to debates and arguments. This is a fine example of size and safe-spaces on social media, as Herndon-De La Rosa explained in an interview:

> …just [be]cause someone leaves a comment, that doesn't mean that they follow us at all. No, and all it takes is one person being like 'Trump 2020!' and then like, that gets blasted into their algorithm and then all those people come and so we're at the point now where I'm …I will hide a lot of the comments, honestly, because I want it to be... I want there to be thoughtful conversation, not just like weird GOP trolling type stuff happening in our comments.

That said, Facebook's decision to move user posts to the "Community" tab has noticeably curbed community-specific interaction and activity. With this update, user

and community discussion more often occurs on the homepage in the comments to Destiny's varied posts.

Social Media and Public Messaging

The New Wave Feminists as a group are active on most popular social media sites, as discussed above. However, most sites only link back to the core website and not to one another. This approach is likely to increase flow to donations and merchandise purchases, as the bio for the Twitter handle for the NWF links directly to the "Support" page on NewWaveFeminists.com. Therefore, while the group is active on multiple platforms, especially Facebook and Instagram, they are not actually highly interconnected.

In terms of public messaging, the NWF's Facebook page does not appear heavily curated. One signifier that is telling of a group's concern with brand image is the "Pages Liked by This Page" widget, which can be interpreted as groups or causes that the page in question publicly supports. For the NWF, those pages include both progressive pro-life groups, like The Guiding Star Project — a pro-life women's clinic intended to unseat Planned Parenthood — as well as Feministing.com, a fervently pro-choice feminist blog whose founder, Jessica Valenti, was one of the loudest voices calling for the NWF's removal at the Women's March on Washington. This projection as decidedly pro-life and decidedly feminist (the group also follows the Women's March) is also reflected in the types of content made public as well as the admin and core community members' handling of regressive rhetoric in the comments section. Finally, the explicit public facing messaging on the page's "About" tab states:

> New Wave Feminists are here to take feminism back from those who have corrupted it. Sometime before we were born our womanhood was traded for a handful of birth control pills, the "privilege" to pose for playboy, and the "right" to abort our children. We embrace the early American feminism of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Also, we're way funny and have super rad hair. (NWF, "About")

FeministsForLife.org

Feministsforlife.org is the main static website for the Feminists For Life of America (FFL or FFLA), an organization founded in 1972 by Cathy Callaghan and Pat Goltz in protest of the pro-abortion stance of the National Organization for Women (NOW) from their Ohio chapter. From the outset, the organization has claimed that protecting the unborn is a core duty of an authentic feminist for a few reasons. One reason is the fact that more females are aborted worldwide than males. Another is the notion that abortion became a substitute for true equality between the sexes — that the only way women could compete in the world with men was by denying a natural function of the human body.

According to internet archiving project The Wayback Machine, the earliest visit recorded to www.feministsforlife.org was in 1996, when the site appeared similar to most non-professionally developed websites of the time: A single page with a plain white background and text formatted in the center of the page with bullet points explaining the mission and current goals of the group (Along with the visitor counter that is common in early websites). While the current incarnation of the site is an anonymously designed Wordpress template, the original site designer is listed as

Coleen MacKay — presumably a tech-savvy member of the group working pro-bono.

This early, bare-bones appearance is unrecognizable to today's website, which is now a templated WordPress thoughtfully curated by professional web designers. Maintaining a cool color-scheme throughout with vibrant ads and high-end stock photography, the site is no longer a basic repository for pertinent information, but clearly a marketing mechanism in its own right. Much of the site is dedicated to proving the necessity of an organization like the FFL, such as the front page's widgets directing visitors to pages like "Successes." The other aim for the site provides content and materials for recruitment and visibility activism through pages like "Pro-life Answers to Pro-Choice Questions" or "Revolutionize Your Campus," where those already convinced by the cause can download free content and order a free "Revolution on Campus Kit," which includes posters, brochures, and the like, so members can table on college campuses with the resources and direction provided. With that in mind, the role of a bespoke website in an online cross-platform community is often one of resources — either for recruitment or confirmation of a group identity and purpose.

Infrastructure and Political Economy

Similar to many Wordpress templates, the site has a home landing page, and a navigation bar at the top of the page with tabs and dropdown menus for other pages and child pages. Main tabs include "About," a dropdown menu including child pages for "Accomplishments," "FAQ," "Speakers," and a page each for "Contact Us" and "Newsletter Signup;" A "News" tab links to a page of what are essentially blog posts promoting the FFL's activities, or responding to current issues in the news. Most of

the latter posts are written by Serrin M. Foster, the organization's president for over 20 years running. The "Herstory" tab drops down to include "Feminist Foremothers," "Women Who Mourn: Reflections by Women who have had abortions" and "We Remember," which includes links to both a memorium of prominant pro-life feminists as well as a bulleted list of women who have died in relation to abortion complications. A "Resources" tab contains that information spotlighted on the homepage, including those mentioned above and links to both books and journals produced by the FFL as well as to their child-site "WomenDeserveBetter.com," which is an extensive repository of resources (read: instructional blogs) for mothers, expecting women, and women who have aborted/miscarried.[26]

This brings us to the second half of this category concerned with financial aspects of the site. Because this is a core web presence for the FFL, there are multiple avenues for income through the site. First is the donation page, which allows for annual subscriptions as well as membership in "Giving Circles" (with feminist foremothers titling tiers of recurring donation amounts - the Susan B. Anthony Circle is for $10,000 donated monthly, yearly, or quarterly). Second, their magazine, once designated a journal, can be purchased issue to issue for $12. The FFLA also sells a limited amount of merchandise under the copyrighted term "Covetable Stuff," consisting of typical merchandise like bumper stickers, calendars, and the like.

