

PRO-LIFE AND PRO-WOMAN: COMPLICATING THE ANTI-ABORTION NARRATIVE
IN AMERICA

Abigail Newell

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Approved by:

Andrew J. Perrin

Barbara Friedman

Kate Weisshaar

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ABSTRACT

Abigail Newell: Pro-life and Pro-woman: Complicating the Anti-Abortion Narrative in America
(Under the direction of Andrew J. Perrin)

Previous research characterizes the anti-abortion movement as anti-woman. This study suggests anti-abortion organizations are employing ‘pro-woman’ framing strategies. To examine how organizations strategically employ pro-woman discourse, I examine literature from two major anti-abortion organizations through narrative and discourse analysis across two critical periods of abortion policy. To demonstrate how this strategy varies across organizations, I compare major organizations’ strategies to those of a student-directed organization. Organizations employ the pro-woman strategy in three ways: 1) recasting women as victims, co-victims, or heroes in narratives as opposed to villains; 2) recontextualizing feminist discourse, while reinforcing dominant gender norms; 3) and crystallizing this strategy between and within organizations over time. While organizational identity and target audience shape deployment style, the pro-woman strategy is largely unified. Historical change in the discursive opportunity structure around women may encourage organizations to adopt the pro-woman strategy and render it more successful than the fetus-centric strategy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CWA	Concerned Women for America
DOS	Discursive Opportunity Structure
NRLC	National Right to Life
SMO(s)	Social Movement Organization
SFLA	Students for Life of America

INTRODUCTION

In the U.S., the legality and morality of abortion have long divided political and public discourses. Immediately following the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, activists formed social movement organizations (SMOs) on either side of the abortion debate, flourishing in the early 1970s immediately following *Roe*. The self-labeled ‘pro-choice’ movement emerged as a coalition from 1960s’ grassroots feminist activism surrounding the Beilenson Bill in California, supporting women’s right to choose (Luker 1984; Staggenborg 1991). The ‘pro-life’¹ movement mobilized in opposition to the pro-choice movement as a coalition of religious elites, doctors, lawyers, and impassioned activists across the country, who were disturbed by the Supreme Court’s apparent rejection of unborn life (Munson 2008).

Over the last 50 years, the pro-life and pro-choice movements have targeted constituents, politicians, and the media by marketing tactical issue frames that are culturally resonant with popular ideologies (Benford and Snow 1998; Oliver and Johnson 2002). Opposing movements, such as the pro-life and pro-choice movements, use disparate frames to maintain oppositional identities (McCaffrey & Keys 2000). Historically, the pro-choice movement framed the abortion rights issue as an issue of privacy and women’s right to choose (Staggenborg 1991; Saletan 2003; Rohlinger 2003). In opposition, the pro-life movement framed the abortion debate as an issue of fetal right-to-life. Furthermore, scholars characterize the pro-life movement as anti-

¹ ‘Anti-abortion’ is used to describe the movement throughout the remaining introduction and analysis, while ‘pro-life’ is used to describe the movement in the results section, following recommendations by Kleinman and Kolb (2012) to distinguish language used by those studied as “data” sources separate from the language of the analysis.

feminist, based on its alliance with the Moral Majority and the pro-choice movement's alliance with second-wave feminism (Saletan 2003; Rohlinger 2003; Fetner 2008).

However, an increasing number of anti-abortion SMOs, such as Feminists for Life, Students for Life, and New Wave Feminists, identify as “pro-woman,” arguing abortion is violence against women and indicative of patriarchal social structure (Oaks 2009). Furthermore, women have increasingly assumed leadership roles within anti-abortion SMOs that had predominantly been occupied by men over the last 30 years (Haugeberg 2017). In this anti-abortion context, ‘pro-woman’ is defined as empowering women as workers, leaders, and decision-makers equal to men, while simultaneously supporting and honoring motherhood (Siegel 2008; Rose 2011; March for Life 2017). In light of this emerging framing strategy, this paper addresses two following questions: 1) in what ways do U.S. anti-abortion organizations construct and deploy pro-woman discourse across two critical periods in abortion policy and politics? 2) how does this strategy compare across organizations with various target audiences?

Previous studies of pro-woman discourse are limited in scope, namely in organizations studied, period of analysis, and attention to gender norms and stereotypes (Rose 2011; Saurette and Gordon 2015). The following analysis critically examines the ways in which organizations strategically employ pro-woman narratives and discourse to target historical constituencies and broader audiences, particularly with respect to how anti-abortion organizations construct and reinforce dominant gender norms, while simultaneously referencing pop feminist discourse. Results reveal that the pro-woman strategy reflects similar ambiguities present in dominant gender norms and ideologies in broader U.S. politics and culture.

Given our limited understanding of the ways in which the pro-woman strategy varies across time and actually represents gendered norms and ideologies, this study seeks to examine

the pro-woman strategy over time and across major organizations, specifically for the ways in which it strategically draws upon, and reinforces, gendered norms. In order address this research agenda, the study employs two interpretive, historical methods of textual analysis: deductive narrative analysis and inductive discourse analysis to examine a textual dataset comprised of 665 organizational documents (summarized in Table 1.1). I selected documents from two major U.S. anti-abortion organizations: National Right to Life (NRLC), which targets a ‘mainstream’ pro-life audience, as the largest and highest grossing anti-abortion organization; and Concerned Women for America (CWA), which primarily targets anti-abortion women. I collected these documents across two critical periods in the abortion debate, 1998-2003 (Period I) and 2011-2017 (Period II), to capture variation in narrative and discourse over time. I compared NRLC and CWA narrative and discourse to those of Students for Life of America (SFLA) during Period II in order to demonstrate the ways in which newly established anti-abortion organizations target the next generation of activists.

Narrative analysis deductively examines how the anti-abortion movement constructs the hero, victim, and villain in the abortion debate. Previous research in the mid-1980s-1990s suggests that the anti-abortion movement strategically constructed the fetus as victim, women as villains, and “pro-life” supporters as heroes (Schroedel 2001; Saurette and Gordon 2015). However, results show that anti-abortion organizations construct and deploy the pro-woman strategy beginning in Period I and increasing in Period II by recasting women as victims, often alongside the fetus as co-victims, pro-abortion advocates and abortionists as villains for exploiting and harming women, and “pro-life,” pro-woman advocates, often women themselves, as heroes. While this shift in characterization of women is fairly consistent across organizations,

this strategy dominates CWA and SFLA issue-framing in Period II, whereas NRLC predominantly employs a fetal-centric strategy across both periods.

Informed by results from the narrative analysis, discourse analysis further examines the various constructions and deployments of pro-woman strategy across both periods and organizations, paying particular attention to representations of gender power relations. This inductive methodology explores how organizations draw upon multiple discursive repertoires when constructing and deploying pro-woman discourses. Discourse analysis is particularly useful in elaborating this strategic pro-woman shift because it acknowledges the connection between language, discourse, ideology and power (Foucault 1973; Fairclough 2012). Furthermore, since pro-woman discourses draw upon cultural ideologies, stereotypes, and norms surrounding womanhood and motherhood, discourse analysis unveils how gender power relations are depicted or “recontextualized”² in a conservative political context.

Ultimately, narrative and discourse analysis results demonstrate anti-abortion organizations strategically construct and deploy pro-woman discourse through three key processes 1) recasting women as victims, co-victims, or heroes in abortion narratives as opposed to villains; 2) recontextualizing pop feminist, pro-choice discourse, while simultaneously reinforcing dominant gender norms and stereotypes and 3) crystallizing and consolidating this strategy both between and within organizations in Period II. While organizational identity and target audience shape the various ways in which organizations deploy the strategy in order to maintain historical constituents, this strategy is fairly unified both in narrative characterization and discursive structure across organizations and time. Results suggest that historical changes in

² Chouliarki and Fairclough (2010) found competing organizations may “recontextualize” discourse from one another in order to counter opposing arguments and viewpoints. I use this term to elucidate the ways in which anti-abortion organizations recontextualize feminist abortion rights organization discourse.

the discursive opportunity structure around women and abortion may have encouraged the anti-abortion movement to adopt the pro-woman strategy and rendered it more successful than the historical fetus-centric strategy, in appealing to broad audiences and promoting anti-choice policies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Politics and Discourse of Abortion

Social movement organizations, such as NRLC, CWA, and SFLA, are professional organizations that share the goals of an overarching social movement, operating within a given discursive context (Zald and McCarthy 1979). SMOs formalize collective action around political issues, in part, by framing the issue itself. Framing literature argues that SMOs seek to construct boundaries around public issue debates. Organizations use rhetorical tactics in order to define the issue at hand for constituents, political elites, and media outlets (Benford et al. 1997; Benford and Snow 2000). Frames are consolidated into organization-specific packages and marketed to these constituents, politicians, and the media to maintain “cultural resonance” (Benford and Snow 2000; Oliver and Johnson 2002). Thus, SMOs market simple, efficient frame packages to appeal to more complex, dynamic, embedded ideologies to mobilize action and propose a solution to a social issue (McDonnell et al. 2017).

