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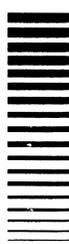
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# When Waves Collide: Cycles of Protest and the Swiss and American Women's Movements

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This article makes two related arguments. First, a rising cycle of protest may influence existing movements by altering their tactics, providing new allies, and altering others' perceptions of the movements. I illustrate these effects with examples drawn from the Swiss women's movement. The Swiss women's movement is unique because the first wave was still pursuing the enfranchisement of women when the second wave mobilized in the 1960s. Second, I argue that a cycle of protest perspective provides new insights into the events surrounding the decline of the American first-wave movement. The study compares Swiss and American first-wave struggles to achieve an Equal Rights Amendment and increase women's representation in elected office. While the Swiss first wave was aided in these endeavors by the rise of the second wave, the U.S. women's movement after 1920 faced additional problems arising from its ties to the Progressive movement. These ties exacerbated splits within the movement and engendered a backlash against the women's movement by interests threatened by Progressive legislation.

Women's movements in industrialized democracies have been characterized as consisting of two waves (Lovenduski 1986; Randall 1987). The first wave in each country typically began in the late 1800s and early 1900s and was concerned with achieving woman suffrage and eliminating barriers to women in education, employment, and the ownership of property. The second waves, with their emphasis on women's liberation and reproductive rights, and challenging the broader features of patriarchal society, emerged during the 1960s

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and 1970s, long after the first waves ebbed. Among Western women's movements, Switzerland is unique in that the first and second wave movements overlapped. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the first wave of the Swiss women's movement was still actively pursuing women's enfranchisement when the new women's liberation movement began to mobilize.

This study uses this unique confluence of waves to examine how cycles of protest shape existing movements. Cycles of protest are periodic increases and decreases in protest triggered by systemic societal changes. Once an increase in protest has begun, both systemic factors and the actions of participating groups determine the length, intensity, and ideological tenor (or "frames") of the cycle (Tarrow 1989b). The cycles-of-protest literature has tended to focus on how early movements affect those which develop later. The influence of older movements on newly emerging ones has been acknowledged in new social movement research (see, e.g., Offe 1985; Touraine 1981), studies of movements within cycles of protest (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Snow and Benford 1992; Tarrow 1989b), and analyses of the women's liberation movement (Freeman 1975; Randall 1987; Rupp and Taylor 1987; Ryan 1992; and Taylor 1989, 1990). A few researchers have suggested that older movements might be influenced by newly emerging cycles of protest, but do not provide any in-depth analysis (Tarrow 1994, Meyer and Whittier 1994). The meeting of the Swiss first wave with the second wave as part of the 60s cycle of protest provides an opportunity to examine this possibility in detail.

In addition, I compare the first waves of the Swiss and the American women's movements after women's enfranchisement. This comparison helps to illustrate the role which cycles of protest may play in the demobilization of movements after they succeed. In the United States, women's rights organizations went into abeyance after the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment (Taylor 1990, 1989), but in Switzerland first wave activists went on to successfully tackle other women's rights issues after suffrage. I argue that the different trajectories of the two movements after women's enfranchisement can be explained by each movement's ties to cycles of protest. The first wave of the U.S. women's movement had strong ties to the Progressive movements,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Historians have argued that Progressivism should not be viewed as a coherent movement since it encompassed many disparate ideologies (e.g., Filene 1970; Rodgers 1982). Nonetheless, the various groups under this rubric viewed themselves as "Progressives," shared the same general beliefs, and formed loose coalitions around specific issues. In that sense they were more than a set of separate movements but constituted a cycle of protest much as did the new social movements of the 1960s and 70s. Thus, it seems appropriate to speak of progressive movements and a progressive cycle of protest as one speaks of new social movements today.

which aided the suffrage effort until 1920 but contributed to increased divisions within the women's movement and inspired a backlash against progressive women after 1920. In Switzerland, the rising cycle of protest in the 1960s, and particularly the second wave's inclusion in this cycle, aided first-wave causes after women's enfranchisement in 1971.<sup>2</sup>

In choosing the United States as the contrasting case, I was guided by two factors. First, the United States provides the best example of a first-wave women's movement tied to a declining cycle of protest. While some European first-wave women's movements had ties to others, particularly the socialist movement, these ties split many European women's movements at their inception in a way that progressive ties did not. Moreover, socialist movements were still on the rise when woman suffrage was adopted in many European countries. Hence, these countries cannot provide an example of a post-suffrage women's movement tied to a *declining* cycle of protest. Second, despite some differences discussed below, the U.S. and Switzerland share several institutional characteristics—a federal system that affects constitutional questions and also inspires a strong belief in local autonomy, and weak national parties with little party discipline—which differentiate them from other European countries. Thus, the first wave of the U.S. women's movement provides the best contrast to the Swiss movement's ties to a rising cycle of protest.

