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and Power in the United States: Body Politics since
the 1960s

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Amélie Ribieras

- 1 For conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly, “abortion is the right-or-wrong issue of our time” (Schlafly 2016, p. 54). It is true that the topic is nowadays indubitably polarizing, as shown by the way pundits scrutinize presidential candidates’ position on the issue during elections. This can be explained in part by the recent efforts of conservatives to lock abortion in a moral framework and exploit it for political purposes, hindering the progress of reproductive justice claims. Although the Supreme Court liberalized abortion in its 1973 landmark decision *Roe v. Wade*, tensions on body politics escalated after the 1970s, invading the national public discourse. Earlier in the century, abortion began to be debated when 16 states decriminalized the procedure starting with Colorado in 1967. However, after *Roe*, it went from being “a technical, medical matter controlled by professionals” to a “public and moral issue of nationwide concern” (Luker 2009 [1984], p. 127). The scope of the debate, thus, changed scale and the topic occupied political discourse.
- 2 Abortion can in fact be envisioned within a paradigm of alternative phases of politicization (Fassin 1997). A first phase occurred from the middle of the 19th century; while women were taking control of their fertility, physicians sought to be the sole purveyors of abortion as a way to regulate their profession and maintain some social power. After a century of silence and a certain degree of social acceptance, abortion reemerged in the public realm. A second phase started in the 1950s, at the instigation of jurists who wanted to legally acknowledge the procedure. Abortion was again questioned at that time. Second-wave feminism then framed it as a gender claim and abortion became a prerequisite to women’s liberation. This article postulates the existence of a third phase, starting in the 1970s, during which abortion was the keystone of the polarization of American politics, creating new dynamics of political and cultural power. Phyllis Schlafly, as a social movement entrepreneur and a leading public figure, adopted a

resolutely pro-life position and mobilized conservatives on the issue. She, thus, contributed to the conservative shift in reproductive politics.¹

- 3 Phyllis Schlafly (1924-2016) was a lawyer, the mother of six children, and a devout Catholic. As such, she became involved in politics over issues such as gender roles, family rights, and abortion.² She was particularly engaged in the struggle against the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the 1970s. If ratified, this amendment, which was proposed by feminists, would have inserted equality of the sexes into the Constitution.³ It was a principle with which Schlafly disagreed on the basis that men's and women's roles were to be seen as complementary. Schlafly subscribed to a functionalist view of the family (popularized in the 1950s), whereby men would be the providers, working outside the home to ensure its economic survival, and women the homemakers, taking care of children and housekeeping (Coontz 1992; Cott 2000; Bryson 2016). Abortion did not fit into this traditional view of the family, whose ultimate goal was to nurture children.
- 4 This article discusses Schlafly's commitment to abortion rights and attempts to show how she participated in politicizing abortion, drawing on archival research conducted at Eagle Forum, Phyllis Schlafly's conservative organization based in St Louis, Missouri.⁴ I will draw upon Ziad Munson's subdivision of pro-life activism to characterize Schlafly's anti-abortion efforts.⁵ She prioritized two strategies when fighting against abortion: spreading conservative rhetorical frames to conceptualize abortion and lobbying the Republican Party in order for conservatives to win back some political and cultural power. The first section of the analysis focuses on situating Schlafly's in the general conservative reaction to abortion. Schlafly's endeavor consisted in tying several feminist demands together (abortion and the ERA) in order to better reject them. The second section considers the rhetorical strategies adopted by Schlafly's Eagle Forum to appropriate the language of abortion, which is related to Munson's "public outreach" category (2008). By packaging knowledge for the public, the group engaged in "a process of cultural transformation" (Ginsburg 1989, p. 173). Finally, as the cultural counteroffensive led by conservatives also took place in the political sphere, the last section examines Eagle Forum's lobbying tactics inside the Grand Old Party (GOP), which corresponds to what Munson characterizes as "politics stream" (2008). Even though her relationship to the party remained uncertain, she managed to infiltrate its structure and collaborate with Republican politicians in order to turn it into the pro-life party, as she explains in her 2016 book *How the Republican Party Became Pro-Life*.

