CHAPTER 8

Gender Movements

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although the feminist project in sociology during the last 30 years has varied theoretically, methodologically, and substantively, much of the scholarship on gender has focused on the maintenance of gender stratification and the resilience of gender inequality. Only recently have gender scholars turned to exploring and theorizing the historicity of gender and processes of gender resistance, challenge, and change. Given the persistence of gender inequality and the universality of gender oppression, it is not surprising that researchers have concentrated so heavily on documenting the extent, forms, and causes of gender stratification. We do know, however, that the dynamics of gender and the extent of gender inequality vary over time and place. Such historical and contextual variability raises important theoretical and empirical questions for sociologists interested in processes of gender change.

One area of research that has begun to examine gender transformation is the scholarship on social movements, particularly the emerging literature on feminist movements in the United States (Buechler, 1990; Ferree & Hess, 1994; Ferree & Martin, 1995; Freeman 1975; Giele, 1995; Katzenstein & Mueller, 1987; Rupp & Taylor, 1987; Ryan, 1992; Staggenborg, 1991; Whittier 1995). This literature focuses largely on the mobilization, ideologies, organizations, leadership patterns, strategies, and tactics of women's move-

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ments. Although this body of research has illustrated the critical role that women's collective action has played in altering gender relations in the United States, scholarship on the gender effects of social movements nevertheless remains fairly descriptive. This is because social movement researchers, in general, have concentrated more on the mobilization of social movements than on their consequences. Recently, however, some movement scholars have begun to explore the gendered nature of social movements (Barnett, 1993; Brown & Ferguson, 1995; Gamson, 1997; McAdam, 1992; Naples, 1992a; Neuhouser, 1995; Reger, Whittier, & Taylor, 1995; Robnett, 1996; Taylor, 1999; West & Blumberg, 1990) and to trace the effects of social movements on gender relations (Staggenborg, 1997; Taylor, 1996; Taylor & Van Willigen, 1996). We believe that developing analytical frameworks that integrate the literatures on gender and social movements offers sociologists an excellent opportunity to understand the dynamic nature of gender and the significance of human agents in the making and remaking of femininity, masculinity, and the existing gender order (see, e.g., Taylor, 1996; Taylor & Van Willigen, 1996).

This chapter seeks to emphasize the role of social movements in gender change by examining the diverse, multiple, and often contradictory social movement activities organized around gender in the United States. Specifically, we focus on the various and sometimes paradoxical ideologies and organizational structures of the modern women's movement. Given this goal, it is useful at the outset to outline a framework for analyzing the outcomes of social movements that makes it possible to link theoretical approaches to gender with existing theory in social movements. We then trace the larger macrostructural preconditions that underlie the emergence of feminist movements in most Western societies. After a brief examination of feminist mobilization in an international context, we turn to our central purpose in this chapter, which is to examine the continuity and transformation of the contemporary feminist movement in the United States and the multiple and shifting strategies collective actors have used in the struggle for equality between women and men. We conclude by exploring two other strands of activism, men's movements and antifeminist countermovements, which also are engaged in the social construction and reconstruction of gender in the United States.

2. GENDER AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORIES

If there is a single point on which gender scholars agree, it is that notions of femininity and masculinity; the gender division of labor in private and public spheres; and numerous institutions, practices, and structures that reinforce male dominance—even the very idea of gender itself—are not expressions of natural differences between women and men. Rather, gender and the gender order are socially constructed. Although there is a fairly universal adoption of social constructionist perspectives in understanding gender, there is considerable variation in the epistemologies, contexts, and levels of analyses of the theories that have been developed to explain gender stratification. Feminist explanations not only focus on different aspects of the gender system, but they also operate at various levels of analyses (for reviews, see Chafetz, 1988; England, 1993; Lorber, 1994). Those theories that explicitly address the change process have tended to be macrostructural and have stressed the relationship between societal level structural and cultural processes and the level of gender inequality in a society (Blumberg, 1984; Chafetz, 1990; Dunn, Almquist, & Chafetz, 1993; Hartmann, 1984; Huber, 1991; Smith 1990). As use-

ful as these perspectives might be for explaining variations in gender inequality across social systems, macrostructural theories are unable to explain the shifts in gender consciousness and increases in resources and organization that social movements scholars have found to be essential for mobilization of collective action oriented toward gender system change (Buechler, 1990; Chafetz & Dworkin, 1986; Costain, 1992; Katzenstein & Mueller, 1987; Klein, 1984). We believe that theoretical frameworks that combine the insights of interactionist, network and organizational, and macrostructural gender theorists by highlighting the centrality of gender at all levels of analysis (see, e.g., Collins, 1990; Connell, 1987; Lorber, 1994; Scott, 1986) are likely to provide the most useful set of concepts for assessing the role of social movement actors in the social construction of gender.

Multilevel frameworks suggest three analytical tools for understanding the effects of social movements on the gender order. First, they view gender at the *interactional level,* calling our attention to the way women and men learn societal expectations of gender-appropriate behavior and practice them in daily interactions in the performance of femininity and masculinity (Butler, 1990; Thorne, 1994; West & Fenstermaker, 1995; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Second, they delineate the way gender operates at the *structural level,* so that gender distinctions become a basis for ranking men above women of the same race and class (Acker, 1990; Reskin, 1988). It is in this sense that Scott (1988) refers to gender as "signifying power relations" (p. 42). As a structure, gender divides work in the home and in the wider economy, legitimates existing hierarchies of authority, organizes sexual expression and emotions, and structures every aspect of social life because of its embeddedness in the family, the workplace, and the state (Connell, 1987; Lorber, 1994). Finally, at the *cultural level,* gender distinctions and hierarchy are expressed in ideology and cultural practices, such as sexuality and language, as well as in art, religion, medicine, law, and the mass media (Butler, 1990; Smith, 1990). Treating the gender system as simultaneously supported and constructed at each of these levels allows us to recognize the myriad of ways that social movements are engaged in claims-making to challenge or affirm the gender code.

Even if multilevel theories are more sensitive to the complexities of gender change, they do not offer insight into the actual processes of change. Our analysis draws upon social movement theory to demonstrate the link between social movement activism and the social construction of gender relations at these various levels. Theorists have developed complementary and competing frameworks to explain the emergence and dynamics of social movements. Our approach to social movements combines the insights of classical collective behavior theory, resource mobilization theory, and new social movements perspectives by highlighting the way grievances, ideology, and collective identity combine with organization, resources, and political context to explain the emergence, nature, and course of movements (McAdam, 1992; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Melucci, 1989; Morris, 1984; Tarrow, 1994; Turner & Killian, 1987). Although scholars generally agree on the factors that promote feminist collective action, there is debate on the relative importance of grievances, consciousness, and collective identity, on the one hand, and resources, political opportunity, and organizations, on the other (Buechler, 1990).

Feminist researchers have placed considerable emphasis on the importance of feminist consciousness—or the belief that women are subordinated as a group on the basis of sex—in explaining the rise of women's movements. Nevertheless, diverse versions of feminism have existed and even coexisted in the same movements throughout history. To capture the diversity of feminism, historians have suggested that one fundamental debate

that appears throughout the history of feminism focuses on women's "sameness" versus their "difference" from men (Black, 1989; Chafe, 1991; Cott, 1987; Offen, 1988; Tong, 1989). Feminists advocating an "equal rights" position have emphasized the similarities between women and men and pursued policies and strategies that treat women and men identically. In contrast, those who argue women's "difference" hold that, either as a result of biology or socialization, women are essentially different from men in their capacity for caring and compassion. These feminists have seen the need for female-specific political strategies that address women's maternal role.