This article proceeds as follows. I begin by describing how the first and second waves of the Swiss movement “collided” in the late 1960s and early 1970s during the battle for women's enfranchisement. In doing so I elaborate the ways the cycle of protest which produced the Swiss second wave affected the activities and success of the first wave. I then examine the Swiss first wave's attempt to achieve an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) after 1971, comparing it to the American battle for the ERA immediately following the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. This is followed by an analysis of the efforts in both countries during the post-suffrage period to increase the number of women serving in legislative bodies. Equal Rights Amendments and increasing women's political representation were chosen as comparative case studies because these issues were major first-wave issues in the post-suffrage periods in both coun-

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<sup>2</sup> It is necessary to make somewhat artificial distinctions between the first and second waves in Switzerland and between the women's rights movement and progressive movements in the U.S. in order to look at the effect these groups had on each other. In both cases there was overlap in personnel, beliefs, and activities. First-wave activists in Switzerland occasionally championed second-wave issues, and many U.S. women's rights activists were active in the progressive movements and adhered to progressive beliefs. In neither case, however, was the overlap so extensive that the two groups could be considered one.

tries.<sup>3</sup> I conclude by discussing the implications of the Swiss case for our understanding of the American women's movement and social movement theory.

### **WHEN WAVES COLLIDE: SWISS WOMEN'S STRUGGLE FOR THE VOTE**

Woman suffrage came very late in Switzerland—on the national level in 1971—and two cantons prohibited women from participating in local elections until 1990. The first Swiss canton to enfranchise women, Vaud, did so only in 1959, long after woman suffrage was an established fact in most European countries. Despite the lateness of women's enfranchisement, the first wave of the Swiss women's movement was very similar to its American and European counterparts.

The origins of the Swiss first wave lay in the early 19th century women's associations which conducted charity and moral reform work or supported the interests of working women (Mesmer 1988), and considered questions of women's rights of secondary importance (Banaszak 1996; Woodtli 1983). Most of the earliest organizations were spin-offs of charitable organizations founded by men (Woodtli 1983; Mesmer 1988). Early on, divisions emerged between these moral reform groups and socialist women's groups. After 1907, socialist women's groups followed a decree of the international socialist movement that stated they should refuse to work with middle-class women's organizations and focus instead on the socialist party and worker's movement which also supported woman suffrage.

This division between socialist and middle-class women's organizations disappeared only gradually. By the 1950s socialists abandoned their radical, anti-capitalist ideology and became increasingly similar to mainstream middle-class groups (Gruner 1977), permitting a transformation of the relationship of socialist women to the suffrage cause. A new generation of socialist women entered the more middle-class suffrage organization, the Schweizerischer Verband für Frauenstimmrecht (SVF). In addition, in 1957 the women's group of the Social Democratic party joined with a number of charitable and religious women's organizations to create a working group which coordinated

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<sup>3</sup> While American and Swiss first-wave women were concerned with other issues, these differed in both countries. First-wave women in Switzerland (but not in the U.S.) became involved in autonomous projects such as houses for victims of domestic violence (Hungerbühler 1984: 20), and first-wave feminists in the United States (but not in Switzerland) fought for protective legislation for women (Lemons 1973; Skocpol 1992; Taylor 1989). That many U.S. suffrage activists pursued progressive issues while Swiss activists worked on traditionally second-wave projects is a sign of how important existing cycles of protest were.

women's rights activities on the national level called the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der schweizerischen Frauenverbände für die politischen Rechte der Frau* (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*). Thus, by the 1950s, socialist women were integrated into the Swiss suffrage movement.

However, divisions remained within the Swiss suffrage movement. Although Swiss suffrage activists were united in a single organization, they were divided on the best strategy to achieve the vote. Some women argued that public education was the best way to work for women's enfranchisement while others argued for more protest or confrontational activities. While these debates mirrored those which occurred in the American suffrage movement after 1910, the tactical divisions in Switzerland did not result in an organizational split within the suffrage movement as they did in the United States. Both wings remained within the SVF since the decentralized structure allowed local groups to pursue their own strategies without interference from or conflict with others.

When the second wave of the Swiss women's movement emerged in the late 1960s it also resembled those appearing elsewhere on the continent and in North America. As elsewhere, the student, peace, and New Left movements played a role in the development of the Swiss second wave, serving as a resource base and spurring women to activism by the chilly climate they found there. Many second-wave activists began their activity in the student movement, adopting its organizational structures, ideology, and tactics in the creation of the women's liberation movement. The poor reception of women in these movements, such as at the SDS Congress in Frankfurt of July 1968, had a mobilizing effect on the Swiss second wave (Hinn 1988: 204).

While scholars have generally divided the U.S. women's movement into two parts: a radical, collectivist, small-group wing and a moderate, bureaucratic, mass movement wing (Deckard 1983; Ferree and Hess 1985; Freeman 1975; Ryan 1992), the Swiss second wave did not develop a moderate wing because existing first-wave organizations already filled this position. Rather, the second wave of the Swiss women's movement consciously distinguished itself from the first by denouncing hierarchical structure in favor of consensus decision making (Hungerbühler 1984). Indeed, second-wave activists often eschewed organizations for informal working groups (Michel-Adler 1986). They also stressed the creation of feminist political, social, and economic institutions in order to replace the patriarchal system (see, e.g., OFRA 1986). Because fundamental change should extend into women's personal lives as well (Voegeli 1986), the Swiss women's liberation movement focused on new issues such as the division of labor within the family, the availability of birth control or abortion, the use of gene technologies, and domestic violence against women. In so doing, it rejected the conventional political activities of the first

wave, preferring to utilize outsider forms of political action—such as demonstrations, street theater, and autonomous local projects—instead of influencing elected officials or political parties. When second-wave activists entered conventional politics, they maintained their outsider status by running initiative campaigns or campaigning for opposition parties.