Conservatives, Abortion, and the Culture Wars

- 5 The salience of abortion rights in the political realm can be understood through the framework of the "culture wars." This phenomenon was described by James D. Hunter as "political and social hostility rooted in different systems of moral understanding" and "being ultimately about the struggle for domination" (Hunter 1991, pp. 42-52).⁶ Hunter identifies "polarizing impulses," taking shape in the 1980s and early 1990s, after a period of cultural protest, waning societal cohesiveness, and large-scale societal transformations. Cultural warfare was rooted in the rise of social movements during the 1960s, such as the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, and the anti-Vietnam war movement. The pervasive initiative of challenging the social and political *status quo* triggered a "backlash" in the 1970s and beyond.⁷

- 6 This atmosphere of social contest and disorder aroused anxiety among conservative Americans (Crawford 1980; Klatch 1987; Himmelstein 1990; McGirr 2001; Critchlow 2005; Gould 2012). They found refuge in the American Right, which had started a process of reconstruction in the mid-1950s and was reaching the status of a legitimate political contender, after years of having a minority status (Himmelstein 1990; Mason 2011). The social traditionalist branch of the Right was flourishing, and it solidified around issues linked to defending the family, which was “the most conspicuous field of conflict in the culture war” (Hunter 1991, p. 176).⁸ Within this framework, abortion then came to symbolize the rejection of traditional sexual patterns leading to creating a family. It was understood by conservatives as a contraceptive method aiming to regulate the American population. For example, in December 1974, Phyllis Schlafly's newsletter *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* displayed a front page on the matter. It read: “ERA Means Abortion and Population Shrinkage” (Schlesinger Library archives, *Phyllis Schlafly Report* collection).⁹
- 7 Protests linked to sexuality had been pushed forward by the feminist movement, which gained momentum in the late 1960s. Women's rights activists were focused on winning back women's power over their own bodies by publicizing issues involving sexuality and reproduction. “The personal is political” was their motto (Evans 2003).¹⁰ Scientific and legal changes had also encouraged this climate of sexual liberalization. The pill was approved for contraceptive use by the Food and Drug Administration in 1960. The Supreme Court ruled that the Bill of Rights afforded rights to privacy to the marital couple in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), thus barring states infringing on a couple's decision in regards to contraceptive use. This was latter extended to single persons in 1972 in the *Eisenstadt v. Baird* case. However, conservatives, and especially conservative women, viewed female sexual liberation with suspicion, believing it to be contrary to their biological roles. They did not identify reproductive justice as an imperative for the advancement of women, and they resented abortion as it appeared to make motherhood optional. “Abortion [...] represents an active denial by women of two essential conditions of female gender identity: pregnancy and the obligations of nurturance that should follow” (Ginsburg 1989, p. 216). Female conservatives took on the fight against feminists to resist the questioning of traditional motherhood and femininity. It triggered a formidable counter-movement, whose participants injected a moral component to the debate. The abortion issue thereafter created a cultural fracture between feminists and conservative women. For Schlafly, “abortion [was] the litmus test of whether or not you are feminist” (Schlafly 2016, p. 7).
- 8 Phyllis Schlafly's main strategy throughout the years was to link abortion to the ERA. The STOP ERA movement surfaced in the early 1970s, in opposition to the process of ratification of the amendment. In 1975, she launched Eagle Forum as an offshoot of STOP ERA, which, as its name clearly indicates, was created to combat the ERA. In fact, she “tied ERA with a variety of distressing situations” (Conover & Gray 1983, p. 80). Schlafly took hold of ERA and abortion at the same time and used language to conflate these feminist claims, because she knew that associating the idea of a greater availability of abortion to the ERA had the potential to scare Americans. Early in the 1970s, Schlafly started to write in her newsletter about what she perceived as the deceptiveness of the ERA. In 1974, for instance, she warned that “if the Equal Rights Amendment is ratified, ERA will repeal all and every kind of anti-abortion laws that we now have” (Schlafly 1974). She also distributed leaflets displaying visual connections between the two issues, such as a knot with two distinguishable strings (Schlesinger Library archives, *Phyllis Schlafly Report*