In this way, the cultural discursive opportunity structure shapes discursive strategies adopted, and their relative success to an extent, because appealing to dominant discourses and ideologies is a politically effective framing tactic (McCammon et al. 2007). The discursive opportunity structure (DOS) is the cultural field of contestation from which movement organizations seek to construct and reconstruct meaning through framing (Gamson and Meyer 1996; McCammon 2013). The availability and resulting success of certain discursive framing strategies is shaped by what can and cannot be said in a given socio-historical context, in

addition to political alliances, dominant ideologies, and movement identity (Foucault 1972; Ferree et al. 2000; McCammon 2013). For example, Ferree et al. (2000) found that U.S. abortion rights discourse hinges less on women's rights frames compared to German discourse because U.S. framing strategies are constrained by discursive opportunities surrounding dominant ideologies of right-to-privacy.³

Since organizations have limited political opportunity to market their frames, dominant discourses are employed to maximize broad appeal to the most popular ideologies. Though multiple issue frames may exist within a social movement, and within its organizations, these frames are subject to a hegemonic structure of popularity based on dominant ideologies and socio-historical context. What frames are culturally and emotionally resonant are fluid and interactional, in that they change over time based on availability of cultural symbols and shifts in audience experiences of resonance (McDonnell et al. 2017). Thus, the political success of social movement frames is moderated by cultural discourses, such as hegemonic gendered discourse.

Given this theoretical framework, critical periods in abortion policy and politics, 1998-2003 and 2011-2017, may reflect changing opportunities for the anti-abortion movement to employ various discursive strategies and the relative success of these strategies. While the data does not necessarily measure the DOS over time, studying historical shifts in the discourse organizations employ demonstrates the strategies that organizations find most advantageous given socio-historical constraints, namely what strategies to employ surrounding women.

Organizational characteristics, including power dynamics between organizational personnel, collective identity, and target constituencies shape discursive strategies adopted in addition to the DOS. In order to construct a clear identity and maintain constituents, SMOs

³ Ferree et al. (2000) did not examine anti-abortion discourse for the centrality of women or women's rights.

utilize consistent frames over time to reproduce their collective identity (Benford and Hunt 1992; Dunn 2004). Oppositional movements tend to market issue-frames along cleavages in dominant ideologies to form adversarial identities, such as the pro-choice movement marketing a women's rights and autonomy frame, and the pro-life movement historically relying on a fetal-right-to-life framing strategy (Staggenborg and Meyer 1998).

During critical periods of political and discursive change, like those studied here, movement organizations with similar goals, such as anti-abortion organizations, may distance themselves from one another in order maintain identity and accomplish particular goals (McCarthy and Zald 1999; Rohlinger and Quadagno 2009). Rose (2011) speculates that increasing employment of pro-woman framing may actually generate intramovement tension. Thus, movement identity and target audience further shape the strategies adopted and their success, in conjunction with the DOS. This paper evaluates discursive contradictions in how organizations construct and deploy the pro-woman strategy in order to elucidate tensions generated by this emerging pro-woman strategy. This comparison demonstrates how organizations may strategically react to changes in DOS context to broaden audiences, while simultaneously working to maintain organizational identity and historical constituencies.

One of the ways in which SMOs construct these frames and mobilize action around issues is by strategically deploying 'formula narratives' with 'stock characters' that are both culturally and emotionally resonant with dominant ideologies, symbols, and messages (Loseke 2000; Dunn 2004). These 'stock characters,' particularly the victims, generate sympathy for those affected by the social issue at hand. Historically, in anti-abortion narratives, fetuses are 'pure' victims, blameless, voiceless, and powerless, and women are largely left out of narratives altogether or portrayed as villains of the 'unborn' (Schroedel 2001; Dunn 2004). However, in

order to appeal to broad audiences in the U.S., victims must have agency and responsibility to best fit cultural repertoires, which prioritize autonomy, self-reliance, and ‘bootstraps’ success stories (Swidler 1982; Dunn 2004). For the anti-abortion movement, recasting women as survivors of post-abortive suffering not only generates worthy sympathy for these victims, but appeals to dominant ‘rags-to-riches’ narratives, which favor stories of survivors and redemption (Cole 2007). Narrative analysis in this study seeks to elucidate how organizations strategically employ pro-woman narratives and discourse that recast women’s roles in order to appeal to broad audiences beyond historical constituencies.

Much of this foundational social movements theory above appears gender blind, neglecting how gender influences social movement dynamics (Taylor 1999; Ferree and Mueller 2007). Since this critique of social movements research in the early 2000s, recent scholarship demonstrates that gender both constructs and constrains social movement activity, particularly at the organizational level, where gender influences framing tactics, strategies, and collective identities (Reger 2018). Mobilizing around women’s roles, such as motherhood and caregiving, has been an effective tool for social movement organizations globally (Shriver et al. 2013; Berry 2015). These gendered frames, in turn, construct and reinforce movement identity, such as constructing a ‘feminist’ identity. In this way, as anti-abortion organizations shift their gendered framing tactics towards pro-woman strategies, possibly in response to changing discursive opportunities over time, this may reconstruct the movement’s collective identity as pro-woman. This contradicts the emphasis previous social movements research placed on the anti-woman, anti-feminist agenda of the anti-abortion movement (Rohlinger 1998; Schroedel 2001).

A small body of research identifies this emerging pro-woman strategy in the anti-abortion movement (Siegel 2008; Rose 2011; Saurette & Gordon 2015). However, these studies fail to

systematically examine the construction and deployment of the pro-woman strategy across various major organizations. Rose (2011) revealed that pro-woman framing is prevalent in a modest anti-abortion organization, the Elliot Institute, but not in a larger SMO, Focus on the Family. Though Saurette and Gordon (2015) do not systematically analyze pro-woman narratives in the U.S., they, too, speculate that pro-woman framing is still subordinate to fetal-centric framing in the U.S. Both of the above studies lack critical attention to gender and power relations inherent in pro-woman discourse, the ways in which this strategy changes over time, and the variation in this strategy across the largest anti-abortion organizations in the U.S.

The following paper systematically examines the ways in which the anti-abortion movement constructs and deploys pro-woman discourse between three major anti-abortion organizations across two critical periods of abortion policy: 1998-2003 (Period I) and 2011-2017 (Period II). Previous research on the U.S. abortion debate studies discourse from the 1980s to the early 2000s. The political and policy context surrounding abortion has changed substantially over the last 20 years, warranting a re-evaluation and in-depth examination of how anti-abortion strategies surrounding women might have changed along the way.

METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

Overview of Methods

RQ1: How do U.S. anti-abortion organizations construct and deploy pro-woman discourse across two critical periods in abortion policy and politics? RQ2: How does this strategy compare across organizations with various target audiences?

In order to address the research questions above, I examined National Right to Life (NRLC) and Concerned Women for America (CWA) literature through two interpretive methods of textual analysis: 1) narrative analysis of historical changes in the ways in which different anti-abortion organizations construct women's roles in abortion narratives over time and 2) discourse analysis of the shifting ways in which different organizations construct and deploy pro-woman discourse by drawing from multiple cultural repertoires. Both methods consider changes in narrative and discursive strategy over time between and within organizations.

Historically, dominant anti-abortion narratives framed activists as the heroes, fetuses as the victims, and women as the villains in the abortion debate (Schroedel 2001; Saurette and Gordon 2015). Narrative analysis both examines shifts in how organizations strategically frame women's roles in abortion over time and compares this strategy across organizations

Based on narrative analysis results, I then compared organizational literature through discourse analysis to examine the changing ways in which organizations construct the pro-woman strategy by drawing upon various cultural repertoires, particularly surrounding dominant gender norms and power relations, and how this deployment differs across organizations. In

doing so, I compared narrative and discourse analysis results from NRLC and CWA in Period II to those from Students for Life of America (SFLA) in Period II to demonstrate how SFLA constructs and deploys the pro-woman strategy in order to target young audiences.

Case Selection

I gathered literature from three anti-abortion social movement organizations (SMOs): National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), Concerned Women for America (CWA); and Students for Life of America (SFLA). I selected these organizations from a database of registered non-profits that self-identify as “pro-life” or are committed to ending legal abortion, in order to capture variation in target audience (GuideStar 2018). NRLC, the self-proclaimed “flagship pro-life organization” is the oldest and largest pro-life SMO in the nation. Founded in 1968, the organization has 50 chapters in 50 states and grossed over \$4 million in 2016 (GuideStar 2018). Carole Tobias is the current president of National Right to Life, but men have historically led the organization (Haugeberg 2017; National Right to Life 2018). One of the most recognizable anti-abortion organizations, NRLC targets a broad audience.

CWA is a self-identified “pro-life” organization that is primarily committed to ending legal abortion, but further opposes issues like physician assisted suicide and prostitution. In 1979, CWA was founded by Christian women dedicated to reversing *Roe v. Wade*. Unlike NRLC women have led the organization from its inception, seeking to represent the interests of anti-abortion women across the country. Under the leadership of Penny Nance, CWA grossed around \$3 million in 2016 (GuideStar 2018). CWA provides a unique case to study the ways in which an organization created by and for women frames women in the abortion narrative.

SFLA seeks to end legal abortion by training the next generation of “pro-life leaders.” The organization was founded in 1998, previously titled American Collegians for Life. SFLA

targets young audiences by touring the country to start local chapters at middle schools, high schools, universities, and professional schools. The organization grossed over \$5 million in 2016 under President Kristen Hawkins, who has been executive director since the organization changed its name to SFLA in 2006 (GuideStar 2018). SFLA's commitment to young anti-abortion constituents captures a disproportionate part of the youth audience.