*The Second Wave's Impact on the Woman Suffrage Movement*

The second wave emerged only during the last three years of the battle for women's voting rights, and there were divisions which reduced the contact between the first and second waves. Indeed, the second wave remained a separate movement although first-wave activists often tried to incorporate second-wave activists into their movement. Even alliances between the two waves were difficult, since there was considerable conflict and animosity between them. A good example of these coordination problems is the protest which a number of second-wave activists staged at the 1968 celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Zürich woman suffrage organization. As one first-wave activist described it, second-wave activists "came in with a megaphone, climbed on stage and disturbed the ceremony. They said over the megaphone: '75 years working for suffrage is no reason to celebrate.' They were disturbed that we had dressed up and were celebrating" (Interview, January 15, 1988).<sup>4</sup> Despite the provocation, the suffrage activists attempted to engage the demonstrators in a dialogue and encouraged them to join the suffrage organization. "We tried to talk to these women. . . . We wanted to show that we understood" (Interview, January 15, 1988). However, none of the demonstrators joined the organization as a result of these talks.

Indeed, each wave was highly critical of the other. The second wave continually argued that the first wave was too complacent about their disenfranchisement and used only weak and ineffective tactics in their struggle for the vote. For example, the Organisation für die Sache der Frau (OFRA) characterized the first wave as weary (erlahmte) and said that it did not deserve the characterization of movement (OFRA 1986: 3). Similarly, when first-wave activists picked the slogan "For women's sake, a male yes" ("Den Frauen zuliebe ein männliches Ja") for the 1970 Zürich suffrage referendum campaign, second-wave activists complained about its deferential tone (Michel-Adler 1986). Indeed, second-wave women argued the first wave's preoccupation with suffrage was misguided because winning the vote would not alter the poor situation of women (Frauen Befreiungs Bewegung 1983).

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on how interviews with first-wave activists were conducted, see the Appendix. All quotations from German-language interviews and published materials are translated from the original by the author.

Suffrage activists were similarly critical of the new women's liberation movement, the Frauen Befreiungs Bewegung (or FBB). They often argued that FBB actions were disruptive, naïve, counterproductive, and too lawless. For example, when FBB women joined one of the first wave's suffrage parades in Zürich, they chose to march down unauthorized parade routes and engage in street theater much to the chagrin of the first wave organizers. Woodtli, herself a first-wave activist, best demonstrates suffrage activists' attitudes toward these confrontational tactics: "these young, fresh, dear peace disturbers were always there. They favored actions which helped them gain *publicity*—overwhelmingly distorted [publicity]" (1983: 207, emphasis in original). In addition, first-wave activists viewed the younger movement as "only a short-lived passion"<sup>5</sup> or having "no constancy or continuity"<sup>6</sup> because of their unwillingness to engage in more conventional activities or to coordinate with the traditional women's organizations.

Despite these differences, there was some limited cooperation between second-wave activists and those first-wave activists more willing to engage in confrontational tactics. In Zürich and Basel, second-wave activists occasionally participated in torchlight parades or campaign strategy meetings (Michel-Adler 1986). The largest and most significant coordinated action between FBB and first-wave women was the one national demonstration for woman suffrage, held in 1969 and known as the March on Bern. Inspired by the federal government's announcement that it would only sign the European Human Rights Convention (EHRC) with a special proviso exempting Switzerland from the clauses granting political rights to women, the Zürich and Basel sections of the suffrage organization coordinated with the FBB to organize the demonstration.

The national suffrage organization (the SVF) did not support or endorse the protest march. In a special meeting of the suffrage organization, a majority of delegates rejected a national demonstration as too aggressive. In a separate meeting of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft which coordinated the activities of first-wave women's organizations, the presidents of the SVF and several other first-wave associations expressed fear that a demonstration would get out of control. After all, the FBB women had been particularly vocal about their unwillingness to compromise on the issue: "Together with the Zürich women of this [suffrage] movement we drafted a resolution to the Federal Council, and it

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted from the minutes of the January 27, 1969, meeting of the Vorstand of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Schweizerischen Frauenverbände für die politischen Rechte der Frau (Gosteli Stiftung Archive, Worblaufen).

<sup>6</sup> From an interview with a first-wave activist, January 15, 1988.

said that we would stop at nothing to prevent the signing of the Human Rights Convention" (quotation from FBB-activist in "Die Protest-Frauen" 1969). Instead the Arbeitsgemeinschaft decided to sponsor a separate meeting across town and a lobbying effort at the parliament building. However, the Basel and Zürich sections of the SVF continued to orchestrate the nationwide demonstration with second-wave women.

Conflict continued to be evident between first and second wave activists despite their coordination on the march. At the last minute some FBB women pulled out arguing that Parliament would not be in session and so the demonstration was senseless (Ruckstuhl 1986: 138). Moreover, second-wave activists pursued more confrontational tactics during the march itself. When both groups found themselves before the Bundeshaus in Bern, a few second-wave activists tried to seize the microphone from the scheduled speakers and held a short sit-in on the tram tracks (Woodtli 1983). Written records and my interviews with suffrage activists indicate these events bothered even the more confrontational first-wave activists.

The March on Bern and the cooperation between the two waves had three positive effects on the woman suffrage movement. First, the March on Bern increased the pressure on the government to act on the issue, although analysts of the Swiss women's movement disagree about how much weight should be given to the one event. Some argue that the march was the major impetus for government action, while others argue that it was only one event among many (c.f. Woodtli 1983; Ruckstuhl 1986). There are two reasons to believe it may have had a greater impact than other events: it was the only national demonstration for women's voting rights in the more than seventy years of the movement and the government announced a referendum on a woman suffrage constitutional amendment soon after the demonstration.