collection, book 2: 1978-79). This was all the more a priority in 1976 as Congress passed the Hyde Amendment, which prohibited the use of federal funding for abortion, except in cases of rape, incest, and to save the life of a woman. Under the ERA, restricting abortion rights in any way would have been considered sex discrimination because it would impact only one sex. In her book *The Power of the Christian Woman*, Schlafly explains what she thought was the source of the demand for abortion, “women must be made equal to men in their ability *not* to become pregnant and *not* be expected to care for babies they may bring into the world” (Schlafly 1981, p. 18, the italics are hers). Equality of the sexes was thus problematic and it had to be fought against, in whatever shape possible and by whatever means necessary.

Rhetorical Tactics: The Language of Abortion

- 9 Phyllis Schlafly was part and parcel of the culture wars raging around social issues, insofar as the rhetoric she used in her Eagle Forum helped conservatives influence the terms of the debate. As the abortion struggle was a conflict over “the means of cultural production,” she helped conservatives take a rhetorical stance on the issue (Hunter 1991, p. 64). Schlafly belonged to the contingent of political entrepreneurs who developed ideas with a mobilizing potential and monitored the polarization of politics at the level of language. This enterprise is described by Munson as “public outreach” activism, that is to say, “educating the wider public about what they see as the horrors of abortion” in order to promote a “culture of life” (2008, p. 116).
- 10 On the word front, Schlafly used discursive manipulations like framing to produce a cultural discourse able to compete with the feminists'.¹¹ She deconstructed the commonly-accepted cultural framework in which abortion was embedded by reframing the feminist demand for abortion, the feminist message, and the perception of the feminists themselves. First, abortion was a collective financial burden. “Abortion on demand” was a recurrent expression used in their language and it shows Schlafly’s intention to exaggerate the scope of the phenomenon. She went as far as talking about an “abortion industry” (Schlafly 1995, Eagle Forum archives, DVD 461). The shared cost of the procedure was an injustice imposed on all Americans and conservatives resented the use of taxpayers’ money for a private decision that went counter to their beliefs.
- 11 Abortion was also tied to fantasized alternative lifestyles encouraged by permissiveness, which conservatives associated with the alleged effects of the sexual revolution endorsed by feminists. Their support for abortion reflected “their accepting a promiscuous lifestyle, [...] [and their] engaging in premarital sex,” adding that “a woman always pays double for illicit sex” (Schlafly 1983, Eagle Forum archives, DVD 22). For Schlafly, the act of getting rid of a baby was then perceived as the result of a large-scale phenomenon of rampant promiscuity, which was morally reprehensible. Conservatives worried about the growing tolerance of recreational sex that occurred outside the marital sphere, in opposition to procreational sex within the structure of marriage. Their goal was to protect this unit as the only legitimate place where sex would be performed and within which babies could be conceived. By promoting abortion, feminists were promoting reckless sexuality and optional parenting, consequently overthrowing the normative sexual order. In opposition to feminism, which Schlafly described as anti-family, she shaped a “pro-family” movement based on the ideal unit of the heterosexual couple and their children. Schlafly then discredited feminists as defenders of an unrighteous cause.

