Minding the Political Gap:
The educational imperative of NGOs

Cathyrn S. Magno
Southern Connecticut State University

The paradox facing women seeking influence over social, economic and political matters is clear and daunting: if women are to fully participate in society, with most societies around the world functioning within a male-dominated ethos, should they create their own spaces outside of the mainstream where their voices can be fully expressed and their discourse explored, or should they enter existing institutions and structures to attempt to make change from a minority position? I contend that this should not be an either/or dichotomy. I suggest that in re-constructing gender paradigms we must listen to those women seeking influence in present times and examine their approaches to authentic power. The "re-construction" I seek encourages a re-vamping of the political science discipline in order to account for women's pathways to political influence. I will argue that women, through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), can safely practice and hone their skills in order to both enter the "mainstream" on their own terms and participate politically within the NGOs themselves. Supporting women's education and growth through NGOs is one way to redress the gender gap in political education and the inequalities that persist in society at large.

The underlying assumption of this paper is that the public sphere, and its concrete manifestation, "civil society," consists of various and sundry spaces, some mutually supportive and some in contention. These spaces serve to enhance democracy, particularly for those for whom opportunities to participate in decision-making at the state level are few. In order to participate in national decision-making, women have constructed NGOs which seek to impact policy-making, and by so doing, they have carved out some public space for themselves. Within this space, they not only craft and submit legislation and other material inputs to the formal government, but they generate political capital for and among themselves. In turn, this fosters a fluid relationship between the NGOs and the state, and has the effect of bolstering women's political careers and other political endeavors. In this way, NGOs serve an emancipatory function, as the nonformal and informal educational processes occurring there assist women in realizing their political selves and support them in taking action toward social change.

The arguments put forth in this article reflect findings of qualitative research conducted in 1999.[1] Over 50 women were interviewed[2] and three NGOs were observed[3] in an effort to document the presence of political capital and describe the political experience of women. Included were Palestinian Arab, Jewish *Mizrachi* and *Ashkenazi* women within the state of Israel. Their voices underpin my understanding of a possible re-construction of women's political participation. Political science has historically lacked exploration into where women are politically active and why they are there. Most empirical research on political participation has been collected in the form of survey data and has focused primarily on indicators such as voting rates and political party affiliation. Because it is difficult or even impossible to quantify much of the political

participation in which women are engaged, the findings presented here are instead qualitative. To examine women's participation, it is necessary to look at the nongovernmental, informal sectors of political and public life, namely because women are not found in the formal arena. Also, it is critical to amplify women's voices by using methods that allow them to articulate their own understandings. This feminist postmodernism calls for critique of traditional approaches that are inherently partial in furthering a dominant narrative (Ardovini-Brooker, 2002); it allows the women being studied to speak for themselves.

The Israeli Setting

Fifty years after Israel was established as a democratic state, women remain grossly underrepresented in the formal political arena. This is despite the legacy of Prime Minister Golda Meir, ostensible military equality, and lack of gender gaps in educational attainment or voting rates. Does this mean that women are simply not "political?" I believe the answer can be found by examining recent developments in Israeli civil society. Over the past 10-15 years, there has been a flowering of women's nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Israel, and women's participation in the peace movement there is world-renowned.

Contemporary Israel is "a welfare state with a socialist, egalitarian rhetoric, a capitalist economy, and strong religious and traditional influences" (Swirski & Safir, 1993, p. 1). It is "a vigorous democracy where a variety of interests compete and clash; yet it differs greatly from the Western world in its strong national vision….it is a 'mobilized democracy' where the elite exerts a tremendous power over the people" (Yishai, 1997, p. 5). This happens within a system of political parties and a powerful national governmental body, the Knesset. The Knesset is a 120-member national legislature to which representatives are elected based on political party lists. In Israel there were, for the May 1999 elections, 31 lists. Each party has a 100-person list. To be on the list, one must be a party member and be chosen by the party leadership to occupy a space. The party lists candidates according to whom they would most like to have receive a Knesset seat, and the lists are ordered with the number one being the first person to have a seat. The number of seats a party wins is determined by popular vote. In the 1999 election, most parties included women on their lists, but several placed their female candidates at the bottom of their lists, thereby assuring that they would not receive mandates while "officially" recognizing women. While female candidates had little chance of achieving Knesset seats, the 1999 elections yielded the most female Knesset members (MKs) in Israel's history - 15. That number was up from nine in the previous (14th) Knesset.