Second, the presence of the women's liberation movement influenced the orientation of the first wave toward certain tactics. The suffrage movement had already engaged in some limited protests—a demonstration in Genève in 1953, a one-day strike of teachers in Basel after the 1959 national referendum, and annual torchlight parades in Zürich and Basel—before the advent of the second wave. However, these events occurred only occasionally and then only in a few cantons; the second wave's emphasis on protest moved discussion about confrontational action from a few local areas to the national level. The presence of the FBB coincides with the first time that the national organization considered a national protest and that the more confrontational local suffrage groups planned a protest outside of their local area. Thus, if the second wave did not introduce militant tactics, it contributed to their wider consideration.

Third, interviews with suffrage activists indicate that several more traditional first-wave women altered their personal opinions of protest tactics as a result of the March on Bern. For example, one first-wave activist explained her initial reaction about the demonstration:

That was in '68 the time of the . . . new women's movement and it was the first time that something entirely new occurred . . . demonstrations and disruptions like at the Zürich suffrage organization anniversary celebration. I must say, that I couldn't originally decide about the March on Bern. I was also afraid; I had heard about the events in Zürich and I thought my God! (Interview, March 21, 1988)

In spite of her concerns, this activist eventually chose to participate. Her reminiscences indicate that the March on Bern inspired her to a greater willingness to be confrontational:

There before the Bundeshaus, we had small whistles, and we whistled. And the police were also there with riot gear, guns and water pistols, and at one point I went up to one and said: "Why are you here? Are you afraid of us? . . . Go home and don't waste the nice day, we are not going to do anything." (Interview, March 21, 1988)

Nor was her reaction unique. While a national demonstration against the government previously would have appalled most first-wave activists, the presence of the second wave and other new social movements enhanced convictions that protest was acceptable and even necessary (Voegeli 1986). Thus, although many first-wave activists did not adopt the FBB's positions, their political discourse and attitudes were inextricably altered.

This case illustrates what some cycle of protest scholars have only considered in theory: that later movements can affect the behavior and fortunes of older movements. In this example, the Swiss second wave not only contributed to renewed governmental consideration of suffrage legislation, but altered the suffrage movement's tactics and the attitudes of more traditional suffrage activists. Although other factors undoubtedly affected Swiss women winning suffrage in 1971 (as opposed to later), the March on Bern and the second wave's participation in the march contributed to the success that year.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Banaszak (1996) argues the major reasons for the delay in women's enfranchisement were the consensus decision-making structures of the Swiss state and the lack of opposition parties and movements allied to the suffrage movement. These restricted the opportunities available to the suffrage movement and encouraged the development of suffrage activists' beliefs and values that led them to ignore or slight potentially successful tactics. The advent of the sixties' movements also brought increased conflict within the political system, providing new opportunities for success.

### COMPARING THE U.S. AND SWISS FIRST WAVES AFTER SUFFRAGE

In Switzerland, the second wave and new social movements' rising cycle of protest continued into the 1970s, as did the first wave of the women's movement. An analysis of Swiss efforts to pass an equal rights amendment and to place more women in legislative office highlights three additional ways that rising cycles of protest can aid an existing movement: by stimulating wider mobilization of the population, by forming alliances with the existing movement which brings additional resources, and by changing how the government, political parties, and other political actors perceive the older movement. In the cases of the equal rights amendment and increasing women's representation, the existence and activities of the Swiss second wave (and the larger cycle of protest) encouraged dramatic gains.

These conclusions are bolstered by a comparison of efforts to win similar advances in the United States. Although both first waves shared many of the same concerns, only the Swiss movement succeeded in gaining an Equal Rights Amendment and greater representation in elected office soon after women's enfranchisement. In contrast to Switzerland, the U.S. movement's fortunes declined after suffrage and it faced a period of abeyance where survival of movement organizations became the overriding issue (Taylor 1989, 1990; Randall 1987). I argue that the Swiss success and U.S. decline after the adoption of women's voting rights can be better understood by viewing them through the theoretical framework of the cycles of protest literature. The American first wave was hindered after women's enfranchisement by its connection to progressivism which focused many activists' attention on other issues, exacerbated existing divisions within the movement, and, as progressivism waned, inspired a counter-movement against feminists. In contrast, the rising women's liberation movement in Switzerland (and the cycle of protest in which it occurred) provided concrete support for women's rights, inspired first-wave activists to further activity, and created an atmosphere which made political parties and the government more responsive to their goals.

#### *The American and Swiss Political Opportunity Structures*

Before I turn to the discussions of the Equal Rights Amendment and women's political representation, we must consider an alternative explanation for the differences between the American and Swiss achievements: the differing structures of political opportunities (Eisinger 1973; Kitchelt 1986; McAdam 1982; Tilly 1978; and Tarrow 1989a, 1989b, 1994). The political opportunity structure literature suggests formal or informal procedures for gaining access to the political system, the existence of allies, and conflicts between elites may provide opportunities for social movements. While the cycles of protest explored

below are one aspect of that political opportunity structure, it is also possible that other aspects in the Swiss and American political system explain the Swiss women's movement success and the American movement's failure. I will discuss those aspects of the political opportunity structure specific to the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment or increases in women's representation in the sections below. However, the question of whether other allies or divisions within elites explain the variation in outcomes is a more general question, and shall be examined here. I argue that the Swiss political system, while providing several formal opportunities such as initiative rights, reduces the conflicts between political actors and produces few reasons for political parties to seek alliances with movements challenging the political order.