Although the discussion of gender ideology in feminism is fruitful, we think that a concentration solely on ideas ignores the fact that feminists are social movements actors situated within an organizational and movement context. Feminism is more than gender ideology: it is a collective identity. Collective identity is the shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity (Taylor, 1989; Taylor & Whittier, 1992). A collective identity approach allows us to understand feminist identity as a movement characteristic that is constructed, activated, and sustained through interaction in a wider social movement.

Even if feminist consciousness is an important ingredient of women's movements, a social movement perspective insists that we recognize that the emergence of feminist movements depends on the political opportunities for women to organize on their own behalf, the resources available to them, as well as their collective identities and interpretation of their grievances. Besides these constitutive elements, social movement scholars recognize that there are some basic structural preconditions underlying the emergence of women's collective mobilization.

3. STRUCTURAL PRECONDITIONS OF WESTERN FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

From a movement perspective, women have always had sufficient grievances to create the context for feminist activity. Indeed, instances of collective action on the part of women abound in history, especially if one includes female reform societies, women's church groups, alternative religious societies, and women's clubs. However, collective activity on the part of women directed specifically toward improving their own status has flourished primarily during periods of generalized social upheaval, when sensitivity to moral injustice, discrimination, and social inequality has been widespread in the society as a whole (Chafe, 1977; Staggenborg, 1998). The first wave of feminism in the United States grew out of the abolitionist struggle of the 1830s and peaked during an era of social reform in the 1890s, and the contemporary movement emerged out of the general social discontent of the 1960s. Although the women's movement did not die between these periods of heightened activism, it declined sharply in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing women the right to vote as a response to the changing social, political, and economic context (Rupp & Taylor, 1987). During this period, women who had played important roles in obtaining women's suffrage managed to keep the flames of feminism alive by launching a campaign to pass an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Constitution.

Researchers identify crucial structural conditions that underlie the emergence of feminist protest (Chafetz & Dworkin, 1986; Huber & Spitze, 1983; Oppenheimer, 1973). Broad societal changes in the patterns of women's participation in the paid labor force,

increases in women's formal educational attainment, and shifts in women's fertility rates and reproductive roles disrupt traditional social arrangements and set the stage for women's movements. Chafetz and Dworkin (1986) propose that as industrialization and urbanization bring greater education for women, expanding public responsibilities create role and status conflicts for middle-class women, who then develop the discontent and gender consciousness necessary for political action. Specifically, when women, especially married middle-class women, enter the paid labor force their gender consciousness increases because they are more likely to use men as a reference group when assessing their access to societal rewards. Similarly, women often experience strains and discrepancies in their lives as their gender consciousness is raised through formal education (Klein, 1984).

Scholars also identify other important structural preconditions that set the stage for feminist mobilization, including changes in family relationships, marriage, fertility, and sexual mores (Ferree & Hess, 1994). Declines in women's childbearing rates and increasing age of women at first marriage can positively influence women's educational attainment and participation in the paid labor force which, in turn, raises women's gender consciousness (Klein, 1984). Moreover, changes in the traditional relationships between women and men in marriage and in sexual mores, such as the shift from authoritarian marriages to romantic or companionate marriages at the turn of the century in the United States and the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s, can politize gender relations and create the motivations for feminist mobilization (Ferree & Hess, 1994).

Structural preconditions underlying the genesis of feminist collective mobilizations vary with historical and geographical context. Not only the political context but also the structural preconditions underlying feminist mobilizations in the United States are different from those in Third World countries. Moreover, variable structural conditions influence the ideologies, organizations, and strategies adopted by feminist movements in different times and places. Nonetheless, scholars recognize some important commonalties between women's movements around the world.

4. FEMINIST MOVEMENTS IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

While this chapter focuses on the women's movement in the United States, it is nonetheless important to acknowledge the multiple forms of feminist resistance around the world and to underscore the importance of the historical and geographical specificity of feminist activism. Throughout modern history, women in all regions of the world have organized collectively against the injustice and oppression in their lives and communities (Basu, 1995). Such mobilizations in diverse political, cultural, and historical contexts have varied widely in their organizations, strategies, ideologies, and structures. Gender oppression for some Third World feminists cannot be divorced from issues and histories of colonization, immigration, racism, or imperialism, and thus feminist activism in some Third World contexts may be organized around a constellation of oppressions rather than specifically around gender oppression (Jayawardena, 1986; Mohanty, Russo, & Torres, 1991). In some instances, however, ideological, organizational, and strategic differences in women's movements cannot be said to lie in the lived experiences of women but in fundamental differences in the political culture of a region (Ray, 1999). In Calcutta, India, for example, which is dominated by the Communist Party and a strong and traditional left culture, the women's movement functions more as a political party and uses strategies to address issues such as work and domestic violence that do not directly threaten

the gender status quo. The women's movement in Bombay, on the other hand, which exists in a more open, contested political field and culture, is characterized by more autonomous forms of organizing and has been influenced by American feminists' analyses of domestic violence and British socialist feminist analyses of class. Although differences exist, researchers nevertheless have identified important commonalties that link women's movements over time and place (Chafetz & Dworkin, 1986; Giele, 1995; Katzenstein & Mueller, 1987; Miles, 1996).

Some scholars recognize that women's movements, particularly those in industrialized countries, generally have emerged in two waves of heightened activism. In their cross-cultural, historical analysis of 48 countries, Chafetz and Dworkin (1986) found that the mass-scale, independent women's movements of the first wave, such as those in European societies and the United States, occurred in the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, while the second wave women's movements emerged since the 1960s. Major goals of the first wave of activism included women's suffrage, educational opportunities for women, basic legal reforms, inheritance and property rights, and employment opportunities for women. Chafetz and Dworkin (1986) maintain that women's demands during this first wave often were framed around middle-class women's roles as wives and mothers and reinforced gender difference by valorizing women's special virtues and moral superiority over men. Smaller scale movements during the first wave were more likely to challenge basic role differentiation between women and men and to resist doctrines and images of femininity in the culture. To the extent that the large-scale changes brought on by urbanization and industrialization in Western countries created dramatic changes in the workplace, the family, and in the lives of women and men, it is not surprising there was considerable ideological debate and diversity among first wave feminists. In the United States, for example, some factions of the nineteenth-century women's movement, which merged in 1890 to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association, were grounded in essentialist views of sex differences and were more interested in nonfeminist social reforms for which the vote was only a prerequisite (Buechler, 1990; Giele, 1995). Other branches of the nineteenth-century women's movement rejected essentialist notions of gender and, by pursuing more radical changes such as sexual freedom and the expansion of women's roles in the workplace and politics, sought to transform the gender order in more fundamental ways (Cott, 1987).

Women's movements of the second wave in Western countries, blossoming since the 1960s, have mobilized around an even broader range of issues, such as reproductive rights, sexual and economic exploitation, and violence against women (Chafetz & Dworkin, 1986; Ferree & Hess, 1994). Modern feminist movements often have developed out of women's commonalties; however, feminist scholars increasingly emphasize that differences of race, class, ethnicity, and nationality are also expressed in the collective identities deployed by feminists (Mohanty et al., 1991; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981). Collins (1990) maintains that African-American women have organized around interlocking structures of oppression that affect women in different ways depending on, for instance, their race, class, or sexual identities. For example, African-American and Latina women from low-income urban neighborhoods have struggled for quality education, affordable and safe housing, and expanded childcare services for their families and communities (Naples, 1992b). Naples characterizes these mobilizations as instances of "activist mothering," and she demonstrates that women's collective identities derive from the multiple and interlocking systems of race and class and are justified by the belief that "good mothering" includes nurturing practices, political activism, and community work.

