

# POLITICAL EXTREMISM AND RADICALISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

FAR-RIGHT AND LEFT POLITICAL GROUPS IN THE  
U.S., EUROPE AND AUSTRALIA

## ORIENTATION RESOURCES

Various source media. *Political Extremism and Radicalism in the Twentieth Century: Far-Right and Left Political Groups in the U.S., Europe and Australia*



The aim of this guide is to give you a better understanding of how to use the *Political Extremism and Radicalism: Far-Right and Left Political Groups in the U.S., Europe, and Australia in the Twentieth Century (PER: FLPG)* for your research purposes. It will cover finding and filtering material as well as explore some key topics covered by the archive.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is aimed at students and researchers who are using Gale Primary Source Archives for the first time. It will take you through the different stages of using a digital archive. If you are unfamiliar with researching in a digital archive it is worth reading the guide through from start to finish.

If you have some experience working with digital archives and are looking for guidance on *PER: FLPG* specifically, head straight to the KEY TOPICS section. Here you will find information on some of the main historical themes addressed by the collections in this archive. There are also some critical thinking questions and useful search terms to help you start your research. The questions in green are entry level questions, the questions in red are more advanced.

If you are looking for examples of research conducted in this digital archive, the final section CASE STUDIES, will provide you with this. This section draws upon documents found in *PER: FLPG* to show you how to use digital primary sources for research and teaching. Again, there are some critical thinking questions and useful search terms to help you start your research. The questions in green are entry level questions, the questions in red are more advanced.

Throughout you will find keywords in bold typeface to help you identify key topics and useful search terms.

## LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

In this section, you will identify the language and words that will produce useful results when you are using the search function in a digital archive.

In all Gale Primary Source Archives you will find language and terminology that is old-fashioned, unfamiliar and potentially offensive. The documents and other sources held in these archives are reflective of the period in which they were written as well as the viewpoint of the content's creator. To that end, you will need to think about the words and phrases that you choose to conduct your search. For example, if you are researching anti-Semitism conducting a search using an offensive term for the Jewish community may yield more results than using "Jew" or "Judaism".

As an example, if you were searching in this archive for examples of women's activism you would most likely start by searching for "women" and "activist" however you would also want to try variations on both these words such as "girl", "female" and "campaigner", "protest" etc. You will notice other terms appearing in your selected source materials. You can use these terms to extend your search. In this example, you might want to extend your search to include terms such

as “women’s liberation”, “suffrage” and “feminist” if you are interested in gender equality or combine the term “women” with “environment” or “anti-war” if you are interested in their involvement in those particular political movements. The more time you spend in the archive looking for sources the more familiar you will become with the variety of terms that might be relevant to your topic, as well as their idiosyncrasies (such as non-standard spelling or slang).

## BASIC SEARCH AND FILTERING

In this section, you will perform a basic search using keywords in *PER: FLPG*. It will also cover how to filter your results, and the steps needed to find a useful and comprehensive set of sources tailored to your research questions. When you enter a search term it will be used to scan both the content of the sources and the tags that have been applied to said sources. In *PER: FLPG* your search is being applied across the 9 collections in this archive.

Let’s start with a key political action covered in the archive: Anti-Racist.

- Search your key term, Anti-Racist, in *PER: FLPG*. You will receive over two thousand results spread across a variety of content types (manuscripts, monographs, newspapers, periodicals, audio etc).
- Filter your results. Using the filter buttons on the right of your results list you can refine your list. You can use these filters to help ensure the source material you are using relates directly to your research question. For example, if you were interested in the American civil rights activist Jesse Jackson you can filter your results so that you are just looking at sources that are about him.
- Assess your results. It is important to remember throughout that these searches are the starting point of your research and as such will provide you with a very broad range of documents. Once you have filtered your results you will still need to analyse them to assess their relevance to your topic. In our examination of Anti-Racist movements and Jesse Jackson, for example, you may want to focus on sources written during the 1960s civil rights movement so you will want to filter your results by publication date.
- Iterate on your search. As you become more familiar with your topic you may also need to go back to your earlier searches and re-assess material you previously discounted. You may also need to undertake new searches using terms you have learnt during your research process. For example, having looked at sources written during the civil rights movement you may now want to look at sources about Jackson’s 1988 presidential campaign as well.

