Gendered Opportunities? Political Opportunities and Activity Choice Among Women's

Movements in the United Kingdom, France and Germany

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Abstract: We ask in this study if a gendered interpretation of political opportunity structures is necessary and argue that scholars should begin to compare the variable impact of POS on women's groups and other movements, in order to ask how/whether gendered POS explain the *activity choices* of women's movement groups. We examine a gendered interpretation of POS and the way in which women's groups alter activity choices when faced with different institutional structures. In an attempt to determine whether POS theories developed around other social movements, namely environmental movements, are applicable to women's movements in Western Europe, we examine whether and how changes in formal domestic political opportunities drive activity choice by British, French and German women's groups and the extent to which these groups ***react to changes in the POS in a similar manner as other social groups.*** We find that Leftist elite allies and electoral cleavages, namely de-alignment, greatly influence activity choice among women's groups in much the same way as environmental movements. Nevertheless, women's groups are found to be disenfranchised from more participatory forms of political action and direct contact with policymaking elites thus suggesting the necessity of a gendered interpretation of POS.

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Introduction

Previous research suggests that 'open' political opportunity structures (POS), such as Leftist parties in government that act as political allies, lead social movements to choose conventional political activities such as lobbying and consultation with government officials (Kriesi 1995; Poloni-Staudinger 2009). Alternatively, when social movements are confronted with a 'closed' political opportunity structures, they are more likely to engage in protest at the domestic level, work in concert with other groups, or act at the level of the European Union (see for example Poloni-Staudinger 2005; Poloni-Staudinger 2008; Poloni-Staudinger 2009; Banaszak, Beckwith and Rucht 2003; Chappell 2002; Rucht and Neidhardt 2002; Jeydel 2000; Kriesi et al 1995). Similarly, women and politics literature presents the effects of 'open' and 'closed' POS on women's movements. Interestingly enough, the literature affirms that Leftist political parties serve as allies to women's groups (for example, see Waylen 2007; Ortbals 2008a) *and* argues that political opportunity structures, including parties, are 'gendered,' namely 'closed,' in a way that makes them less amendable to producing success for women's movements than for other movements (Friedman 1998, 2000). In other words, POS, like the state in general, are plagued by "systematic gendered arrangements of [masculinist] power and privilege…" (Beckwith 2005, 583). We argue here that if a gendered interpretation of political opportunities is necessary, scholars should begin to compare the variable impact of POS on

women's groups and other movements, in order to ask how/whether gendered POS explain the *activity choices* of women's movement groups.

In this paper, we examine a gendered interpretation of POS and the way in which women's groups alter activity choices when faced with different institutional structures. In an attempt to determine whether POS theories developed around other social movements are applicable to women's movements in Western Europe, we examine whether and how changes in formal domestic political opportunities drive activity choice by British, French and German women's groups and the extent to which these groups ***react to changes in the POS in a similar manner as other social groups.*** Activity choices refer to the specific activity options that groups can choose to engage in, and may include protests and demonstrations, lobbying, court activity, consultative activity, critical and supportive statements of governments or officials, media releases and non-political activity, such as education events, seminars, and research.[1] The sum total and the 'mix' of activities in which groups engage is referred to as a group's action repertoire (Poloni-Staudinger 2008; Poloni-Staudinger 2009). In order to allow for a more holistic understanding of women's group activity, the study encompasses a variety of groups, thus women's groups are defined herein as organizations that emphasize "women's issues" (see Beckwith 1996; 2005) and include groups which do and do not self-identify as feminists.[2]

More specifically, we ask how the dynamics of elite alliances (party politics as related to women's and other movement groups), the nature of electoral cleavages (party de-alignment and electoral volatility), and the ability for European action impact activity choices among women's groups. Given past theory, we expect women's groups to more vigorously pursue conventional activities, such as lobbying and consultation, when Leftist parties are in power, yet to be most critical of the Left, with which they have the greatest affinity and thus the greatest stake in their

actions. That said, we expect contact between Leftist parties and women's groups to decline

when parties are under pressure to respond to class-based, worker's demands. In terms of

cleavages, we expect the confrontational activities of women's groups, such as protests and

demonstrations, to increase during periods of party de-alignment when social groups in general

turn to more demonstrative forms of political expression, whereas conventional activities should

increase during periods of electoral volatility when politicians are seeking new constituencies

and engage movements in deliberations (Jeydel 2000). As per European institutions, we expect

women's groups to seek EU opportunities when domestic POS are closed.

These theoretical relationships are explored below, and are tested through the use of

content analysis of publicly available, FACTIVA newswires to track women's group activity

from 1980 through 2007. By studying the dynamics of elite alliances and electoral cleavages and

how they influence activity choices from 1980 to 2007, the paper combines the process, over-

time approach of social movement scholars (Costain 1992; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1998) with a

comparative approach, which has heretofore been thought of as static (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et

al. 1995).[3] After analyzing these data, we compare them to research findings about

environmental movements in the same countries. The paper is structured as follows: literature

review of gendered political opportunities, literature review of European women's movements,

research design, results and comparison to other movements, and conclusions.

Political Opportunities: Gendered?

Much of the work that examines social movement activity does so from the political

opportunity structure (POS) perspective (see for example Tarrow 1998; Imig and Tarrow 2001;

McAdam et al.1996; Kriesi et al 1995). Political opportunity structures can be thought of as

"filters between the mobilization of groups and their choice of strategies and actions" (Kitschelt 1986, 59), and may include structures as diverse as influential political allies, divided elites, and political repression (Tarrow 1998). In most works, the term POS does not refer to the characteristics of groups such as their monetary and staff resources or their ideological or issue focus, but focuses on the "degree to which groups are likely to be able to gain access to power and to manipulate the political system" (Eisinger 1973, 25). Underlying the opportunity structure argument is the idea that social movements do not develop and act in the same way in every country. Rather, national political institutions shape, in different ways, the way in which people mobilize and organize and the outcomes of their mobilizations (della Porta et al. 1999). Thus, movements' organizational features, action repertoires, and impacts are influenced by the political conditions in their respective countries (Van Der Heijden 2006). In other words, activists do not choose goals and tactics in a vacuum; rather, the political context sets the grievances around which activists mobilize, advantaging some claims and disadvantaging others (Meyer and Minkoff 2004).

The literature about POS is problematic for the analysis of women's groups because it assumes gender neutrality, namely it conveys that groups similarly react to changes in institutions and does not critically evaluate the gendered implications of those institutions (see Young 1996; Kuumba 2002). Feminist scholarship, however, suggests that the modern welfare state and capitalist economies are built on patriarchal principles (Kenney 1996; Orloff 1996; see also Krook 2005 for discussion of feminist institutionalism), women in all societies share the experience of political exclusion (Beckwith 2005; Nelson and Chowdhury 1994), and thus are 'political outsiders' (Baldez 2002, 15). [4] Even though traditional gender roles may fade in progressive societies, institutional cultures of the state continue to reproduce masculinity, and,

without parity in national governments worldwide, politics remains a realm dominated by men (Kenney 1996). Therefore, the state may be conceived as inherently masculine (Viterna and Fallon 2008; Brush 2003; Orloff 1996; Parpart and Staudt 1989), implying that women citizens and women's movements groups are consistently at a disadvantage. Therefore, it is understandable why some research has found that the movement resources of women's groups influence protest activities more than openings in the POS (Soule et al. 1999).

Because of the gendered, patriarchal nature of the state, it stands to reason that women's groups may react differently to changes in the POS than other social groups. Past research demonstrates that the POS influences women's movements (e.g., Costain 1991; Banaszak 1996; Staggenborg 2001; Roth 2007), and, in fact, finds that political parties –even Leftist ones- may reproduce 'women's marginalization from politics' (Freidman 1998, 503; Fransechet 2004). However, the extant literature disagrees on the specification of 'gendered POS,' disproportionately gauges certain POS types from the larger social movement literature, and lacks an emphasis on movement activity choice. These constitute three shortcomings that this paper seeks to ameliorate.

First, the specification of 'gendered POS' is vague. For instance, McCammon et al tests a positive understanding of gendered POS, specifically whether a large number of women lawmakers genders the state in a feminist manner which then facilitates the success of women's jury movements (2007). On the other hand, several scholars hint that the state's patriarchal nature is a constant. For example, if the state is 'public' and men are deemed public actors and women 'private' actors in the home, women will have few successes in the public realm (Freidman 1998). Recent research by Kuumba, however, argues that the masculine rendering of the state is 'neither unidirectional nor straight-forward' (2002, 506), but that 'a gendered

perspective reveals that the differential experiences and structural locations of women and men must be taken into account' (510). This then signifies that it is essential to understand how gender affects particular POS in given cases and what McAdam (1982) calls the 'broad [economic] processes,' which also may be built on gender relations and impact opportunities themselves. In this paper, we prefer the latter approach that asks *when and how* the state and specific POS are gendered.