Although there is debate about the definition of feminism around the world, it is difficult to deny that since the late 1960s there has been an enormous growth of feminist activity all over the globe. Some scholars argue that large independent women's movements during this period occurred primarily in Western industrial societies and that feminist movement activity was limited, in part, by the large number of repressive political regimes around the world that efficiently suppressed feminist activity (Chafetz & Dworkin, 1986). Other scholars use a broader definition of what constitutes a women's movement and conclude that feminist resistance during this period was and still is extremely widespread (Basu, 1995; Jayawardena, 1986; Miles, 1996; Mohanty et al., 1991).

Since the 1970s, there has been a phenomenal growth of regional, interregional, and international networking between feminist groups (Miles, 1996), although the origins of international women's organizations date back to the closing decades of the nineteenth century (Rupp, 1997). The United Nations' International Women's Year (1975) and Decade for Women (1975–1985) helped foster global feminist dialogues and stimulated independent, locally based feminist activities in all parts of the world. Since the beginning of the U.N. Decade for Women there have been four "official" U.N. conferences of government representatives devoted to women's issues. Four "unofficial" forums of women's groups and feminists from around the world have occurred simultaneously with these "official" conferences. Since the first forum in Mexico City in 1975, participation by women in the "unofficial" forums has increased sharply, challenging the notion that feminism has died in recent years. Although these conferences and forums have been sites of considerable debate and conflict over the meaning of "women's issues" and the definition of feminism, the events have sparked multiple forms and foci of feminist resistance and a global awareness of women's oppression that reaches beyond women's groups.

Other examples of international feminist networks, events, and organizations include the International Tribunal of Crimes against Women held in Brussels in 1976; Development Alternative with Women for a New Era (DAWN), an international organization of Third World feminist-activist researchers formed in 1984; the Women's International Tribunal and Meeting on Reproductive Rights in 1984 in Amsterdam; and the Network on Women's Rights Are Human Rights founded in 1991 (Miles, 1996). Through these and other countless networks and organizations, feminists are forging global relations around a diverse set of issues, including "health, housing, education, law reform, population, human rights, reproductive and genetic engineering, female sexual slavery and trafficking in women, violence against women, spirituality, peace and militarism, external debt, fundamentalism, environment, development, media, alternative technology, film, art and literature, publishing, and women's studies" (Miles, 1996, p. 142). Scholars of international feminism, such as Raca Ray (1999), contend that, despite variation in women's movements around the world, through international conferences the ideology and practice of radical feminism in the United States has left its mark on feminism globally.

Accompanying the burgeoning of international feminist networks, there has been a growing global awareness among feminist movements around the world since the 1970s. Scholars of international feminism, such as Agnes Miles (1996), go so far as to suggest that within the context of broad globalization processes, women's groups in all regions are more often acting locally while thinking globally. Without ignoring the tensions among feminists from different parts of the world, such as those between the North and the South, and conflicts among feminists from the same region, such as disputes between white women and women of color in the United States (Leidner, 1993) and between East

and West German women in postunification Germany (Ferree, 1997), Miles contends that there is an emerging feminist global vision in which diversity and specificity are embraced rather than seen as essentially contradictory. Within this emerging global vision, some feminists are working to build theory and practice that understands the oppression in women's lives as deeply connected with other forms, structures, and manifestations of oppression. As such, feminist concerns about reproductive freedoms are not divorced from ecological issues or from the historical processes of colonization. Although much of the feminist scholarship on women's movements is focused on the development of women's movements in the United States or European societies, the feminist literature on women's movements in non-Western societies and the global feminist movement is expanding rapidly (see Miles, 1996 and Mohanty et al., 1991 for detailed bibliographies). The trajectory of the U.S. women's movement can be understood only in this global context.

5. THE CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST MOVEMENT: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Of all the manifestations of social activism in the 1960s in the United States, feminism is one of the few that continued to flourish in the 1970s and 1980s and remains active in the 1990s. Although feminism has changed form in the late 1980s and 1990s, neither the movement nor the injustices that produced it have vanished. We trace here the interrelationships among the ideologies, organizational structures, changing political context, and strategies of the most recent wave of the U.S. women's movement.

Most scholarly analyses of the women's movement of the late 1960s—what scholars call the "new feminist movement"—divide it into two wings, with origins in the grievances and preexisting organizations of two groups of women: older professional women who created bureaucratic organizations with a liberal ideology and adopted legal reform strategies, and younger women from the civil rights and New Left movements who formed small collective organizations with radical ideology and employed "personal as political" strategies such as consciousness-raising groups (Buechler, 1990; Cassell, 1977; Ferree & Hess, 1985; Freeman, 1975).

The ideologies, organizations, and strategies developed by these two factions have not, however, remained separate and distinct since the 1970s. The contemporary wave of feminist activism can be divided into three stages: resurgence (1966–1971), the feminist heyday (1972–1982), and abeyance (1983 to the present). Scholars generally date the feminist resurgence to the founding of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966 (Buechler, 1990; Ryan, 1992). During the resurgence period, the movement established itself, forming organizations and ideologies and moving into the public eye. By 1971, major segments of feminism had crystallized: liberal feminism, embodied in the formation of groups such as NOW, the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) in 1967, and the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) in 1971; radical feminism and socialist feminism, emerging from consciousness raising groups, theory groups, and small action groups such as Redstockings and the Feminists in 1969; and lesbian feminism, organized in such groups as Radicalesbians in 1970 and the Furies (initially called "Those Women") in 1971 (Echols, 1989).

The year 1972 was pivotal both for the movement's success and for its opposition. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) passed in Congress, and Phyllis Schafly launched

her first attacks, signifying the transition to a second phase of feminist activism that lasted until the defeat of the ERA in 1982 (Mansbridge, 1986). While some authors argue that this period saw a decline in the women's movement and a retreat from radicalism (Echols 1989), we think it should be considered the movement's heyday because the feminist revolution seemed to be on the move. The campaign to ratify the ERA in the states brought mass mobilization, fostering female solidarity and enlisting women into feminism, women's studies programs proliferated on college campuses, the number and variety of feminist organizations increased phenomenally, and the movement entered the political arena and encountered active opposition (Matthews & DeHart, 1990; Ryan, 1992). Not only did feminism flourish in the ratification campaign, it spread into the political mainstream while radical and lesbian feminist organizing heightened outside it.

Following the ERA's defeat in 1982, the women's movement entered a period of the doldrums, in which it has developed new structural forms to survive a shrinking membership and an increasingly nonreceptive environment. The 1980s saw a turning away from the values of equality, human rights, and social justice and even a deliberate backlash against the feminist momentum of the 1970s. Rights won by feminists in the 1960s and 1970s—from affirmative action to legal abortion—have been under siege throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Yet the 1980s and 1990s are not the first hostile period in which feminism has endured. In the period following World War II, when strict gender roles and social and political conservatism flourished, the women's movement adopted a tightknit structure that enabled it to survive (Rupp & Taylor, 1987; Taylor, 1989). The so-called "postfeminist" era of the 1980s and 1990s no more marks the death of the women's movement than did the 1950s.

5.1. Feminist Ideology

Although ideas do not necessarily cause social movements, social movement theorists identify ideology as a central component of any social movement (Morris & Mueller, 1992). The new feminist movement, like most social movements, is not ideologically monolithic. Feminist ideology encompasses numerous ideological strands that differ in the scope of change sought; the extent to which gender inequality is linked to other systems of domination, especially class, race/ethnicity, and sexuality; and the significance attributed to gender differences. We focus here on the evolution of the dominant ideologies that have motivated participants in the two major branches of the new feminist movement from its inception, liberal feminism and radical feminism.