- 12 Hoping to achieve a reversal of perceptions, Schlafly framed feminists as careless murderers. They were vilified for what was perceived as their carelessness. Abortion was a selfish act, performed only for reasons such as “comfort, convenience, and embarrassment” (Schlafly 1983, Eagle Forum archives, DVD 22). It epitomized the individualistic drift of the sexual revolution, and while conservative women displayed their enthusiasm about fulfilling their (almost) patriotic mission to bring new life on earth, Schlafly insisted that feminists’ number one right was “the right to kill a baby” (Schlafly 1991, Eagle Forum archives, DVD 307). This contrast underlined the subversive behavior of women’s rights activists, whose rhetoric of choice clashed with the moralizing vision of conception. Schlafly’s portrayal of feminists as “a bunch of marital misfits who are seeking their identity as Ms., mistaken about morals, misinformed about history, motivated by the axiom ‘misery loves company,’ and who want to remake our laws, revise the marriage contract, restructure society, remold our children to conform to lib values instead of God’s values, and replace the image of woman as virtue and mother with the image of prostitute, swinger and lesbian” (Schlafly 1981, p.175) is blatantly indicative of a cultural clash centered on contested views of gender and sexuality. On the issues of sexuality and reproduction, and by extension, abortion, conservative women and feminists appeared to be polarized and irreconcilable.
- 13 Not only were feminists denigrated but they were also held responsible for putting women and babies in danger. Through a technique called boundary framing, which aimed to delineate the limit between good and bad, Schlafly participated in framing feminists as the real source of women’s misery (Benford & Snow 2000). As argued by an Eagle Forum activist during a workshop organized in 1989 for Eagle Council (Eagle Forum’s annual conference), people opposing abortion should frame the issue to their own advantage; in other words, paint a compassionate picture of themselves and demonize their adversaries (Janine Hansen 1989, Eagle Forum archives, DVD 780). Formerly seen as advocates of women’s rights, feminists then came to be represented by their opponents as threats to female interests. At the aforementioned workshop, another speaker went so far as to qualify abortion as “an act of violence against women” (Olivia Dart, *Ibid.*). Since feminists were being depicted as the threat, women needed new defenders. Conservatives demonstrated a sense of acuteness when they coined a powerful counter-adjective to the one adopted by feminists (pro-choice).¹² They reshaped the adversarial categories of the debate when they popularized the label “pro-life,” rather than the negative term “anti-choice” or even “anti-abortion.” As linguistics professor Andrea Tyler argues, “by positioning themselves as ‘pro-life’, this group essentially won the war of words” (Tyler in Shepard 2010). Such a rhetorical strategy allowed them to channel the emotions related to abortion in a new direction: defending innocent fetuses’ lives, instead of defending women’s rights. Pitting the life of the mother against the life of the child, the spread of the word “pro-life” created a cultural climate in which the protection of the unborn took on a great deal of importance. The spread of this pro-fetus narrative initiated the birth of “embryo politics: an effort, on many fronts, to define the meaning of life in ways that are at odds with conventional understandings” (Di Mauro & Joffe 2007). Hence why Phyllis Schlafly could be seen wearing an “It’s a Child not a Choice” button at an anti-abortion demonstration on the steps of the Supreme Court (1991, Eagle Forum archives, photographs collection).
- 14 Reframing the aggressor/defender/victim trio also entailed insisting on the fate of the baby. Their position as selfless defenders of the vulnerable taken up by conservatives can

be situated in the master frame of civil rights, which they co-opted from previous social movements.¹³ Conservatives like Schlafly envisioned the rights of the baby in a framework large enough to encompass ideals such as justice and equality. As she stated in her 2016 book, “the question of abortion [...] is ultimately concerned with equality of rights under the law” (Schlafly 2016, p. 62). Therefore, she believed that the 14th amendment, which guarantees equal protection of the law to every American citizen, must apply to the unborn. This conception of individual rights was an attempt to introduce new legal grounds by defining an unborn fetus as a legally independent person, an endeavor in which conservatives have yet to be successful.¹⁴

- 15 The discourse displayed at Eagle Forum helped conservatives to obtain a voice in the abortion debate and develop new perspectives. Moreover, these rhetorical strategies were directed at a specific audience. They targeted potential supporters for validation or recruitment purposes. Sociologists Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow talk about motivational framing when social movement entrepreneurs issue a “call to arms” to future participants (2000). Leaders manipulate issues so that they resonate with citizens’ daily experiences: this is what is referred to as salience. Consequently, manufacturing words can help mobilize new participants as much as it can help rally new political allies.