## Advanced Search

The 'Advanced Search' function allows users to refine their search for multiple terms and apply the filtering process at the beginning of your search. This can be useful for when you have a very specific research question or in the latter stages of your research project when you have a more defined idea of the source material you are looking for.

One special search category added to *PER: FLPG* is that of audio and transcripts. This is to reflect the recorded interviews in the [Searchlight Oral Histories Collection](#) which can be both listened to and read. As the audio files have been transcribed, they can be discovered, as well as cross-searched with other document and content types, via the 'Advanced Search' and 'Filter Options'.

---

## KEY TOPICS

This section will introduce you to five of the main subject areas covered by *PER: FLPG*. These subject areas were chosen because they relate directly to the documents that make up *PER: FLPG*, as well as reflecting historiographical debates and key teaching areas. There are also questions designed to help guide your research into these topics in the archive. You will also find lists of further useful search terms which will assist you in broadening your knowledge of these subjects. These terms have already been tested via the *PER: FLPG* search function so should provide you with helpful results.

### Radical Right

Throughout the twentieth century most Western countries have broadly described politics with the terms right and left, with right-wing describing traditional conservatives. Far-right or extreme right ideologies, groups or movements go beyond the standard right promoting ideas of radical nationalism, anti-integration and authoritarianism. Although the first fascist movements came to prominence in early twentieth-century Europe during the World Wars today examples of far-right politics can be found around the world and includes neo-fascism, neo-Nazism, white supremacism and white nationalism.

- How did far-right movements develop in the US throughout the twentieth century?
- What were the campaigning strategies of the alt-right throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century?
- Assess the success of anti-fascist movements at combatting the far-right.

Other useful search terms: American First Party, American Nazi Party, British National Party, British People's Party, British Union of Fascists, Combat 18, detention, emigration, English Defence League, immigration, Imperial Fascist League, John Birch Society, Ku Klux Klan, Liberty Lobby, National Front, National Party, National Renaissance Party, National Socialism, National Socialist German Workers' Party, Neo-Nazis, Nordic League, Posse Comitatus, Right Club.

## Racist and Hate Groups

The Southern Poverty Law Center defines a hate group as an organization that – “based on its official statements or principles, the statements of its leaders, or its activities – has beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics” which includes race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Describe the role religion plays within racist and hate groups?
- List the recurring themes are used in propaganda by racist and hate groups?
- Explain what the various primary sources gathered in *PER: FLPG* tell us about hate speech?

Other useful search terms: anti-Catholicism, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, anti-integrationist, anti-Semitism, Christian Identity, Citizens Council Movement, concentration camps, hate crimes, homosexual, holocaust denial, homophobic, human rights, murder, National Alliance, National States Rights Party, National Youth Alliance/Youth for Wallace, race discrimination, race relations, racial violence, racism, skinhead, transsexual, transvestite, White Aryan Resistance.

---

## Communist and Socialist Groups

Although communism and socialism is not considered far-left or unorthodox by many, particularly in countries where it is the ideology of the ruling political party, throughout the twentieth century communists, suspected communists and communist sympathisers have been considered dangerous radicals in many western, capitalist countries. In nations such as the US and Britain these groups and individuals have been under surveillance and treated as a national threat.

- Why did the British government keep files on communists and suspected communists?
- How are communists portrayed by anti-communist propaganda in the United States?
- Despite the political chaos in the interwar period communism remained marginal in Britain. Identify and explain why the Communist Party of Great Britain failed to gain significant support.

Other useful search terms: Communist Party of the United States of America, Communist Workers Party, Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, Democratic Socialists of America, House Un-American Activities Committee, International Socialists, labor movement, labor union, Revolutionary Communist Party, Revolutionary Communist Youth, Revolutionary Socialist League, Socialist Labor Party, Socialist Workers Party, Soviet Union, Spanish Civil War, trade union, World Anti-Communist League, Young Communist League, Young Socialist Alliance.