Second, the women and politics literature on POS disproportionately gauges a limited number of POS types from the larger literature, for there is noticeable preference for testing the impact of elite, Leftist alliances and authoritarian, repressive regimes. In terms of the latter, Latin American scholars have argued that women's groups are successful under repressive regimes because political parties are weak and movement activism becomes the only political game in town (Waylen 1994; Noonan 1995; Franceschet 2004; Fransechet and MacDonald 2004). Though Leftist allies are not uniformly helpful to women's movements, many scholars show that they assist women in their quest for equality (Waylen 2000; Young 2000; Banaszak et al 2003; Fransechet 2004; Waylen 2007; Ortbals 2008a; Rinker and Ortbals 2009). These foci notwithstanding, it should be acknowledged that there is an emerging literature on international POS, showing that forums provided by the European Union and United Nations – whether conferences, commissions, or agencies- serve as POS for women's movements seeking changes on the domestic front (Joachim 2003; Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000). By focusing on elite alliances (both Leftist parties and their relations to multiple movements), electoral cleavages, and the European Union, we both extend this new literature and reorient feminist studies to other POS types found in the larger social movement literature.[5]

Finally, the extant literature presents very little investigation into the activity choices of women's movement groups (for exception about double militancy, see Franceschet 2004). Rather, the effects of POS are more frequently tested vis-à-vis movement framing and success of the so-called 'insider strategy' (see Franceschet 2004). Past research on framing, or namely how movements create 'meaning for themselves, the movement participants, potential adherents, and opponents' (Noonan 1995, 86), demonstrates how POS is a 'filter' impacting the framing of the movement's message. For example, masculinist POS sometimes cause women to frame activisms in traditional, feminine terms (or to make them appear as political outsiders and hence not a threat to a regime) which often time yields movement successes (Noonan 1995; Fransechet 2003; Baldez 2002). Comparative feminist policy literature (see, for example, Mazur 2002; Chappell 2002; Outshoorn and Kantola 2007) examines the impact of institutional variables on women's policy agencies and policy debates. It has been shown that when women choose a distinctively insider strategy through institutions, they are most aided by POS such as the European Union, decentralization, and 'sympathetic non-feminist allies' (Mazur 2002, 177; Outshoorn and Kantola 2007). Though Leftist parties do not consistently aid feminist policy outcomes (see Mazur 2002), many scholars have shown that Leftist parties are preferable allies in the policy game (see, for example, Ortbals 2008a; Waylen 2007). In this study, we examine similar POS but we do so in relation to women's activity choices.

Given the shortcomings in the prevailing literature, this study addresses how POS influence women's groups *in society*, and asks under which institutional configurations, they *choose specific activities*. Women can engage in more conventional action such as contacting their political representatives or sitting on advisory boards; they can participate in unconventional activities, such as protests and demonstrations; and they can choose non-political

actions. By looking at the activity choices of women's groups and comparing them to other

movements' choices –under similar POS- we begin to gauge whether women face less

welcoming, 'gendered' opportunities than other movement groups.

One final caveat is in order. Scholars have shown that some women's groups do not seek

change in gender hierarchies –in society or the state- and instead prioritize non-feminist, so-

called 'practical' goals (Molyneux 1995, 284; see also Ortbals 2008b).[6] That is, these groups are

not pushing for a transformation of the system, thus they may be reacting in much the same way

as other social groups to changing POS and the state may not be threatened by their claims,

leading to their legitimization (see Banaszak et al 2003). If this is the case, we may find that

POS sometimes does function in a gender neutral way. This presents us with several

propositions for this study:

1. *A feminized interpretation of POS is needed as gender relations pervade all institutions, influencing activities of women's movement organizations.*

2. *Women's groups react to changes in POS in a similar manner as other social groups and as such, a gendered interpretation of POS is not necessary.*

3. *Women's groups react to changes in POS in a similar manner as other social groups but are met with less success, thus a gendered interpretation of POS is necessary.*

We explore these propositions by, first, testing hypotheses related to POS impact on actions by

women's groups, and second, by comparing results of data to similar, past studies on the actions

of other social movements, namely environmental movements.

European Women's Movement

Before testing data, it behooves us to review the state of women's movements in the countries under examination. The women's movements in France, Great Britain, and Germany share features yet differ in ways similar to interest group affiliation in the three countries. Because this research is mainly focused on within country analysis, the research design is not hampered by these 'uncontrolled' differences. However, we do draw some cross-country comparisons, thus similarities in movement goals and orientations are noteworthy.

The movements' similarities include goals, preference for the Left, cooptation by state and political actors, and fragmentation. According to some scholars, the women's movement in Europe has mainly focused on demand for equal pay and equal working conditions (Haug 1995). Other prominent issues include abortion rights and women's health issues. For instance, French feminist in recent decades have fought for reproductive rights and employment opportunities (Jenson and Sineau 1994), and more recently RU 486 has been a major concern for many women's groups (Ebert 2007). For German women's groups, abortion has been 'a central mobilizing issue' which remained relevant in debates into the early 1990s (Kamenitsa 2001). Employment issues are salient to German women as well (Lemke 1994; Lang 2000). Similarly, parts of the women's movement in Great Britain have been mobilized around reproductive issues (see Stetson 2001).

In all three countries activists hold some preference for the Left, though these preferences are indeed varied. For example, British feminists and Labour activists have not always been united on every issue, such as abortion, yet 'historically, many women's organizations had been close to the Left' (Stetson 2001). Second-wave French feminists are inclined toward the far-Left (and, thus away from mainstream politics, see Jenson and Sineau 1994), and German groups,

though sometimes suspicious of the Left, understand the Greens and SPD (Red-Green coalition) as the parties most dedicated to women's issues (Young 1996; Kamenitsa 2001; Lang 2007; Lemke 1994). In fact, some scholars would argue that women's groups in these three countries have been eclipsed by institutional actors, whether parties or women's policy agencies. Haug (1995) claims that the European women's movement has changed with much of its agenda co-opted by social democratic parties throughout Europe (see also Goodman 2007). According to Viterna and Fallon (2008) 'gender-specific goals are often subsumed to a party's "mainstream" agenda, and women's branches of political parties are generally too weak and poorly funded to exert real party influence' (672). Movement goals are also institutionalized through women's policy agencies as groups receive subsidies from the state and begin to work through institutions rather than protesting them. This phenomenon is most pronounced in Germany where women's groups receive a great deal of state funding and work closely with institutions (Lang 2007). French groups also receive funds from institutions and participate in government consultation (Mazur 2007). British groups work with agencies, but scholars have noted that agencies have not addressed all possible feminist women's issues (Lovenduski 2007).

The movements also share recent histories of fragmentation. French feminism has been divided between different 'wings' (revolutionary, syndicalist, and egalitarian – see Jenson and Sineau 1994), and may be considered 'scattered,' 'disorganized,' and in 'decline' (Robinson 2001, 94). It should be noted, however, that the French movement experienced some revitalization in the 1990s due to movement unity over parity goals (Baudino 2008). Unification led to fissures in the German movement (from differing East and West perspectives, see Young 1996; Kamenitsa 2001), and currently the movement consists of various 'local grassroots projects' or 'professionalized [NGO] women's organizations' that run, for example, health

centers or shelters (Lang 2000; Lang 2007, 138). British feminism has been described as a collection of women's *movements* (Stetson 2001), and, with the exception of the Fawcett Society, 'most other visible active groups are either organized around single issues (Rape Crisis, Women's Aid Federation), sectors (Women's Health, Reproductive Rights) or ethnicities' (Lovenduski 2007, 160).

That said, of the three movements, the French movement is the weakest (Rucht 1996), for it has been in decline since the early 1970s (Robinson 2001). According to some reports 'less than 1 percent of adult women belonged to it [the women's movement] and they formed a tiny fringe in French society' (Kaplan 1992: 764). This contrasts with German groups which are relatively strong (Rucht 1996). While perhaps less politically strong than their German counterparts, the number of women engaged in groups in the UK is larger. This is due to the overall culture of organizational affiliation and the nature of the interest group sector in the UK and mirrors patterns seen for other movements (Poloni-Staudinger 2008). Also of interest is the fact that both the UK and Germany have been led by women politicians, Margaret Thatcher throughout the 1980s in the UK, and Angela Merkel from 2005 in Germany.