[26] Notably, WomenDeserveBetter.com does not sport the same high quality web design as the FFL's, but is instead a basic black-and-white blog site with an extensive collection of articles, covering issues from "11 Tips for Homeschooling Temporarily," in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to "How to Lease a Car." Finally, the navigation bar ends with a circled "GIVE" button which takes the visitor to a donation page

Finally, the list of expert speakers compiled under the "About" section concludes with an option to inquire about rates and schedules, implying that part of the FFL's income is derived from speaking fees. The site does not support any advertisements aside from its own, and is listed as a 501 (c)3, so presumably all income is in the form of selling merchandise, memberships, and donations.

Content

As the static site in this networked community, the content was as expected — curated and in-depth with regard to archivability and searchability. The overall tone of content in the site is calmly impassioned - while there is no tangible sense of urgency, it is clear that the site is aimed to convey the FFL as a *movement* and not solely a non-profit organization. Unlike the other sites in this study, the FFL's site has no user-generated content. That said, there is quite a bit of original content, much of it created by Serrin Foster herself, or FFL board chair Kara Sorenson, available to watch, read, or download free-of-charge. First, there is a page listing initiatives and bills the FFL is endorsing and supporting, as well as calls to action for or against the campaigns of various members of congress on abortion and family-related issues. Second, there are various videos stretching back ten years showcasing FFL speakers (primarily Serrin Foster), interviews, and coverage of outreach and protest events that the FFL hosts or takes part in, such as the "March for Life." Finally, as mentioned earlier, there are reference resources for the task of recruitment and visibility. This includes downloadable ads and brochures, as well as a list of "pro-woman answers to pro-choice questions," where primarily Foster gives extensive responses to questions and critiques of pro-life feminism, such as "What about all those kids in foster care that nobody wants?"

Users and Interactivity

Little meta-data is available for the users of FeministForLife.org, as the site does not receive enough traffic to ascertain triangulated demographic information. That said, free search engine optimization (SEO) analytics can provide some clues. According to SEMRush, a marketing analysis "toolkit," FeministsForLife.org garners about two to three thousand visits per day, almost all of which are from anglophone countries (half of which is the U.S.). A great deal of their traffic links in from the Susan B. Anthony List's website. Otherwise, much of their traffic is directed through searches about feminist foremothers — in particular Susan B. Anthony, Victoria Woodhull, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Elizabeth Blackwell, the first female physician (accredited by the AMA) and Harvard Medical School graduate. SEMRush also indicates that FeministsForLife.org does not use branded or targeted advertising to draw traffic to their site.

FeministForLife.org is the least interactive of the sites analyzed in this project. As it is a static website, it does not allow for user generated content or interactions with content produced by the admins. FFL's website does not even allow for commenting on their "blog" type posts by Serrin Foster; instead they lead to donation links and buttons to share the post/article on social media. This is likely due to the FFLA's controversial stances which would undoubtedly draw negative commentary to their site.

Social Media and Public Messaging

Though FeministsForLife.org is the only non-SMS in this study, it is one of the more interconnected sites. There are social media widgets at the bottom of the FFL homepage for both the organization's Facebook and Twitter feeds, implying an

active engagement with both platforms. However, no original content is being produced on those accounts, so they therefore act more as branches leading back to the main webpage. The site also links to a YouTube channel featuring most of the same videos available on the website, but touts over 70 thousand views. The site's *public messaging* is not necessarily an effect of, but its main purpose. Every page and piece of content featured has been considered through the lens of public messaging prior to publication, and some messages are more salient than others. Their mission statement is: "Feminists for Life is a renaissance of the original American feminism. Like Susan B. Anthony and other early American suffragists, today's pro-life feminists envision a better world in which no woman would be driven by desperation to abortion" followed by a bulleted list addressing social inequities that make having children an unattractive option like "Campuses and workplaces that support mothers in practical ways and do not force them to choose between their education or career plans and their children" ("About Us"). Both of these themes call back to first-wave feminists and social justice-based pro-lifism, and are main messaging strategies to convey the organization's current slogan "Women Deserve Better." Additionally, as described above, the site contains a curated collection of videos, advertisements, and downloadable (read: shareable) content that collectively projects a desired brand and messaging.

Discussion

The ultimate objective of this methodological approach is to heuristically tease out underlying similarities and differences between otherwise disparate internet platforms. This approach is used here in concert with an inquiry toward the content and efficacy of a digital community as both a safe space and/or potential

counterpublic. A number of similarities arise when each platform is viewed from its category results. In the case of these three sites, each has strengths and weaknesses for supporting an online community of pro-life feminists. There are not many attributes that all three sites share, aside from engagement in some way with social media platforms, as well as their use by pro-life feminists to connect with other pro-life feminists and to speak to the world beyond that group. That said, a number of the digital community requisites can be found in either each site or a combination of sites. Using this analysis of candidacy for digital communities, the next question is whether a site is a "safe space" as defined by various scholars. Does this community provide a unique platform for self-expression and group identity cultivation? Is it safe from interveners for members to share personal narratives and build "discursive boundaries?"

As determined by Gruzd et al, Twitter hashtag threads can in the right circumstances be considered digital communities. Aside from Jones's fourth requirement, "sustained membership over time," this thread technically meets all other criteria in their study. That said, when considering the content and participants of this one, as highly varied and opportunistic as a platform for political opinions, it is difficult to assume that members of any extant or newly formed community in this thread felt the space to be a safe site for identity exploration or self-expression. Additionally, because the thread is a result of a multi-hashtag inquiry, it lacks the focused intentionality of a discussion thread formed around a new hashtag community.