Textual Dataset

Periods of interest.

I examined NRLC and CWA literature from two critical periods for abortion rights policy in the U.S.: 1998-2003 (Period I) and 2011-2017 (Period II), and I examined SFLA from Period II. These periods capture discourse surrounding major changes in the legality of abortion both in federal and state legislatures. In the late 1990s, Congress passed the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban, criminalizing dilation and extraction abortion procedures. President Bill Clinton vetoed the bill, but pro-life activists, lobbyists, and sympathetic politicians continued to promote the ban into George W. Bush's presidency. The Partial Birth Abortion Act was eventually signed into law by the President in 2003 (Guttmacher 2018). Thus, this period provides an opportunity to analyze changes in narrative and discursive structure during a critical era in the American abortion debate.

From 2011-2017, 22 state legislatures passed an unprecedented number of laws related to abortion procedures, clinics, and providers. 45% of these laws either targeted regulations of abortion providers, limited insurance coverage of abortion, restricted medication abortion, or required waiting periods between counseling and procedure (Nash et al. 2014). Proponents of these laws, including anti-abortion organizations, lobbyists, and representatives, argued these laws protected women from dangerous medical procedures, unqualified doctors, and unequipped

clinics. Opponents argued these laws were intended to limit abortion access by enacting medically unnecessary restrictions on a safe medical procedure (Grossman et al. 2016). This period intends to capture changes in how organizations employ the pro-woman strategy during a time of increased state regulation of abortion.

Given the relevant historical context in abortion policy and substantial literature available for analysis during these periods, results elucidate the ways in which organizations employ the pro-woman strategy across two critical periods and how these strategies compare. However, the gap in between periods (2004-2010) may be meaningful. There were notable moments in abortion policy, such as the *Gonzalez vs. Carhart* (2007) U.S. Supreme Court case, which upheld the constitutionality of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban. Since this decision did not substantially change abortion policy beyond the 2003 ban, the time periods sampled still reflect significant moments in abortion discourse.

Additionally, the availability of organizational literature constrains my periods of analysis. Given the lack of digitized organizational publications before 2010, physical library archives, such as the People for the American Way Collection of Conservative Ephemera 1984-2004, serve as the only available source of textual data. As the name implies, the archival collection only includes documents between the years of 1984-2004. Given a lack of physically or digitized archives for Students for Life of American and its relative infancy during my first period of analysis, I was only able to collect literature from this organization digitally available from 2011-2017. This is a notable limitation in my ability to analyze change across organizations from 2004-2010 and SFLA change over time (See Appendix 1 for supplementary analysis of NRLC newsletters from 2004-2010). However, the data available through online and physical

archives do provide substantial opportunity for comparing organizational strategies across two critical periods.

Document types.

The textual dataset includes newsletters and press releases. I selected these types of documents based on their broad target audiences and accessibility. This literature exemplifies how organizations construct and deploy narratives and discourse of women's role in abortion for the American public. NRLC and CWA consistently produced press releases and newsletters between 1998-2003 and 2011-2017, and SFLA releases yearly packages of releases and newsletters from 2011-2017. Both newsletters and press releases constitute a reliable body of literature from which to compare pro-woman narratives and discourse over time.

Owned vs. Third-Party Media

While newsletters and press releases generally target broad audiences of constituents, media, and political elites, different forms of communication may result in strategic variation in discursive strategy. NRLC and CWA newsletters, for example, are what Rohlinger (2016) refers to as "direct media," similar to what strategic communication scholars label "owned media" (Lovett and Staelin 2016). Organizations use owned media as direct communications with constituents and political allies, instead of relying on the mainstream media to relay their messages. This avoids any interpretation or possibly negative framing from the media middleman. NRLC has a reputation of legitimacy and professionalism compared to other anti-abortion SMOs in the U.S., like Operation Rescue, and their deployment of owned media strategically controls the messages delivered to constituents and beyond (Rohlinger 2015).

Press releases from CWA and SFLA, however, comprise "third-party" or "paid" media, which are presented directly to external media outlets, who then relay CWA's messages to broad

audiences. This third-party process constrains CWA's control of its communications with constituents and political elites. However, CWA has had increasing success appealing to mainstream media outlets over the last 20 years, crafting a professional rapport similar to that of NRLC (Rohlinger 2015). For this reason, they have strategically crafted press releases to appeal to the mainstream media and broad audiences, instead of more sympathetic conservative outlets like *National Review* (Rohlinger 2015). Attracting positive third-party media coverage can legitimize and normalize organization discourse. Press releases, thus, may employ different pro-woman discursive strategies than newsletters based on this owned vs. third-party distinction. This is not a limitation of the study design, but offers a unique opportunity to examine the various ways in which different organizations employ the pro-woman strategy to target different audiences, such as mainstream audiences versus sympathetic anti-abortion constituencies.

Sampling frame.

The sampling frame is composed of all National Right to Life newsletters and all Concerned Women of America press releases and newsletters produced within Period I and Period II, and all Students for Life of America press releases produced in Period II. Generally, NRLC newsletters are released every month, resulting in about 12 newsletters per year. Not all newsletters are available in online archives, and there are substantial gaps in coverage in 2011-2013. Only 7 newsletters were released in 2011, 4 in 2012, and 1 in 2013. For this reason, I extended my analysis time period to 2017 not only to capture more recent discourse surrounding abortion but to increase the sample size for the second time period. Press releases from CWA and SFLA are generated about once a week, resulting in a sizeable amount of textual data to analyze. Documents were collected through online organization-based archives, press release databases like Businesses Wire and Cision, and physical library archives. Since CWA

publications are not digitally archived before 2010, I collected press releases and newsletters from the People for the American Way Collection of Conservative Political Ephemera 1984-2004 at the Bancroft Library.

I analyzed all newsletters and press releases produced by each organization from Period I and Period II, resulting in a textual dataset of 665 documents. The textual dataset is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of Textual Dataset

Organization	Document Type	Period I	Period II	N
NRLC	Newsletters	70	56	126
	Press Releases	131	242	373
CWA	Newsletters	106	n/a	106
	Press Releases	n/a	60	60
SFLA	Press Releases	n/a	60	60
Total		307	358	N=665

Difficulties in collecting documents from each organization based on limited digital and physical archives generates coverage error. However, collecting data from multiple resources, including online archives and the People for the American Way Collection for Conservative Political Ephemera, attempts to minimize this error with best available data. The literature available from organization websites and archives provides a substantial body of documents from which to study changes and variation in narrative and discursive strategies. Maintaining a complete sampling frame of literature generates a substantial textual dataset that maximizes variation in narrative and discourse from multiple organizations and minimizes sampling error.

Part I: Framing the Abortion Narrative

Narrative analysis, an interpretive form of content analysis, systematically describes nuanced patterns in meaning from text (Krippendorff 1980; Franzosi 1998; Elo and Kyngas 2007). Similar to discourse analysis, narrative analysis prioritizes messages, symbolism, and meaning from text as opposed to grammatical structure. SMOs employ specific narratives to frame issues and control the language of the debate for target populations (Benford and Snow 2000). The subjects in these narratives are typified in six main ways: the hero, the false hero, the donor, the helper, the sought-after-person, and the villain. Saurette and Gordon (2015) adapt this characterization technique into the “hero, victim, villain” framework to systematically analyze pro-woman discourse in Canada. Canadian anti-abortion organizations frame women as victims or heroes, fetuses as the victims, and pro-choice organizations as the villains. The authors speculate that these pro-woman narratives are not as dominant in U.S., but they do not systematically analyze U.S. anti-abortion discourse. Therefore, this analysis adopts this “hero, victim, villain” framework to critically examine pro-woman narratives in the U.S.

Analytic strategy.

I analyzed anti-abortion narratives deductively to fit the theoretical hero, victim, villain framework, which specifically identifies the roles in which anti-abortion organizations cast women. First, I identified narratives in which women are the subject or the object of the action, as opposed to fetal-centered narratives. Fetal-centric narratives, or narratives focused primarily on ‘unborn’ victims, exemplify the historically dominant anti-abortion discursive strategies. These narratives are not pro-woman, but rather exclude women from the narrative. Thus, pro-woman narratives must depict women as actors central to the plot. These narratives are then categorized based on which role women and other actors, such as pro-choice opponents and abortion providers, are playing in the plot: hero, victim, or villain.

Schroedel (2001) argues that the U.S. anti-abortion movement frames women as the villains, fetuses as the victims, and pro-life activists as the heroes. Narratives may contain multiple victims, such as co-victim narratives in which women and the fetus are cast as victims simultaneously. Changes in women's roles as the heroes, victims, or villains were determined based on this historical baseline narrative. Finally, I compared the proportion of pro-woman narratives to the proportion of fetal-centric narratives to determine the extent to which this strategy dominates organizational discourse. Given Saurette and Gordon's (2015) findings in Canada, I hypothesized that women are more frequently portrayed as victims, or even heroes, in Period II across organizations compared to historical narratives where women were more frequently villainized or ignored in Period I (Schroedel 2001).

Defining pro-woman.