Research Design

Data and Hypotheses

In this study, we ask why groups choose to engage in one activity over another and whether or not changes in domestic POS influence the activity patterns of women's movements in the same way that they influence the activity patterns of other social groups. We will focus on a specific set of POS indicators when addressing these propositions-- the presence of elite allies, the nature of existing political cleavages in society, and the European Union. In this way, we

take a view of POS which is limited to the formal political landscape, i.e. party politics and the structure and action of the state (see McCammon et al 2001 for a critique of this approach). This approach is popular among scholars interested in a targeted definition of POS and the influence of state structures on movements (i.e. Banaszak 1996; Kriesi 1995; Tarrow 1998).

Data were drawn from a content analysis of news wires available from the FACTIVA service, and eight different activity options were coded: protests and demonstrations, lobbying, court activity, consultative activity, broadly critical statements of governments or officials, and broadly supportive statements of governments or officials, media releases and non-political activity[7]. Results focus on the relationships between activity choice and opportunity structure and the comparison of results for women's groups to past findings for other movements (Poloni-Staudinger 2005, 2008, 2009; Kreisi et al 1995). In this way, we explore how POS similarly or dissimilarly impact women, i.e., how POS are "gendered."

Previous research suggests that when social groups are confronted with 'closed' POS (elite allies not in power, weak platform on women's issues, lack of volatility in electoral system), social groups are more likely to engage in protest at the domestic level, seek out cooperative activities, and/or act at the level of the European Union. However, when faced with 'open' POS, movements react in a more conventional way (lobbying and consultation) (see for example Poloni-Staudinger 2005; Poloni-Staudinger 2008; Poloni-Staudinger 2009; Banaszak, Beckwith and Rucht 2003; Chappell 2002; Rucht and Neidhardt 2002; Jeydel 2000; Kriesi et al 1995) (see H1 below). A great deal of literature has focused on the presence of the Left, particularly social democratic parties, as being an important, 'open' POS in forwarding women's issues (for a discussion see Viterna and Fallon 2008; Young 2000; Ortbals 2008a; Waylen 2007). That said, research has also shown that the presence of the Left in government does not

guarantee the success of feminist policies (Mazur 2003a; Mazur 2003b; Stetson 2000;

Fransechet2004). Given the expectation that the Left will be responsive to women's issues, will

women's groups maintain greater contact, through conventional actions, when the Left is in

power (see H1 below)? If women's issues have indeed been incorporated into the platforms of

Left parties, we can test if these electoral alliances actually mean something to actions. For

example, could we expect criticism of Left parties to be sharper than criticisms of the right, as

embodied in the expectation-punishment axiom (Poloni-Staudinger 2005), which states that

social movements are much more critical of those political parties with whom one would expect

them to have the greatest affinity (Poloni-Staudinger 2005; Poloni-Staudinger 2008) (see H3

below)? If instead POS are closed, can we expect that women's groups will turn toward the

European Union as has been found for other social groups, namely environmental groups (see

H6 below) (Poloni-Staudinger 2008)? Due to time and cost issues, smaller social groups have

been found to not always act at the level of the EU; however, when opportunities for action are

closed domestically, groups will sometimes turn attention to the EU in an effort to

'outmaneuver' the nation-state (Poloni-Staudinger 2008). This is a topic discussed at length in

the multilevel governance work (see Pollack for more on this).

   Similarly, the issues of 'new social movements' such as the women's movement are not

the only issues to which parties of the Left must attend. Left parties often play a delicate

balancing game between their Left-libertarian constituents and their traditional base, the working

classes. When the Left is under pressure (from Left libertarian parties like green parties or far

Left or communist parties), they have been found to turn back to their traditional working class

base (Kriesi et. al 1995; Przeworski and Sprague 1986; Poloni-Staudinger 2009) (see H2 below).

During such times, we can expect that women's groups may react to this closing of POS by shifting their choice of activity.

The salient political cleavages in society have also been found to influence social group activity; however, this is less-researched than the effect of elite alliances on group activity. Previous research suggests that as de-alignment among the electorate increases, social groups are more likely to turn to more demonstrative forms of political expression (Dalton et al. 1984; Rucht and Neidhardt 2002; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Jeydel 2000; Costain 1991). In previous research on environmental groups in the same countries, increasing de-alignment was found to increase protest activities relative to other activities among environmental groups. Thus we expect that increasing de-alignment in this study would similarly increase the likelihood of protest among women's groups (see H4 below). Conversely, conventional activities among environmental groups were found to increase during periods of higher electoral volatility (Poloni-Staudinger 2005). Why are low levels of party unity and electoral volatility helpful to social movements? Under this type of elite arrangement, legislative members may be more willing or able to vote based on personal preference rather than party line (Jeydel 2000). Electoral instability also increases the likelihood of contact among social groups and elites. This is because under conditions of electoral instability, politicians will be looking for new constituencies (Jeydel 2000). If this is so, we expect that increasing volatility in the system would result in an increased likelihood of conventional activities among women's groups as well (see H5 below).

Table 1 lists hypotheses to be tested in this study as well as operationalizations of the concepts and related literature from which the hypotheses are derived.

<Table 1 About Here>

These hypotheses assume that women's groups react to changes in POS in a similar manner as other groups. This study will explore whether or not this is in fact the case.

Methods

We test hypotheses examining activity choices among women's groups in three West European countries—UK, France and Germany. The unit of analysis in this research is the group. The countries provide the background for activity. These three countries are very similar when one examines their level of development, both economic and social. They are all post-industrial democracies among the most developed in the world, with similarly progressive gender values. That said, between country analysis is not the focus of this study. This study is concerned with over time changes in group activity choice due to changes in POS.

The data on group activity was drawn from a content analysis of news wires available from the FACTIVA wire service. The first step in this process involved generating a list of women's groups in the UK, France and Germany through internet searches of databases and searches of previous research related to women's groups. The second step involved conducting a key word search for each group on FACTIVA and downloading all "hits". Groups were searched for by name in their original language (in the case of French and German groups) and in the English translation of their name. About 80 percent of groups from the original list were found in the wires. Groups included in analyses can be found in Table 2. The news wires were then coded for group activity. The coding consisted of the group, the action undertaken by the

group, and the target of this action. Inter-coder reliability was found to be 97%. Based on this method, just over 6850 observations were coded.

<Table 2 About Here>

The dependent variable in this study is activity choice. Several categories of activity choice were coded for this study: non-political activity[8], protests and demonstrations, lobbying[9], consultative acts[10], critical statements, supportive statements[11], and court activity. Most studies do not focus on the wide array of activities in which social groups engage, opting often for studies focused on protest or conflict. By widening analyses to a more complete action repertoire, we will be able to get a better idea of the way in which women's groups respond to changes in POS, and the types of activities in which they engage.

Independent Variables: Elite Alliances. The independent variables were drawn from several different data sources. The data on party platforms were gathered using data from the party manifesto project (Budge et. al 2001). Specifically, the variables per503 (social justice) and per706 (non-economic demographic groups) were used.   The social justice variable focuses on the concept of equality; the need for fair treatment of all people and special protection for the underprivileged; and the end of discrimination based on sex (Budge et al 2001, 226). The non-economic demographic group variable focuses on favorable mentions of or need for assistance to women as well as other non-majority groups (Budge et al. 2001, 228). The strength of platform variable is a dummy variable indicating if the party in power's platform is stronger (1) or weaker (0) than the opposition party's platform. Data on party in power were gathered from several sources depending on the country under examination[12]. Controls were also included for whether or not it was an election year (1 election year, 0 non-election year)[13] as this has been found to influence activities among environmental groups (Poloni-Staudinger 2004; 2008; 2009). In

addition, a control for the type of group, feminist movement organization (FMO) or women's movement organization (WMO) was determined by accessing the webpages of each group and reading mission statements. If a group spoke of an interest in combating patriarchy in the system, specifically identified as feminist, and/or spoke of redefining socially-constructed gender roles, it was coded as an FMO; if the group did not include such statements in its mission, it was coded as a WMO.

Independent Variables: Electoral Cleavages. Electoral volatility was assessed by looking at Pederson's Volatility Index, Rae's Fractionalization of the Vote Index and change in pressure on the traditional Left. Both pressure from communist parties and green parties were examined. Data for Left pressure and de-alignment were drawn from Eurobarometer data[14]. The Eurobarometer survey asked respondents to indicate which party they intended to vote for in the upcoming election. While the survey allows for the possibility of many party responses, for the purposes of assessing pressure on the traditional Left party, I collapsed these responses into four categories: social democratic parties (traditional Left parties)[15], communist parties, green parties and traditional right parties[16]. I used party intention rather than actual percentage of votes to assess pressure because this would be the information groups and parties had at the time activity took place. Recall, it was hypothesized above that the proportion of electoral support one party has relative to another would likely influence where groups act. Pressure, then, was measured as the proportion of electoral support for the social democratic party divided by the proportion of electoral support for the green party (for green pressure) and by the proportion of electoral support for the communist party (for communist pressure). This measure enables one to determine how many times larger the social democratic support is than the green and/or

communist support. As this number approaches 1, even support, we would expect competition between the parties to increase, thus opening political opportunity structures for groups.