Prolife Lobbying Within the Republican Party

- 16 From 1980 onwards, abortion conspicuously became a partisan issue and polarized the political landscape. Phyllis Schlafly took it upon herself to characterize abortion in a partisan framework. This can be associated with what Munson calls the “politics stream” of pro-life activities. One might wonder how could the Republican Party go from being the first party to endorse the ERA in 1940 to the pro-life party at the turn of the twenty-first century, but the answer is quite simply Phyllis Schlafly. Armed with a solid anti-abortion rhetoric and fortified by the deceleration of the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment starting in 1977, she took advantage of her outsider position to infuse the Republican Party with anti-abortion rhetoric.¹⁵ This effort culminated in the withdrawal of both the ERA and abortion from the Republican plank in 1980. In return, the GOP utilized Phyllis Schlafly and her organization to court new constituents.
- 17 Throughout her activist years, Schlafly kept a prudent position towards the Republican Party. Early on, she was involved in the National Federation of Republican Women (NFRW).¹⁶ In 1967, the internal crisis between moderates and conservatives within the party, after Barry Goldwater’s failure in the 1964 presidential election, impacted the NFRW. The party was trying to rid itself of its more extremist elements and Schlafly was known for being conservative. When she sought to run for the national presidency of the federation, she was purged from leadership positions in the party (Critchlow 2005). This is the reason why she started her own organization, STOP ERA, with her loyal followers.
- 18 However, Schlafly never completely separated from the GOP, and she tried to retain influence behind the scenes. She nurtured ties with Republican politicians with whom she knew she could collaborate. She counted on authority figures such as Henry Hyde to promote her cause. A representative in the Illinois legislature from 1967 to 1974, and then Representative for Illinois in the US Congress, he is remembered for sponsoring the so-called Hyde Amendment in 1976. Hyde and Schlafly moved in the same political circles, Illinois being their common political playground.¹⁷ Since Schlafly served as an elected delegate to the 1956, 1964, 1968, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2004, 2012 and 2016 Republican

National Conventions (RNC), and as an alternate delegate in 1960, 1980, 2000 and 2008, their paths also crossed at the national level (*Ibid.*).

- 19 Schlafly and Hyde benefitted from one another. Schlafly campaigned vehemently in favor of the Hyde Amendment, and she used it as a strong argument against the ERA in return. For example, according to a leaflet from the Eagle Forum archives, Schlafly used her organization to draw a connection between the 1983 House's vote on the Hyde Amendment and the subsequent one on the ERA (Eagle Forum Archives, ERA series, box 5, file 16). She compared Republicans' voting records in order to identify the real pro-life congressmen.¹⁸ That same year, she included in her newsletter Hyde's testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee on the ERA-abortion connection, in which he denounced the pro-choice view of seeing abortion restrictions as sex discrimination (Schlafly 1983, Schlesinger Library archives, *Phyllis Schlafly Report* collection: book 4: 1982-1984). Since Hyde was her political ally inside the party, Schlafly gave him a platform in her newsletter. Their political commitment to one another proved to be mutual, and their alliance was quite fruitful. For example, when both were delegates for the state of Illinois at the 1984 RNC, they joined efforts to strengthen the language on abortion on the Republican plank and pushed for a Human Life Amendment (Schlafly 2016). They were able to convince the RNC to adopt the following paragraph: "The unborn child has a fundamental, individual right to life, which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children [...]" (Critchlow 2008, p. 286). The Hyde-Schlafly duo thereafter pressured the Republican leadership into adopting and maintaining a resolutely pro-life agenda throughout the 1980s.
- 20 However, perhaps because of the 1989 Supreme Court's decision *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, pro-choice Republicans became more vocal in 1990.¹⁹ Right-to-life advocates started to be challenged from within the party, particularly by Ann Stone's efforts. Her work as a fundraiser for the Republican Party and her pro-abortion campaign reinvigorated the group Republicans for Choice, which put pro-life activists on the defensive. Phyllis Schlafly mobilized two of her friends to work on this problem: Colleen Parro, a faithful member of Eagle Forum and Kathleen Sullivan, the Eagle Forum leader for Illinois. With Schlafly's approval and help, they worked to identify pro-life leaders in the different states to encourage them to run as delegates to the convention and help maintain the pro-life momentum. Together, they created the Republican National Coalition for Life (RNCL) in 1990. According to Schlafly's website, it was founded "after two groups, Republicans for Choice and National Republican Coalition for Choice, publicly announced their intention to provoke a floor fight at the 1992 Republican National Convention in Houston in order to remove the pro-life plank from the platform" ("Republican National Coalition for Life"). In 1992, dissensions within the party openly erupted. A joint interview of two protagonists clearly embodies the polarizing impact of the abortion issue within the GOP: during the convention, Phyllis Schlafly was interviewed by CBS alongside Mary Dent Crisp, a Republican women's rights advocate who had been disavowed by her own party in 1980 during the struggle over abortion (1992, Eagle Forum archives, DVD 183). As Schlafly tried to adopt the role of watchdog for the right-to-life plank, Crisp advocated for another familial vision whereby women could have the right to choose, highlighting the enduring dissensions within the party on the issue of abortion.