---

## New Left

The New Left was a collection of leftist activist movements fighting for civil rights, anti-war, feminism, gay rights, abortion rights and drug policy reforms in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>1</sup> Whether New Left movements should be categorised as “extreme” or “radical” is debatable, but their call for a social revolution makes them anti-establishment and thus unorthodox in the time period in which they were active.

- List modern political movements inspired by the New Left.
- What is the hippie subculture?
- Analyze why youth movements were so predominant in the New Left.
- Explain the revival of anarchism in relation to the anti-nuclear, environmental and peace movements of the New Left.
- Explain the role of protest as a tool for political change in the 1960s and 1970s America.

Other useful search terms: acid, affirmative action, alternative schools, American Civil Liberties Union, American Indian Movement, animal rights, assisted suicide, commune, conscription, drugs, Earth First, gay liberation, genetic engineering, Gray Panthers, green politics, hippies, homophobia, lesbian separatism, Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), Native American, pacifist, recycling, Stonewall Riot, Students for a Democratic Society, Underground Press Syndicate, United Farm Workers, vegetarianism, Vietnam War, Weather Underground Organization, Weathermen, women’s liberation movement, Wounded Knee occupation, Yippies

---

## Civil Rights Movement

In the United States the civil rights movement denotes the struggle to end institutionalized racial discrimination for African Americans. Although the movement achieved its largest legislative gains in the mid-1960s the movement’s origins and impact are felt way beyond that.

- Describe what started the civil rights movement?
- What was the Black Panther Party and what was its role in the civil rights movement?
- Discuss the role of African American women in the civil rights movement?
- The civil rights movement impacted the whole of the US population, not just African Americans. Compose an argument for or against this statement.
- Analyze the impact of Jewish support for the civil rights movement.

---

<sup>1</sup> PRO-TIP! Most of these movements were in some way acknowledged by or connected to other movements, an interconnectedness reflected across the collections, so it is important to read around your chosen subject to discover important links.

Other useful search terms: abolition of slavery, black liberation, black nationalism, black power, Brown v. Board of Education, interracial marriage, Jim Crow laws, Little Rock Nine, lynching, Montgomery bus boycott, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Council of Negro Women, nonviolent resistance, racial segregation, sit-ins, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, United States Congress, United States Senate, United States Supreme Court.

---

## CASE STUDIES

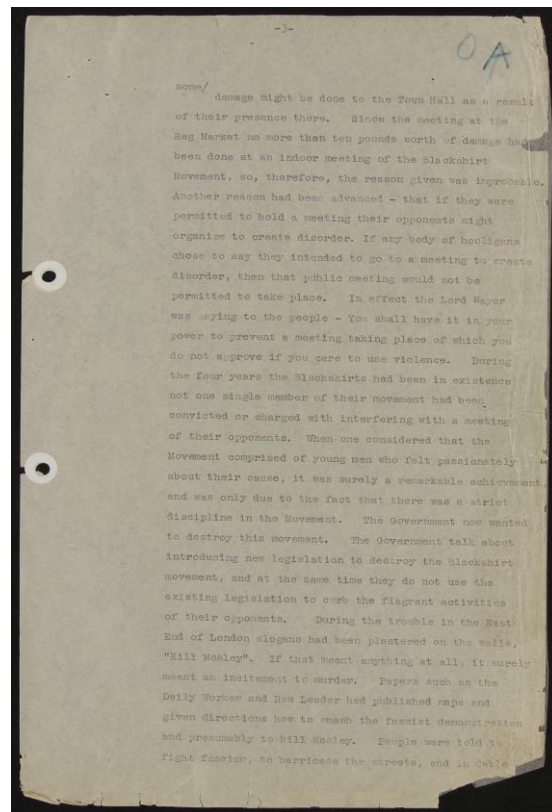
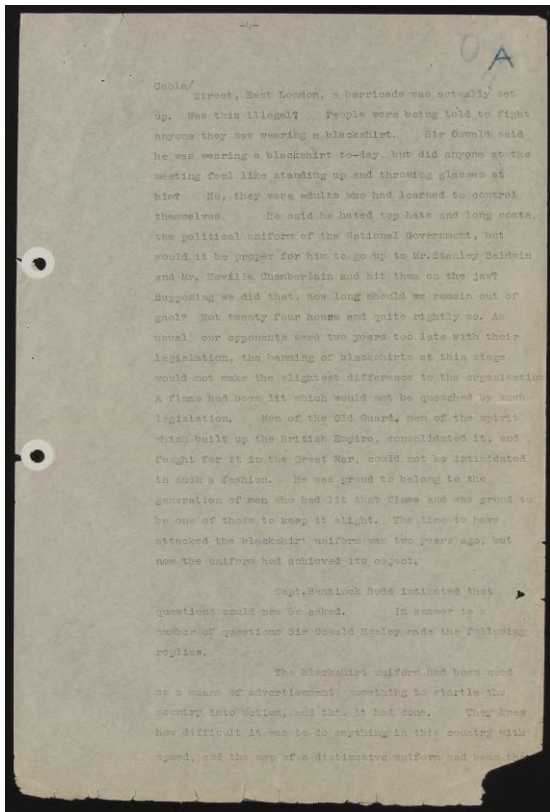
These case studies provide some examples of the sorts of material found in *PER: FLPG*. They will show you how the source material found in *PER: FLPG* relates to some of the key topics discussed above. They will also introduce you to the kinds of specific questions you can use to interrogate individual sources. If you are interested in the topics discussed in these case studies, at the end of each study you will find suggestions for how to investigate further.