Similarly, the Facebook page for the New Wave Feminists fulfills all the above requirements as a digital community; it even satisfies Jones's fourth criterion for sustained membership over time. Because the page is opt-in, a self-selecting group

of pro-life feminists can have a consistent platform on which to build discursive boundaries. It is not a perfectly safe space, as anyone can become a follower of the page, but in general the site provides a relatively unseen space (less so, however, after the Women's March) where a marginal group can reinforce their group identities, histories, and convictions.

Finally, the Feminists for Life website does not provide a space for the interactivity necessary for it to stand as a digital community on its own. Instead, it acts as a repository of resources for and histories of the pro-life feminist community writ-large. From a broader perspective, the site also provides a legitimation of the concept of pro-life feminism, and acts as a proverbial backbone for the identity group's status. This site also does not fulfill basic candidacy for a 'safe space,' as it is freely available to anyone and provides no venue for interactivity.

In all, only the former two sites could be individual bases for digital communities, and from there only the New Wave Feminists' Facebook group is designed in such a way as to allow for discrete social isolation from the broader public, or a "safe space." Again, this separation is not absolute — nonmembers may comment on posts originating from the NWF's page — but, in general, Facebook's design as a platform encourages a separatist model for issue-based engagement.

Conclusion

If the objective of this study were solely to determine the platform most suited for a "safe space," Facebook would win out in most contexts. The affordances of Facebook that provide safe spaces for marginalized groups in the United States are the same affordances that contribute to the platform's divisive, echo-chamber effects on

users with socio-political differences. [27] While the goal includes understanding the similarities and differences of the affordances and usages of multiple platforms, the ultimate goal is to ascertain if the digital community of pro-life feminists has or needs safe spaces online. By need, I am referring to the idea that marginalized groups form and develop online in a qualitatively different way than on-the-ground recruitment and organizing. In this case, the pro-life feminists had an extant network connected through phone trees and snail mail — still social technologies, but not the kind under scrutiny here.

With this in mind, we can conclude that unlike some marginalized groups, the pro-life feminists did not require a safe online space to initially form and incubate as a social group. Instead, pro-life feminists utilized the affordances of online networks to mature, fundraise, organize, and recruit. Subsequent sects (Facebook groups in this instance) of pro-life feminists, "Riot Grrrls for Life," "Secular Pro-life," "Athiests for Life," and many others have arguably been a byproduct of both the pro-life feminist move to social media in concert with the development of easily-creatable "groups" and "pages" on the platform. The existence of these sub-groups performs that discursive boundary-making for the broader online community of pro-life feminists, working out (in real time) the nuances of what it means to be a pro-life feminist. Each time one of these groups peels off from a broader categorization, it points to the latter's deficiency in the qualities for membership, and stretches the scope with which pro-life feminism can be viewed.

[27] Facebook is considered one of the most compliant social media platforms in cooperating with oppressive governments to censors and surveil citizens.

This is a fine illustration of this chapter's conclusion that, in some cases, multiple sites are needed to fulfill extant qualifications for a digital community (and subsequently networked counterpublic), such as Twitter's "potential for influence," or Facebook's "sustained membership over time." To speak about networked digital communities in the terms of networked counterpublics is to underscore their potential for social and political influence on the broader "public." Herein lies the (somewhat arbitrary) distinction between digital communities and networked counterpublics — the latter is invoked in discussions on potential for influence as a "subaltern counterpublic," while the former can be better applied to groups that are not currently tied to active social movements.

Most pro-life feminists designate the ideology as a movement, and therefore this study is concerned with the latter. From the above results, we have concluded that on their own merits, these sites may lack the necessary components of a networked counterpublic. Combined, however, the three sites establish a strong digital community and moreover a potentially effective subaltern counterpublic. Together the sites provide major benefits for a growing and otherwise marginal community: They have a sustained site of membership (Facebook), a platform to support instantaneous communication with other members (Twitter), and a shared history and set of resources with which to contextualize a social identity (FFL website). Variations of these affordances are present individually, but together the sites form a network full of opportunities to develop identity and culture and reinforce the ideology of pro-life feminism.

V: CONCLUSION

In the history of U.S. women's movements, the strong-willed female figurehead has been essential to a project's identity and the public's perception and memory of it. This is made plain in the recent popular mini-series, *Mrs. America,* which follows prominent moments in the feminist v. antifeminist moment — highlighting in particular the role that the cult of personality played in major political moves of community leaders like Betty Friedan and Phyllis Schlafly, respectively. The pro-life feminist movement is no different in this regard. Rachel MacNair perhaps single-handedly lifted pro-life feminism from the depths of obscurity and conspiracy theory to a fully institutionalized school of thought with a large number of followers. Her Quaker upbringing and outlook was undoubtedly woven into the foundation of the Feminists For Life and the "consistent life ethic," and her shared religious identity with Susan B. Anthony likely bolstered her sense of authority over the suffragette's existential outlook. These details seem almost too personal to be relevant in the broader history of the feminist movement until one considers the role this activist played, and continues to play, in strategically proselytizing this evocative history and the subsequent influence of the Susan B. Anthony List, which has already spent half a million dollars by mid-year in the 2020 election cycle on supporting pro-life and Republican candidates (opensecrets.org). With this in mind, this dissertation has attempted to read cases micro and macro in relation to the counterintuitive stance of pro-life feminism with the outlook that all historical, sociological, and political stones be overturned where possible.