A number of women have made their way into the Israeli formal political sphere, and it is important to understand their connections to women's organizations and their female constituencies at large. Golda Meir, who served in the most powerful position in the country, rising through the ranks of her political party, was explicitly not a feminist (Agassi, 1993; Shalev, 1995). [4]Some of the most respected and notorious women in Israeli politics are not feminists first and foremost. For example, Penina Rosenblum did not run on a predominantly feminist platform in 1999; rather, it was her modeling career and business acumen that gained her notoriety. In contrast, Marcia Freedman is considered by many to be Israel's first feminist MK, elected in 1974. She describes the experience as challenging, embarrassing at times and ultimately discouraging. Today,

she does not believe in politics, stating "I don't believe it's the way to make social change. Those in power are not interested - it is in their interest to maintain the status quo" (M. Freedman, personal communication, October 28, 1999). The specific context of Israel lent itself well to the study of women in NGOs because of their great numbers in the civil society sector; the minimal number of women in formal politics however mirrors most countries in the world. Therefore the findings of this study, while reflecting the Israeli experience, have strong implications for gender and politics globally.

Exploring Feminist Political Critique

Critical to my examination of civil society are theories describing the public sphere as composed of multiple, alternative publics (Fraser, 1997; Benhabib, 1992). These public spaces today often take the shape of NGOs. Women and other oppressed groups in diverse, power-stratified societies such as Israel, have found it necessary to form alternative public niches, more in the past decade than ever before, as an attempt for "participatory parity rather than a threat to democracy" (Fraser, 1997, p. 81).

It has been claimed that "in the experience of women, many assumptions about the nature of the democratic state have not been supported" (Stromquist, 1998, p. 2). For women, democracy's central pillars of liberty and equality have been compromised by the social implications of their gender. As far as traditional political scientists were concerned,

> the only groups worthy of study were political parties and interest groups, because they were participants in electoral politics; women's behavior as a group was interesting only insofar as women voted, had opinions, joined parties, or formed a cohesive interest group….Formal, measurable activity was more appropriately the stuff of politics than were the informal politics of everyday life (Flammang, 1997, p. xi).

Feminist critique (Pateman, 1989; Benhabib & Cornell, 1987; Fraser, 1997) has countered established political science tenets, and several feminists (Nelson, 1989; Tronto, 1991) have called for comprehensive transformation of the political science discipline. They emphasize that all political subjects are gendered, that there are problems inherent in the methodological individualism of the traditional discipline, and that political science needs to move in a radically democratic direction and look more closely at the contexts in which politics are expressed. Flammang (1997) discusses the need for feminist scholarship in terms of how it can transform the discipline of political science, epistomologically, methodologically and empirically. Whereas conventional political science epistemology presumes objective observers studying autonomous individuals, feminist researchers assume gendered observers studying "socially interdependent people" (Flammang, 1997, p. 3).

Feminist theorists are at odds over both the ends and the means for feminist activism. Feminist critical theory attempts to understand the ways in which patriarchy and male domination is instilled in political institutions and processes, while also recognizing the diverse responses and modes of resistance employed by women of different backgrounds (e.g., racial, social class, religious, etc.). However, feminists, in particular,

have not yet developed a critical model of public space and public discourse (Benhabib, 1992). Through the lens of feminist critical theory, I examine the patriarchal nature of the formal political system as well as women's resistance and construction of their own political spaces.

This article, therefore, is built upon feminist critical theory, through which it attempts to offer a construction, or re-construction, of how political science treats women's political participation. It does so by using a new term, "political capital," to identify the ways in which women build knowledge and interpret the political world in which they live (Magno, 2002). While this approach does not break down the dominant structures (meaning, it does not assume a society outside of the nation-state or suggest that the formal political system be dismantled), it does offer a reinterpretation of pathways to empowerment and political activity.