Political parties might choose to champion women's causes or ally with the movement when they need the movement's support to maintain their position in the government or challenge other political parties (Tilly 1978). Several factors might affect parties' alliances with movements. For one thing, systems with a larger number of parties provide more potential allies (Kitschelt 1986). In addition, Kriesi (1995) points out that strong left-leaning parties also increase opportunities for challenging movements (however see Beckwith 1987). While the Swiss system has the advantage of a multi-party system (in comparison to the American two-party system) and a long-standing socialist party (which the U.S. lacks), several factors reduce the opportunities provided by these structures. First, unlike socialist parties in other Western European countries, the Swiss Social Democratic party (SP) has continuously been a part of the government since 1943, although it often presents itself as an opposition party (Kriesi 1995). The SP's permanent status as part of the governmental coalition reduces its incentive to champion the issues of challenging groups.

The stability of the Swiss political system also reduces the opportunities provided by the socialist party and the multi-party system. Gruner (1977) notes that Swiss voting patterns changed little between 1919 (when proportional representation was introduced) and 1975. Although recently the strength of party identification has dropped (Longchamp 1987), the corresponding change in election results has been small (Ritschard 1987). Perhaps most importantly, the national executive in Switzerland is the seven-seat Federal Council, which is elected by Parliament according to a "magic formula" which specifies in advance how many positions each party will receive. The last change in this formula occurred in 1959 when the Social Democratic party gained an additional seat. Since parties can generally count on receiving approximately the same electoral support as in previous elections and the control of the executive is largely independent

of electoral strength, parties do not need to respond to movement demands in order to acquire power in government.

Switzerland also has a unique decision-making process which is based not on competitive groups vying for the majority but on the creation of consensus—be it by amicable agreement (Steiner 1974) or by accretion (Steiner and Dorff 1980). Within the Federal Council, the consensus system translates into a norm of collegiality which states that all members are responsible for and must support the decisions of the whole (Faganini 1978). Once a decision has been made the parties in the Federal Council are expected to support government policy. Differences between interest groups and other interested parties are worked out by a consensus-building process during the drafting of legislation and the consultation of interest groups and local governments on new bills (known as *Vernehmlassung*). Thus, overt conflict over policy is rare, providing fewer reasons for parties or established interest groups to seek alliances with the women's movement.

#### *The Equal Rights Amendment*

If Switzerland was late in enfranchising women, it was quick to adopt an Equal Rights Amendment. Within four years of their enfranchisement, Swiss women activists launched an initiative petition to bring a constitutional amendment on equal rights for women before the Swiss electorate. Swiss voters approved this amendment in 1981, despite the continued disenfranchisement of women in several cantons. In contrast, the battle for an Equal Rights Amendment in the United States has been long and unsuccessful. Although Alice Paul and the National Woman's party began to lobby Congress for such an amendment in 1923, Congress did not vote on the amendment until the 1950s and it did not receive the 2/3 majority needed to send it to the states for ratification until 1972. Even then, by the 1982 deadline, only 35 of the 38 needed states had ratified the amendment.

One reason for the difference in outcomes is that the rules for altering the constitution make such change easier in Switzerland than in the United States. Initiative rights allow Swiss women to inaugurate constitutional changes without the support of the Federal Council or the Swiss Parliament; initiatives become constitutional amendments if they are approved in a national referendum. The United States has no such means for introducing amendments and proposed amendments must be ratified by 3/4's of the state legislatures or specially convened state conventions. As a result, it is more difficult to bring new constitutional amendments to the agenda and easier for proposed amendments to fail. On the other hand, two factors increase the difficulty of amending the constitution in Switzerland. First, few constitutional amendments pass the obligatory referendum without government support (Hertig 1984). Sec-

ond, Swiss constitutional amendments must be approved by a majority of the voters and a majority of cantons calculated by tallying the votes in each canton (called a *Ständemehr*). This confers more power on the smaller, rural cantons, allowing them to defeat an amendment even if a majority of voters approve. Thus, governmental and widespread popular support are generally necessary to ratify constitutional amendments in Switzerland.

Although Swiss activists clearly had more opportunities to achieve an Equal Rights Amendment, their success cannot be attributed to structural differences alone. They also achieved more in intermediate steps along the way to the amendment, mobilizing a larger percentage of the population in favor of the amendment and garnering support from the government and eventually all women's organizations. Similarly, American first-wave activists' failure to achieve an Equal Rights Amendment is not completely related to the onerous procedures needed for constitutional amendments because supporters failed to mobilize most women's organizations. Rather, in both cases the success or failure is related to the movement's connections to cycles of protest.

*Switzerland.* The idea of a Swiss equal rights amendment was first discussed at the fourth Swiss Women's Congress held in Bern in 1975 (Ruckstuhl 1986: 268). Although an equal rights amendment initiative campaign was endorsed by the Congress, many women's organizations including the SVF (now renamed Schweizerischer Verband für Frauenrechte) refused to support the initiative campaign, arguing that such an amendment went too far in pushing equality and that some differences between men and women should be maintained (Woodtli 1983: 200-201).<sup>8</sup> Despite this official opposition, some first-wave activists, mainly from Zürich and Basel, decided to continue with the initiative campaign anyway.