Following operationalizations used in previous studies (see Dalton and Wattenburg 2000), de-alignment was measured based on a survey question that asked respondents if they felt close to any political party[17]. Respondents could answer if they felt 'very close', 'fairly close', were merely a 'sympathizer', or were 'not close' to a party. De-alignment was measured as the percentage of respondents in each country in each year responding that they 'did not feel close' to any political party. This follows operationalizations used previously by Dalton and Wattenburg (2000). I also examined the impact of the percentage of respondents in each country in each year responding that they felt 'very close' to a particular party, and this did not change the results.

Design. Data were first examined descriptively. The second step in analyses consisted of multivariate analysis in the form of a multinomial logit, where activity type served as the dependent variable. For the multinomial logistic analyses, equations were adjusted for clustering on actor and robust standard errors were used in determination of significance. This step was taken because while results are likely independent across groups, they are likely not independent within groups. They have something in common; they are undertaken by the same actor. In addition, a variable was inserted to control for group type. This dummy variable indicated whether or not the group was a feminist movement organization (fmo) or women's movement organization (wmo), coded 1 and 0, respectively. Women's movement organizations are, defined as movements displaying 'the primacy of women's gendered experiences, women's issues, and women's leadership and decision making' (Beckwith 1996, 1038). On the other hand, feminist movement organizations are movements 'contesting political, social, and other

power arrangements of domination and subordination on the basis of gender' (Beckwith 2000, 437), or, in short, those that seek 'to transform the [gender] roles [that] society assigns to women' (Alavarez 1990, 24).

A final step looked at opportunities accessed by groups at the level of the European Union. For this analysis, logistic analysis was used and the dependent variable was a dummy variable indicating EU-targeted activity (1) or non-EU-targeted activity. An activity was coded as an EU-targeted activity if the wire indicated the target of the activity was the "European Union" or any of the institutions associated with the European Union[18]. All independent variables remained the same as in the multinomial logit with one exception. An additional control variable was added that measured whether or not the activity surrounded an international (1) or non-international (0) issue.

Results

Describing the Data. The majority of events in this study were undertaken by British groups[19]. About seventy percent of the activities in this study were undertaken by British groups, about fifteen percent were undertaken by French groups, and about twelve percent were undertaken by German groups[20]. While there were more activities coded for British groups in this study than for French or German groups, the concentration of activities remains very similar among the three countries. Table 3 lists the concentration by activity for each country.

Thirty-three percent of all activities in which groups engage are non-political. While this varies somewhat by country, the variations are minor. This is interesting as it mirrors results found for environmental groups (Poloni-Staudinger 2009). While environmental groups do also engage in a great deal of non-political activity, however, women's groups engage in it more;

nearly thirty-three percent of the activities in this study were non-political in nature, while non-political activity made up about seventeen percent of all activities among environmental groups in the same countries (Poloni-Staudinger 2009). If we look at activity and filter it by whether or not a group is considered feminist, we see a slightly different pattern. While women's movement organizations engage in non-political activity more than any other type of activity, feminist organizations nearly equally engage in non-political activity, lobbying and media use[21]. This has remained relatively stable over time.

That said, many of the groups in this study have explicitly political agendas, yet, the majority of their acts (or at least a large proportion) are decidedly non-political in nature. This suggests that perhaps the gendering of POS causes women's groups to choose non-political over political activities. Alternatively, it may simply be the case that social movements – women's groups included-participate in more non-political activities than research has previously accounted for (for exception, see Poloni-Staudinger 2008; Ortbals 2008b). There are other implications here as well. The majority of the non-political activities in which these groups engage consist of educational events, information campaigns, research, publications, and help centers. For example, on April 20, 2000 the Federation National Solaridité Femmes (French group) started a hotline for battered women. On October 11, 2004 the Women's Environmental Network (British group) launched a public campaign about breast cancer. These are two examples of the majority of the types of activities in which groups engage. This raises interesting questions about the role of civil society in relation to the state as these groups are taking on the traditional roles of the state in terms of providing services (see Banaszak et al 2003).

<Table 3 About Here>

The data also point to the low percentage of protests/demonstrations as compared to other activity choices. This is similar to what was found for environmental groups (Poloni-Staudinger 2005; Poloni-Staudinger 2009) yet is even more extreme for women's groups. (See Table 4 for a comparison of women's and environmental groups' activities). This implies that women's groups may opt for protest less often than other social groups and is particularly interesting given the fact that data was collected through content analysis of newswires, which do not appear to over-report protests as compared to other types of activities[22]. In addition, the focus of the social movement field on protest (see Mair 2004) is perhaps slightly misleading, as this shows that social groups engage in many types of activities and protest only makes up a small portion of what groups choose to do. Only two percent of overall activities were protest-related activities. There is some variation by country. Protest made up less than one percent of overall German activity, while it occupied nearly seven percent of the activities undertaken by French groups in this study. The reasons behind the relative lack of protest among women's groups deserves further study but may be partially attributable to the time period of this study (1980-2007), namely after the heyday of second-wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s.

One further finding related to the concentration of activities, or the groups' action repertoires, deserves discussion. Consultation among women's groups is nearly as low as protest, making up only 2.5% of the overall activities in this study. By comparison, consultation made up about eleven percent of total activities engaged in by environmental groups from the same three countries (Poloni-Staudinger 2009). This implies that women's groups are invited to the proverbial table less often than other social groups. In addition, a major implication of this finding is that political opportunity structures indeed remain adversely gendered for some activities, particularly activities such as consultation that have the potential to have the greatest

influence on the policy process. There is little difference whether or not a group is considered an FMO or WMO, both types of groups participate in consultative acts with the government only about two percent of the time, and the findings are consistent across all the groups from all three countries in this study.

As we begin to examine the impact of POS on activity, we find that the data show a discernable difference in activity by party in power in all three countries. In all countries, total activity is greater under parties of the Left as opposed to parties of the right (see Figure 1). Approximately eighty-two percent of activities in the UK took place when the Left was in power. Sixty-nine percent of the activities in France took place when the Left was in power. Sixty-four percent of the activities in Germany took place when the Left was in power[23]. This lends support to H1 (activity choice rises and falls by party in power) and mirrors results found for environmental groups (Poloni-Staudinger 2009). In particular, conventional activities such as consultation and lobbying are more likely to be undertaken under Left as opposed to right governments. This is not surprising as previous research has shown a link between parties of the Left and women's movements (see Rucht for example 1996).

Multinomial Results. Multinomial analyses focused on the influence POS had on the propensity of groups to engage in one activity over another. The dependent variable in the equation was a nominal variable of activity choice; the elite alliance and electoral cleavage variables as well as the feminist group control served as the independent variables. Results will be presented by country and can be found in Table 5.

Elite Alliances. Multinomial results add to the patterns discussed above related to elite alliances. The presence of elite allies in government statistically impacts the activity choices of women's groups. When the Left is in power in the UK, groups are less likely to engage in

protest over other forms of activity. The presence of the Left in power decreases the odds of

protest over consultation by a factor of .10 or 90 percent, all else being equal. When the Left is in

power in France, the odds that groups will engage in protest over consultation are decreased by

about 10 percent, all else being equal (p<.001). Results are not statistically significant for

lobbying. The presence of the Left in power did not have a significant effect on activity choice

among German groups. This is surprising because one would expect that the parties of the Left

would be natural allies for women's groups, though it is consistent with Lang's findings that 'the

record' of the recent Red-Green government was 'mixed at best' (2007, 133) Even under Left

governments, though, groups are not much more likely to engage in direct activities with

government elites. This implies that political opportunity structures may be more closed for

women's groups than for other groups. For example, environmental groups under Left

governments in all three countries were more likely to engage in lobbying, consultation and

media usage (Poloni-Staudinger 2009). These analyses suggest that while the presence of elite

allies in positions of governing authority impacts POS for activity among women's groups, it

does so to a lesser degree than for other social groups such as environmental groups. Again, this

suggests that the gendering of POS may result in women's groups facing closed POS even when

allies are in positions of governing authority.