If feminist knowledge is understood to be "a *moment* of emancipation" then feminist critical theory moves beyond critique to "construct 'knowledge' about the world in the service of an emancipatory politics" (Steans, 1998, p. 31). Because politics is a male-dominated activity around the world (Randall, 1987; Seager and Olson, 1986; Phillips, 1991), emancipatory politics for women is essential to an understanding of how political institutions are shaped and influenced. As a result of postmodernist and other critical thinking about the political process and the function of civil society, the conditions are now ripe for different forms of political activity (Steans, 1998). As women participate in large numbers in NGOs and have historically participated in various kinds of voluntary associations, it is important to understand the emancipatory moments occurring in these public spaces and how they benefit individual women and women's issues. In NGOs, women's subjective experience comes together with political knowledge to increase their personal and organizational political capital - thereby effecting social change.

It is important to note that some theorists believe that women should not hurry into formal politics, worrying that women's approach to politics will be co-opted by the male political game (Lafferty, 1981). Indeed, Phillips (1991) encourages skepticism toward orthodox channels, but strongly contends that even if it is not the top priority, women need to hold political office. She goes on to explain that a feminist reconstruction of politics does not simply mean adding more women to the formal political mix.[5] The integration of personal and political life is likely to be on male terms unless women became conscious of their own needs and values. Women have sought to "radicalize the very practices of democracy: to cut through the pomposity of male rhetoric; to subvert unnecessary hierarchies; to open up decision-making to those who were once objects of policy; to create the world anew" (Flammang, 1997, p. 4). Consciousness-raising and political dialogue have been major components of women's NGOs and the women's movement in general around the world.

While NGOs can act as stepping-stones to formal politics, the women in this study did not necessarily see joining the formal political arena as the eventual form of political participation -- therefore their notion of how to be political fell outside the normative view of "politics." In other words, the women do not *expect* a liberal feminist conception of eventuality that assumes equal participation in the formal political arena. In this way, one sees women's opinions about women's NGOs as a contribution to the

transformation of our definitions of the "political" rather than as a piece of the formal political arena or as a wholly alternative sphere. NGOs form an integral, connected and in every way viable part of the political system. In addition to introducing new ways of networking, interacting with politicians, legislating reforms and creating centers of political education, they influence "traditional" political behaviors such as voting, feelings of efficacy and growth of interest groups. As such they must enter into the theory, research and epistemology of political science.

Examining Civil Society

There is a rapidly growing literature base on civil society (Walzer, 1995). At a time when rational choice theory is becoming the dominant paradigm in American political science and the empirical democratic theory of the 1950s continues to hold its stead, theories on civil society and social capital[6] are gathering widespread interdisciplinary enthusiasm. This is in part because they recognize that economic models are inadequate means to fully understand and analyze social and political life (Foley & Edwards, 1997). Edwards & Foley (1998) argue however that the terms "civil society" and "social capital" "suffer from acute definitional fuzziness" (p. 126), that widespread discussion of these terms "[suffers] from a lack of clarity" and that "the notion of social capital is generally undertheorized and oversimplified" (Foley & Edwards, 1997, pp. 550-551). Along with other scholars (i.e., Booth & Richard, 1998), Edwards & Foley (1998) argue that for social capital "to have robust analytic value and theoretical coherence, it must be considered in concert with, but differentiated from, other forms of capital" (p. 136).

This paper responds to their criticism and call for new differentiation by extracting some properties of the concept of social capital to form a second term, "political capital," in an effort to add depth and recognition of the complexities of the term "social capital." Although Putnam (1993) views social capital as linking civic associations and regime performance, the means by which social capital *influences* regime behavior remain elusive. The concept of political capital used here incorporates two elements of social capital, namely norms and networks. It is more educative in nature, however, as it also includes skills and knowledge. Finally, it includes a core political element: in order to convert political education to political capital, political activity must be taken. This is a distinct departure from the concept of social capital.

Increasingly, current forms of institutions and political representation seem ineffective in achieving the main goals of democratic politics (Wright, 1995), such as the active political involvement of citizens. Many scholars have responded by building arguments for the enhancement of secondary associations (Cohen & Rogers, 1995) and the importance of civil society to a stable democracy (Walzer, 1995). Inasmuch as the politics of a civil society can move political and social institutions away from hierarchical, patriarchal, nationalist, racist forms and toward egalitarian, horizontal, non-sexist versions, civil society can indeed be a target of democratization (Cohen, 1995). Especially in pluralist, diverse societies, civil society discourse tends to promote ideals such as political transparency, justice, equality and voluntary association. To date, political theory has yet to address the mobilization of *women* at the civil society level (Nathan, 1998), and this paper hopes to inspire that discussion.