These case studies can also be used as a teaching tool. They can be used to help educators explain using digital primary sources to new users. Together with the instructions above (Basic Search and Filtering), they can help in explaining to new users how to navigate a digital archive. They also provide clear examples of the source materials in *PER: FLPG*, and the kinds of critical thinking that need to be applied to these sources. Further case studies and essays on key topics covered in *PER: FLPG* can be found in [Research Tools](#).

### Oswald Mosley, British Fascism

Oswald Mosley was a British politician who founded the British Union of Fascists (BUF) in 1932 and led Britain's anti-Semitic fascist movement. In 1936 Mosley led the BUF in a march in the East End of London which clashed with anti-fascist demonstrators. This became known as the Battle of Cable Street and signifies an important point in British history when far-right political extremism was subverted and the BUF's growing popularity was curtailed, but how impactful was this event?

In the interwar period Mosley was under surveillance by the British Security Service, better known as MI5, and was classed by them as a right-wing extremist. Of particular interest are police reports of public events where Mosley spoke from 1933-1940. In November 1936, one month after the Battle of Cable Street, Birmingham City Police made a report of Mosley speaking at luncheon for local businessmen where he gives an account of the "trouble in the East End of London".



KV 2/884: The Security Service: Personal (PF Series) Files. Right-Wing Extremists. February 16, 1933-August 12, 1940. MS British Security Service Personal Files. Subseries on Right Wing-Extremists, Communists and Suspected Communists, and Soviet and Other Communist Front Organisations: British Security Service Personal Files. Subseries on Right Wing-Extremists, Communists and Suspected Communists, and Soviet and Other Communist Front Organisations KV 2/884. The National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). Political Extremism and Radicalism, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CZD0HY987296639/PLEX?u=webdemo&sid=PLEX&xid=d02e36be>. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020. [p. 219-220]

Critical thinking questions to consider:

- What does this excerpt tell us about violence at BUF meetings?
- How would you describe the attitude of the author towards the government?
- What does this excerpt suggest about the significance of clothing?
- If we go further into the file, we can find further reports detailing Mosley's public appearances which can help us understand the level of influence the BUF had. Based on what you find there, judge whether Britain was ever at risk of becoming a fascist country and justify your argument.



Another first-person account of the Battle of Cable Street is given by Max Levitas in an oral history where he also describes the resistance to fascism by the Jewish community and communist groups in the East End of London in the 1930s. Listen to his account (or read the transcript) by clicking [here](#).



Critical thinking question:

- Explain the role of marching as a political tool used by the fascists and antifascists in the early twentieth century.