Like previous work that noted the balancing act the Left plays between its different

constituencies, this study also finds a relationship between communist party support and activity

choice, particularly in France[24]. In France, a unit increase in communist party strength (a

percent increase indicating support of communist party), significantly increases the odds of

protest over all other activities, all else being equal. This implies that as pressure increases upon

the traditional Left, and the Left pivots toward addressing this pressure by focusing on its

traditional working-class base, women's groups are likely to respond to this by increasing their levels of protest. This only occurs, though, when pressure comes from the communist party. As green party support increases in France, we do not see groups becoming more likely to engage in protest. Likely increases in green party support are not perceived as threatening to women's groups' interests as *Les Verts* have a substantial component of equality in their platform. In Germany as well, increasing communist support decreased the odds of lobbying, but did not have a significant impact on protest. Like in France, green party support in Germany increased the odds of lobbying. This implies limited support for H2[25] and is fairly similar to patterns found for environmental groups in the same countries (Poloni-Staudinger 2009). An alternative explanation though may be that French feminists typically affiliate with the far Left. As such, protest is a natural avenue for political expression if they are working in concert with this ally. In essence, it is possible that French groups affiliate more strongly with far Left than traditional Left parties. (This is discussed further with relation to volatility below).

The presence of the Left in power appears to elevate the odds of criticism over several types of activities. For example, in the UK, the odds that groups will criticize the government rather than lobby is increased by a factor of 4.25 when the Left is in power (p<.01). In addition, the presence of the Left in power increases the odds of criticism over consultation by a factor of 3.17 (p<.01) in the UK. Given the low levels of consultation seen among women's groups, even when the Left is in power, it is not surprising that groups disenfranchised from the system would be critical of the government in power. That said, British groups are also more likely to criticize government officials rather than engage in protest when the Left is in power (e^b=5.51, p<.01). This implies that groups are more likely to criticize the government when the Left is in power as opposed to when the right is in power (see Figure 2), although this criticism is not elevated to

protest when the Left is in power. Similar patterns are found in France. When the Left is in power, the odds that French groups will engage in criticism over consultation are increased by a factor of 1.88, all else being equal (p<.001) (see Figure 3). This criticism, however, is not elevated to protest when the Left is in power. Results related to the effect of the Left on the propensity of German groups to criticize rather than engage in protest were quite dramatic (Figure 4). We find that when the Left is in power, the odds of criticism over protest are increased by a factor of 50.57 (p<.001).

<<Table 5 about Here>>

<Figure 2 About Here>

<Figure 3 About Here>

<<Figure 4 About Here>>

In sum, there is limited support for H3; women's groups, like environmental groups, appear to be more likely to criticize the political party with whom we would expect them to have the greatest affiliation. Why is this the case? The expectation-punishment axiom (Poloni-Staudinger 2005) suggests that groups are most critical of those parties with whom we would expect them to share the greatest affinity. Since the traditional parties of the Left in Europe have co-opted much of the women's movements' agenda, expectations that they will deliver on women's issues are raised. When these expectations are not met, groups react with harsh criticism of government officials. Expectations are not as elevated for parties of the right; therefore, criticism is not as quick to come when right parties do not perform well on women's issues. That said, this relationship is not as strong for women's groups as it is for environmental

groups (Poloni-Staudinger 2005) suggesting that perhaps women's expectations of the Left are not as high as environmental groups' expectations of Left and green parties. This may be because there are parties, green parties, associated with the environmental movement, and women's groups do not have the same closeness of affiliation with a particular political party. It could also be that women's *expectations* about what can be achieved through government are not as high as they are used to encountering closed, gendered POS; therefore, while they criticize the government, this relationship is not as strong as it is for the environmental movement due to differential expectations among the different social movements.

Looking deeper at the impact of alliances on activity choice, we found that party platform was important in influencing activity choices, lending support to both H1 and H3. For example, during times when the party in power has a stronger platform related to equity and women's rights, British groups are more likely to engage in conventional activities. A stronger platform increases the odds of lobbying over protest by a factor of 1.53 in the UK, all else being equal (p<.05)[26] and the odds of lobbying over court-based activities by a factor of 1.47, all else being equal (p<.001). An even stronger pattern was found for France. The odds of lobbying over protest are found to increase by a factor of 1.2 (p<.0001) when the equality platform is stronger in France, all else being equal. Similarly, when the equality platform of the party in power is stronger, the odds of consultation over lobbying are dramatically increased by a factor of 9.44 in France (p<.001), all else being equal[27]. This suggests that women's groups have the best odds for consultation with the government when the Left is in power and has a strong platform of equality. It is during these times that opportunity structures would be the least gendered in a discriminatory way. In Germany, the odds of lobbying compared to criticism are increased by a

factor of 5.95 (p<.01) as the equality platform of the party in power increases, all else being equal.

Electoral Cleavages. De-alignment was also found to influence activity patterns. The odds of protest are increased relative to consultation as de-alignment increases among the British electorate, all else being equal (e^b=1.48, p<.05). In addition, de-alignment was found to increase the odds of protest in France related to lobbying (e^b=8.32, p<.001), consultation (e^b=98.71, p<.001), and criticism (e^b=7.51, p<.001). In Germany as well, an increase in de-alignment correspondingly increases the odds of protest relative to lobbying, consultation and criticism, although odds were only increased a small degree in the German case. This mirrors results found for environmental groups from the same three countries; increasing de-alignment opens opportunities for protest (Poloni-Staudinger 2005), and offers some support for H4.

Traditional measures of volatility, Rae's Fractionalization and the Pederson Index were non-significant in this study. Recalling the pressure on the traditional Left was also used to measure volatility in this study, in the UK, the only significant finding related to this variable concerned the choice to engage in court-based activity. As pressure on the traditional Left increased in the UK, groups became more likely to engage in court activity relative to all other activity choices. Why this may be the case ought to be explored in future studies. The lack of other findings is less surprising given the majoritarian nature of the British electoral system.

In France, we find that volatility in the electoral system has a much more dramatic effect on group activity choice; however, these effects run counter to hypothesized effects. In France, for a unit increase in volatility, groups are more likely to engage in protest over every other activity choice. Increasing volatility also decreases the odds of supportive statements by French groups. For example, a unit increase in volatility, decreases the odds of supportive statements

over protest by a factor of .01, or ninety-nine percent, all else being equal (p<.001). These findings hold in France whether or not volatility is introduced into the electoral system by pressure on the Socialists from the Communist Party or from *Les Verts*. In Germany, there are no statistically significant findings, and data were insufficient to complete some analyses. In sum, while increased volatility was found to *increase* conventional activities among environmental groups in the same three countries (Poloni-Staudinger 2005), it was found to *decrease* conventional activities among women's groups and *increase* confrontational activity. Though more in-depth analysis of this phenomenon is needed, we are inclined to suggest that some French feminists' ties to the far Left and rejection of mainstream politics (Jenson and Sineau 1994) made them more inclined to protest instead of engaging in deliberations with the more moderate Socialists during times of electoral volatility. As a result, H5 is not confirmed by this study.

Finally, the presence of an election year influenced slightly the activity choices of groups. While not a hypothesized causal variable in this study, election years were found in the previous studies on environmental groups to influence group activity choices (Poloni-Staudinger 2005; Poloni-Staudinger 2008; Poloni-Staudinger 2009). In essence, the presence of election years presents an opening of POS for social groups. In this study, during election years, British groups were found to increase their levels of lobbying relative to non-political (factor of 1.19, p<.01) and media activities (factor of 1.22, p<.01). This suggests that groups find POS more open for lobbying during election years. Perhaps during these times, public officials eager to earn votes are more accessible to women's groups, and opportunity structures may be less gendered during these times. In France, the relationships are even stronger. Protest was significantly decreased relative to every other activity choice during election years in France. For example, during

election years, the odds that groups will engage in lobbying over protest are increased by a factor of 1.85, or eighty-five percent (p<.001), all else being equal. In Germany as well, during election years, groups are more likely to lobby rather than engage in non-political activities (factor of 1.69, p<.001), all else being equal. The data show some support, therefore, for the idea that POS are perceived to be more open to women's groups and perhaps less gendered during election years, thus encouraging higher levels of lobbying among women's groups.

In sum, the data indicate that the most open POS for women's groups occur when the Left is in power and has a strong platform of equality, it is an election year, de-alignment is high, and the traditional Left is under pressure from other parties of the Left in the system. Ideal type analyses indicate that under such arrangements, the probability of protest among women's groups is about six percent, all else being equal. If the opposite is true, and opportunity structures are closed (right in power, weak platform of equality, not an election year, de-alignment low and little pressure on the traditional Left party), then the overall probability of protest is doubled to twelve percent, all else being equal. When POS are open, the probability of lobbying is about fourteen percent, all else being equal. When POS are closed, this probability drops to eleven percent, all else being equal. While this is not a dramatic difference, it does indicate that opportunity structures are less amenable to access by women's groups when they are closed. Interestingly, whether or not POS were open or closed had little effect on the probability of consultation. Likely this is because women's groups display such low levels of consultation in the first place. This further illustrates the gendered nature of POS.