The first wave of the women's movement in the nineteenth century was, by and large, a liberal feminist reform movement. It sought equality within the existing social structure and, indeed, in many ways functioned like other reform movements to reaffirm existing values within the society (Ferree & Hess, 1985). Nineteenth-century feminists believed that if they obtained the right to an education, the right to own property, the right to vote, employment rights—in other words, equal civil rights under the law—they would attain equality with men. Scholars have labeled this thinking "individualist" or "equity" feminism, linking the goal of equal rights to gender assumptions about women's basic sameness with men (Black, 1989; Offen, 1988).

The basic ideas identified with contemporary liberal or "mainstream" feminism have changed little since their formulation in the nineteenth century when they seemed progressive, even radical (Eisenstein, 1981). Contemporary liberal feminist ideology holds

that women lack power simply because women as a group are not allowed equal opportunity to compete and succeed in the male-dominated economic and political arenas but, instead, are relegated to the subordinate world of home, domestic labor, motherhood, and family. The major strategy for change is to gain legal and economic equalities and to obtain access to elite positions in the workplace and in politics. Thus, liberal feminists tend to place as much emphasis on changing individual women as they do on changing society. For instance, teaching women managerial skills or instructing rape victims in "survival" strategies strikes a blow at gender social definitions that channel women into traditionally feminine occupations and passive behaviors that make them easy targets of aggression by men. As several scholars have noted, liberal feminism ironically provided ideological support through the 1970s and 1980s for the massive transformation in work and family life that was occurring as the United States underwent the transition to a postindustrial order (Mitchell, 1986; Stacey, 1987). Some writers even contend that by urging women to enter the workplace and adopt a male orientation, the equal opportunity approach to feminism unwittingly contributed to a host of problems that further disadvantaged women, especially working-class women and women of color, including the rise in divorce rates, the "feminization" of working-class occupations, and the devaluation of motherhood and traditional female characteristics (Gordon, 1991).

Radical feminist ideology dates to Simone de Beauvoir's early 1950s theory of "sex class," which was developed further in the late 1960s among small groups of radical women who fought the subordination of women's liberation within the New Left (Beauvoir, 1952; Daly, 1978; Firestone, 1970; Griffin, 1978; MacKinnon, 1982, 1983; Millett, 1971; Rich, 1976, 1980). The radical approach recognizes women's identity and subordination as a "sex class," emphasizes women's fundamental difference from men, views gender as the primary contradiction and foundation for the unequal distribution of a society's rewards and privileges, and recasts relations between women and men in political terms (Echols, 1989). Defining women as a "sex class" means no longer treating patriarchy in individual terms but acknowledging the social and structural nature of women's subordination. Radical feminists hold that in all societies, institutions, and social patterns are structured to maintain and perpetuate gender inequality and that female disadvantage permeates virtually all aspects of sociocultural and personal life. Further, through the gender division of labor, social institutions are linked so that male superiority depends upon female subordination (Hartmann, 1981). In the United States, as in most industrialized societies, power, prestige, and wealth accrue to those who control the distribution of resources outside the home in the economic and political spheres. The sexual division of labor that assigns childcare and domestic responsibilities to women not only ensures gender inequality in the dominant family system but perpetuates male advantage in political and economic institutions as well.

To unravel the complex structure on which gender inequality rests requires, from a radical feminist perspective, a fundamental transformation of all institutions in society. To meet this challenge, radical feminists formulated influential critiques of the family, marriage, love, motherhood, heterosexuality, sexual violence, capitalism, reproductive policies, the media, science, language and culture, the beauty industry, sports, politics and the law, and technology. Radical feminism's ultimate vision is revolutionary in scope: a fundamentally new social order that eliminates the sex-class system and replaces it with new ways—based on women's difference—of defining and structuring experience. Central to the development of radical feminist ideology was the strategy of forming small groups for the purpose of "consciousness-raising." Pioneered initially among New Left

women, consciousness-raising can be understood as a kind of conversion in which women come to view experiences previously thought of as personal and individual, such as sexual exploitation or employment discrimination, as social problems that are the result of gender inequality.

By the late 1970s, the distinction between liberal and radical feminism was becoming less clear (Carden, 1978; Whittier, 1995). Ideological shifts took place at both the individual and organizational levels. Participation in liberal feminist reform and service organizations working on such issues as rape, battering, abortion, legal and employment discrimination, and women's health problems raised women's consciousness, increased their feminist activism, and contributed to their radicalization as they came to see connections between these issues and the larger system of gender inequality (Schlesinger & Bart, 1983; Whittier, 1995). Women were also radicalized by working through their own personal experiences of sexual harassment, divorce, rape, abortion, and incest (Huber, 1973; Klein, 1984).

Radicalization has also occurred at the group level. By the end of the 1970s, liberal feminist organizations, such as NOW, the Women's Legal Defense Fund, and the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), which had been pursuing equality within the law, began to adopt strategies and goals consistent with a more radical stance. NOW included in its 1979 objectives not only such legal strategies as the ERA and reproductive choice, but also broader issues such as the threat of nuclear energy to the survival of the species, lesbian and gay rights, homemakers' rights, the exploitation of women in the home, and sex-segregation in the workplace (Eisenstein, 1981). Even the ERA, which sought equality for women within the existing legal and economic structure, was based on the fact that women are discriminated against as a "sex class" (Mansbridge, 1986).

Beginning in the mid-1980s, with the defeat of the unifying issue of the ERA and the growing diversification of the movement, feminist ideology deemphasized the question of women's sameness or difference from men in favor of "deconstructing" the term "woman." Women of color, Jewish women, lesbians, and working-class women challenged radical feminists' idea of a "sex class" that implied a distinctive and essential female condition. Since women are distributed throughout all social classes, racial and ethnic groupings, sexual communities, cultures, and religions, disadvantage for women varies and is multidimensional (Spelman, 1988). The recognition that the circumstances of women's oppression differ has given way to a new feminist paradigm that views race, class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality as interlocking systems of oppression, forming what Patricia Hill Collins (1990) refers to as a "matrix of domination."

Some scholars have charged that focusing on women's differences from one another has resulted in a retreat to "identity politics" and the demise of the women's movement. Alice Echols (1989) links disputes over difference and a focus on identity to a concentration on building an alternative women's culture rather than confronting and changing social institutions. In a similar vein, Barbara Ryan (1989) argues that internal debates over the correctness of competing feminist theories and the political implications of personal choices—what she terms "ideological purity"—tore the women's movement apart. But other scholars see the sometimes vehement arguments over women's differences from one another as a sign of life (Taylor & Rupp, 1993). Feminists organizing around diverse identities sometimes seek out new arenas of challenge that differ from traditional definitions of political activism and thus extend the reach of feminism. Self-help movements focused on the self and the body—for example, drug and alcohol abuse, incest, postpartum depression, battering, breast cancer—offer a complex challenge to traditional no-

tions of femininity, motherhood, and sexuality and carry the potential to mobilize new constituencies (Gagné, 1998; Taylor & Van Willigen, 1996).

In any case, ideas alone are an incomplete explanation of either the direction or the consequences of a social movement (Marx & Wood, 1975; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Much depends on a movement's structures and strategies, as well as on the larger political context.

5.2. Feminist Organizational Structures

Social movements do not generally have a single, central organization or unified direction. Rather, the structure of any general and broad-based social movement is more diffuse in that it is composed of a number of relatively independent organizations that differ in ideology, structure, goals, and tactics, is characterized by decentralized leadership; and is loosely connected by multiple and overlapping memberships, friendship networks, and cooperation in working toward common goals (Gerlach & Hine, 1970). The organizational structure of the new feminist movement has conformed to this model from its beginnings (Cassell, 1977; Ferree & Martin, 1995; Freeman, 1975). While the movement as a whole is characterized by a decentralized structure, the various organizations that comprise it vary widely in structure. The diversity of feminist organizational forms reflects both ideological differences and, as Freeman (1979) points out, the movement's diverse membership base.