Second-wave activists were not involved in these initial discussions since they boycotted the congress (Michel-Adler 1986). Nonetheless, second-wave activists were instrumental in the amendment's success because the divisions within the Swiss first wave initially reduced the number of women who supported the initiative campaign. Second-wave activists soon became actively involved in collecting signatures for the initiative despite their skepticism about the utility of legal venues for creating equality (Hungerbühler 1984). Their activity proved important because the greatest obstacle to the amendment was gaining the requisite number of signatures to bring the issue to a vote: "we had a lot of trouble getting the 50,000 signatures to place the issue on the

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<sup>8</sup> Although the SVF and other first-wave women's organizations refused to support the initiative petition campaign, most changed their minds by 1981, the year that the Equal Rights Amendment came to a vote.

ballot . . . it was a difficult campaign” (Interview with first-wave activist, June 9, 1988). In fact, the initiative managed to garner only 57,000 valid signatures. Since the Swiss constitution was altered two years later to require 100,000 signatures for a constitutional initiative, any delays might have been fatal to the amendment. Thus, the mobilization of second-wave activists occurred at an important juncture.

Moreover, the second wave also influenced the government’s decision to endorse the amendment (albeit with a slight rewording). Governmental approval of the Equal Rights Amendment did not derive from a pro-feminist agenda; rather, it was connected to an abortion rights initiative which second-wave activists had introduced in 1971. As one first-wave activist argued: “the national government . . . worked very hard against abortion, and when it came to the Parliament, they realized they had to do something for women, so they supported the Equal Rights Amendment” (Interview, June 9, 1988). Even if the trade-off was not as explicit as this and other activists believed, the presence of the second wave provided a political context of multiple demands for women’s rights where the proposals of the first-wave activists looked less radical.

*The United States.* In the United States, the battle for a national Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the 1920s was spearheaded by the National Woman’s party (NWP) and Alice Paul. In 1923, the NWP unanimously adopted a resolution to pursue an Equal Rights Amendment (Becker 1981). Its focus on the ERA eventually produced considerable conflict among first-wave women because the social progressivism of many activists contradicted equal rights for women. As progressive activists began to fight for protective legislation for women (which they saw as one means of ameliorating social ills), their opposition to an Equal Rights Amendment hardened and eventually created a schism between them and the NWP. As a result, most other first-wave organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, the Women’s Trade Union League, and the National Consumers’ League, opposed the amendment (Becker 1981; Lemons 1973).

Thus, as in Switzerland, the equal rights amendment was introduced by a small minority of first-wave activists. However, the dominance of progressive issues on the public agenda increased splits within the movement. Because the Progressive cycle of protest peaked in 1920, political parties, interest groups, and even the women’s movement found themselves reacting to progressive issues and discourse. While the women’s rights movement was always divided between social and equity feminists (see Black 1980, 1989), the Progressive movements and dominance of progressive frames forced the issue of protective legislation to the top of the women’s movement’s agenda, splitting the first wave for over 30 years (Sklar 1986).

The participation of women's groups in Progressive movements' battles for the creation of protective legislation for women and children, the Sheppard-Towner Act, and women's minimum wage laws also produced a backlash from those groups most hurt by this legislation (see Lemons 1973: 209-25; Skocpol 1992). In the late 1920s, women's organizations were tied to Bolshevism by the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Medical Association among others (Lemons 1973: 209). While the rising tide of conservatism which washed over the U.S. in the late 1920s would certainly have hurt the ERA cause in any case, the fact that women were tied to progressive causes helped to make them a *special target* of the groups whose interests were threatened by social progressivism. Thus, women's groups suffered even more during the era of conservatism which followed the decline of Progressivism because of their association with progressive causes.

Thus, although the initial failures of the ERA after 1920 have generally been blamed on conflict between social and equity feminists (Lemons 1973) or on growing national conservatism (Deckard 1983; Nasstrom 1991), both are related to the influence of Progressive movements at the time. Divisions among first-wave activists existed prior to 1920 and in Switzerland, but these did not hinder the U.S. campaign for woman suffrage (Ryan 1992) or the Swiss Equal Rights Amendment campaign. Hence, movement divisions alone were not sufficient to cause the failures of either first-wave movement. Instead, the post-suffrage American women's movement was hampered by its connection to progressivism which aggravated existing divisions and, as the Progressive cycle of protest waned, inspired a counter-movement against feminists. In contrast, the rising women's liberation movement in Switzerland provided concrete support for women's rights and increased government responsiveness to first-wave demands.

#### *Electing Women to Public Office.*

The second goal shared by Swiss and American first-wave activists was to increase women's representation in public office. Swiss women's representation in politics increased rapidly after their enfranchisement in 1971. Five percent of the representatives in the lower house of Parliament (the Nationalrat) were women in the year women were enfranchised; twenty years later women constituted 17.5 percent of the representatives (Ballmer-Chao 1990). Representation in cantonal parliaments was even better; even in the two cantons which enfranchised women after 1989 more than 10 percent of the legislators were women by 1993 (Bundesamt für Statistik 1994). The least progress was made in the Federal Council (Bundesrat) where only two women have served since 1971, the first one elected in 1984; yet, even here Swiss first-wave activists have done better than their American counterparts.