EU-Targeted Activity. Recall, that when opportunities are closed domestically, social groups in Europe looking for other avenues may turn toward the EU. We tested this idea in our study to determine if women's groups make use of EU opportunities and if this use is influenced

by domestic POS. Interesting, only about four percent of all activities in this study were EU-targeted activities. This was consistent across all three countries, and slightly lower than what was found for environmental groups from the same countries (Poloni-Staudinger 2008)[28]. There are discrepancies based upon group type; FMOs acted at the EU about six percent of the time while WMOs only targeted three percent of their activities at the EU. This is consistent across all three countries. Overall, when the Left is in power, groups are less likely to act at the EU level, decreasing the odds of EU activity by fifty-eight percent, all else being equal (p<.01). In addition, if the issue under consideration is an international issue, groups are more likely to act at the level of the EU, increasing the odds of EU activity by a factor of 1.10, or ten percent all else being equal (p<.001). During election years, groups are also more likely to act at the EU level, increasing the odds of EU activity by a factor of 1.75, all else being equal (p<.001). Per country results are nearly identical. These results mirror results at the EU level for environmental groups and offer support for H6.

This study does not however tell us if groups are met with success when the closure of domestic POS pushes them to act at the EU level. The gendering of POS at the EU level may in fact account for the fact that such a small percentage of overall activity among the groups in this study is EU-targeted activity. When groups do act at the level of the EU, sixty-five percent of all activities were lobbying. Consultation at the level of the EU accounted for less than one percent of all activities in this study. Other EU-targeted activity included criticism of the EU and media-based activity. This finding indicates that there is a gendering of POS at the EU as well as domestic levels. Whereas the EU is deeply involved in environmental and business regulation, its gender focus is narrow (emphases on violence and employment). It may be the case that many

women's groups, with broader goals such as reproduction, do not consider the EU a relevant arena for action.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper, we posed a question related to the necessity of a gendered interpretation of political opportunity structures. The data point to the idea that women's groups in the United Kingdom, France and Germany behave in a somewhat similar fashion as other groups, most strongly when faced with alliances with the Left and de-alignment. That said, data do not indicate that a gendered interpretation of political opportunity structures is unnecessary. Rather, we herein conclude ***that women's groups react to changes in POS in a similar manner as other social groups but are met with less success, thus a gendered interpretation of political opportunity structures are necessary.*** Most disconcertingly, women's groups seem closed off from consultation activities, have fewer opportunities at the EU level, and have lower expectations of Leftist party allies. Several of these findings merit further comment.

This study provided a preliminary look at the relationship between changes in POS and activity choices among women's groups, and it does confirm women and politics literature that puts forth Leftist parties as allies of women's movements. Leftist alliances present 'open' POS to women's groups, and when Leftist parties are in power, groups choose to lobby rather than protest. An important caveat to this finding is that Leftist parties are most 'open' to women's groups when they have a strong platform related to equity and women's rights. This coincides with recent research that argues that Leftist governance does not uniformly produce

opportunities, but rather allies of women's movements must be sympathetic to their causes (see Mazur 2002).

While groups respond similarly to changes in POS, there are important differences to note as well. Pressure on the party of the Left did not appear to influence the activity choices of women's groups. Either this means that regardless of pressure from communist parties or Left-libertarian parties, traditional Left parties continue to respond to the needs of women, or it means that women's groups do not expect much from the parties in the first place. Future research will examine this in more detail. Furthermore, while conventional activity by women's movements rises and falls based upon the party in power, protest activity does not follow patterns seen among other social groups. That is, women's groups do not respond with protest to changes in POS in a similar manner as other social groups. Why is this the case? Perhaps the gendered nature of opportunity structures influences this activity choice. Perhaps newswires underreport protests by women's groups, though it should be noted that this was found not to be the case for environmental groups. Moreover, it could also be the case that women's groups are less likely to protest in general, for this has been a critique of Western feminist movements in the decades since the second-wave of feminism. Future research needs to examine this finding in more detail.

In addition, we stress that consultation is a depressed activity compared to the other activities in which groups were found to engage. Therefore, while women's groups are found to lobby much like other groups, when it comes to formally having a seat at the policymaking table, this is much less of the case. It appears, then, that there is some evidence that the policymaking process is closed to these groups in a way that it is not closed for other social groups. This leads us to conclude that a gendered interpretation of POS is necessary when understanding the way in which women's groups choose activity tactics vis á vis changes in the state.

While further research is necessary, results also show that the majority of what groups do is non-political in nature. In a sense, women's groups seem to have to put the non-political interests of the group above strategic feminist interests, or changing the patriarchy of the state. It is also important to note that for many women's groups, changing paradigms is not their focus. Many of the groups are focused on increasing funding for breast cancer research and awareness or providing daycare options for working mothers. Although data show that feminist women's groups choose political actions more often than women's groups, they too spend a great deal of time on non-political actions. This finding leads us to suggest that future research must be completed on the full action repertoire of social movements. The significance of non-political action is greater still when considering that women's groups are taking on some of the traditional activities of the state. Scholars question the impact of "off-loading" the state's responsibilities onto civil society and question whether professionalized women's NGOs –the purveyors of social services like daycare and health research- have led to the decreasing popularity of 'engagement in feminist issues' and movement 'dependency' on the state (Banaszak et al 2003; Lang 2000, 301). Our research definitely provides support for this assertion.

In sum, our research findings lead us to suggest that while women's groups often choose activities in response to changes in POS in a similar manner to other social groups, the gendered nature of POS continues to mute these relationships and disenfranchise women's groups from more participatory forms of political action. Thus, a gendered interpretation is necessary and important for understanding patterns of activity among women's groups.

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Endnotes

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[1] We call these activities 'non-political' according to the larger social movement literature (Tarrow 1989; Kriesi 1995; Poloni-Staudinger 2008) in that they are not activities directed at political actors or institutions. Nonetheless, we note the personal politics of empowerment that may occur in educational forums.

[2] In other words, both feminist and non-feminist organizing and activism are counted. Using a broad definition of women's movements that is 'women-centered' rather than 'feminist-centered' (see Beckwith 2005 for distinction). This is not without problems; however, Beckwith (2005) simply states that women's movements mobilize *women*, the working definition used in this research.

[3] Although often focusing on one movement at one point in time or on a truncated action repertoire. A variety of scholarly approaches to POS exists. Some work on political opportunities takes a 'political process', or over time approach (Costain 1992; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1998), looking at how changes in the political opportunity structure influence the development of social movements. Other work has taken a more static and comparative approach to the POS (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995), comparing movements in different political environments. More recently, scholarly work has begun to argue for and combine these two approaches (Tarrow 1998; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Banaszak 2005).

[4] Krook suggestsed a feminist institutionalist model in reference to political recruitment, where gender is taken as a central dimension of the candidate selection process. This study seeks to find if this is applicable to discussions of political opportunities for social movements as well.

[5] It should also be mentioned that Banaszak shows discusses how several different kinds of POS can affect women (1996, pp. 29-31), including informal decisionmaking procedures, federalism, unity of elites/number of political parties, political allies, formal rules and institutions. Moreover, Baldez examines the impact of electoral realignment (2002).

[6] Strategic gender interests are those that are vested in long-term transformations of gender relations and hierarchies, concerned with changing the underlying inequities in the prevailing institutional arrangement. Women's groups also have practical interests concerning, for example, motherhood or neighborhood politics.

[7] While political opportunity structures, by their definition are "political", Poloni-Staudinger previously found through work on environmental groups, that the majority of activity that these groups engage in was non-political in nature (educational pursuits, species counts, etc). While these activities may be aimed at shaping public debate, and are therefore on some level "political", they are not targeted at a political entity; therefore, it is necessary to include both political and non-political activity in the analysis. In addition, it was found that for environmental group activity, some actions could not be coded as a specific activity, but could be coded as being broadly supportive or critical of the government (both domestic and supranational government), We propose that the same may be true of reporting on women's groups. Therefore, the proposed coding scheme for this study will follow the scheme developed in earlier research (Poloni-Staudinger 2005).

[8] This includes media-focused non-political activity in the form of press releases, etc as well as other non-political activity. Other forms of non-political activity include education events, seminars, etc.

[9] Lobbying consisted of events where groups specifically lobbied a government official or office about their issue.

[10] Consultation differs from lobbying in that with consultation, groups are invited into a specific working relationship with the government, an occurrence not uncommon in more corporatist Europe. Lobbying is when groups contact elites in an unsolicited manner to argue on behalf of a particular policy position. While both are conventional acts, consultation is much more formalized.