There have been two main types of organizational structure in the new feminist movement since its resurgence, reflecting the two sources of feminist organizing in the late 1960s: bureaucratically structured movement organizations with hierarchical leadership and democratic decision-making procedures, such as NOW; and smaller, collectively structured groups that formed a more diffuse social movement community held together by a feminist political culture. The smaller groups must be understood as what Joan Acker (1990) has termed "gendered" organizations. Collectively organized groups, at least in theory, strove to exemplify a better way of structuring society by constructing a distinctive women's culture that valorized egalitarianism, the expression of emotion, and the sharing of personal experience. It is important to recognize, however, that while the two strands of the women's movement emerged separately, they have not remained distinct and opposed to each other, and in any case most organizations were mixed in form from the outset. The two structures have increasingly converged as bureaucratic organizations adopted some of the innovations of collectivism and feminist collectives became more formally structured (Ferree & Martin, 1995; Martin, 1990; Ryan, 1992; Staggenborg, 1988, 1989; Whittier, 1995). In addition, many individual activists are involved in a variety of organizations with differing structures.

The bureaucratically structured and professionalized movement organizations initially adopted by liberal groups such as NOW were well suited to work within the similarly structured political arena and to members' previous experience in professional organizations. The structures that radical feminist groups initially adopted, on the other hand, built on their prior involvement experiences in the New Left (Evans, 1979). Collectivist organizations grew from radical feminists' attempt to structure relations among members, processes of decision making, and group leadership in a way that reflected or prefigured the values and goals of the movement (Breines, 1982; Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Feminist collectivist organizations made decisions by consensus, rotated leadership and

other tasks among members, and shared skills to avoid hierarchy and specialization. As Jo Freeman (1972/1973) and others have noted, such groups often failed to meet their ideals and did, in fact, spawn unacknowledged hierarchies. Nevertheless, the conscious effort to build a feminist collective structure has had a lasting impact on the women's movement and has led to the growth of what Steven Buechler (1990) calls a social movement community.

Buechler proposes that movements consist not only of formal organizations, but that they also include more informally organized communities, made up of networks of people who share the movement's political goals and outlook and work toward common aims. The collectivist branch of the women's movement initially sparked the growth of a feminist social movement community in which alternative structures guided by a distinctively feminist women's culture flourished—including bookstores, theater groups, music collectives, poetry groups, art collectives, publishing and recording companies, spirituality groups, vacation resorts, self-help groups, and a variety of feminist-run businesses. This "women's culture," although it includes feminists of diverse political persuasions, has been largely maintained by lesbian feminists in the 1980s and 1990s. It nurtures a feminist collective identity that is important to the survival of the women's movement as a whole (Taylor & Rupp, 1993; Taylor & Whittier, 1992).

Both bureaucratic organizations working within mainstream politics and the alternative feminist culture have expanded and converged since the movement's emergence in the 1960s. Organizations such as NOW and the NARAL incorporated some of the innovations of collectivism, including consciousness-raising groups, modified consensus decision-making, and the use of direct action tactics and civil disobedience. A host of structural variations emerged, including formally structured groups that use consensus decision-making, organizations with deliberately democratic structures, and groups that officially operate by majority-rule democracy but in practice make most decisions by consensus (Martin, 1990; Ryan, 1992; Staggenborg, 1988, 1989; Taylor, 1996). At the same time, feminist collectives shifted their focus from consciousness-raising and radical feminist critique to the development of feminist self-help and service organizations, such as rape crisis centers, shelters for battered women, job training programs for displaced homemakers, and lesbian peer counseling groups. Moreover, many feminist collectives revised their structure to depend less on consensus decision-making and to permit specialization of skills. Feminist anti-rape groups received financial support from government agencies and private foundations to provide rape prevention and treatment services in public schools and universities (Matthews, 1994). The widespread acceptance of the feminist analysis of rape as an act of violence and power rather than a strictly sexual act attest to the impact of the feminist anti-rape movement. The distinction between "working outside the system" and "working within the system," so important in the late 1960s, no longer had the same significance.

In conjunction with the ideological shift from a universal to a differentiated category of "woman," the structures of the women's movement diversified as well. Although individual women of color and working-class women had participated in the founding of NOW and in the early protests against sexism in the civil rights movement, the women's movement attracted primarily white middle-class women. Not that women of color and working-class or poor women experienced no oppression as women or opposed feminist goals. A 1989 *New York Times*/CBS News poll revealed that, whereas only 64% of white women saw a need for a women's movement, 85% of African-American women and 76% of Hispanic women thought the women's movement was needed (Sapiro, 1991). Yet the

feminist movement remained predominantly white both because of the continuation of its tradition of defining its goals with an eye to the concerns of white middle-class women and because many black women and other women of color place a priority on working with men of their own communities to advance their collective interests. Independent organizing by women of color did occur during the 1970s, and when African-American activists in the women's movement formed the National Black Feminist Organization in 1973 it grew to a membership of 1000 within its first year (Deckard, 1983). In the 1980s and 1990s independent feminist organizations and networks of women of color, such as the National Black Women's Health Project and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, emerged. Women of color also formed active caucuses within predominantly white feminist organizations, such as the National Women's Studies Association, to work against racism within the women's movement (Leidner, 1993). Likewise, Jewish women, who had historically played important roles within the women's movement, began to organize their own groups in the 1980s and speak out against anti-Semitism within the movement (Beck, 1980; Bulkin, Pratt, & Smith, 1984).

Union women played a significant role in the formation of NOW in 1966 by providing office space and clerical services, until NOW's endorsement of the ERA in 1967 forced the women of the United Auto Workers, an organization that at the time opposed the ERA, to withdraw such support. Women committed to both feminism and the union movement, like women of color, formed their own organization, the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), in 1974 (Balser, 1987). CLUW claimed 16,000 members by 1982 and had made progress in its fight to win AFL–CIO support for feminist issues. Union women also participated in deeply gendered ways in labor movement activity such as the 1985 Wheeling–Pittsburgh Steel strike, both affirming and challenging gender (Fonow, 1998). The basic class and race composition of the movement may have changed little throughout the 1970s and 1980s, but as Buechler (1990, p. 158) put it, "A movement that began as unconsciously class-bound and race-bound has now become consciously class-bound and race-bound."

Collective action by the women's movement has both created new institutions and moved into almost every major institution of our society. However, in direct proportion to the successes of the women's movement, a countermovement, as we shall see, successfully reversed some feminist gains, stalled progress on others, and changed the face of the women's movement.

5.3. The Antifeminist Political Context

The early 1980s saw a rapid decrease in the number of feminist organizations and a transformation in the form and activities of the women's movement. In part, this was a response to the successes of the New Right: so powerful were antifeminist sentiments and forces that members of the Republican party were elected in 1980 on a platform developed explicitly to "put women back in their place." After 40 years of faithful support of the ERA, the Republican party dropped it from its platform, called for a constitutional amendment to ban abortion, and aligned itself with the economic and social policies of the New Right. After the election of the conservative Reagan administration in 1980, federal funds and grants were rarely available to feminist service organizations, and because other social service organizations were also hard hit by budget cuts, competition increased for relatively scarce money from private foundations. As a result, many femi-

nist programs, such as rape crisis centers, shelters for battered women, abortion clinics, and job training programs were forced to end or limit their services.