In the United States, women's representation grew at glacial speeds after the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. It was not until 1952 that more than 2 percent of the U.S. House of Representatives were women. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, women's congressional representation remained stable at around 1.5 percent (Whicker, Jewell, and Duke 1991). Moreover, few women were moving into state legislatures during this period; in 1937 there were fewer than three women per state legislature (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994). Nor were women being appointed to the Cabinet; Frances Perkins became the first woman to serve in 1933, and it was only in 1953 that a second woman cabinet member was chosen.

One reason Swiss women's representation in the Nationalrat is much higher than in the United States' Congress is the differences in electoral systems. Party list, proportional representation systems, as in Switzerland, provide greater opportunities for women's representation than single member, first past the post systems (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1992; Norris 1994). However the Swiss electoral system does not uniformly favor women. Seats in the upper house (Ständerat) and representing five cantons in the Nationalrat are chosen using single member, first past the post systems. Nonetheless, twenty years after suffrage, women constitute 11 percent of the upper chamber, indicating that electoral system alone cannot account for all the country differences. As Norris (1994) points out, electoral systems only explain some of the differences; party selection processes also affect women's representation.

Moreover, Swiss activists managed to make greater strides, not just in increasing women's representation in elected office, but also in expanding the visibility of the issue. Swiss first-wave activists also staged more actions on this issue than their American counterparts, although many of these tactics met with limited success. As in the case of the Equal Rights Amendment, first-wave activists in both countries considered similar tactics to increase the representation of women, but were divided over the proper course of action. Nonetheless, Swiss first-wave activists cooperated on a number of actions, while their American counterparts were unable to overcome their divisions. The Swiss second wave facilitated the endeavors of first-wave activists and created a more sympathetic political environment.

*Switzerland.* While first-wave activists in Switzerland were frustrated by the slow inroads which women made into elected office, coordination was difficult because women's individual party affiliations came into conflict with their desire to increase women's representation. This problem was particularly acute for first-wave women belonging to bourgeois or religious parties. Because these parties nominated fewer women than socialist or environmental parties, these activists often had to abandon their party affiliations to support women candidates. In fact, friction between middle-class first-wave women

and left-leaning women over support for women candidates erupted several times. For example, at the SVF annual convention in 1988, its president was criticized for endorsing a male candidate from the *Freisinnig-Demokratische* (Liberal Democratic) party over a woman from the Social Democratic party.

First- and second-wave women coordinated several efforts to improve the status of women in government. One such effort began when first-wave organizations and political parties ignored a suggestion made at the 1975 Swiss Women's Congress for party list quotas for women. The advocates of this idea formed a separate women's party of first and second wave women candidates to run in national elections (Benz-Burger 1987). Similarly, in June 1991 the Berner Stadtparlament passed a Social Democratic motion to introduce a 40 percent quota with the help of women from the bourgeois parties ("Frauenquote für das Berner Stadtparlament" 1991). These women abstained on the final vote, thereby permitting the motion to pass. More recently, in the wake of the defeat of a woman, Christiane Brunner, for a Federal Council position, women from both waves and all political parties created a shadow council called the "Frauenbundesrat" which has demanded a 50 percent quota for Nationalrat seats ("De Heiri lernt's Fürchte" 1993).

These activities have helped to increase women's representation and media attention on the issue. Both the government and political parties have considered policies to expand the number of women in elected office. Second-wave activists have been important to that success. They initiated some of the actions to increase women's representation, such as the Bern quota law, and also served as a potentially mobilizable group for such actions as the 1975 Zürich women's party. Perhaps most importantly, their presence has made political parties and the government more receptive to the demands for greater representation.

*The United States.* In the United States, both the League of Women Voters and the National Woman's party (which disagreed vehemently on most issues) advocated increasing the number of women elected officials after 1920 (Becker 1981; Lemons 1973; Young 1989). Indeed, many of the tactics used by Swiss women were first considered by American first-wave activists. For example, in 1924 the NWP mounted an extensive "Women for Congress" campaign throwing all of its support behind ten women candidates in the hopes of creating a women's bloc (Becker 1981). Suggestions for a separate women's party or quotas for women within existing parties surfaced in the National Woman's party and the League for Women Voters during the 1920s (see Lemons 1973: 95, 109; Becker 1981; and Young 1989: 51). However, neither organization followed up on these tactics, choosing instead to focus their efforts exclusively on voter education (largely a League tactic) and the endorsement of women candidates (Lemons 1973; Becker 1981).

As in Switzerland, the latter tactic created divisions within the first wave because activists often found their solidarity for women conflicting with their political views. Women in the League of Women Voters often rejected the League's recommendations on women candidates in favor of their own party loyalties (Young 1989: 73). The NWP refused to support women candidates unless they were also supporters of the ERA, causing the split over progressive legislation to engulf the issue of women's representation (Becker 1981: 99-104). Even though both organizations believed in the necessity of supporting women candidates, other issues divided women when it came to concrete efforts to increase representation.

### *The International Context*

If the post-suffrage U.S. and Swiss women's movements had varying degrees of success, do the changes which occurred in the world-wide women's movement between 1920 and the 1970s and 1980s explain this difference? The Swiss movement benefitted from the world-wide attention to women's issues and was influenced by prominent American and European feminists.<sup>9</sup> Yet, I believe that Swiss advances cannot be attributed to the international context for several reasons. First, Switzerland's lateness in achieving woman suffrage indicates that the international context did not contribute significantly to the women's movement's tactics or successes. Although there was a lively international women's movement in the 1910s and 1920s and the Swiss suffrage movement had ties to American and European feminists, this international context did not shorten Swiss women's struggle for the vote.