[11] While some activities could not be originally coded as a specific action (such as a protest or lobbying event), they could be coded as statements or actions which were broadly critical or supportive of the government. These would

be different than media usage in that they were not made under the auspices of a specific press conference or media event. The interest of this study is to determine in the POS helps to explain why groups chose to engage in these statements of support or criticism over other types of activities, such as protest or lobbying.

[12] Data for the United Kingdom came from the Party Manifesto website at: http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/uktable.htm as well as from data tables in *The British Polity*. Data for France and Germany were drawn from www.electionresources.org as well as from data tables in *The French Polity* and *The German Polity,* respectively.

[13] Election year refers to the national election. While elections to the European Parliament might be thought to influence these relationships, this was explored and found not to be significantly related to activity choice nor did its inclusion in the equation change any other results.

[14] The Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File, 1970-1999 (ICPSR number 3384) provided data for the years 1980 through 1995 (for de-alignment) and 1980 through 1998 (for Left pressure) in all three countries[14]. Data for the years 1995-2004 and 1998-2004 were drawn from the yearly Eurobarometer surveys.

[15] Included in this would be the Socialist Party in France, the SPD in Germany and the Labour Party in the UK.

[16] Included in this would be the Gaullist parties (all factions) and center-right parties in France, the CDU/CSU in Germany and the Conservative Party in the UK.

[17] Respondents were asked "Generally speaking do you feel closer to one of the <national> political parties than to the others? If yes, which one? Coding was done as "very close" "fairly close" or "merely a sympathizer".

[18] For earlier activities, activity was coded as EU activity if it was targeted at the EEC, EC, or any of the institutions associated with these earlier incarnations of the EU>

[19] While this is not uncommon as there are more social groups in the UK than the other countries (see Poloni-Staudinger 2005), the preponderance of UK groups is likely exacerbated in this study because searches on French and German groups need to be expanded.

[20] The remaining three percent of activities were undertaken by 'international' groups which did not have a home country, yet operate in all three countries.

[21] There is some variation by country in the UK, FMOs in this study nearly equally engage in non-political activity, lobbying and media use, while in France, FMOs in this study spend one-third of their time engaging in non-political activity.

[22] Protest made up about 7 percent of overall activities among environmental groups from the same countries (Poloni-Staudinger 2009).

[23] The Left was in power in the UK 30% of the time under study. The Left was in power in France 58% of the time under study. The Left was in power in Germany 25% of the time under study.

[24] Communist pressure is not applicable in the UK given the extremely small nature of communist support in that country.

[25] Given the first past the post electoral formula in the UK, analyses related to H2 were inappropriate for British groups.

[26] As related to per706.

[27] Results related to the other platform variable per503 are nearly identical

[28] Environmental groups have been found to act at the EU level about 10% of the time (Poloni-Staudinger 2008).

Table 1: Hypotheses, Concepts, and Measures

Concept	Hypothesis	Activity and Measure	Selected Sources
Elite Alliances			
	H1: When sympathetic elites are found in parliaments, we can expect contact with elites in the form of lobbying and consultation to be higher. Activity can be expected to rise and fall based on the absence or presence of the left in power.	Activity: Lobbying Consultation Measure: Party in power; % of seats held by party of left; Strength of Platform	Pagnucco and Smith (1993); Kriesi et al. (1995); Tarrow (1989, 1995, 1996, 1998); Viterna and Fallon (2008);
	H2: When the Social Democratic party is under pressure to gain the workers' vote, contact among groups and elites will be depressed and unconventional activities will increase. This is because the Social Democratic party is focusing on its traditional working-class base and not on 'new social movement' issues.	Activity: Lobbying Consultation/ Unconventional activity Measure: Popular support for Communists	Przeworski and Sprague (1986); Kriesi et al. (1995); Poloni-Staudinger (*forthcoming*)
	H3: Groups will be most critical of those parties with whom they would be expected to have greatest affinity and of those parties whose platform strength is greater in their issue area.	Activity: Critical and Supportive Statements Measure: Party in Power, Strength of Cabinet, Platform	Poloni-Staudinger (2005)
Electoral Cleavages	H4: During periods of de-alignment, opportunities for activity will increase.	Activity: Confrontational Activity Measure: Percent of Population not Identifying with Political Party	Dalton et al. (1984); Rucht and Neidhardt (2002); Dalton and Wattenberg (2000); Jeydel (2000) Costain (1991)
	H5: Conventional activities will increase during periods of increased electoral volatility.	Activity: Conventional Activity Measure:	Poloni-Staudinger (2005)

		Pederson's Volatility Index; Rae's Fractionalization Index; Pressure on Traditional Left	

Table 2: Groups Included in Study

ABANTU for Development
AFAVO
AFEM
AMARC
Abortion Rights
Action Feminine
Afro-Caribbean Women's association
akina mama wa afrika
Almondbury Townswomen's Guild
Aldermaston Women's Campaign
Amnesty for Women
Anti-slavery international
Asian Family Counseling Service
Association of baha'I women
Association of Iranian women in Britain
Association Europeenne contre les violence
Association des Femmes de l'Europe
Association for Improvements to Maternity
Association for Post-Natal Illness
Association of Radical Midwives
Association of University teachers
Avon Sexual Abuse Centre
Awaz Utaoh
Behind Closed Doors
Bildungsdienst
Billesley Development Agency
Birmingham Women's Aid
Birmingham Women's Hospital NHS Trust
Black Theatre Co-operative
Black Women's Rape Action Project
Body and soul
Breakthrough Breast Cancer
Breakthrough for Women
Breast Cancer Care
Caritas Internationalis
Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft
Centre for research and education on ge
Centre for the study of women and gende
Clean break theatre
Crossroads women's centre
DAG Deutsche Angestellten Gewerkschaft
Daycare Trust

Deutsche Angestellten Gewerkschaft
Deutscher Frauenrat
Deutscher Frauenring
Different voices
Dirigeantes
East-west European Women's network
English collective of prostitutes
Equal Opportunities Commission
Essex TEC
European association against violence a
European Movement
European Women's Lobby
Everywoman
Ew-network
FEMVision
Feminine action
FMA
Federation Nationale Solaridite Femmes
Feminist Collective Against Rape
Femmes Solidaires
French Movement for Family Planning
GAMS
German Housewives
German Women's Council
Hillingdon Women's centre
IPPF
IPRA
IRESCO
International Council of Women
Institute for Women's studies
Institute of development studies
International council of wise women
International planned parenthood federation
Internationaler bund
Justice for women
Labour Women's Network
Les Nanas Beurs
Les Penelopes
Lobby for women
London rape crisis
MFPF
MODEFEN
MSF
Mama Na Dada International
Medical Women's International Association
Medica zenica
Milton Keynes Women and Work Group
ministry of women's rights
Mothers for peace
Mouvement Europeen
Mouvement Francais Pour le planning famiale
Napier University- Employment Research
National Abortion Campaign

National Association of Premenstrual
Syndrome
National Collective for Women's Rights
National Council of German Women's
Organizations
National Union of Teachers
National women's network
Nouvelles Questions Feministes
One World Action
Orlanda Frauenverlag
Older women's network
Onlywomen press
Powerhouse
Professional Family Women's Network
SOS Femme
Salford Women's Centre
Scarlet Press
Scottish Convention of Women
Scottish Joint Action Group
Scottish Women's Aid
Sellafield Women's Peace Camp
Silver Moon
Single Parent Action Network
Southall Black Sisters
Survivors fund
Sutton Women's Centre
Terre des Femmes
The 300 Group
The Feminist Archive
The Feminist Library
The Foundation for Women's Health
The Hypatia Trust
The national council of French women
The Research Centre on Violence, Abuse
The Sex Education Forum
The Women's Library
The Women's Press
The Women's Therapy Centre
UNIFI
Union des femmes francaises
Union feminine civique et sociale
Union of French Women
Violence, Abuse, and Gender Relations R
Voluntary Arts Network
WAGGGS
WILPF
WIZO
WIZO (UK)
WIZO France
WOMANKIND Worldwide
Wages Due Lesbians
Wages for Housewives

Wales Assembly of Women
War on Want
Welsh Women's Aid
Winvisible
Women Welcome Women
Women against war
Women for peace and ecology
Women in Film and Television
Women in Publishing
Women into Public Life Campaign
Women into the Network
Women's Action for Democracy
Women's Action for Peace
Women's Alliance for Democracy
Women's Arts Association
Women's Communication Centre
Women's Envrionmental Network
Women's international democratic federation
Women's international studies Europe
Women's Information Centre
Women's Information Centre
Women's Network of the Methodist Church
Women's Nuclear Test Ban Network
Women's Radio Group
Word Power
World Federation of Methodist Women
YWCA
Zonta international

Table 3: Activity by Country

	Non-political	Media Statements	Protest/ Demonstration	Lobbying	Consultation	Critical Statements	Supportive Statements	Court Activity
UK	33.29	25.64	1.96	17.62	2.53	11.96	4.96	1.06
France	29.33	18.18	6.61	12.40	3.31	9.92	4.96	4.96
Germany	30.77	38.46	.94	9.62	1.94	9.62	5.77	3.85

Note: Numbers are percents of total activity.