The failure of the ERA in 1982 seemed to reflect the changed political climate, setting the stage for other setbacks throughout the 1980s. Abortion rights, won in 1973 with the Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade, were curtailed in 1989 by the Supreme Court's decision in Webster v. Reproductive Services permitting states to enact restrictions on abortion (Staggenborg, 1991, pp. 137–138). Following the Webster decision, state governments set increasingly tight restrictions on abortion, ranging from "informed consent" laws that required a waiting period before women could have abortions, to parental consent laws for underage women, to outright bans on abortion unless the woman's life was in danger. In 1991, the Supreme Court further limited abortion rights by ruling that federally funded family planning clinics could be barred from providing information on abortion. The anti-abortion movement also escalated and hardened its tactics in the late 1980s: it bombed abortion clinics, picketed doctors who performed abortions, and attempted to dissuade women entering clinics from having abortions (Simonds, 1996; Staggenborg, 1991). Further, Women's Studies programs in colleges and universities, which had been established in the 1970s in response to feminist agitation, came under attack by conservatives in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A backlash against "multiculturalism" and "political correctness" in academia sought to restore the traditional academic focus on the "great thinkers" of Western European history, and thus to maintain the primacy of white male perspectives and experiences. Joining the attack, feminists such as Camille Paglia, Katie Roiphe, and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese drew media attention by holding radical and lesbian feminists responsible for alienating mainstream women and men from the women's movement.

The women's movement suffered not only from such attacks, but also from its apparent success. Overt opposition to the feminist movement had been muted in the mid- to late 1970s. Elites in politics, education, and industry gave the appearance of supporting feminist aims through largely ineffectual affirmative action programs and the appointment of a few token women to high positions in their respective areas. Meanwhile, the popular image of feminism advanced by the mass media suggested that the women's movement had won its goals, making feminism an anachronism. Despite the real-life difficulties women encountered trying to balance paid employment and a "second shift" of housework and childcare (Hochschild, 1989), the image of the working woman became the feminine ideal. The public discourse implied that since women had already achieved equality with men, they no longer needed a protest movement, unless they happened to be lesbians and man haters. Both popular and scholarly writers, in short, declared the 1980s and 1990s a "post-feminist" era.

But the women's movement did not die. Rather, it went into abeyance in order to survive in a hostile political climate. Movements in abeyance are in a holding pattern, during which activists from an earlier period maintain the ideology and structural base of the movement, but few new recruits join (Taylor, 1989). A movement in abeyance is primarily oriented toward maintaining itself rather than confronting the established order directly. Focusing on building an alternative culture, for example, is a means of surviving when external resources are not available and the political structure is not amenable to challenge. The structure and strategies of the women's movement have changed, then, as mass mobilization has declined and opposition to feminism has swelled. Nevertheless, feminist resistance continues in different forms.

5.4. Multiple Strategies and the Challenge to Gender

Patricia Hill Collins suggests that gender resistance, challenge, and change can occur at three levels: the individual level of consciousness and interactions, the social structural level, and the cultural level (1990, p. 227). This conceptualization allows us to recognize that movements adopt many strategies and to acknowledge the important role of women's movements in the reconstruction of gender.

5.4.1. Resisting Gender Practices. It is well established that the dominant gender order is created and maintained, in part, through the everyday practices of individuals who give gender meaning through the constant and contentious process of engendering behavior as separate and unequal (Butler, 1990; Chodorow, 1995; West & Zimmerman, 1987). At the level of consciousness and social interactions, individual women can and do resist norms and expectations of the dominant gender system (Thorne, 1995). It is, however, social movements or collectivities rather than isolated individuals, who perform the critical role of refashioning the gender code and calling institutions to account for gender inequality (Chafetz, 1990; Connell, 1987; Huber, 1976). One of the primary goals of the new feminist movement has been to change the unequal power relations between women and men. A general strategy used by feminists to achieve this goal has been to resist and challenge sexist practices within a diverse set of social contexts, ranging from heterosexual marriage to the gender division of labor in rearing and nurturing children to the workplace and medical establishment.

The formation of consciousness-raising groups facilitated the process of resisting and challenging gender practices and politicizing everyday life. Because consciousness-raising enables women to view the "personal as political," for most women it is an identity-altering experience. Becoming a feminist can transform a woman's entire self-concept and way of life: her biography, appearance, beliefs, behavior, and relationships (Cassell, 1977; Esterberg, 1997). As women's consciousness changes through personalized political strategies such as consciousness-raising, women individually and collectively defy normative role expectations for women and, in so doing, reconstruct interpersonal relationships between women and men.

Women active in the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s continue to shape their lives in the 1980s and 1990s around their feminist beliefs, even when they are not involved in organized feminist activity. Many hold jobs in government, social service organizations, or Women's Studies and other academic programs that allow them to incorporate their political goals into their work, and they continue to choose leisure activities, significant relationships, and dress and presentation of self that are consistent with feminist ideology (Whittier, 1995). Even the consciousness and lives of women who do not identify as feminist have been altered by the women's movement. In a study of gender and family life in the Silicon Valley of California, Judith Stacey (1987) argues that in the 1980s some women have incorporated portions of feminism into traditional family and work structures by combining a feminist emphasis on developing satisfying careers, sharing household work with husbands, and increasing men's emotional expressiveness through fundamentalist Christianity and its focus on the importance of the family. Such women critique men's absence from families and lack of emotional expression, reflecting both feminism and traditional religion. The effects of the women's movement stretch far beyond policies and practices that are explicitly labeled feminist.

Another example of women resisting gender practices at the interactional level is

found among African American women involved in little sister fraternity programs on college campuses. In their study of such programs, Stombler and Padavic (1997) discovered that African-American women embrace a collective identity built on notions of sisterhood and womanly strength to challenge the sexist practices of fraternities. Further, these women use the fraternity little sister program to satisfy their own agendas of community service and self-enhancement. Even within the most traditional male-dominated organizations, then, gender relations are not immutable and women are employing diverse strategies to resist gender inequality.

5.4.2. Challenging the Structure of Gender Inequality. The challenge to gender inequality and the dominant gender order is also waged at the social structural level. As we have seen, the liberal bureaucratic strand of the new feminist movement has employed legal reform strategies and engaged in street protests to counter sex discrimination in the economic, educational, political, and domestic spheres. The legislative campaigns for equal pay for work of comparable worth and for maternity policy in the workplace illustrate challenges to institutions that essentialize differences between women and men and rank "masculine" values and attributes above those identified as feminine (Vogel, 1993). The women's movement has created a feminist policy network of elected officials, lobbying organizations, social movement organizations, and individuals who have mobilized to address policy issues ranging from abortion rights, domestic violence, and pregnancy discrimination to day care (Ferree & Hess, 1994; Gagné, 1998; Staggenborg, 1996).

As part of its legislative or legal strategies, the new feminist movement has engaged in street protests, such as picketing, mass demonstrations, and civil disobedience. Even within the conservative political climate of the 1980s, the feminist movement sparked some of the largest feminist demonstrations and actions in years. In April 1989, NOW and abortion rights groups organized a national demonstration in Washington, D.C., that drew between 300,000 and 600,000 women and men to protest restrictions on abortion. Additional national and local demonstrations followed, and pro-choice activists organized electoral lobbying, defense of abortion clinics, and conferences, and attempted to form coalitions across racial and ethnic lines and among women of different ages (Ryan, 1992; Staggenborg, 1991). The NARAL experienced a growth in membership from 200,000 in 1989 to 400,000 in 1990 (Staggenborg, 1991, p. 138), and membership in NOW also continued to grow in the late 1980s and 1990s after a decline in the early 1980s, with a membership of 250,000 in 1989. In addition, a wide variety of feminist organizations continue to pursue social change at state and local levels (Ferree & Martin, 1995).