What women do with the political capital they have or gain through NGO participation

is a crucial aspect of this study. Many of the political women in Israel came out of the women's movement which took place there in the 1970s and 1980s, and their current political roles vary from NGO activity to Knesset member. Many scholars are currently debating the intersection between social movement activism[7] and institutionalization. Meyer & Tarrow (1998) note a shift in contentious politics in the gender arena, observing that one outcome of feminist activism is the increased visibility of women in leadership roles in both women's movements and other organizations. Katzenstein (1998) does not see institutional actors once part of social movements as abandoning political goals. She encourages us to consider both the radical and more moderate forms of activist politics. Her vision of institutions as able to absorb movement activists is essential to an understanding of women's political roles. If a dichotomous distinction between outsiders and insiders is maintained, then women who often must rely on the backing of feminist social movements to gain political capital necessary to obtain political office will have to choose between her identity and her career. Furthermore, it denies the recognition that all locations (public spaces) in society are implicated and have a voice in issues of power (Katzenstein, 1998). Especially given the increase in the number of NGOs advancing political agendas, the blurring of political space is heavily impacting women's movements and women themselves.

Minding the Political Gap

As civil society expands in nations around the world, how does women's growing involvement in NGOs affect their status vis-à-vis politics? Tinker (1999) asks, "Does women's involvement translate into greater political power, or does participation in NGOs once again marginalize women?" (p. 88-89).

The Israeli and Palestinian women interviewed for this study addressed this question. Most of the studies on Israeli women in politics have focused on women's representation in the Knesset (Azmon, 1990; Brichta & Brichta, 1994; Etzioni-Halevy & Illy, 1981) or on female political elites (Weiss & Yishai, 1980; Herzog, 1994). In contrast, this study assessed the political activities of women outside of formal politics. The political sphere in Israel as well as most other countries in the world, traditionally public, has been male-dominated. Specifically in Israel, women have been excluded from formal participation on some issues central to their well-being, because of the dominance of religious law over civil law in areas of family, divorce, etc. However, women have found a forum for participation in civil society, specifically through NGO activities focusing on conflict resolution and other women's issues.[8] This civil society participation is, in effect, its own kind of educational social movement which has the catalytic effect of increasing women's political capital -- making the public woman political.

In order to achieve such an active society, certain political education is needed. I argue that along with the general education acquired in schools, marginalized status groups (i.e., women, ethnic minorities, etc.) require additional assets, to wit, social networks and specialized knowledge and skills. Further, given their exclusion from the formal political sphere, women and other marginalized groups need a public space in which to act on their knowledge. It is this combination of education and activity -- political capital -- that fuels social change among civic associations - in this study, women's NGOs in Israel. Also, NGOs have provided an arena in which women's participation not only links them to one another through horizontal networks but also links them to policy-making and

the state through vertical networks. Political capital is defined here as the combination of political education (skills and knowledge) and networks *together with* political action. The public space in which this moment of conversion occurs is where investment can be made, in order to achieve returns of political influence and impact.

Five findings of the study are particularly relevant to this discussion. They all indicate that women can and do participate politically and provide evidence of the worth of NGOs in building their political education and activism. These findings show that NGOs can fill public space with centers of learning and growth. Women, although they vote in equal numbers to men in Israel, do not occupy positions of power in the formal system in equal numbers to men. Therefore, these findings on women's political participation outside the formal system are critical to understanding how and why women engage in action for social change in the nonformal sphere. As one woman interviewed said, through NGOs "women suddenly find that there is a big world, bigger than their own world…I think the more the better. This is what we call civic society now? No question, the more the better." The key findings are detailed in the passages that follow.

1. NGOs create new discourse

One of the major advantages of participating in politically-oriented NGOs, as opposed to political parties for example, is that NGOs open opportunity for creating and exposing new discourse. According to one woman interviewed, "Our main job [in NGOs] is to infuse a different input into the general political atmosphere, in the general thinking." NGOs' location outside of the establishment is critical to their freedom of speech and activity. As one woman put it:

> First of all you have the right to criticize the establishment. You're not dependent on it - you can say whatever you want and do whatever you want and you don't have to bend your head. That's a big plus…. Especially when you're speaking about the establishment and you know that it's a male establishment. So that gives us an alternative to - that's what I mean when I say when you're in politics you're actually trapped. It doesn't matter what you do, you're still working within that establishment.