To begin, I provided background research on not only the emergence of pro-life feminism, but of abortion as a legible political issue. That is, I traced early mutations of the definitions of what did and did not qualify as abortion—post-quickening vs. menstrual regulation, for example—and fleshed out the institutionalization of women's health services through the formation of the American Medical Association. At that moment in time, legal implications of abortion were addressed only where necessary, and definitions of "therapeutic abortions" broadened throughout the 1960s on both sides of the U.S. political spectrum. This flow led to an ebb in the form of anti-feminism, the new right, and reactionary legislative moves like the Hyde Amendment intended to circumvent the gains made by the women's movement, such as Roe v. Wade.

It is these two ideologies, feminist and anti-feminist, that progressive pro-lifers were forced to choose between. Many became single-issue voters, which sent them into the right, as both parties changed tactics and pro-lifism became an identity, instead of a nuanced political issue. Those left behind, like Rachel MacNair, worked to support pro-life Democrats, while they were still a common entity. For decades, pro-life feminists rode on the boundary between what Hannah Arendt considered the private sphere of bodily concerns and the public arena for juridical deliberation, sustaining a third space through the impossibility of their convictions. This fringe identity was supported by a contrived shared history and legitimated through institutions and organizations like the FFL or the SBA List. This is elaborated in Chapter Two, where I interrogated the historical figure of Susan B. Anthony — an unlikely yet enduring mascot for pro-life feminists to deploy in arguments over "authentic" feminism.

In Chapter One, I focused on the material implications of such an extreme departure from mainstream feminism by reading the Women's March of 2017 as the catalyst for a pro-life feminist resurgence. Without question, media coverage and engagement provided a legitimizing vehicle for debate around feminism and abortion, even if only a small minority wanted to have the conversation. The chapter concluded that in the dialogical realm of mainstream activist feminism, pro-life politics are incommensurable to the movement. This is not to say pro-life feminism is ontologically impossible, but that feminism as a social movement, extending from the women's liberation movement, is in many ways *defined* by its pro-abortion rights stance, making pro-life feminism categorically incongruent to one of the most widely-perceived formations of public feminism.

In essence, the pro-life feminists lay in wait, training, organizing, legitimating, authoring, and so on, until socio-political formations transformed into their current trajectory. As with nationalist American populism, pro-life feminism became galvanized in the margins of legible politics, and social media and the writable web provided both venue and validation for the group, along with countless other niche social groupings. Chapter Three analyzed the texture of sociality in online communities like that of the pro-life feminists, ultimately arguing that social media in particular (as well as other aspects of the writable web, which will be discussed below) facilitates the cultivation, growth, and maintenance of fringe viewpoints like pro-life feminism. Much like various alt-right and conspiracist groups receiving media attention as of late, the web also provides an amplification of a small population's existence, which might otherwise be relegated to a church basement gathering. This amplification at first only creates the perception of a larger role in public discourse than is realistic, but inevitably the phenomenon contributes to the

power those groups are then able to yield in the public sphere. The project ends on the topic of digital communities to reflect the forward-moving position of counterintuitive or paradoxical political identities. The stalwart insistence of the pro-life feminists of their own interpretation of political history, along with the moralistic drive to protect the "unborn" and the crisis of factual reality the U.S. currently wrestles with, implies that pro-life feminists are not going anywhere anytime soon.

A major limitation of a project this broad in scope is the use of language and the black-boxing of nuanced historical contexts. For instance, to talk about a feminist movement that is at odds with the pro-life feminist movement is already rife with complications. Each potential terminology: "mainstream feminism," "white/liberal feminism," "popular feminism," "constitutional feminism," "hegemonic feminism," etc. brings with it a body of literature, debate, and genealogy of its own. How does one convey all of the subtleties of history, dissents, alliances, presents and futures of an enormous entity like feminism in regard to its perception by the general public? Questions like this exemplify the enormity of this project, illustrate its draw to a researcher, and underscores the inevitable critiques of internal reliability and consistency.

To speak of feminism as an intellectual project can ignore the material efforts and consequences of hard-fought, on-the-ground accomplishments, as has been criticized in the past. To address it as primarily a social movement denies the reality that much of the feminist project has moved into academia, and debates outside of the academy are similarly preoccupied. To think about feminism as an era of the women's movement implies that it is a finalized moment bound within a specific temporality — to echo Jennifer Nash's critique of co-opting black feminism—a project to be completed and thus moved on from. Feminism as a philosophical genre

regarding centralized platforms like identity and bodily autonomy gets even further into the weeds, fully submitting feminist ideals to the ivory tower and assuming some platonic realm of pure feminism exists and can be aimed for.

It is in this final understanding of feminism which the pro-life feminists find a space to insert themselves — regarding feminism as a philosophical endeavor allows for deliberation, and the pro-life feminists fill that role by resisting one (albeit major) aspect of contemporary popular feminism. They do this almost entirely by exploiting the malleability of history. Because Susan B. Anthony said very little at all about abortion as a concept, building a case against the idea that she was "pro-life" is both arduous and trivial for anyone outside of the pro-life feminist community. Already being written-off, the movement faced little resistance while quietly building long-lasting monuments, like the SBA List, to bolster their version of history.