Beyond street politics, feminist activism in the 1980s and 1990s moved into diverse institutional settings. As an indication of the success and influence of feminist mobilization in earlier years, women found niches from which to challenge and transform institutional policies and structures, from pay equity to sexual harassment to occupational sex segregation (Blum, 1991). Katzenstein (1997) questions the notion that social movements are antithetical to institutions and that unobstrustive mobilization within institutional boundaries signifies the deradicalization of feminism. In her study of women's activism in the military and the Catholic Church, she found that women in the military have formed pressure groups, such as Women Military Aviators, that fought for the opening up of combat aviation positions for women. In the Catholic Church, radical religious orders have become protected spaces for women who challenge hierarchy within the institutional church. Although the form and location of feminist protest has changed in the 1980s and 1990s, this does not necessarily denote a post-feminist era or even the derad-

icalization of the women's movement. The transformative potential of feminist activism within institutional settings may in some contexts be greater than pressure from outside.

5.4.3. RECONSTRUCTING THE CULTURE OF GENDER. At the cultural level, the feminist social movement community has challenged cultural values, beliefs, and norms around gender and the gender order through building alternative social and cultural institutions for women outside mainstream institutions. The strategy of creating autonomous institutions is rooted in radical feminist ideology, which emphasizes that women need to have places and events away from patriarchal society where they can develop strength and pride as women. Since the early years of the women's movement, an extensive network of institutions has emerged within which a feminist culture flourishes (Taylor & Whittier, 1992). The development of feminist communities contributes to the reconstruction of the culture of gender by challenging the devaluation of the feminine and undermining androcentric values and beliefs, at the same time that they rearticulate alternative femininities and woman-centered values and beliefs (Taylor & Rupp, 1993).

Into the 1990s, the feminist cultural community has continued to thrive, with groups such as the Lesbian Avengers, and with such events as an "annual multicultural multiracial conference on aging" for lesbians (*Off Our Backs,* 1991, p. 12), feminist cruises, several annual women's music and comedy festivals in different parts of the country. Gatherings and conferences in 1990 included groups such as Jewish lesbian daughters of holocaust survivors, women motorcyclists, "fat dykes," practitioners of Diannic Wicca, Asian lesbians, practitioners of herbal medicine, and survivors of incest. Newsletters and publications exist for groups including women recovering from addictions, women's music professionals and fans, lesbian separatists, disabled lesbians, lesbian mothers, feminists interested in sadomasochism, feminists opposed to pornography, and a multitude of others. The growth of the feminist community underscores the flowering of lesbian feminism in the late 1980s and 1990s (Esterberg, 1997; Stein, 1997). A wide variety of lesbian and lesbian feminist books and anthologies have been published on topics ranging from lesbian feminist ethics, to separatism, to sexuality, to commitment ceremonies for lesbian couples (see, e.g., Butler, 1991; Hoagland, 1988; Hoagland & Penelope, 1988; Loulan, 1990), reflecting diverse perspectives that have been hotly debated in the pages of lesbian publications and at conferences and festivals. For example, a series of letters to the editor in a national lesbian newsletter argued over the correct lesbian feminist response to lesbians serving in the armed forces in the Persian Gulf War: some readers held that the war was a manifestation of patriarchy and that lesbians in the military should be criticized; others argued that lesbian soldiers should be supported because they are lesbians in a homophobic institution, regardless of support or opposition to the war; still others argued that the Gulf War was justified and that lesbian servicewomen should be celebrated for their patriotic service (*Lesbian Connection,* 1991). Clearly, the task of building a community based on the identity "lesbian" has proven complex, if not impossible. Nevertheless, the institutional structure of the social movement community has continued to expand, and within the community feminists construct and reinforce a collective identity based on opposition to dominant conceptions of women and lesbians (Taylor & Whittier, 1992).

Another example of resistance on the cultural level is the emergence of women's self-help groups in the 1980s and 1990s that sprang directly out of the early women's health movement and continue to model feminist consciousness-raising groups (Rapping, 1996; Simonds, 1996). Some feminist writers contend that women's self-help di-

verts the feminist agenda away from social and political change and directs women, instead, to change themselves (Kaminer, 1992). Others argue that self-help movements, such as the postpartum depression and breast cancer movements, are contributing to the reconstruction of gender through the collective redefinition of womanhood and the cultural articulation of alternative femininities (Taylor, 1996; Taylor & Van Willigen, 1996). Rather than depoliticized and purely individually focused, self-help movements, Taylor (1996) contends, perform a critical role in calling institutions to account for gender inequality and refashioning the dominant gender code.

All of these diverse strategies, operating at different levels, challenge gender. From the individual to the social structural to the cultural plane, we can see the continuous impact of the women's movement.

5.5. Movement Continuity and Change Into the Twentieth Century

Social movement scholars understand that social movements affect one another. The abolitionist movement in the mid-nineteenth century influenced the first wave of the women's movement in the United States, and the civil rights and New Left movements of the 1960s shaped the course of the second wave of the women movement (Buechler, 1990). In turn, the women's movement has also had a substantial impact on other social movements. Meyer and Whittier (1994) argue that "the ideas, tactics, style, participants, and organizations of one movement often *spill over* its boundaries to affect other social movements" (p. 277, emphasis in the original). The gay and lesbian movement, transgender, AIDS, recovery from addictions, New Age, and animal rights movements have been profoundly influenced by feminist values and ideology, including the emphasis on collective structure and consensus, the notion of the personal as political, and the critique of patriarchy extended to the mistreatment of animals and ecological resources (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995). The women's movement also trained a large number of feminist activists in the 1970s, particularly lesbians, who have participated in new social movements and integrated feminism into them (Cavin, 1990; Whittier, 1995). The gay and lesbian movement, for example, has expanded its health concerns to include breast cancer as well as AIDS and has used strategies of the feminist anti-rape movement to confront violence against gays and lesbians. In addition, feminists have renewed coalitions with the peace, environmental, socialist, anti-U.S. intervention in Latin America, and anti-apartheid movements, transforming these movements both by creating separate feminist organizations that address these issues and by moving into mixed-sex organizations (Whittier, 1995). In a sense the women's movement has come full circle, rejoining the 1990s versions of the movements that composed the New Left in the 1960s when feminists split off to form a separate autonomous women's movement.

Although the women's movement has changed form and location in the 1980s and 1990s, the level of mass mobilization and confrontation of the social structural system clearly declined following 1982. Because feminism in the late 1980s and 1990s is focused more on consciousness and culture and has established roots in other social movements of the period, feminist protest is less visible than it was during the heyday of the women's movement. Notably, in keeping with the patterns that characterize movements in abeyance (Taylor, 1989), the most active feminists in the late 1980s and 1990s have been women who became involved with the movement during the late 1960s and 1970s, were

transformed by their involvement, and formed a lasting commitment to feminist goals (Whittier, 1995). According to some recent studies (Dill, unpublished; Schneider, 1988), despite support for feminist goals, many young women do not identify themselves as feminists, apparently because the identity of feminist is stigmatized. A feminist is seen as someone who deviates from gender norms by being unattractive, aggressive, hostile to men, opposed to marriage and motherhood, lesbian, and imitative of men. Despite the gains made by women in some areas, gender norms are still so rigid and deeply internalized that they successfully deter many women, who otherwise support the feminist agenda, from participating in the movement.