A third woman said, "NGOs are free to explore and use other theories that are not accepted by the establishment" (Interview 26). It was also noted, by several interviewees, that NGOs play a definite political role, as one woman noted, "I do think that the discourse starts from the outside, from the grassroots. From my experience of being a radical, I think that it goes also into the Knesset."

2. NGOs are educational spaces

The founder of one NGO stated, "one needs to educate women politically, one needs to get them involved, and ultimately, some of those women will go and run for office." In this way, NGOs act as a type of greenhouse where women are safe to grow the skills, knowledge and networks they need for political activity. All three of the women's NGOs I studied offer nonformal political education courses of various sorts which include not only political skills and knowledge but also aspects of consciousness-raising such as the history of feminism. One organization initiated a "café politic" in which women were

invited to gather to discuss any political topic they wished; this type of informal education proved paramount to women's activism. One woman named skills learned in NGOs such as, "democratic skills, analyzing skills, documentation, reflection and so on - all of these are skills you need for politics." According to study participants, women learn how to lobby and how to make their voices heard. A woman from one of the NGOs I visited said, "Part of the work we do here is from time to time to have political discussions to sharpen our argument….I think women do find themselves empowered."

Regarding knowledge for politics, one woman said, "the self-image that women have and the image of the typical politician don't go together. There's a dissonance there." NGOs' political training courses and the NGOs themselves do well in attempting to alleviate this dissonance by raising women's confidence, knowledge and skill levels. As stated by one interviewee, "It's the NGO's responsibility to train more….I think we must develop some curricula. [One NGO] does some of that. They have had seminars for women. But not enough." This speaks to recognition of the importance of political training among women in NGOs as well as the need for increased attention to the connection between building skills and being politically active. Essential knowledge that women reported gaining in NGOs ranged from consciousness-raising to fundraising to political savvy.

3. NGOs act as stepping-stones into formal politics for women

The majority of women interviewed were interested in utilizing the skills, knowledge and networks they gain in NGOs to move into the formal political sphere, thereby creating change from within. 78% of women believed that NGOs can or do act as stepping-stones into formal politics for women. One interviewee noted, "If you look at the women members of the Knesset, the great majority of them started out in women's organizations….If the career of the men goes through the army, the career of the women goes through the women's organizations" (Interview 4).

This finding is critical, given concurrent findings regarding the lack of opportunity for women in the formal political sphere. 48 out of 50 women said there is not enough opportunity for women to participate in formal politics. This was for primarily two reasons: 1) that formal politics is a "dirty business," and 2), men have networks, especially the army, which allow them easier access to formal politics than women. One scholar has written that "many of the formal channels are now blocked to women…Any woman who wants to seriously express her opinion must do it through an extra-parliamentary process" (Chazan, 1993, p. 152).

4. NGOs may constitute a women's ghetto, but are essential nevertheless

Some women noted concern that NGOs might turn into a women's ghetto. One woman said that "at a certain point I feel a little bit frustrated, because most of the women are stuck on the level of the NGOs." Another interviewee expressed her worry this way:

> Many of the people who are involved in activism are satisfied. And this satisfaction could create a false perception of change. Because you're active, and you change your life, you think that the life around you is changing - or the political situation is changing. But this is a mistake….NGOs could be a place for a woman to be active and to learn new skills and discover their abilities for more

> political involvement. But the problem that exists and the contradiction that exists is that many could see the NGOs as the ultimate field for them. And this is very, very mistaken. And I think this is a very sensitive combination that you have to create. To work in an NGO or to create more opportunities for women to experience that power, but without seeing it as the ultimate space.

Despite this potential negative consequence, most women (43 out of 50) strongly believe in the political worth of NGOs, for women and for other subordinated groups. One woman promoted the idea of NGOs working as a parallel public sphere to formal politics, explaining,

I would like to see NGOs as a parallel partner, where [women] would be finding parallel positions in both [formal politics and NGOs], rather than as an alternative. And if it becomes an alternative for all sorts of political reasons, the danger lies in it being a collusive kind of pseudo power, which doesn't really give them real power in decision-making, and real-world politics. They may feel good and some of them may feel powerful, but I think that's an illusion which men and women will be colluding in to maintain a sort of structural inequality which to me is very dangerous.