- 21 Yet, Schlafly's influence won her the support to maintain the pro-life plank from the majority of members.²⁰ She made a real show of force by distributing red cowboy hats, sponsored by the RNCL, to the pro-life delegates at the convention (immortalized by photographs found in the Eagle Forum archives). The tension over abortion in 1992 was symptomatic of the intensity of the culture wars at work in American politics at that moment, as was shown also by the so-called "Culture War Speech" delivered by Pat Buchanan, in which he denounced President Clinton's "unrestricted abortion on demand."²¹ Schlafly's endeavors at the 1992 RNC seemed to confirm that the 1992 elections were much more about abortion than the economy (Abramowitz 1995).
- 22 Besides, the GOP made use of personalities like Schlafly to co-opt single-issue voters for whom abortion was a key concern in politics (Petchesky 1981). Schlafly herself drew the same conclusion: "the pro-life constituency has been a major, even decisive, factor in the unprecedented growth of the Republican Party in the 1980s and 1990s" ("The Republican Party is the Pro-life Party," Eagle Forum headquarters). According to her, the Republican Party gained strength and coherence as a political entity when partisan politics started to become polarized on abortion. The GOP had been a party on the defensive throughout the 1960s and the 1970s, and social issues, especially abortion, helped to shift the balance of power. It seems worth speculating on the link between the party's transformation into an effective political entity and Schlafly's own endeavors. It appears that she fought hard to insert the pro-life rhetoric into the GOP, and I would like to suggest that she can probably be linked to the so-called "Catholic Strategy" developed by the Republican Party, starting with President Nixon (Himmelstein 1990; Wilcox 2011; Williams 2011; Chélini-Pont 2013). For Williams, "abortion policy played a pivotal role in transforming the GOP from a predominantly mainline Protestant party into a party of conservative Catholics and Evangelicals" (Williams 2011). Schlafly, herself a Catholic, was surely instrumental in attracting Catholic voters to the Republican Party, notably through the pro-life language she disseminated, as well as her active partisan lobbying.²² She stood as an influential activist and showed that Catholics had a place in the GOP. Moreover, Schlafly's friend Kathleen Sullivan mentioned that churches were a key mobilizing pool where they recruited homemakers for the STOP ERA movement (2016). Thanks to the overlapping of different networks of loyalty, Schlafly had not only access to Catholics, but also to the wider Christian Right.²³ Clyde Wilcox defines it as "a social movement that attempt[ed] to mobilize evangelical Protestants and other orthodox Christians into conservative political action" (Wilcox 2011, p. 8).²⁴ Most of these people had been shaken by the landmark Supreme Court decisions of the 1960s, notably *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) which forbade prayer in public schools. This potential constituency, wary of societal changes having to do with faith, sexuality, and gender roles was a formidable resource for Schlafly, from the 1970s onwards, because it provided access to valuable religious networks from diverse denominations. It allowed her to co-opt religious supporters whom she channeled towards her own organization and the Republican Party, and thus standing out as a real manifestation of the party's conservative turn.

Conclusion

- 23 The issue of abortion provided Phyllis Schlafly with a powerful point of entry in the late twentieth century's cultural debates. As she was successful at romanticizing and publicizing her accomplishments, she proclaimed herself and her forces responsible for

the cultural shift of the party. At the end of her life, in 2016, she wrote a book to explain her intervention. *How the Republican Party Became Pro-Life* tells the story of “a person who holds no public office, usually not a party position, doesn’t run a big lobbying firm, doesn’t represent a big corporation or a special interest group, and she instills awe, fear, respect, and she has influence” (Bob Novack in Schlafly 2016, p. iii).²⁵ Thus, even as an outsider, she was seemingly able to weigh in on the positions taken by the party.