*More on this topic...*

If you want to investigate British fascism and anti-fascism, European or transnational fascism a good place to start is by browsing the following collections from *PER: FLPG*:

- [British Home Office Defence Regulation 18B Advisory Committee Papers Regarding the Detainment of Oswald Mosley, Leader of the British Union of Fascists](#)
- [British Home Office Registered Papers Regarding British Fascists and Suspected Nazi Sympathisers](#)
- [British Security Service Personal Files. Subseries on Right Wing-Extremists, Communists and Suspected Communists, and Soviet and Other Communist Front Organisations](#)
- [Fascist and Anti-Fascist Booklets](#)
- [Leaflets, Stickers, Posters, Electoral Ephemera from Fascist and Anti-Fascist Groups](#)
- [Searchlight Magazine](#)

---

### Phyllis Schlafly and the Equal Rights Amendment

Phyllis Schlafly was an American conservative activist who successfully campaigned against the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the US Constitution, which was intended to guarantee equal legal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex. In 1972, Schlafly founded the Eagle Forum, a conservative political interest group. Below is an example of an Eagle Forum newsletter from 1983 which talks about the ERA being an attempt to gain abortion funding as well as a drive for membership.

Critical thinking questions to consider:

- How would you describe the attitude of the author(s) towards the women's liberation movement and feminism?
- Explain how the images of "family", "wife" and "mother" are used.
- Is this newsletter propaganda? Debate why or why not.
- Is this an example of fake news? Debate why or why not. State how would you check.



March 1983

PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY  
PRESIDENT

LEADING THE PRO-FAMILY MOVEMENT SINCE 1972

316 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E., Suite 203, Washington, D.C. 20003 (202) 544-0353

## EAGLE FORUM

Hqrs. office: Box 618, Altan, IL 62002 (618) 462-5415

### ERA - EASY RIGHTS TO ABORTION

Minnesota and Wisconsin prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that "ERA" is a code word for abortion and abortion funding; and those are the reasons why we are seeing a desperate push to get ERA passed before people realize this effect. "ERA" now stands for Easy Rights to Abortion.

A proposed Minnesota State ERA has been under discussion for months. Pro-lifers proposed an amendment to prevent ERA from granting any right to abortion or abortion funding; but pro-ERAs argued strenuously that a pro-life amendment would "dilute the intent of ERA." After it became clear that a pro-life amendment would be added to ERA, the ERA sponsor withdrew ERA and declined to allow it to be voted on at all! This makes it clear that ERA = Easy Rights to Abortion, -- and the pro-ERA leaders know this, and that's why they want ERA without amendments.

The Minnesota ERA experience confirms the Wisconsin ERA experience (described in the last two E.F. Newsletters). After pro-life language was added to the Wisconsin State ERA, pro-ERA groups declined to support it.

The reason why we KNOW for sure that ERA equals abortion funding is that that is what the American Civil Liberties Union says. The ACLU is a pro-ERA organization of liberal lawyers. As described in our green flier called "The E.R.A.-Abortion Connection" in our Feb. mailing, the ACLU argued in lawsuits in Hawaii and Massachusetts that the denial of tax funds to pay for abortions is "a denial of equal rights on account of sex" in violation of ERA. (HI and MA have ERA in their state constitutions.)

Now a third case has surfaced in Pennsylvania, another state with ERA in its state constitution. The American Civil Liberties Foundation of PA is arguing in the case of Fischer v. Dept. of Public Welfare that a denial of tax funds for abortions constitutes "a gender-based classification in violation of the Pennsylvania ERA."

Tell your Senators and Congressmen; tell your state legislators. Anyone who cares about the right to life must vote NO on ERA unless it has pro-life language added.

### EAGLE FORUM MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

By your contribution to Eagle Forum, you are part of the most successful group of achievers in America today! Read the letter on the reverse side of this Newsletter to see what Eagle Forum can mean to you.

But we need your help. Enclosed is our new membership brochure. PLEASE renew your membership/subscription today with an extra donation for our current projects, or use it to get ONE new member for Eagle Forum.

We must expose the "gender gap" which is really a code word for the "gay gap." The homosexual/lesbian community has made a calculated decision to support Democrats against Republicans regardless of other factors or issues. They are trying to wrap "gay rights" in ERA, "women's rights," and "gender gap" in order to intimidate voters.