Thus, pro-woman narratives are operationalized in which women are either the victims or the heroes, not the villains. This operationalization attempts to capture the definition of pro-woman, where women are equal to men and celebrated as mothers, but are not demonized or ignored. Honoring of motherhood is central to the pro-woman concept, in juxtaposition with mainstream feminism, which de-emphasizes the centrality of motherhood for women (March for Life 2016). For this reason, pro-woman narratives most likely depict mothers as heroes.

Though narrative analysis is methodologically limited in its capacity to study large quantities of text, the strengths of this method largely outweigh its weaknesses when addressing the research agenda. Most importantly, narrative analysis produces rich, nuanced descriptions of pro-woman discourse, which quantitative content analysis cannot illustrate. Narrative analysis uncovers implicit representations of women in organizational literature and identifies changes in these representations over time. Summing the frequency with which organizations use the word

“woman” over time, while interesting, would not allow for a complex understanding of how organizations frame women’s role in abortion. Even if anti-abortion discourse includes women more in recent years, compared to “fetus-centric” discourse, women may be depicted as victims. In this way, narrative analysis is an ideal method for examining the pro-woman strategy across organizations and over time.

Part II: Discourse Analysis of Pro-Woman Themes

Based on evidence of a narrative shift towards pro-woman framing strategies, I examined further the construction and deployment of the strategy through discourse analysis. In particular, this inductive methodology compared the ways in which different organizations strategically appeal to dominant gender ideologies by drawing on various cultural repertoires, within and beyond conservative anti-abortion discourse, when constructing pro-woman themes. In order to compare anti-abortion discursive strategies, I connected language throughout the textual dataset where movement organizations employ ‘feminist’ discourse, drawing from cultural repertoires surrounding popular woman-centric ideas, to discourse where organizations draw from conservative cultural repertoires surrounding traditional gender norms, such as the centrality of motherhood. These maps of connected language and themes both between and within organizational literature demonstrate the ways in which the anti-abortion movement draws upon various ‘feminist’ and conservative cultural repertoires when strategically constructing pro-woman discourse. Moreover, discourse analysis helps to elaborate on these complex, often contradictory, representations of women across organizations.

Discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis explores how gender power relations manifest in the various strategic constructions and deployments of pro-woman discourse. Discourse itself refers to what can and

cannot be said in social context, structured by relations of power. The patterns and regularities of what is sayable then construct knowledge. Dominant groups strategically deploy these patterns to construct dominant ideologies and maintain power (Foucault 1972; Fairclough 2012). In other words, discourses construct knowledge around topics or ideas, which prescribes a certain way of talking about such topics or ideas (Hall 1997: 8). These discourses are deployed to naturalize dominant ideologies that uphold the dominant social order. Those in power control which cultural stereotypes, norms, and symbols are conveyed to support dominant ideologies associated with groups in power. In this way, discourse analysis reveals how power relations operate through language to normalize dominant ideas and reinforce social structures (Milestone and Meyer 2012).

When producing these discourses, organizations draw upon various cultural repertoires and meanings. Culture does not determine behavior, but ideologies, values, and norms shape cultural repertoires - or as Swidler (1986) refers to them, “tool kits” - consisting of “symbols, stories, rituals and world views” that help form certain “strategies of action” (273). These cultural repertoires shape communications skills and habits that constitute the cultural component of discursive strategies. These discursive strategies are then deployed to solve a problem, such as how to effectively frame the abortion debate for both political elites and public constituencies. By drawing from a variety of cultural repertoires when constructing discursive strategies, organizations can appeal to a variety of dominant ideologies.

Despite its marginal place in sociological research, discourse analysis is a powerful tool in examining production of knowledge, power, ideology, and understanding the social conditions under which they emerge. Wagner-Pacifici (1994) maps the relationship between violence and language, finding that powerful institutions can suppress marginalized groups and their

discourses by recontextualizing the language and themes of the very groups they seek to dominate. While speakers do have agency, power relations and institutional structures shape and normalize certain discursive strategies - and their implied ideologies - over others. Thus, this method provides the tools necessary to understand the changing ways in which the anti-abortion organizations employ pro-woman discourse as a reflection of dominant gender ideologies and the broader constraints shaped by the discursive opportunity structure.

Discourse analysis is particularly useful in examining gender power dynamics across social contexts (Cameron 1998; McIntosh and Cucklanz 2014; Speer 2004). Specifically, gender discourse analysis examines how the recurring patterns, such as repeated stereotypes or norms, reflect dominant ideologies that men and women are divided into dichotomous, hierarchical classes (Lazar 2007). This method is frequently used to study nuanced changes in gender ideology over time by providing rich explorations of gender power dynamics (Faludi 1991; Vavrus 2007). Post-feminist scholars suggest it provides necessary tools to study the changing manifestations of the gender hierarchy, in which evidence of gender inequality and sexism is largely implicit, complex, and context-specific (Mills 1999; Lazar 2007). Thus, discourse analysis is an ideal methodology to study the dynamic, often implicit, representations of women and gender power relations in organization literature as a reflection of complex dominant gender ideology, shifting discursive opportunities, and strategic targeting of certain audiences, such as women and young people.

In the context of abortion politics, the anti-abortion movement strategically employs certain discourses to oppose legal abortion. The discourses included and excluded reflect dominant ideologies of the organization, movement, political context, and larger social order (Ruiz 2009). Furthermore, the political context of abortion politics, such as ambivalent, stagnant

public opinion and presence of elite political allies, shape what strategies the movement finds most advantageous to employ. In this way, studying anti-abortion discourse involved carefully examining the power relations conveyed to understand dominant ideologies and cultural norms within the organization, broader movement, and political context. Since the abortion debate is inherently tied to ideologies surrounding gender, such as women's place in society (Luker 1984), discourse analysis of anti-abortion themes surrounding women unearths nuanced relations of power and inequality.

Analytic strategy.

Building on the theory above, the analysis connected pro-woman discourse to the broader social context in which discourse is produced and to the discursive opportunity structure. This interprets discourse as a reflection of dominant ideologies and as a social product generated under certain social conditions. Discourse is, thus, both a reflection of the producers' shared interpretations and understandings, which often reflect dominant ideologies, and the social context under which certain discourses are produced as opposed to others (Ruiz 2009). Pro-woman discursive strategies reflect dominant gendered ideologies and the unique social context during both critical periods. The various ways in which organizations draw from different interpretive repertoires when constructing pro-woman themes may reflect tensions within the anti-abortion movement in deploying the pro-woman strategy to various audiences.

My analytic strategy examined pro-woman themes textually, contextually, and interpretively, paying particular attention to implicit reflections of gender norms and stereotypes (Ruiz 2009). At the textual level, the coding schema was flexible, built from patterned themes found in the text to elucidate cultural assumptions and ideologies about gender. Then, I linked the themes identified intertextually and intratextually to map the various discursive strategies and

cultural repertoires employed by each organization. Next, I compared themes across organizations. This method contextualizes pro-woman themes as a combination of both ‘feminist’ and traditional gender norms because the context in which discourse is produced - both in opposition and in relation to other discourses - is central to discourse analysis (Foucault 1973). Finally, I connected changes in the configuration of these various discursive strategies to dominant gender ideologies present in the discursive opportunity structure.

Coding schema.

The coding schema employs an iterative deductive-inductive approach (Kuckartz 2012). Thematic coding first identified overarching, patterned themes in organizational literature, attaching meaning to repeated and patterned discourses and unifying them (Saldana 2014). Though codes may reflect similar themes identified through narrative analysis, codes were developed from the textual data itself, instead of hypothesized codes and categories. Comparing discourse surrounding women across organizations demonstrates the complex ways the anti-abortion movement draws upon both feminist and conservative gender norms to produce pro-woman discourse and depicts gender norms and power relations.

Strengths and limitations.

Discourse analysis is limited in its capacity to examine vast quantities of text, constraining the external validity of the study. However, this method provides ‘thick description’ (Geertz 1973) of the pro-woman strategy and its invocations of gender norms, central to my research question. Overall, discourse analysis results demonstrate how different organizations construct and deploy pro-woman strategies across the anti-abortion movement, beyond the overall frequency of pro-woman frames. While previous research documents an increase in pro-woman framing in some anti-abortion organizations, these studies fail to critically examine how

these frames are strategically deployed across the movement. Furthermore, the majority of this research does not identify how organizations draw upon dominant ideologies surrounding gender norms and expectations (Rose 2011; Saurette and Gordon 2015). Employing discourse analysis deconstructs the pro-woman strategy to better understand how anti-abortion organizations construct and deploy pro-woman discourse, drawing from and reinforcing dominant gender norms.

