



Archival Representations of Women in a Congressional Collections Archive

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Introduction

Study of women's archival representations in a Congressional Collections Archive

Research Questions:

- How are women's records represented in Congressional Collections?
- What formats are women's records preserved in?
- What themes are prevalent in women's records?

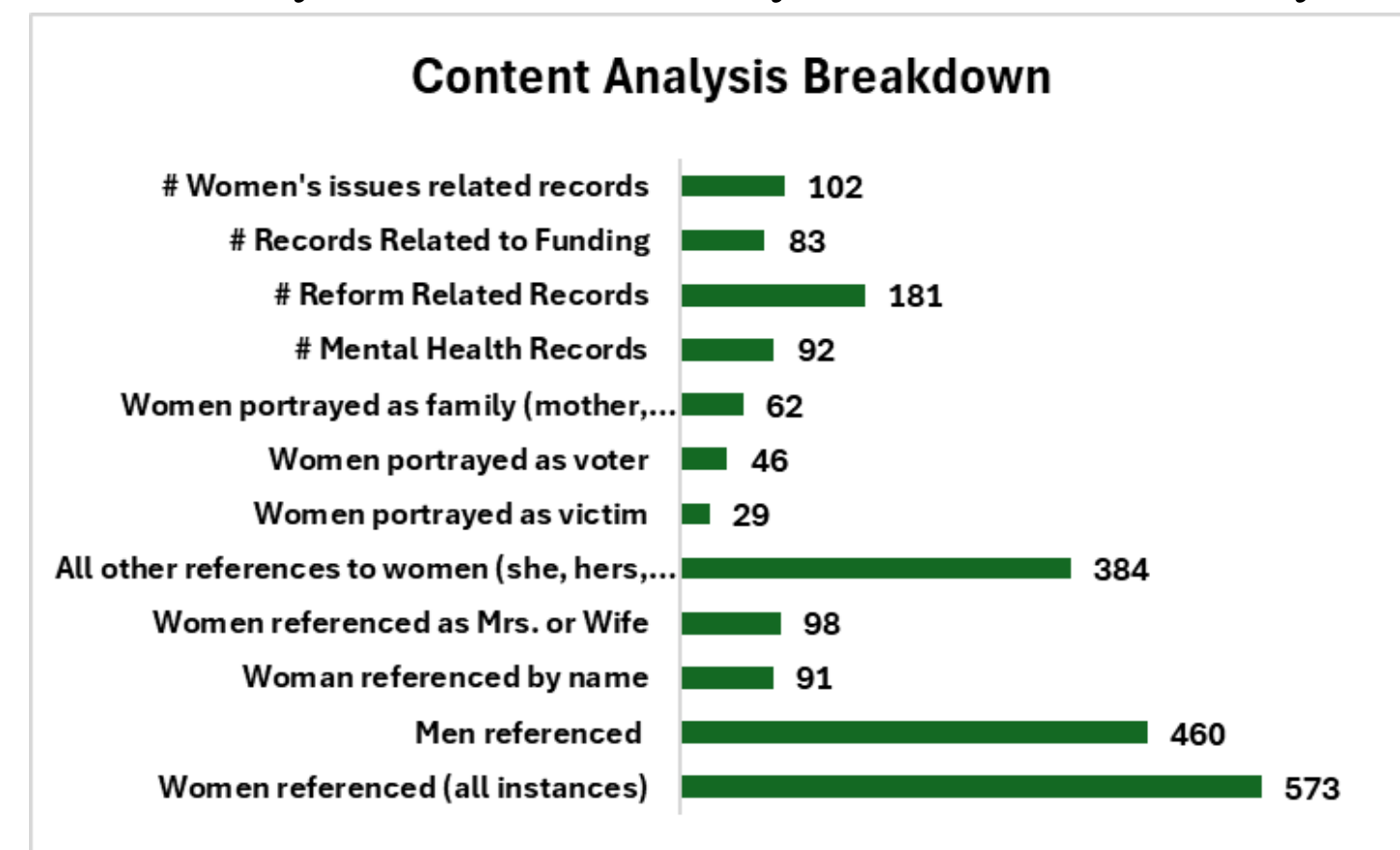
Background

Archival representation:

- Processes of arrangement, description, and creation of finding aids and tools (Yakel, 2006).
- Archival representations imbue creators' biases and beliefs
- Archivists determine narratives
- Records influence communal memory
- Women's records are underrepresented
- Underrepresentation has negative impacts
- Congressional collections created by Congress members and staff used as accountable documentation

Methodology

- Population: The Carl Albert Center Congressional and Political Collections, including the records of the Julian P. Kanter Political Commercial Archive
- Sample: 243 records
- Data Collection: Keyword searching online finding aids
- Data Analysis: Thematic analysis and content analysis



Numbers are the sum of counts in all records

Findings

Representation: minimal to collection wide accreditation (ex. Helen Gahagan Douglas collection).

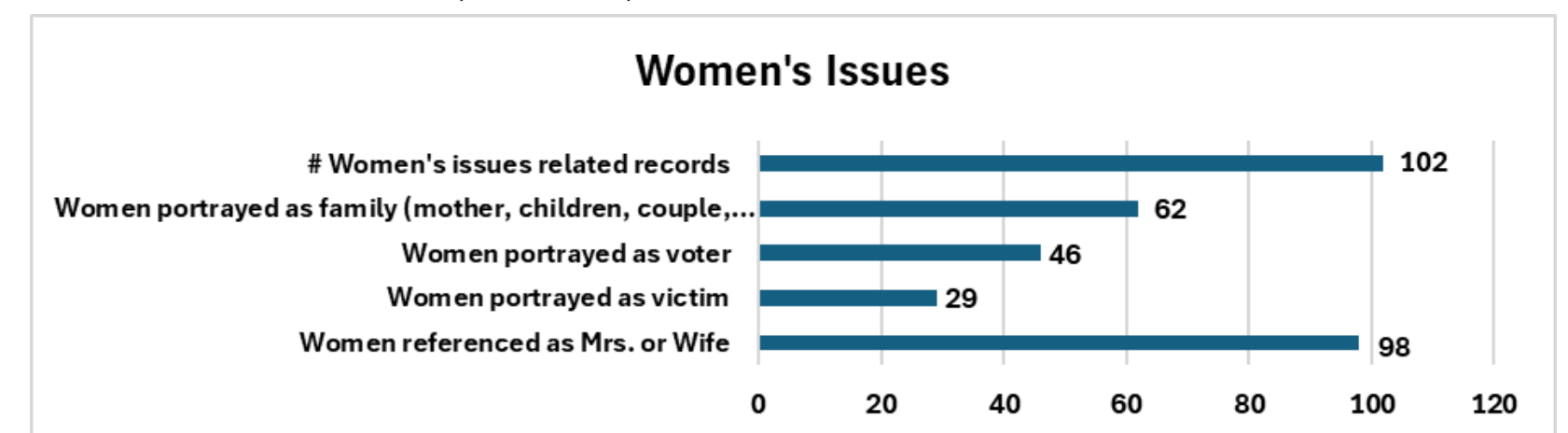
Heavily politicized

Formats:

- Text, film, magnetic tapes, DVDs, photographs, and digital files

Themes:

- Women's issues
 - Records relating to women's reproductive rights, civil rights, education, etc.
- Women's Identities
 - Victim
 - Voter
 - Wife
 - Mother
- Vague
 - Records with missing or problematic Scope and Contents, Dates, or Extents fields.



Conclusions

Women's records often contain reform and civil rights themes, and portray women as victims, voters, wives, and mothers.

Acknowledgments

Yakel, E. (2006). Archival representation. In F. X. Blouin & W. G. Rosenberg (Eds.), *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar* (pp. 151–164). University of Michigan Press.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.93171.19>