With its assumption that the suffragettes were likely anti-abortion, the pro-life feminist version of the history of the women's movement viewed Roe v. Wade and NOW's push for abortion rights as an aberration instead of a core defining principle. To many pro-life feminists, the move to focus on abortion-on-demand was a misstep for the women's movement, one that cost women further gains in independence, but not one that couldn't be undone. There are even conspiracies that Larry Lader, one of the founders of NARAL, and biographer of Margaret Sanger, convinced friend and fellow Vasser alum Betty Friedan to push abortion-on-demand after she read his book on the topic. Sue Ellen Browder writes about working for *Cosmo* in *Subverted: How I Helped the Sexual Revolution Hijack the Women's Movement* (2015), and the insidiously capitalistic undercurrent of sexual liberation, which she considers a wholly separate movement from women's liberation. In this text, notably published by a non-academic Catholic printing press, Browder claims that Friedan sprung the vote on

abortion at the very end of the second annual NOW conference — a sticking point for many pro-life feminists who argue that the vote was carried out without an organizational consensus, "when, in her characteristic domineering style, with a voice like a foghorn, she demanded that NOW take a stand in favor of contraception and for total repeal of all abortion laws" (58). This account is not unlike similar complaints from NOW members who would ultimately leave the organization in order to form WEAL. The letters between Betty Boyer and fellow WEAL and NOW members, found in the organizations' archives, illustrate an instance of dissent over abortion which was not wholly based on the usual religious grounds. It is a strong example of the many varied reasons for abortion's opposition at the cusp of its de-criminalization
— in this case, a combination of personality and cultural clashes between the more conservative feminists of the Midwest and the progressive elite driving
NOW's decisions on the coasts.

According to a series of letters and newsletters circulated among the Ohio NOW constituency, the seed for dissent was planted at NOW's second annual national convention in Washington. 100 members were in attendance on November 19th, 1967 when the motion to liberalize abortion rights in the US Constitution came to the floor: "The right of a woman to prevent conception and with proper Medical safeguards to terminate her pregnancy shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state" (minutes from NOW conference). By deciding on an amended version of this motion which prohibits the criminalization of abortions, NOW placed a controversial topic at the forefront of publicity surrounding the burgeoning women's movement. As arguably the leading organizational actor in the movement, NOW presently headed by Betty Friedan, initiated the first abortion-rights-based schism after the hotly debated resolution was passed.

Elizabeth ("Betty") Boyer, a prominent feminist lawyer on the early nominating committee for NOW led the case for WEAL in Ohio, where measures for establishing an official NOW chapter were underway. Due to the unpopularity among Ohio women of the decision to tackle abortion rights at that time, the Ohio chapter decided to remain unofficial for the time being. Boyer consequently resigned as President of the dwindling chapter, notably maintaining her seat on the nominating board of NOW, "knowing that I represent a large segment of the presently-constituted membership, and in the hope of tempering what I consider to be its presently ill-advised course of action" (Letter to National Board Members of NOW, 1-25-68 - packet 1). The collective response in Ohio also led to a drastic decision to de-affiliate from NOW for an event the constituency had been planning to host, a talk by Congresswoman Martha Griffiths. The fear was that the highly politicized decision to make abortion rights a central platform of NOW would overshadow all other publicity surrounding the event, including the legal and economic focus of Griffiths's talk on "Discriminations Against Women in America":

> *...no one [in Ohio] wanted to sponsor Mrs. Griffiths appearance in the name of NOW, although all still very much wanted her to come, the idea being that if it were a NOW function, certain Board members would undoubtedly fly into town and call a press conference. Our local newspapers would grab at the chance to play up the abortion matter, and to play down everything Mrs. Griffiths might have to say, which would have real value to us.*
>
> *Therefore, after much consultation and with real regret, we evolved the enclosed rather unpleasant missive to the NOW board. I presented it personally in Pittsburgh, and, oddly, the reception was sympathetic by*

everyone but Betty Friedan. (Letter to Phineas Indritz, legal counsel to Congresswoman Griffiths)

The event ultimately became the fulcrum for the departure from NOW and establishment of WEAL. This was exemplified in a letter from Boyer to the Ohio NOW members, which served as a simultaneous call to action regarding NOW's abortion platform, a notification of the event sponsorship change to "Nonpartisan Women," and a survey seeking responses to NOW's abortion decision. The survey was also an attempt to take the temperature of the group's desire to leave NOW: "Many members have suggested that it would be more feasible to split away and form an Ohio group, incorporated under another name, to proceed along the original lines of NOW" (letter to NOW Ohio members from E. Boyer, Dec. 26, 1967). Despite extensive outreach and publicity, only 200 out of the 1,000 invited attended the talk
— in a letter to Griffiths, Boyer expressed dismay over the numbers and implied that de-affiliating the event with NOW may have had a role in the small turnout: "We hear rumors of political, as well as 'establishment' intimidation." Regardless, the event became a perfect organizing locale for the group of women that would become WEAL, and a sign-up sheet was passed around to recruit its founding members.

Despite Boyer's evident disdain for the present leadership and facilitation of NOW, she insisted that the new group would work in concert with NOW:

> *Women interested in such a group do not envision it as competing with, or undermining, NOW. Inasmuch as it would comprise women of admittedly more temperate and practical views, who would not join NOW as presently constituted, more women's efforts could thus be enlisted. At times the two groups could no doubt coordinate efforts, but at others they would be necessarily completely disassociated.*

Connections between the two organizations remained strong, and many women became members of both groups over time. Working together, they both contributed massive efforts in the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), though WEAL went on to focus more on specific judicial matters pertaining to equal treatment in the workplace and economic-based equality measures.

In 1970, WEAL filed its first class-action lawsuit for equal opportunities in higher education, invoking Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which enforces laws against sexual discriminations in federally-funded institutions. This class-action suit historically led to congress adopting Title IX into the Amendments to the Federal Education Act in 1972. Relatedly, WEAL pursued another class-action suit against universities which until that point had customarily required female employees to pay more into social security than their male counterparts under the assumption that women lived longer, which could not be statistically supported. The case went to the supreme court and WEAL was successful in dealing another major blow to sexual inequality in higher education (Castro, 1990).