RESULTS

Part I: Recasting Women's Roles in 'Pro-Life' Narratives

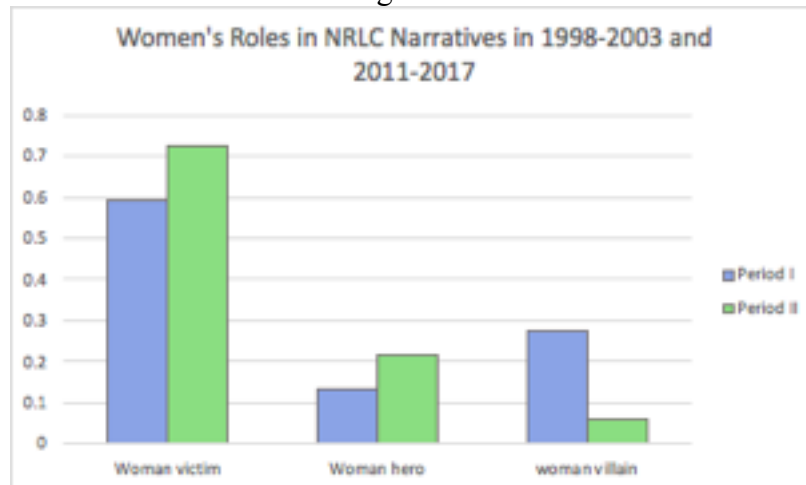
From Period I to Period II, “pro-life” narratives recast women as victims and even heroes or co-victims, as opposed to villains across NRLC and CWA discourse, demonstrating an increase in pro-woman narratives overall. Both NRLC and CWA construct pro-woman narratives by 1) decreasingly portraying women as selfish, uneducated, and promiscuous villains and 2) increasingly portraying women as heroic self-sacrificing mothers and uniquely-qualified advocates.

First and foremost, organizations increasingly deploy the pro-woman strategy over time by decreasingly casting women as villains in Period II compared to Period I. For example, in Period I, NRLC calls out women for their “sinful actions” in having abortions out of “self-centeredness” and “convenience,” relates stories of teen mothers who carelessly, “sign away [their] rights” to their sons and daughters (Liz Townsend, November 1998) and claims that, “some women want to kill their children because they are handicapped” (Dr. James Delahanty, August 1999). This characterizes the way NRLC more frequently villainizes women for selfishly, and ‘sinfully,’ having abortions in Period I and decreasingly so in Period II (see Figure 4.1).

Similarly, CWA is significantly less likely to villainize women for seeking abortions out of convenience following promiscuous, premarital sex in Period II compared to Period I. For example, a June 1998 press release states that “*convenience* [emphasis original] is the primary

reason that women seek late-term abortions.... The ‘typical’ patients tend to be young, low-income women often poorly educated or naive, whose reasons for waiting so long to end their pregnancies are rarely medical.” This stereotypes women who seek abortions as uneducated and irresponsible. Furthermore, women “have lost sight of the beauty of motherhood and have focused instead on issues of convenience and control...If she wants sex, she has it, whether or not she is in a position to care for a child. If she does not want to be pregnant, she gets an abortion” (Beverly LayHaye, January 1998). If women engage in sex, they should be ready to face the consequences of the “beauty” of motherhood they have supposedly “lost.”

Figure 4.1



In 1998-2003, 13.46% of narratives cast women as heroes, 59.09% of narratives cast women as victims, and 27.45% of narratives cast women as villains. In 2011-2017, 21.74% of narratives cast women as heroes, 72.45% cast women as victims, and 5.81% cast women as villains.

However, in Period II, both CWA and NRLC rarely villainize women. For example, women are no longer villainized even when choosing abortion in CWA narratives. President Penny Nance argues that the Pain Capable Child Protection Act, which prohibits second-trimester abortions, protects women at risk from dangerous ‘late-term’ abortions and mendacious providers: “This legislation also provides protection for women choosing abortion. This bill empowers women by giving them the added protection of a civil right of action against the

abortion provider” (Penny Nance, May 2015). Thus, this shift in the narrative surrounding women’s roles in abortion toward heroic depictions of women, instead of selfish, promiscuous villains exemplifies the increase in the pro-woman strategy over time and across organizations.

Both CWA and NRLC increasingly cast women as heroes in Period II compared to Period I, often as self-sacrificing mothers and uniquely-qualified pro-life advocates. Since motherhood is central to the definition of pro-woman, it is unsurprising that NRLC emphasizes “the deep respect we all have for the love and sacrifice of the women who give so much of themselves to raise and care for children, the future of the world” (David Andrusko, May 2017). Women were often lauded for rejecting doctor’s advice to abort babies with serious defects, caring for children with special needs, and choosing adoption, and these heroic narratives increase from Period I to Period II.

However, CWA features first-hand accounts from mothers within the organization. A letter to the editor of CWA publication *Family Voice* featured a heroic mother’s story: “Last year I was pregnant and expecting my third child, whom the doctor said wouldn’t survive. They voiced the option of having an abortion and I said ‘no.’ I’m happy to report that my child turned out 100 percent intact with no Down syndrome or genetic disease” (January/February 2001). Instead of featuring second-hand accounts of mothers’ own experiences like NRLC, CWA as an organization comprised primarily of women and mothers who advocate against abortion, has the ability to deploy first-person narratives from within its own membership.

While NRLC occasionally lauds women as uniquely-qualified pro-life advocates like “Vera, who has experienced the tragedy of abortion in her own life, [and] gave up a senior-level position in the business world to devote her full energy to the pro-life movement” (Ernest Olhoff, July 2001) across both periods, CWA more frequently celebrates women pro-life advocates in

Period II compared to Period I. CWA frequently emphasizes that pro-life women do “exceptional work as a new generation of trailblazers on behalf of women and unborn children” (CWA Staff, March 2011).

CWA increasingly portrays women as resistant, independent-minded pro-life advocates through their ‘Lady Smarts’ campaign, in which they argue that “women are concerned about more than their ‘lady parts’ this election; they are concerned about our economy and our national security” (October 2012). While these narratives still rely on negative stereotypes such as that some women ‘selfishly’ care more about their “lady parts” and reproductive rights than the nation’s well-being, they do champion ‘average’ women as agentic, political participants, which is less frequent in NRLC’s characterization of heroic women.

Both NRLC and CWA most frequently cast women as victims across both periods, but in NRLC narratives, this characterization increases in Period II compared to Period I. Women are repeatedly depicted as “victimized by the lies of the abortion industry...convinced by those lies that their unborn babies were nothing more than ‘a glob of cells’ or ‘just tissue,’” (David Andrusko, May 2017), instead of opponents against the unborn in Period I.

NRLC shifts characterization of victims in addition to increasingly portraying women as victims from Period I to Period II. Specifically, women in Period II are less likely to be portrayed as naïvely coerced by individuals into abortion, and more likely to be manipulated by pro-abortion culture and murderous abortionists than in Period I. In Period II, NRLC repeatedly criticizes the pro-abortion culture and industry for, “removing all speed bumps on the path to a quick death. And the largest [speed bump] of all is all is the woman’s gut-level knowledge that she is severing the deepest bond in human culture” (David Andrusko, July 2011). Thus, structural, cultural forces and the pro-choice movement force women to have abortions. This

diverges from the characterization of victimhood in Period I, where NRLC frequently features stories of women like Liane whose boyfriend Leo told her the pregnancy was a “blob of tissue” and demanded she have an abortion (Thomas Strahan, April 2002). This divergence exemplifies the increasing strategic construction and deployment of pro-woman narratives in Period II in that women’s victimization is actually more tied to structures and cultural norms than individual.

Despite the fact that CWA claims “victimology” is symptomatic of left-wing ‘pro-abortion’ feminism, CWA’s narratives still depict women most often as victims, compared to heroes and villains, similar to NRLC’s pro-woman narratives (Penny Nance, August 2016; see Figure 4.2). However, CWA frames women’s victimhood differently than NRLC, particularly diverging in Period II. In Period I, CWA’s portrayal of women’s victimhood reflects similar notions of passivity and naiveté similar to NRLC narratives. In Period I, CWA frequently portrays others coercing women to have abortions because women “usually gave into abortion only through pressure from the abuser and/or family members” (Family Voice, January/February 2001). However, in Period II, CWA treats abortion as violence against women, calling “abortionists” perpetrators of violence against women. In their opposition to Planned Parenthood, CWA argues the organization is guilty of “aiding and abetting sex traffickers, cheating the government, blatant racism, and the failure to report the molestation and rape of minors” (Penny Nance, October 2015). Thus, Planned Parenthood is not only guilty of profiting from abortion, but also enacting violence against women. This differs from the coercion and passivity emphasized in NRLC narratives and CWA narratives from Period I.

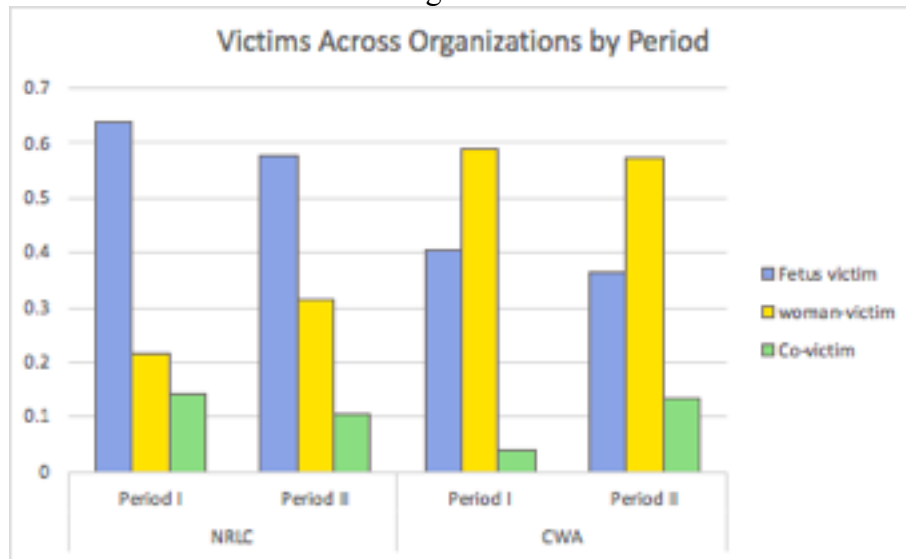
Figure 4.2



In Period I (1998-2003), CWA casts women as victims 73.60% of the time, as heroes 17.87%, and the villain 8.53%. In Period II (2011-2017), CWA casts women as victims 57%, as heroes 41.32%, and villains 1.2% of woman-centric narratives.