- 24 Concerning Schlafly’s pro-life efforts, they were circumscribed to the two aforementioned areas: language and partisan politics. Schlafly’s involvement with the abortion issue is the story of how effective she was in appealing to citizens who would be ready to mobilize and cast their votes from a cultural perspective. Among other factors, Schlafly led the “sexual conservatives” to prominence in American politics (Di Mauro & Joffe 2007). As much as they had an impact on reproductive politics over the last fifty years, so too did Phyllis Schlafly.

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NOTES

1. I follow the lead of Kristin Luker and Daniel K. Williams in their use of the words "pro-life" and "prochoice" to qualify the sides of the abortion debate, nevertheless aware of their political and partisan connotations (Luker, 2009 [1984]; Williams, 2011). I also use the terms "anti-abortion," "right-to-life," and "pro-abortion."

2. Phyllis Schlafly had a rich and diverse career. She was also greatly interested in issues such as anticommunism, this paper, however, focuses on her activism in regards to women's issues.

3. The ERA was first introduced in Congress in 1923 thanks to suffragist Alice Paul. Yet, it only gained substantial support in 1972 when it passed. Because conservative women mobilized against it, in particular thanks to Schlafly's organization STOP ERA (created in 1972), it was abandoned in 1982. Only 35 states voted in favor of the amendment, when the required number

was 38. In March 2017 and May 2018, the Nevada and Illinois legislatures voted for it, bringing the number of states to 37.

4. I conducted doctoral research on Phyllis Schlafly and her Eagle Forum during two field trips in 2016 and 2017. I was able to study documents from various archives. I consulted the collections of the Eagle Forum archives in Saint Louis, Missouri, those of the Schlesinger Library, Boston, Massachusetts, and those of the Library of Congress and the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington DC. I also conducted oral history interviews with Eagle Forum members and Schlafly's closest friends and relatives.

5. In his book *The Making of Pro-life Activists: How Social Movement Mobilization Works* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008), Munson envisioned four categories to study pro-life activism: the politics stream (standard political and legal activity such as political campaigns, lobbying, and litigation), the direct action stream (protest and demonstrations), the individual outreach stream (support and guidance for patients), and the public outreach stream (reaching out to people and advertising about the wrongs of abortion and its alternative).

6. Hunter explains that religious orthodox forces and religious progressive forces were ready to compete for the definition of public culture based on shared values, national ideals and collective identity. Culture wars stemmed from their competing moral visions of the world (Hunter 1991, p. 76).

7. On the expression "backlash," see Susan Faludi's journalistic essay *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York, Crown, 1991).

8. In 1990, Himmelstein described conservatism as a movement encompassing three branches: economic libertarianism, social traditionalism, and militant anticommunism (p. 14). The social traditionalism branch is particularly relevant to this topic, as the distinctiveness of the movement was the rising involvement of female activists, on which I focus. Rebecca Klatch, who was one of the first scholars to study conservative women, also identifies similar sensibilities: social conservatism and laissez-faire conservatism (*Women of the New Right*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1987). The adjective "conservative" used in this article will then mostly refer to social conservatism, a branch concerned with the preservation, or restoration, of so-called traditional social and moral values.

9. The *Phyllis Schlafly Report* was first published in 1967 and started with 30,000 subscribers (Critchlow 2005).

10. The expression originated in a 1970 essay by feminist Carol Hanisch, published in *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation*, edited by Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt (Hanisch 2006).

11. Framing consists of "an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction" (Benford & Snow 2000).

12. Pro-abortion activists had a hard time countering the pro-life branding of the anti-abortion side. *New York Times'* reporter Linda Greenhouse and Yale historian Reva B. Siegel revealed a memo by Jimmie Kimmey attesting to the difficulty for the pro-abortion camp to find a name for the movement. Kimmey was the executive director of The Association for the Study of Abortion Inc., founded by Alan F. Guttmacher, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and Robert E. Hall, professor at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. The association aimed to "support the early reform movement in New York and [serving] as a clearinghouse of information for activist groups around the country" (Greenhouse & Siegel 2012 [2010], p. 31). They considered alternatives like "Freedom of Conscience" or "Right to Choose." Incidentally, the right to choose was legally described for the first time in *People v. Belous*, a 1969 decision by California's Supreme Court (McGirr 2001, pp. 231-235).