In the end, WEAL ultimately succeeded in their aim for "responsible rebellion," defining the conservative wing of the women's movement and offering a space to conservative and older women who wanted to further women's rights but would or could not join more controversial groups such as NOW. The group grew in size and scope significantly in the first few years, developing a 501c(3) WEAL Fund to finance the now national organization. Following years of successful legislative accomplishments, the group eventually fell prey to an oversaturated market of 501c(3) women's groups by the early 1980's and by the late 1980's dissolved amid a declining economy and a widespread anti-feminist sentiment (Records of WEAL, 1966-1979).

Historical accounts like that of WEAL's inception illustrate that abortion as a *platform* in particular has a nuanced genealogical origin like any other political issue. That said, abortion rights fall into a particular space unique to concepts that are pushed into the public world from what was previously considered private or 'personal' in nature. That is, making public the private issues often attributed to women and the domestic sphere has historically played out in the form of counterpublics or issue networks, forcing a discursive breakthrough in the "public sphere" or, in most cases in modern U.S. context, the legislative arena. A highly cited example is the issue of domestic violence (Fraser, 1990), where the once private phenomenon of spousal abuse reached a critical mass of public attention and eventually became an issue of public health — one that would be recognized by the law and built into public political institutions.

Discussions on the role of the private sphere in political movements build on the premise of various iterations of a "public," such as the Habermassian public sphere and its feasibility in the contemporary socio-technological moment. Sitting atop a breadth of work on publics and their respective/constituent privates, *Antigone* provides a useful allegorical discussion on the virtuality of politics situated between the home and the state. The Greek drama has been utilized by feminist political philosophers to theorize on women's role, or lack thereof, in democratic republics. The blurred boundaries of the home and the state as depicted in *Antigone* at once both undermine and concretize the democratic body of the state. The reality of pro-life feminism lives in this third space, between the private rights-based existential philosophies and religiosities, and the legible political space of public discourse, perception, and ultimately legislation.

Often in contest with idealized homogenous "publics" of philosophy, the public/private distinction is invoked in contemporary terms to highlight the institutionalized social restrictions on the private sphere for groups that are not included within the public. Scholars like Bonnie Honig, Nancy Fraser, Joan Landes, and Seyla Benhabib have approached the notion of publics in their relation to women and/or feminism. Notably, most of these scholars are theorizing within the parameters of extant work in Habermassian publics, viewing the private as "that which is not public."

The feminist preoccupation with this distinction in the 1960s and 1970s in Western academia coincided with major developments in the women's liberation movement, such as the establishment of NOW in 1966, which sought to secure a position for women in the public sphere (read: legislative precedence). The public/private debate emerged once again in the 1990s, when the burgeoning digital era alongside the integration of identity politics moved many scholars to begin to either rethink the formulation of the public/private distinction, or to deconstruct it altogether (Landes, 1998). For instance, Goodman (1992) addresses a number of problematics in the distinction, primarily with the argument that Habermas's public sphere was formed within the private sphere, and that the creation of a "new culture" of private life was constituted by the discursive boundaries set forth by the public sphere.

Lopata (1993) historicizes the notion of the public/private distinction as one of a political economic imperative. She argues that the two-sphere model is not only an imaginary produced under the auspices of capitalism, but that the proliferation of its ideology inherently stratifies society based on gender. Though a number of scholars critique not only the usefulness, but the problematic political contribution of the

public/private model (Beckford, 1989; Coontz, 1988, Dobbelaere, 1985; Gamarnikow, Morgan, Purvis & Taylorson, 1983; Hanson, 1987; Lohan, 2000), many of those listed here find the model to be either a realistic depiction, and/or a helpful methodological analytic to work through contemporary feminist issues (Landes, 2003; Benhabib, 1993). This is exemplified in Gal's (2002) semiotic breakdown of the model as not only a discursive move ("communicative phenomenon"), but as a meta-discourse, wherein all discourse is colored by the fluid and dialectical indexicality of the public vs. the private.

Benhabib (1993) explicitly wrestles with Arendt's and Habermas's constructions of the public and private, where Arendt is charged with gendering the two spheres, and Habermas creates a problematic formulation where public norms (and therein universal morality) are set as distinct from private values. Alternatively, Honig (1992) invokes Hannah Arendt's conception of the private as not merely "that which is not public," but most aspects pertaining to the body. Arendt conceives the body as a univocal, mundane site that must be tended to prior to an individuated existence in the "good life," aka, the public, political world. Arendt's philosophies have historically been criticized for their exclusion of women, and potentially anti-feminist undertones, but Honig finds in Arendt the potential for feminist politics to fit concisely within the gap left between the public and the private by the encroaching "social." For Arendt, the social is the bleeding of private issues into the public and public issues into the private. This third space is the corner of Arendt's work that is of interest to this project.

As reproductive rights fall squarely into the Arendtian social sphere, there lies a framework for the extrapolation of this political space beyond or between the state and the body. Honig maintains in this piece that within that space, a Butlerian

potential for hegemonic deliberation is possible in the imitable performative actions of the private: “Political theory’s task is to aid and enable that practice of (re)founding by widening the spaces (of tension, undecidability, and arbitrariness) that might be hospitable to new beginnings” (p. 113). If we consider the seemingly personal engagements of Betty Boyer or Rachel MacNair within this conception of a social sphere, we can develop an ulterior language with which to talk about the politics of women’s interpersonal relationships as a contribution to the above hegemonic deliberation. That is, the unique politics of women’s relationships enlists a deliberative power all its own when thought of as a political vector, and while the macro-historical elements detailed throughout this project trace the public and the private and the transition between the two, the persistence of an Arendtian social sphere, a “third place” may permanently house the philosophical contestation of abortion politics.