While both organizations increasingly employ pro-woman narratives across periods, the way in which this strategy is employed in relation to and in tandem with the fetal-centric strategy varies across organization. Fetal-centric narratives dominate pro-woman narratives in NRLC, while pro-woman narratives dominate fetal-centric narratives in CWA. More specifically, NRLC constructs and deploys more narratives around fetal life and victimhood, and actually decreases the portrayal of women as co-victims alongside the fetus. However, CWA focuses more on women in general, increasingly portraying women and the fetus in co-victimhood to show relationship between unborn and mother, and increasingly portraying women as resistant, independent-minded heroes from Period I to Period II. In this way, pro-woman narratives differ across organizations in that NRLC relies more on traditional notions of victimhood and the fetal-centric strategy to appeal to a broad pro-life audience, while CWA strategically tailors its woman-centric narratives in order to appeal to women constituents (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3



In Period I, NRLC casts fetuses as the victim 64.07% of the time, women as the victim 21.57% of the time, and both as co-victims 14.36% of the time. In Period II, NRLC casts fetuses as the victim 57.92% of the time, women 31.38% of the time, and co-victims 10.95%. In Period I, CWA casts fetuses as the victim 40.42% of the time, women 59.09%, and co-victims 3.89%. In Period II, CWA casts fetuses as the victim 36.33% of the time, women as the victim 57.49%, and co-victims 13.51% of the time.

Part II: The Contradictions and Crystallization of Pro-woman Discourse

NRLC and CWA construct pro-woman discourse by strategically recontextualizing popular feminist discourse, such as references to empowerment, violence against women, and structural inequality, in order to veil reinforcements of traditional, differential gender norms and stereotypes, such as passivity, naivety, and motherhood. This discursive strategy emerges in Period I, but crystallizes in Period II. While the construction of this strategy is relatively uniform across organizations, each organization's identity and target constituencies shape the ways in which organizations deploy it. Therefore, organizations may deploy the strategy differently in order to target constituencies, while the uniformity in construction may reflect shifts in the overarching discursive opportunity structure surrounding women.

NRLC's pro-woman discursive strategy draws upon feminist conceptions of empowerment even when portraying women as victims in Period II, compared to Period I when

NRLC predominantly portrays women as naive and passive. In Period II, pro-life activists ‘empower’ women to choose life, whereas in Period I, pro-life activists ‘persuade’ and ‘convince’ women to choose life. For example, in Period I, NRLC’s “solemn task is to peacefully, legally persuade both individual mothers and the nation that taking the life of an unborn is not a solution” (David Andrusko, November 1998). Persuading women signals that women are supposedly “abortion-minded” or naturally drawn toward abortion, and the pro-life movement needs to actively sway their immoral inclinations (1998). However, in Period II, NRLC argues “abortion pill reversal information empowers women” to choose life (Dr. Mary Francis, April 2017) and suggests friends “extend and empower” women when they are considering abortion (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 2017). Empowering women implies women have the innate ability to ‘choose life,’ and the pro-life movement supports them in their decision. Women, thus, may have the information necessary to ‘choose life’ on their own.

Furthermore, this comparison reveals the changing ways in which NRLC strategically draws from feminist phrases to construct pro-woman discourse. In the first period, NRLC narratives generally seek to ‘teach’ or ‘persuade’ women not to have abortions. This draws from cultural repertoires which reinforce traditional gender norms of passivity. However, in Period II, NRLC employs feminist notions of ‘empowerment’ by repeatedly depicting activists who ‘empower’ women to choose life. This frames pro-life activists as women’s champions in Period II, as opposed to paternalistic teachers in Period I. Important to note, however, women still need pro-life ‘empowerment’ to choose life, implying that if left to their own devices, women would choose abortion. These passages demonstrate the changing ways in which NRLC strategically recontextualizes feminist themes and reinforces traditional gender norms to construct and

employ pro-woman discourse, as well as how NRLC crystallizes pro-woman discourse into a cohesive framing strategy in Period II by reducing the contradictory depictions of “persuading” passive victims and trusting that women have the moral capacity to “choose life.”

Similar to NRLC, CWA draws upon feminist discourse, such as empowering single mothers and violence against women, to veil reinforcements of traditional, differential gender norms and passive victimhood to construct the pro-woman strategy. This discursive strategy emerges in Period I, but crystallizes in Period II in that the explicit contradictions between feminist and traditional gender norms and stereotypes are made implicit, cleverly synthesizing the two discursive structures into a more cohesive strategy.

For example, as the pro-woman strategy begins to take shape during Period I, CWA repeatedly advocates for “traditional family values,” in which marriage is between a man and a woman, the way God intended, where women are subordinate to their husbands and occupy different but equal roles (October 1998). At the 1998 CWA Convention, featured speaker Dr. Dorothy Patterson recommends women join evangelical bible studies, “where women can learn exactly what the Bible really says, including that they are indeed supposed to submit to their husbands” (September 1998). However, in the May 1998 *Family Voice* publication, CWA encourages women to “loose the chains” of abusive husbands, often addicted to pornography, such as Kathleen who was “victimized by well-meaning pastors... They told me ‘you’re not satisfying your husband; you’re not being a submissive wife.’” CWA suggests women should be submissive to husbands at the 1998 Convention, but then calls out pastors for telling women to be submissive to their husbands that same year. Thus, CWA invoked feminist phrases to “loose the chains” of their husbands, while simultaneously reinforcing notions that women should be submissive in Period I.

This explicit endorsement of differential gender roles is less frequent and more implicit in Period II. CWA emphasizes the independence and strength of stay-at-home and single mothers in Period II, as opposed to conflicting messages of subordination. For example, Penny Nance, writes that “stay at home moms hold the purse strings for the family.... They make the choices to live within families’ budget every month...” (April 2012). While this passage perpetuates stereotypes of self-sacrificing motherhood, it is indicative of the ways in which CWA strategically draws upon feminist discourse in order to veil their reinforcement of dominant gender norms. The contradictions present in Period I dissipate in Period II, where the pro-woman discourse becomes a cohesive strategy.

Notably, CWA develops the pro-woman strategy in Period II by extending feminist conceptions of violence against women, even sexual violence, to include abortion. This is particularly evident when CWA equates women victims of abortion to victims of sexual violence, suggesting men may slip women emergency contraceptive pills without their consent like date-rape drugs: “If Ella [emergency contraceptive pill] is easy to access, women will be victims to it being slipped to them without their consent...drugs that can cause an abortion, while touted as giving women more control over their bodies, are just as easily used by men to exploit women” (CWA Staff, January 2011). Abortion, thus, becomes another way men can enact violence against women. This recontextualizes the discourse of feminist advocates against sexual assault, who connect sexual violence, and violence against women more broadly, to patriarchal domination and exploitation of women’s bodies. However, CWA simultaneously draws from discourse surrounding traditional gender norms by excluding any discourse around women’s capacity to choose Ella.

This exemplifies the complex ways in which CWA and NRLC construct pro-woman discourse by simultaneously recontextualizing feminist conceptions of agency, patriarchal domination, and violence against women and reinforcing traditional gender norms and stereotypes, such as differential gender norms and passive victimhood. Furthermore, this discursive strategy crystallizes from Period I to Period II. While the structure of the pro-woman discursive strategy is similar across NRLC and CWA literature, organizational identity constrains the specific references to feminism, so that while NRLC predominantly focuses on second-hand accounts of women's suffering under abortion, CWA pro-woman discourse is constructed by and for women. Each organization tailors their deployment style to appeal to its historical target audience and to broader constituencies. This targeted deployment is particularly evident in narrative and discourse of the next generation of pro-life activists: Students for Life of America.

Part III: The Next Generation, SFLA Pro-woman Narratives and Discourse

In SFLA newsletters from Period II, women are more likely to be cast as victims, than as heroes, and least likely to be cast as villains, similar to CWA and NRLC (Figure 4.4). However, women are also more often cast as heroes in SFLA and CWA narratives than in NRLC narratives, while women were more likely to be cast as victims by SFLA than by CWA.

Within SFLA narratives, women were most often portrayed as victims in “crisis pregnancy” situations, requiring pro-life guidance or support to choose life. SFLA frequently featured stories of women reversing their abortion decisions and ‘choosing life’ after encountering SFLA activists. For example, President Kristan Hawkins invites readers to imagine a world “where no woman ever feels forced to choose abortion for the sake of her education, career, or family... where every woman who faces a crisis pregnancy knows where to turn for

help” (2011-2012). Through their “Pregnant on Campus Initiative” campaign SFLA attempted to support young women in ‘crisis pregnancies’ to choose life. SFLA encouraged young women that pursuing an education and having a child are not mutually exclusive. These narratives portrayed women as victims of their crisis pregnancies and social pressures to choose abortion over raising the child.