5. NGOs influence the formal political system

It was clear from the perspective of both politicians and NGO representatives that NGOs influence formal politics. "NGOs make change. They are a place where *civilians* make change. It's not enough, but it's something." The research revealed evidence of NGOs participating in the formal system (i.e., drafting legislation) and Knesset members working with and relying on NGOs for information and, at times, support. It was described as a symbiotic, or at least reciprocal, relationship. One woman said:

> I can tell you that the formal political system is asking for our help very often, almost every day….And it happens the opposite way that we come with an offer, a proposal for any subject and to say to them, 'Listen there is something to work on and it has high chances,' and he is in the formal political system so he can do something with it….[The NGO has] impact, and I think it's two-sided.

Conclusion

Many women interviewed felt that they are excluded from the mainstream of formal structures such as the formal political systems. Some discussed their disdain for entering the male-dominated "system," preferring instead to effect change from the outside. Others felt that it was important and indeed necessary for women to enter the formal system and demonstrate their capacity to serve in high positions and their rights to occupy such positions. The educational capacity of NGOs, however, was undisputed. NGOs offer the opportunity for women to acquire political knowledge and skills, establish networks, and take action on issues of concern to them. The importance of NGOs as a viable part of the political landscape was also undisputed. Women and other subordinated groups are not well represented politically, despite equal educational opportunity. Therefore, the potential for NGOs to close the political gap is tremendous and should be acknowledged and further examined by educators and political scientists alike.

While the research for this study was conducted in Israel, the patriarchal nature of political systems worldwide implicate the applicability of findings to women and other underrepresented groups in democracies elsewhere, though the knowledge and experiences of women cannot be generalized. Through further examination of political capital, both for women and other oppressed or underrepresented groups in societies around the world, scholars and practitioners can identify means to invest in such capital and grow it to equalize the voices that have thus far gone largely unheard.

Notes

1 Certainly, since 1999, the violence sweeping Israel and the Occupied Territories has affected every aspect of life in the region. The ineffective attempts by formal governmental representatives to bring peace support the increased involvement of NGOs and women in these efforts, both because they have fewer political constraints (i.e., elections) and they have grassroots connections to increase education and understanding in both populations.

2 The study was based on a referred sample of women from varying ethnic groups and of varying ages, all of whom had some connection to a women's NGO or the formal political arena. 26 were NGO staff members, 16 were NGO volunteers or training participants, and 7 were politicians. The majority of interviewees (27) were aged 46-60, and the second largest group was aged 23-30. The only significant difference in findings among the sample was based on age, and this revealed a basic distaste for the "establishment" among the older group, while the younger group saw the potential of NGOs to act as stepping-stones to formal politics as viable and desirable. This supports the growth of political capital, and the importance of networks between NGOs and the formal political sphere.

3 The three organizations were chosen because they are three of the largest women's NGOs in Israel. One, the Israel Women's Network (IWN), was chosen based on its commitment to advancing the status of women through politics. The second, Bat Shalom, was chosen because it is a very visible organization in the area of peace and conflict resolution and because of its unique ties with a Palestinian women's organization. The third, the Haifa Women's Coalition (HWC), was added as a third site approximately one month into my research, because of its reputation as a multi-cultural organization comprising Jewish and Arab women. It was chosen also because of its location in the periphery and its dedication to women's rights issues. I felt that my study would be strengthened if I could provide data on political capital from a variety of women's organizations. While these three NGOs had varying goals, they all provided venues where I could assess the spill-over effects of their particular activities into other political areas.

4 Some might say women are under-represented in government today because of Golda Meir; she was unabashedly anti-feminist. Shalev (1995) even considers Meir merely a "token figurehead" (p. 8).

5 Women as individual politicians do not necessarily pursue "women's interests." While studies have shown that women employ different styles of political engagement than men, they tend to be wary of speaking for women (Phillips, 1991).

6 Social capital is defined by Putnam (1993) as referring to "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (p. 167).

7 Meyer & Tarrow (1998) define movements as "collective challenges to existing arrangements of power and distribution by people with common purposes and solidarity, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities" (p. 4).

8 Indeed, on the international level, the far-reaching recognition of the human rights of women, for example, can be seen in terms of the Fourth World Conference on Women. As stated by Bunch (1998), "The Beijing document reflects the power of civil society."

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