Judith Butler (2002) (et al)’s theoretical work on the political using *Antigone* as a standpoint may prove useful to this project’s inquisition of a third (or a potentially infinite), extrastitial space. In her contrary reading to the usual anti-statist takes on the play, Butler argues that Antigone’s ulterior role is not inherently contentious, but that she inhabits a liminal space between the family and the state. This idea, exemplary in the dynamics between Creon and Antigone, challenges the notion that the state and the family are two mutually exclusive entities, and instead implies their chiasmic interplay, “She is outside the terms of the polis, but she is, as it were, an outside without which the polis could not be” (p. 4). Antigone’s performance within the role of sovereignty, as well as the conflicting nature of her kinship relationships undermine definitions of the public and the private, and therein destabilize the “conceptual distinction” between the two.

Antigone's exclusion from, and constitution and undermining of, the state provides a useful model for thinking through the enduring occupation of pro-life feminists in a space between the public and private, as their mere existence both undermines feminism's tenets of inclusivity and societal adaptability, and constitutes the very movement they are excluded from. As was concluded in Chapter One, the 2017 Women's March was a proverbial line drawn in the sand (albeit one that was already there by implication) defining what *is* and what *is not* considered contemporary feminist ideology. The constitutional status of abortion politics, then, provides that ever-shifting boundary between the body and the state.

This persistently in-flux boundary was one conclusion within a study that did not lend itself to being conclusive from the outset. To recall, the following research questions drove my inquiry through a series of interdisciplinary and multi-modal case studies: (1) How does this seemingly paradoxical and marginal political group sustain an identity and history in the face of competing popular memories of feminism and the women's movement? And (2) What does the persistence, and recent resurgence of this group say about the state and definition of the feminist movement today?

Future Directions

There are a few different avenues that seem ripe for further interrogation, some of which are direct continuations of this project, while others were inspired by it in the process. Certain directions beyond the scope of this project, like further detail into affect's role in pro-life feminist rhetorical tactics, could take the form of long-form sentiment analyses, or extensive interviewing of members of the pro-life and pro-life feminist communities. Ideally, the former would utilize data scraping capabilities already in existence or in development in order to quickly record public

expressions surrounding some sort of controversy or major event in the realm of women's and/or reproductive rights. One shortfall of this project in that regard was the timeliness of data collection. Had Twitter data around the 2017 Women's March been more recently available, a more thorough and complete picture of public sentiment around the incident in question would have been possible. This ideal study would require both the flexibility to quickly pivot to new data collection on an unfolding event, and the amount of CPU power and storage required to pull, save, and parse through the massive dataset.

A second extension on this project's intentions would be to expand research in online communities using different methodological approaches to the one used in this project. A formal social network analysis could provide illuminating details on how power centers and influence circles function in the world of pro-life feminists, or any other fringe social movement or group. Conversely, a discursive or textual analysis of one site or social media platform — instead of three like were assessed in this project — might provide a clearer sense of a given platform's affordances, and the unique and nuanced ways in which different groups utilize it.

Finally, I am most interested in a deeper study of philosophical new-media implications of the pro-life feminist and marginal/populism through the web in U.S. society. This would look like an analysis of the pro-life feminists' use of online platforms to produce certain knowledges and perceptions about feminism, and about pro-life feminism's place as a category within it. Aside from the plethora of pro-life feminist created and promoted blogs and articles, some of which have been cited previously, other avenues for constructing knowledge are less transparent. During my research for this project, I came across a handful of instances where crowd-sourced educational materials, like Wikipedia, were altered to integrate pro-life feminism into

the topic of feminism more broadly. For instance, in analyzing back-links from the Feminists For Life website, I discovered a site titled "Academic Kids Encyclopedia" which listed the FFL under a subheading of "Feminist Organizations." Academic Kids is a curated encyclopedia collection that pulls pages and information from Wikipedia to a presumably kid-safe internet environment. Some pages, like the "Feminism" entry, are not drawn entirely from Wikipedia, and therefore presumably less-scrutinized by the hive mind of wiki editors and bots. It goes without saying that introducing the idea of feminism at a young age is a challenging task without the added nuance over debates on abortion.

Similarly, battles over meaning and history, much like my analysis of Susan B. Anthony's Legacy, occur out in the open on Wikipedia, which can serve as a battleground of sorts for categorization and taxonomy of both simple and complex concepts. Indeed, there is even a Wikipedia page dedicated to the "Susan B. Anthony abortion dispute," where both activists on either side of the dispute as well as uninvolved editors with no stake in the debate take seriously every word, reference, and linguistic implication. The former seeking to impress their understanding of "truth," and the latter intent on imposing as much impartiality as possible in what is otherwise an ideologically-loaded conversation. What's more, it is not always easy to tell activist from simple editor, nor are the two roles mutually exclusive.[28]

[28] While anyone can edit a Wikipedia page, many factors go into whether those edits will remain intact for even a short amount of time. Some edits are automatically flagged for review by more senior editors (registered Wikipedia members who have contributed successfully over time), and some are instantly revoked or corrected by bots designed to scan materials instantaneously and streamline the reviewing process.