Women are cast as heroes more frequently in SFLA narratives than those of NRLC and CWA. But like NRLC and CWA, mothers and pro-life women activists are frequently celebrated as heroes in SFLA narratives. For example, SFLA repeatedly lauds mothers, especially those who changed their decision to have an abortion, as courageous: “Maria wanted to tell me in person that she had decided to keep her baby. That regardless of what her parents wanted her to do, she was going ahead with the pregnancy” (2011-2012). Furthermore, SFLA advocates celebrate young mothers to reduce their shame and stigma: “We stood side-by-side with a heroic young woman who was shamed by her Christian school for being pregnant” (2016-2017). Compared to NRLC and CWA narratives, pro-life women activists are more frequently depicted as heroes in SFLA narratives, often helping other women in crisis pregnancy situations. In a feature entitled, ‘Lori’s Story,’ SFLA profiles a young student who dedicated her college career to helping young pregnant women on campus, “who placed priceless value on helping women facing unplanned pregnancies to choose life for their children” (2015-2016). Similar to NRLC’s features on women’s abortion stories, and CWA’s stories about mother activists, SFLA features the stories of young women activists helping other young women in crisis.

Despite the prevalence of pro-woman, woman-centric narratives in SFLA newsletters, narratives surrounding the unborn are far from absent. For example, SFLA repeatedly referred to narratives in which women choose life as “Baby Saves,” not “Women Saves.” In the 2016-2017

report on the Pregnant on Campus Initiative's accomplishments, SFLA quantified their success as "34 babies saved." In the same article, SFLA also highlighted that 265 student mothers received assistance from the Initiative. Through this narrative, the organization prioritized saving babies, while women are helped in the process. While the desired outcome of this strategy may be to save unborn lives, it forces SFLA to target strategy towards young women.

Figure 4.4



NRLC casts women as victims 72.45%, as heroes 21.73%, and as villains 5.81% of the time. CWA casts women as victims 57.48%, as heroes 41.32%, and villains 1.20% of the time. SFLA casts women as victims 65.07%, as heroes 33.33%, and villains 1.59% of the time

SFLA Discourse

In SFLA literature, the pro-woman strategy draws from feminist discourse and traditional gender norms surrounding motherhood and victimhood, similar to how NRLC and CWA construct the strategy. Specifically, SFLA incorporates feminist discourses surrounding the exploitation of women, structural barriers to childrearing, and collective feminine agency, while simultaneously invoking stereotypes of passivity and women as vessels for life. In this way, women are granted agency to resist the pressure to have an abortion, but still require collective support from pro-life women to do so. This perpetuates the stereotypes reiterated in NRLC and CWA discourse that if left to their own devices, women would not 'choose life.' However, SFLA

articulates this message in conjunction with narratives of directly helping women raise children through collective action. This reflects similar discourse employed by feminist advocates for affordable, communal childcare (Brush 2002; Douglas and Michaels 2004). In fact, SFLA never directly villainizes or opposes feminists. Instead, SFLA frames their opposition to Planned Parenthood solely on the basis of their pro-choice stance; not their explicitly feminist identity.

SFLA frequently opposes Planned Parenthood through campaigns across college campuses with signs that read, “Planned Parenthood Betrays Women,” or, “Planned Parenthood Exploits Women” (2013-2014; 2015-2016; 2016-2017). In 2017, SFLA began their, “We Don’t Need Planned Parenthood,” campaign in tandem with the Women’s March on Washington. This discourse implies that women are independent actors who do not need assistance from “exploitative” organizations like Planned Parenthood (2016-2017). Literature and signs from these campaigns are printed in Planned Parenthood’s signature pink. This appropriation of Planned Parenthood’s language and color scheme may even seek to confuse or mislead women to utilize pro-life sponsored care, such as Crisis Pregnancy Centers, instead of actual health care centers like Planned Parenthood (Bryant and Swartz 2018).

Unlike NRLC narratives, women are less often depicted as coerced by partners and family members into abortion. Instead, SFLA acknowledges the structural challenges facing young mothers. For example, DePauw University’s SFLA chapter organized a drive of supplies for pregnant women on campus, including diapers, clothing, and food. Other university chapters set up scholarship funds for pregnant mothers to finish out their degrees, advocated for lactation rooms and changing tables on college campuses, and threw pregnant women baby showers (2015-2016). This acknowledges the structural constraints that drive women to consider

abortion, especially young women, retracting some of the blame pro-life narratives often place on them.

Finally, SFLA discourse draws from feminist conceptions of collective agency in their repeated stories of women helping women. Since most of the heroic pro-life activists featured in SFLA discourse are women, there are numerous examples of women helping other women, such as picking up a woman who “chose life” stranded at Planned Parenthood (2011-2012) or “empowering women to reject the abortion industry’s rampant lie that moms aren’t strong enough or capable enough to have a child and succeed in school” (2015-2016). This discourse draws from feminist conceptions of collective agency, in that resistance is often exercised in conjunction with others (Miriam 2005).

Even in these pro-woman passages above, SFLA pro-woman discourse still draws from traditional gender norms surrounding passivity, immaturity, irresponsibility, and motherhood. In SFLA pro-woman discourse, women often make the ‘right’ choice. Women change their mind about abortion thanks to the hard work of SFLA activists praying outside clinics or showcasing fetal development models. As with NRLC and CWA, pro-woman discourse in SFLA newsletters implies women require support to choose life. ‘Abortion-minded’ women struggle to resist choosing abortion on their own. Furthermore, women are often referred to as “girls” regardless of age, perpetuating the stereotype that women are naive and dependent (2011-2012).

In addition, the “Baby Saves,” campaign treats talking to women about abortion as a means to an end. Thus, helping women may not be the movement’s ultimate priority. Women who choose life save the unborn, not necessarily protect themselves from the harms of abortion, so emphasized by NRLC pro-woman discourse. This suggests that women are obstacles to tackle in the pro-life quest to save the unborn. Ultimately, this draws from essentialist stereotypes of

motherhood, in which women are simply vessels for life. In this way, SFLA constructs pro-woman discourse by drawing from traditional gender norms and discourse, as well as feminist discourse.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Narrative analysis results show how anti-abortion organizations strategically construct and deploy pro-woman discourse by recasting women as victims, co-victims, or heroes in abortion narratives as opposed to villains (Figure 4.1 and 4.2). Results from NRLC and CWA suggest that this pro-woman strategy increased over time, and this strategy rivals or dominates the fetus-centric strategy in Period II. These narratives disrupt the historical focus on the fetus (Schroedel 2001; Saurette and Gordon 2015). In addition, while target audience and organizational identity shape the deployment of this strategy, the similarities reveal a consistent discursive construction across organizations that crystallizes in Period II, veiling reinforcements of traditional gender norms with recontextualization of pop feminist discourse.

Defining and operationalizing pro-woman

While previous research studies anti-abortion, pro-woman framing, few explicitly define how it is pragmatically and strategically operationalized and deployed across the movement (Rose 2011; Saurette & Gordon 2015). In fact, the actual phrase ‘pro-woman’ only appears a few times in NRLC and CWA literature, and is never used in SFLA literature. The patterned discourse surrounding women’s victimization constructs the pro-woman strategy and implied ideology.

Therefore, pro-woman discourse is a framing strategy which organizations employ to broaden the abortion debate to include both life of the unborn and of the woman. Primarily, pro-woman narratives construct women as victims of abortion, sometimes the primary victims as

with CWA and SFLA discourse, and sometimes the secondary or co-victim as with NRLC discourse. These pro-woman themes emphasize the ways in which the anti-abortion movement protects and advocates for women, who are harmed, exploited, or betrayed by the ‘abortion industry’ and ‘pro-abortion culture.’ Pro-woman discourse extends anti-abortion issue-framing beyond fetal personhood into discursive realms surrounding women’s empowerment, maternal politics, and victims’ rights. Women are frequently depicted as equals and even independent decision-makers and leaders.

However, this discourse reinforces complementary, traditional gender norms of passivity, motherhood, and victimhood. Women are most appreciated as mothers and sometimes pitied as vulnerable, naive, and easily-influenced victims. Ultimately, this pro-woman discourse implies that women do not possess the moral capacity, knowledge, or resources to choose life on their own; women need the guidance of anti-abortion advocates to make the ‘right’ decision.

This elucidates the ways in which the discursive opportunity structures, organizational identity, and target audiences constrain and construct what strategies organizations choose to adopt and the relative success of these strategies. In order to refute criticisms from pro-choice opposition that the anti-abortion movement is anti-woman, organizations craft pro-woman narratives to suggest they are the true protectors of women. In this way, organizations deploy the pro-woman discursive strategy to combat oppositional stereotypes and reconstruct identities as champions of both ‘the unborn and their mothers.’