Numbers do not total 100% as there were some instances of activities that did not fit into above categories.

Table 4: Comparison of Results for Women's and Environmental Movements

Table 4: Comparison of Results Between Women's and Environmental Movements in the UK, France and Germany

Result Related To…	Women's Movement	Environmental Movement
Descriptive Statistics	• Majority of events by British groups • One-third of all activities non-political • Extremely low levels of protest • Women's groups rarely participate in consultative acts (2% of activities)	• Majority of events by British groups • One-fifth of all activity non-political • Low levels of protest • Low levels of consultations, but not extremely low (7% of activities)
Election Year	• Increase lobbying, protest decreased during election years	• Increase in criticism during election years
Elite Alliances	• Higher levels of overall activity when left in power • Lower levels of protest when left in power • Not much impact on conventional activity • Increasing communist party support, increases protest • Left in power increases criticism, but to a lesser degree (moderate support of expectation-punishment axiom)	• Higher levels of overall activity when left in power • Lower levels of protest when left in power • Much higher conventional levels when left in power • Increasing communist party support, increases protest • Left in power dramatically increases criticism (strong support for expectation-punishment axiom)
Electoral Cleavages	• De-alignment found to increase protest • Increasing volatility measured as pressure on left, increases protest	• De-alignment found to increase protest • Increasing volatility measured as pressure on left, decreases protest
EU-Targeted Activity	• Lower level of EU-targeted Activity • EU activity influence by domestic party in power and election year	• Higher level of EU-targeted Activity • EU activity influence by domestic party in power and election year

Table 5: Selected Multinomial Results

Comparison	UK				France	
	b	z	P	odds	b	z
Election Year						
Protest | Lobbying	0.029	0.14	0.889	0.151	-43.857	-17.714
Protest | Consultation	0.330	0.83	0.407	0.987	-45.696	-37.699
Lobbying | Non political	0.180	2.043	0.041	1.19	2.106	2.514
Lobbying | Media	0.339	1.737	0.020	1.22	.972	.943
Left in Power						
Protest | Lobbying	-0.96	-1.427	0.010	0.383	-.188	-.081
Protest | Consultation	-22.474	-4.843	0.001	0.100	-26.382	-4.115
Protest | Support	-15.372	-11.849	0.001	0.001	2.720	1.476
Criticism | Protest	1.70	2.20	0.01	5.510	2.723	1.476
Criticism | Consultation	1.15	2.00	0.01	3.170	23.659	12.433
Criticism | Lobbying	1.45	1.658	0.01	4.250	2.535	1.260
Criticism | Support	1.383	1.083	0.279	1.258	0.166	0.098
Platform						
Lobbying | Protest	0.473	1.991	0.050	1.530	292.62	6.712
Consultation | Protest	11.680	4.264	0.001	1.180	**	**
Lobbying | Criticism	0.327	1.989	0.050	1.387	85.09	2.489
Lobbying | Court	11.899	4.397	0.001	1.470	50.50	1.159
Consultation | Lobbying	0.039	0.113	0.910	1.039	124.28	2.851
Communist Support						
Protest| Lobbying	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	77.372	36.427
Protest | Criticism	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	101.945	35.382
Protest | Support	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	41.740	44.093
Protest | Court	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	617.267	295.955
De-alignment						
Protest | Lobbying	-0.059	-.679	0.497	0.942	38.96	8.661
Protest| Consultation	0.392	1.820	0.050	1.480	8.188	9.922
Protest | Criticism	-0.096	-1.097	0.272	0.908	43.460	10.032
Volatility (left pressure)						

Protest | Lobbying	0.011	1.271	0.204	1.011	130.06	20.38
Protest | Consultation	-0.009	-0.242	0.809	0.991	138.70	37.43
Protest | Criticism	-0.001	-0.073	0.942	0.999	156.83	23.33
Criticism | Lobbying	0.012	2.061	0.040	1.012	-26.77	-5.83

Note: Standard Errors are Adjusted for Clustering on Actor; Results are presented as discussed in text due to sizing of displaying all results

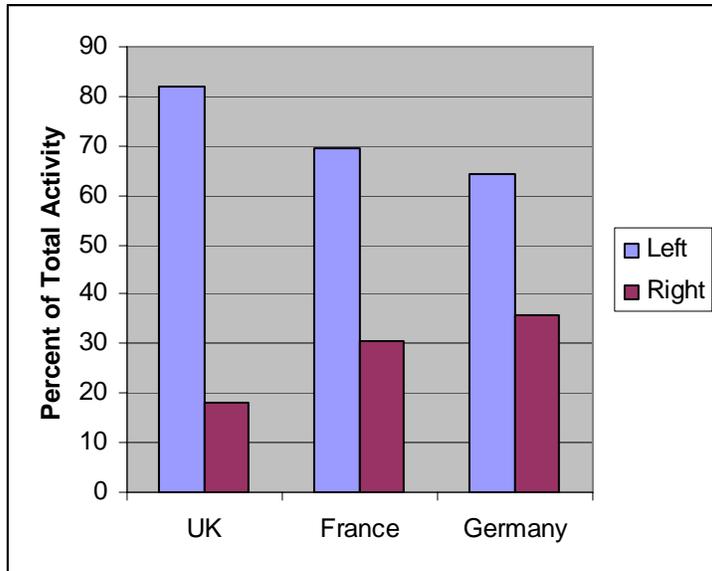n/a--not applicable in UK

Figure 1: Activity by Party in Power
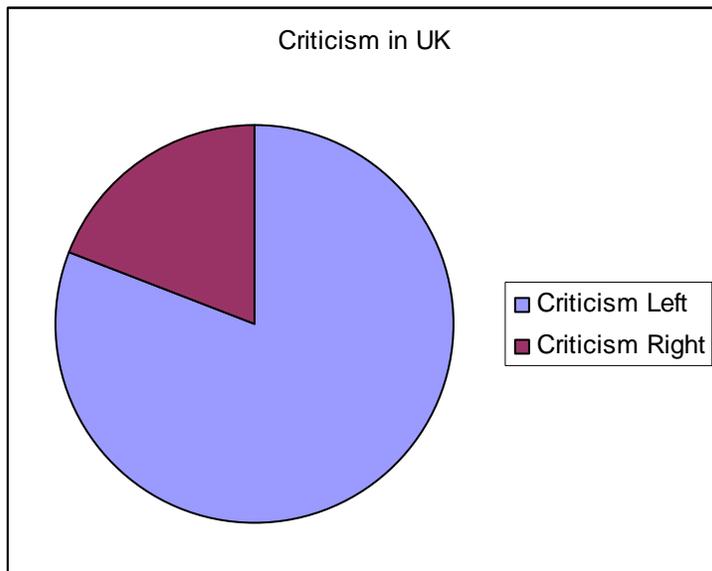

Figure 2: Criticism in the UK

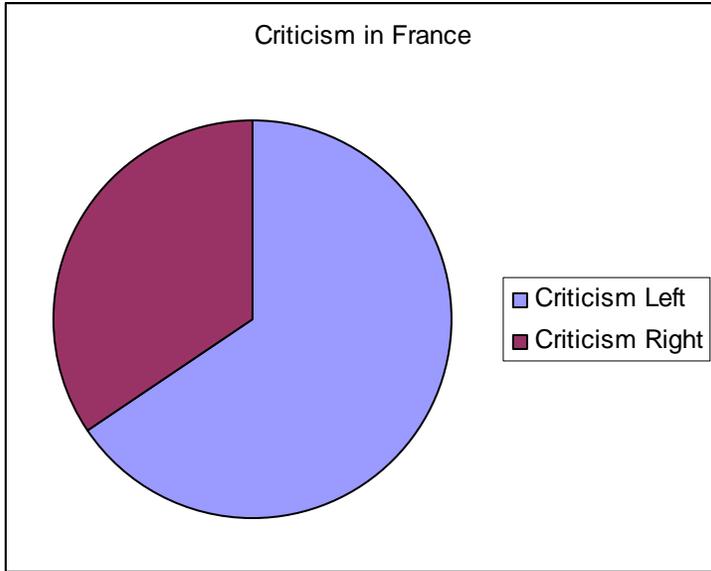**Figure 3: Criticism in France**

Criticism in France

Criticism Left
Criticism Right

Figure 4: Criticism in Germany

Criticism in Germany

Left
Right