While this behind-the-scenes debate happens contemporaneously on other pages within the discursive scope of pro-life feminism, the edit area for the "Anti-Abortion Feminism" wiki provides ample examples for the ideological deliberation that goes into a Wikipedia page. For instance, a user with the IP address 85.242.239.146 deleted a considerable amount of material they considered slanted against pro-life feminism, including discussions on the Susan B. Anthony debate, and connections between pro-life feminist groups and more militant pro-life groups like the National Right to Life Committee. The anonymous user also added the modifier "pro-choice" to references of "feminists" in order to emphasize the idea that pro-life feminists should be considered equally in the broader denomination of "feminist." She made these and other edits with the comments: "*Deleted weasel words. This article needs to be neutral,*" and "*This article was horribly biased against pro-life feminism, imagine the same in a*[n] *article about their op*[p]*onents."* (85.242.239.146, 12 Feb 2011).

Alternately, editors and/or possible pro-choice advocates made revisions and overturned these edits, claiming: "*after discussion, [remove] frivolous templates; "I personally disagree with the peer-reviewed scholarship and think we should use activist nonsense instead" is not an actionable cause for a neutrality tag*," referring to a conflict between academic and non-academic scholarship used as citations for entry information (Roscelese, 25 Feb 2011). The same user, who is active in women's history spheres on Wikipedia, also argues "*no, your attempts to pretend this is a mainstream phenomenon are undue, & your attempts to lend WP's authority to the claim this is what our foremothers wanted violates WP:NPOV*, " citing Wikipedia's No-Point-Of-View clause as a justification for removing 85.242.239.146's edits. Here we can see a(n) (im)material sublimation of a macro conflict between populism and

academia — one that, if studied further, could provide invaluable insight into the matrix of knowledge, power, and ideology the U.S. is currently in the process of detangling.

As scholars and social commentators wrestle with an affective "post-truth" reality, the writable web provides a pallet for a growing movement of conspiracists peddling "alternative facts" (Wehner, 2019). While certain encyclopedic formats like Wikipedia self-police to a degree, social media platforms have little incentive to pit opposing factions against each other by forcing a politically integrated discursive environment. Facebook in particular seems to be at the epicenter of this phenomenon for a number of reasons: Facebook's infrastructure, while providing an excellent incubation platform for burgeoning social groups, allows for ideological echo chambers which are almost only met with objection by complete strangers with a penchant for trolling. Additionally, Facebook's historic refusal (and later short walkback) to fact-check political advertisements, let alone most of the content circulated on the site, sets up a growing older population of Facebook users to consume, believe, and share information that may be biased interpretations, or outright untrue content. This obfuscation of truths and falsehoods then puts the onus of clarification on the company in question, a task which it has repeatedly avoided taking on. A study that focuses on one social group, ideally through digital ethnographic methods, would be an excellent grounding of the assumptions underscoring this line of inquiry.

Final Thoughts

This project took a multi-pronged approach to answering the previously mentioned research questions. Question one is answered through the mechanisms of

popular memory and commemoration, and via the support system and external validation and reassurance drawn from communities of other pro-life feminists, specifically those online. This project makes clear that in order to maintain a sense of history in the manner of pro-life feminists, there must be a voluntary disregard for some professional historical accounts — if not the wholesale rejection of academic methods for reading the past. This diverted history is then reinforced through simulations of academic work like newsletters posing as journals or multiple books published internally and stocked on library shelves. Second, pro-life feminists again mimic formal institutions from their unique ideological perspective, from the Susan B. Anthony List to the pro-life birthplace memorialization under the same name. Finally, the strength of seduction in the perception of a moral high ground cannot be underestimated, as is evident in hundreds of years of anglo-saxon colonialism. While religiosity does not drive all pro-life feminists in the way that it does for non-feminist or anti-feminist pro-lifers, the mindset of saviorism has a similar affective effect on the extent to which certain narratives and rationales are consumed and digested in the pro-life feminist community.

Question two harkens back to the above discussion on the public and the third place. The "third space/place" shows up in a variety of literature as a way to discuss boundaries, outsiderness, and change. A prominent arena that benefits from "border thinking" are scholars working toward decolonial endeavors, using the border to indicate a dialogic locus of "colonial difference" ideal for subaltern resistance and reclamation of humanity and subjectivity (Poovey, 1988; Lugones, 2010; Bhahba, 1995; Mignolo, 2000). In that context as well as the Arendtian formulation, the border between public and private tends to be a space where transformation and flux can occur. The implication of the third place in the latter sense is that it is in many ways

an anteroom for the public— a location for private issues to become public and vice versa, or for identities to form and solidify. This direction is especially visible in post-structuralist confrontations of gender, wherein the notion of 'queering' a space aims to upend normative boundaries: as gender can "transect" identity categories, resulting in a "mutual transformation" of each one (Harper, et al, 1997, p.2).

The other important aspect of the third space is its imperative to define the spheres it sits between. While the pro-life feminists can occupy a liminal space of potential, their existence, and moreover their agitation of pro-choice feminists both challenges and supplies the discursive boundaries of mainstream feminism today. The contemporary pro-life feminist identity, in turn, is to some degree predicated on the exclusion from broad definitions of feminist politics. Particularly since the 2017 Women's March, the intolerability of the pro-life feminists has provided a martyrdom that underscores their movement in no uncertain terms. This begs the final question: Can pro-life feminists exist as a sect of pro-choice feminism? Or were pro-life feminists always already incommensurable to mainstream feminism? Like many beleaguered fringe movements on the right, is the existence of pro-life feminism predicated on the experience of ostracism? This is not for this study to determine, but opens a new inquiry for future directions, especially in terms of sociological readings of social movements and group identity.

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