However, organizational identity, forged in part through alliances with conservatives and the Religious Right and simultaneous opposition to feminist, left-wing politics constrain the movement’s capacity to make explicitly feminist claims. Both NRLC and CWA attack ‘pro-abortion’ feminist politicians and organizations. While SFLA does not villainize feminists

explicitly, they also do not explicitly identify as feminist. Furthermore, organizations like CWA who target women are more likely to focus narratives and discourse around women in general, and thus, spend significantly less time villainizing or ignoring women to discuss the ‘unborn’ compared to NRLC, which targets a broader audience beyond anti-abortion women.

Relatedly, feminist discourse is not a ‘dominant discourse’ in U.S. politics and culture. Working mothers’ wages are still penalized, despite an increase in public support for working mothers (Horowitz, Parker and Stepler 2017). This wage penalty is, in part, explained by discrimination based on status characteristics, like gender and motherhood (Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007). Mothers are stereotyped as less competent, less qualified than non-mothers and male candidates overall. Simultaneously, women are encouraged to occupy ‘separate spheres’ from men and practice intensive motherhood (Hays 1999). Intensive motherhood mandates women devote their lives to raising children, but the stereotypes of an ideal worker demand commitment to the workplace (Acker 1990). Taken together, this research shows dominant ideologies may still reinforce motherhood as women’s primary role in society, despite increasing positive attitudes towards egalitarian gender norms (Cotter and Hermsen 2014; Shu and Meagher 2018).

Thus, pro-woman discourse’s emphasis on ‘separate spheres’ gender norms (Zelizer 2007) where women are predominantly championed as mothers reflects and reinforces similar ambiguities present in dominant gender ideology. Pro-woman discourse is not explicitly sexist, but instead takes the form of more insidious, subliminal references to stereotypes of motherhood and victimhood. Pro-woman narratives obscure these endorsements of traditional gender norms by the sheen of feminist ‘empowerment’ and ‘representation,’ but still perpetuate dominant gender ideology and power structures. In this way, the tensions and contradictions characteristic

of the pro-woman strategy between persuasion and empowerment, passivity and agency, victims and heroes, reflect tensions in broader political discourse surrounding women.

Discursive Opportunities and Organizational Constraints

While the results here cannot explicitly measure the discursive opportunity structure, evidence of the similar ways in which organizations strategically construct pro-woman narratives and discourse over time demonstrates what strategies may be most effective given changing discursive constraints. Despite various organizational histories, identities, and target audiences, NRLC, CWA, and SFLA construct similar narrative characterizations over time, converging on similar themes of victimhood and motherhood. While the pro-woman strategy emerges in Period I, organizations consolidate and crystallize the strategy in Period II, decreasing contradictory depictions of gender norms and stereotypes and synchronizing a similar discursive structure that recontextualizes pop feminist phrases and concepts while simultaneously referencing traditional gender norms. In this way, the strategies organizations choose to adopt may reflect changes external to organizations, such as changes in the discursive opportunity structure around women and feminism. As McCammon (2013) argues, which framing strategies are resonant and advantageous changes across time period and context.

However, organizational identity shapes the stylistic deployment of the pro-woman strategy to an extent. CWA strategically deploys pro-woman discourse by extending violence against women to include abortion, adopting an organization-specific deployment style that is consistent with CWA's opposition to violence against women and sexual assault more broadly. In targeting women, the organization specifically frames abortion as a "women's issue" that may resonate specifically with constituents. Notably, CWA has been led by and for women since its inception. Thus, CWA President Penny Nance may frame abortion differently than NRLC editor

David Andrusko given her lived experiences and target constituents. However, the similarities not only in the ways in which organizations construct the pro-woman strategy in each period, but also the similar patterns of crystallization across both organizations demonstrates the pervasiveness and unification of this strategy. This may reflect the likeness of changing discursive opportunities around women between Period I and Period II in that a diverse array of organizations maintained a unified, cohesive strategy.

It is particularly striking that anti-abortion discourse is actually converging on similar pro-woman themes across organizations, given predictions from Rose (2011) that the pro-woman strategy will generate tension within the movement and organizations will particularize goals and strategies during times of opportunity (Rohlinger and Quadagno 2010). Pro-woman narratives follow the same formula and structure by and large: Pro-life heroes save women victims from ‘pro-abortion’ villains. Furthermore, the structure of pro-woman discourse is similar. Organizations weave the discursive threads of feminist and dominant, traditional gender norms into a cohesive blanket message that pro-life organizations *do* care about women, even more than their exploitative pro-abortion opponents. Thus, this unified strategy takes full advantage of political opportunity from 2011-2017, as opposed to generating or exacerbating intramovement tensions.

Furthermore, as organizations adopt this pro-woman strategy, how do we know if it has been more or less successful than the fetal-right-to-life framing strategy? While results here cannot provide concrete evidence of the strategy’s effectiveness, recent political science research shows that the pro-woman strategy has already been effective in passing woman-centric, anti-choice policy at the federal and state levels (Von Hagel and Mansbach 2016). More specifically, woman-centric legislation has been more successful than legislation protecting fetal life

(Cannold 2002; Siegel 2008; Von Hagel and Mansbach 2016). While the anti-abortion movement historically employed fetal personhood frames, most of the bills establishing fetal personhood backed by the movement in the late 1970s through the 1990s failed to pass at federal and state levels. As the anti-abortion movement began employing more women-centric, pro-woman discursive strategies in the late 1990s onwards and into the 21st century, as my study demonstrates, organizations promoted bills that protected women from abortion, such as Women's Right to Know Laws. The proportion of these pro-woman bills passed into law is significantly higher than the proportion of fetal personhood bills passed.

Thus, organizations may also have adopted the pro-woman strategy because this discourse is more easily institutionalized than discourse around fetal-right-to-life, especially from 2011-2017. This may reflect the likeness of a shifting discursive opportunity structure around women in U.S. politics and policy. Regardless of why organizations adopted this strategy, pro-woman discourse has been institutionalized into abortion policy, evidenced by nearly 75 state laws⁴ passed between 2011-2017 intended to 'protect women' from the dangers of abortion procedures, providers, and clinics (Guttmacher 2017). Organizations have power to shape the terms of the debate but also broader policy discourse. As for what strategies the anti-abortion movement pursues in years to come and their relative success, if Students for Life of America is any signal, the future may very well be female.

⁴ From Alan Guttmacher Institute. This represents the total of laws regarding mandatory waiting periods, sonograms, and counseling laws passed between 2011-2017.

APPENDIX 1: NRLC RESULTS FROM 2004-2010

Given the sizeable time lapse between Period I and Period II, I examined NRLC newsletters from 2004-2010. Newsletters were the only literature available during the interim period from any of the three organizations. I conducted focused coding of narrative characterization across each year and examined discursive strategy for contradictions and ambiguities in deployment style. Overall, narrative characterization from 2004-2011 is similar to that in Period II: women are most frequently cast as victims, and heroes, and least likely cast as villains. Notably, the proportion of each characterization is closer to the proportions in Period II than Period I. For example, women are cast as victims about 69% of the time, heroes about 20% of the time, and villains only 5% of the time overall.

However, examining variation across each year reveals that this shift in characterization is somewhat linear, though imperfect. For example, in 2004, women are cast as villains about 10% of the time, compared to heroes or victims. However, in 2009-2010 (only 4 short newsletters were released in 2010, so I combined them with the 11 produced in 2009), women were cast as villains only 3% of the time. Furthermore, women are increasingly portrayed as victims compared to the fetus over time. In 2004, women are portrayed as victims only 26% of the time, co-victims 11% of the time, and fetuses as the victims 63% of the time. However, by 2008, the dominance of fetal-centric narratives declines. Women are cast as the victim 42% of the time, co-victims 6% of the time, and fetuses as victims 51%. This mirrors the trend between Period I and Period II, in which women-centric narratives grow increasingly prevalent compared to fetus-centric narratives. While this does not necessarily indicate a linear trend in pro-woman narratives, it does support the consistent increase and prevalence of pro-woman narratives in NRLC discourse over time.

The pro-woman strategy during the latter portion of this interim period reflects similar discursive construction and deployment as Period II. For example, from 2008-2010, NRLC increasingly depicts women activists as the heroes of the movement, seemingly catalyzed by Sarah Palin's vice-presidential nomination. Palin is hailed for "her strength, her wisdom, her courage, to withstand all that will be thrown up against her," such as the "sexist" attacks by the liberal media and Obama campaign (David Andrusko, October 2008). However, Palin is honored as the ultimate pro-life icon because she is the mother of a disabled child and a teen mother, outlined in an article titled, "How a Hockey Mom Turned Alaska's Political Establishment Upside Down." The article calls pro-choice liberals "sexist" for opposing Palin's dedication to country and family (Kaylene Johnson, September 2008). Similarly, NRLC increasingly depicts young women activists as heroic for "questioning" abortion during the interim period: "Yet today's young women are questioning abortion not because they know too little, but because they know too much. They have paid the price for the modern feminist embrace of counterfeit liberation. Now they are standing up to demand the real thing-whether or not their elders approve" (David Andrusko, March 2008). This discursive strategy reflects the construction of pro-woman discourse broadly in which organizations draw upon feminist themes of anti-sexism and reinforce traditional norms of motherhood, as well as NRLC's unique deployment style which explicitly opposes the feminist movement.

While this overview of the pro-woman strategy from 2004-2011 is quite brief, it demonstrates the most prevalent ways in which NRLC constructs and deploys pro-woman narratives and discourse in between Period I and Period II.

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