13. A master frame is "quite broad in terms of scope, functioning as a kind of algorithm that colors and constrains the orientations and activities of other movements" (Benford & Snow 2000).

14. Conservatives have made several attempts to officialize the rights of unborn fetuses and to establish conception as the start of life, notably through the push for a Human Life Amendment, which the Republican Party officially supported in its platform as of 1984 (Schlafly 2016). The 2016 GOP platform reiterated this pledge (“Republican Party Platform”, 2016).
 15. Between 1974 and 1977, the ratification process stalled as only five states voted in favor of it while five rescinded their vote (Nebraska, Tennessee, Idaho, South Dakota and Kentucky).
 16. Schlafly was elected president of the Illinois Federation of Republican Women three times between 1960 and 1964 and was the first vice-president of the NFRW from 1964 to 1967. (“The Life and Legacy of Phyllis Schlafly” 2018).
 17. Schlafly lived in Illinois from 1949 to 1993. (*Ibid.*)
 18. The vote on the Hyde Amendment happened on Sept. 22, 1983 while the vote on the ERA took place on Nov. 5, 1983. The representatives who voted in favor of the Hyde Amendment and the ERA were identified as the traitors.
 19. The *Webster* decision gave more leverage to states in terms of restricting abortion rights.
 20. As Catherine Rymph shows, she also won the battle over feminism in the GOP (2006).
 21. Patrick J. Buchanan ran for the presidential ticket in the Republican primaries in 1992, before throwing his support behind George H. W. Bush.
 22. David C. Leege, emeritus professor of political science and expert on the links between Catholicism and politics, explains that Catholics were part of the New Deal coalition in the 1930s and thus tended to vote for the Democratic Party. However, several Republican presidents were successful in attracting the “Catholic vote”—a term about which Leege expresses skepticism—: Richard Nixon in 1972, Ronald Reagan in 1980, and George H. W. Bush in 1988. Leege contests the idea that religion be seen as the main factor for Catholics’ voting patterns from 1968 to 1992. For him “racially charged issues were far away the dominant reason why white Catholics left the Democratic Party,” though he also mentions how “moral-restorationist issues” affected the “Catholic vote” (Leege 2004).
 23. At one of the two 2017 Eagle Councils, several Sunday services were offered to Eagle Forum members: one Protestant service, one Mormon service, one Church of Christ service, and one Catholic service, testifying to the religious diversity of Schlafly’s followers (Eagle Council program, 2017).
 24. Wilcox explains that some scholars reject the term Christian Right, preferring to use Religious Rights because it also encompasses groups such as Orthodox Jews. The Christian Right mainly contains white evangelical Christians, especially the Fundamentalist and Pentecostal denominations. They participate in organizations like Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America, among others (Wilcox 2011).
 25. The foreword was written by CNN journalist Bob Novak.
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ABSTRACTS

Phyllis Schlafly, an activist and an icon of the American Right, appropriated social issues in order to mobilize conservatives from the 1970s onward. The struggle against abortion was key to her traditional view of the family, which was organized around traditional gender roles. Thanks to a pro-life rhetoric and intense lobbying within the Republican Party, she fought against the

feminist movement and helped to polarize the political landscape on this crucial issue linked to sexuality and reproduction.

Phyllis Schlafly, militante et figure très connue de la droite américaine, s'empara des débats socioculturels pour mobiliser les conservateurs à partir des années 1970. La lutte contre l'avortement fut l'un des piliers de sa vision traditionnelle de la famille, qui s'organisait autour des rôles genrés traditionnels. Par l'utilisation d'une rhétorique dite pro-life et l'un lobbying poussé dans le Parti républicain, elle participa, en s'opposant au mouvement féministe, à la polarisation du paysage politique sur cette question primordiale liée à la sexualité et à la reproduction.

INDEX

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