Second, in the 1960s and 1970s, the influence of the international context was strongest on the Swiss second wave but the successes chronicled above cannot be completely attributed to these women either. For one thing, the second-wave movement was relatively small in comparison to its counterparts in the U.S. or other Western European countries (Gruner 1983; Kriesi 1986: 344). More importantly, while other European countries like Germany also experienced increased interest in electing women to political office in the 70s, Switzerland was unique because that interest involved coordination among the women of all political parties. In most European countries, it is primarily women on the Left who have advocated separate women's parties or quotas for women. When women in the more traditional political parties have tried to increase representation (which is rare), it has been within their own parties

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<sup>9</sup> For example, scholars of the Swiss women's liberation movement note that the writings of feminist authors, particularly Simone de Beauvoir (Michel-Adler 1986) and the translation of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* into German in 1966 (Woodtli 1983), heavily influenced the movement.

and not by coordinating efforts across party lines. Not so in Switzerland. The reason, I argue, is that many of the women in Swiss center and right parties were first-wave activists who had fought for women's enfranchisement. Both waves made indispensable contributions to the battles for greater representation in elective office and an equal rights amendment.

## CONCLUSION

The meeting of the first and second waves of the women's movement in Switzerland was a unique event, but one which illustrates how cycles of protest can influence the behavior and fortunes of earlier movements. I also argue that the cycle of protest perspective is useful in reexamining the dynamics of women's movements in other countries.

In particular, I have shown how outcomes in the United States previously viewed through the lens of internal divisions and wider public opinion can be better understood by adding the cycles of protest perspective. The comparison to Switzerland suggests that the abeyance of the American first wave after 1920 and its inability to acquire an Equal Rights Amendment or increases in women's representation originated not in movement divisions but in constraints imposed by their connection to a declining Progressive cycle of protest. By the 1920s, the Progressive movements were suffering under a rise in anti-Communist fervor and a strong backlash engendered by their own success in the first two decades. Both of these affected the first wave of the women's movement because of their ties to progressive movements. These ties also deepened the divisions within the U.S. women's movement. By framing the question of equal rights in the context of protective legislation, these divisions became insurmountable barriers to coordination. Thus, both the internal conflict and much of the rising conservatism blamed for the decline of the US first wave women's movement derive from its connection to the Progressive cycle of protest.

The conjunction of the first and second waves in Switzerland indicates the many ways rising cycles of protest might influence existing political actors. First, a new cycle of protest may provide a new ally (or opponent) for existing movements, affecting their political opportunities at particular points in the political process. Second, the rising cycle of protest may influence other political actors, particularly political parties and the government, by changing the way they view existing movements. With the rise of new movements, these actors may be more open to the ideas of existing movements (see also Tarrow 1994: 98).

Third, new cycles of protest may make existing activists open to previously unconsidered tactics or issues (as were first-wave activists during the March on Bern). Although Tarrow (1994) has suggested that existing

movements adopt tactical innovations proven useful by rising social movements, the case of the Swiss women's movement shows that cycles of protest may also alter the use of existing tactics. Some Swiss suffrage activists were already conducting protest demonstrations at the local level during the 1950s. The rise of the second wave did not so much create evidence of a new tactic's usefulness as focus attention on an *existing* tactic and provide a larger constituency to advocate it.

Finally, in both the American and Swiss cases, movement reaction to cycles of protest was influenced by the divisions within the movement. The first Swiss nation-wide demonstration and the American concern for protective legislation did not occur because the movement as a whole was reacting to new opportunities, but because the opportunities created by existing or developing cycles of protest encouraged and empowered certain groups within the movement. Thus, understanding the effects which rising cycles of protest have on existing organizations or movements requires that we abandon the concept of a singular, unified movement and examine the interplay between opportunities, decision making, and divisions or subcultures within the movement.

#### **APPENDIX—INTERVIEW SAMPLING AND METHODOLOGY**

Interviews were conducted with sixty-two first-wave activists between December 1987 and August 1988 for a larger project on the Swiss woman suffrage movement (see Banaszak 1996). Since the interviews' main purpose was to obtain detailed information about the national and cantonal suffrage campaigns, a purposive sampling procedure was utilized. Most informants were chosen by asking other interview participants for names (snowball sampling). I also attempted to locate individuals who were prominent in the historical records of each canton. Only a few additional informants were found this way; most of the people in the historical record not named by other activists were deceased. The refusal rate was very low; only three women refused to be interviewed. In order to assure representation of all regions within Switzerland, I decided at the outset to interview at least two individuals from each canton. While I exceeded this number in several cantons, I managed to locate only one informant in two cantons—Aargau and Uri.

All interviews were conducted by the author, and, with one exception, recorded on tape. Fifty-five of the sixty-two individuals were interviewed in German. In the French-speaking cantons when the respondent preferred not to speak German or English, a translator was used. To assure the accuracy of the translator, the interviews were transcribed twice, once by a French-speaker. The interviews aimed at understanding both the individual's and suffrage organization's activities. Respondents were asked how they came to join the organization, what positions they held and what activities they participated in

within the group, both before and after suffrage. They were also questioned about how the organization recruited new members, what tactics were used, what alliances the organization forged with other groups, and what effect initial successes or failures had on the organization. Activists who indicated continued involvement in the women's movement after suffrage were asked about their activities. The interviews ranged in length from forty-five minutes to four hours with an average interview lasting ninety minutes.

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