We must expose the vicious women's lib (feminist) attacks on the legal rights and economic well-being of dependent wives in the home. Take a good look at the newspaper ad reproduced below which is being run by local banks. It clearly shows how a married couple with the wife in the labor force can put \$4,000 in IRAs each year, BUT the traditional married couple with a dependent-wife (unfairly identified here as a "non-working spouse") may put only \$2,250 in IRAs (a yearly discrimination of \$1,750 per year). This discrimination is the fault of the women's libbers who lobbied a provision in the tax law that penalizes the dependent wife for her in-the-home lifestyle.

**NEED A \$4000 TAX DEDUCTION?**

It's easy. Just open or add to your Individual Retirement Account and lower your 1982 taxable income by up to \$4000.

Plan Status	Maximum Deduction
Single	\$2,000
Married with dependent spouse	\$2,500
Joint return, both wage earners	\$4,000

Dear Phyllis,

Today is Valentine's Day -- traditionally, a day when we set aside the time to honor those persons for whom we feel a very special fondness. As I was going through my list of names this morning your name came readily to mind.

I would like to take this special day to tell you how much my association with you has meant to my family and to myself. I have become a more confident political animal; I have become a more interesting wife and mother; and, I have become a more viable witness for our Lord.

If it were not for the Stop-ERA movement, I would not have become alarmed about the political involvement of the National Council of Churches; I would not have taken the so-called women's movement seriously; and, I would not have been able to carry through on a community and church project that required guts and self-confidence.

Because of Eagle Forum, I have met women who have become my role models. We are able to support one another even when we have a difference of opinion. We have learned how to listen in order to cull all the facts. We have learned to express ourselves with tolerance for all facets of an issue. More importantly, we have become a spiritual support system.

Because of the P.S. Report, I have had the ammunition needed when local high school students needed resources for their conservative point of view. I have used these reports for letters to the Editor. I have used these reports for private talks with my pastor. They have all become part of my permanent file on issues and involvement.

Perhaps someone in your leadership position does not realize what a positive influence she has on those women she leads. Because of the skills I have learned I was able to neutralize some of the training my son was receiving in medical school on the question of abortion. Because of the enormous amount of information that I have stored on the feminist movement, I was able to write 20 essays for my second son in his freshman year of college and thereby free him to work on math and science. [He had signed up for a class on Marriage and the Family only to learn it was a feminist class on changing sex roles. The required reading was a book on a Lesbian love affair. The essays were to be done on chapters from feminist writings. Whereas he would have had to plow through these, from my exposure to this (?) I could write the essay after reading one paragraph. He received a B+ in the course. He was also spared filling his young mind with all that 'garbage'.] Because of my contacts, I was able to help my daughter get speakers for her school and her church class on abortion and the ERA.

In closing, I want you to know that the most important benefit for me from having been in the Stop-ERA movement for the past ten years has been the respect that I have earned from my family. My husband has been a wonderful friend to me during all this time. Very rarely did he complain about not having clean socks or dinner on time. My sons and my daughter, though maybe not as supportive as my husband in the beginning, have grown to understand how important it is for each person to stand up and be counted. It has given them the self-confidence to hold their own with their teachers and professors.

I sincerely believe that being involved politically, as a family unit, has prevented my children from falling into the trap of self-centeredness. They have been able to see themselves as part of a broader spectrum. Their home provided a balance to the ideas learned in their schools. My husband has benefited, also, as he is able to hold his own with the women in his office. He has been able to enlighten his male friends, also.

Thank you, Phyllis, for enduring this letter. Please do not feel discouraged because the ERA seems to be making a comeback. Your troops have only to hear the trumpet call! God is in control! God bless you and your family.

Most sincerely,

Donna Anagnostou

14125 Cranston  
Livonia, MI 48154

Eagle Forum. March, 1983-September 2, 1993. TS The American Radicalism Collection: Part 2: The Religious and Radical Right. Michigan State University. Political Extremism and Radicalism, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BIFAZZ464390668/PLEX?u=webdemo&sid=PLEX&xid=c40069cb>. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

More on this topic...

If you want to investigate the question of abortion rights further some useful search terms include:

- Barbara Ehrenreich
- National Abortion Rights Action League
- National Organization for Women
- National Women's Health Network
- Planned Parenthood Federation of America
- Pro-choice
- Pro-life
- Women's Health Services
- World Health Organization

# CITATION

CITATION GOES HERE