Yet some younger women have joined the women's movement in the late 1980s and 1990s despite the risks entailed in identifying with a stigmatized and unpopular cause. In a study of young feminist activists in the 1990s, Kim Dill (unpublished) has found that a new generation of women has been recruited to feminism primarily through Women's Studies courses and through the transmission of feminism from mothers to daughters. The institutionalized gains of the heyday of feminist activism in the 1970s are enabling the women's movement to survive and to disseminate its ideas to new recruits. What direction the self-proclaimed "third wave" (Kamen, 1991; Walker, 1992, 1995) will take is not at all clear, but the history of the women's movement suggests that a new constituency will revise feminist ideology, renovate existing structures, respond to a changing political climate, and further develop feminist strategies.

6. ANTIFEMINIST COUNTERMOVEMENTS

The emergence of organized opposition is one indication of the successes of feminist movements. In general, it is when social movements pose a serious threat to the status quo that countermovements appear (Chafetz & Dworkin, 1987). Antifeminist resistance movements mobilized in response to first and second wave feminist movements in the United States when feminists began to gain political legitimacy and influence. For example, as the first wave of the women's movement was building support for suffrage in the late nineteenth century, an organized anti-suffrage movement began to coalesce (Marshall, 1997). Likewise, when the feminist movement of the 1970s was gaining political ground on the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, an anti-ERA movement blossomed (Marshall, 1984).

Antifeminist countermovements, like feminist movements, are not monolithic but vary over time and place by ideology, strategy, and organization (Blee 1991; Buechler 1990; Marshall 1985). Chafetz and Dworkin (1987) contend that antifeminist countermovements are composed of two constituencies: vested-interest groups which are typically male-dominated and oppose feminist change movements on the basis of class interests and voluntary grassroots associations made up of women who are reacting to the threat to their status as privileged traditional women.

Compared to the scholarship on movements, countermovements have been understudied and undertheorized (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996). Moreover, research on organized opposition to feminism by women is also limited (Klatch, 1990; Marshall, 1997). Women's participation in antifeminist countermovements challenges the radical feminist notion that women are a "sex class" with clearly defined gender interests. Differences among women, particularly class status, are brought to light when we consider women's involvement in antifeminist mobilizations (Luker, 1984). Scholars often characterize

antifeminist women as victims of false consciousness or as women who are passively expressing their husbands' interests. Marshall (1997) argues that these are overly simplistic interpretations and that an appreciation for the ways in which anti-suffragist leaders used their wealth, social networks, and political power to build an oppositional identity in the anti-suffrage movement suggests "a conceptual shift of the locus of conflict over suffrage from culture to politics" (p. 13). In this light, antifeminist women should be viewed as political actors who take up gendered class interests independent of their husbands (Marshall, 1997).

The interaction between opposing movements is a prominent feature of contemporary American society. Any social movement analysis is incomplete without considering the interdependence of movements and countermovements. For example, the tactics, strategies, organizational forms, and feminist identities characteristic of the feminist movement during the 1980s and 1990s cannot be fully understood without considering the effects of the anti-abortion mobilization and the rise of the New Right. The relationship between movements and countermovements are variously described by social movement scholars as loosely coupled conflict (Zald & Useem, 1987); movement conflux created by dialectical interaction (Mottle, 1980); and an ebb and flow of opposing movements (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996; Zald & Useem, 1987).

The contemporary women's movement in the United States has been opposed by a variety of conservative antifeminist groups. In the early 1970s the Stop ERA campaign, initiated by Phyllis Schlafly, fought to block the passage of the ERA by state legislatures. Through the 1970s, the New Right grew larger and more influential, linking conservative issues, including opposition to busing, abortion, gay rights, the ERA, and governmental regulation of business through affirmative action and health and safety programs (Klatch, 1990). With the election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1980, the New Right gained state support for its agenda. The antifeminist movement in the late 1980s and 1990s has spent considerable energy opposing abortion, and its successes in that area have been impressive in terms of judicial and legislative gains and disruptive demonstrations at abortion clinics (Simonds, 1996; Staggenborg, 1991). Over the years, a number of aggressive splinter groups, such as Operation Rescue, have developed out of the mainstream National Right to Life Committee, which originated within the Catholic Church. The murders of Drs. David Gunn in Pensacola, Florida, and Barnett and Slepian in Buffalo, New York, are a potent example of the radical tactics advocated by some antifeminist groups. The prevalence of antifeminist resistance throughout history highlights the significance of the family, sexuality, and reproduction for the maintenance of the dominant social order. The growth of antifeminism, however, does not imply that the women's movement has failed or run its course. On the contrary, it attests to feminism's successful challenge to the status quo.

7. MEN'S RESPONSES TO FEMINIST MOBILIZATION

Men clearly have been affected by changes in the gender system in the United States. Researchers recently have begun to examine men's organized responses to feminism and shifts in gender and family relations (Kimmel, 1987; Messner, 1997; Schwalbe, 1996). Like women's movements, organized men's responses vary broadly both ideologically and structurally. Moreover, along with feminist movements and countermovements, men's gender-based movements are becoming major players in the process of reconstituting gender and family relations.

Kimmel (1987) contends that, at the turn of the century men's responses to changes in the gender system took three forms: masculinist, antifeminist, and profeminist. The masculinist response, characterized by homosocial institutions, was an indirect reaction to the purported feminization of American manhood associated with industrialization, the separation of work from the home, and the necessity for men to prove themselves in the marketplace. The antifeminist and profeminist responses were more direct reactions to the women's movement during the period (Kimmel, 1987). Antifeminist responses, such as opposition to women's suffrage and women's participation in the public sphere, were based on the belief that the traditional patriarchal family is the God-given natural social arrangement. Profeminist responses, although variable, generally embraced feminists' demands for an expansion of women's public participation and an end to the gender division of labor in family life and were based on both a sense of justice and the belief that gender changes would also benefit men (Kimmel, 1987).

Although Kimmel's typology was developed to explain men's responses to the first wave of feminism in the United States, there are some parallels to men's oppositional movements during the second wave. Messner (1997) maps out some of the major mobilizations, which include the men's liberation movement, men's rights groups, the progressive profeminist movement, the Promise Keepers, the Million Man March, the mythopoetic movement, and racial and sexual identity movements.

Aligned with the liberal branch of the women's movement, the men's liberation movement emerged in the mid-1970s (Messner, 1997). Men's liberation took up the discourse of sex roles and organized around the belief that the dominant sex/gender system oppressed both women and men. In particular, men's liberationists stressed the costs of masculinity for men. By the late 1970s, the men's liberation movement had transformed itself into two divergent branches. The antifeminist men's rights branch, which includes organizations such as Men's Rights, Inc. formed in 1977 and The Coalition of Free Men formed in 1980, espouses the view that men are the real victims of rigid sex roles, prostitution, pornography, divorce settlements, false rape and sexual harassment accusations, and even domestic violence. Men's rights groups also claim that the feminist movement is an attempt to cover up the fact that women, as a group, possess the "real" power (Messner, 1997).

On the other end of the political spectrum, the collective identity of the progressive profeminist men's branch embraces the discourse and politics of gender hierarchy in which women are viewed as institutionally oppressed and men are believed to enjoy structurally based power and privilege over women. There are two major ideological and political positions within the profeminist men's wing. Radical profeminist men's groups focus on male sexuality and sexual violence as a major cause of women's oppression, whereas socialist profeminist men rely on Marxist feminism to incorporate the interaction of class relations and gender relations in their analyses of women's oppression. Regardless of their differences, profeminist men's organizations, such as the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS), position themselves in opposition to the men's rights movement (Messner, 1997). Although men active in the profeminist men's movement are dedicated to improving women's status relative to men's, the size of profeminist men's mobilizations has decreased sharply from the 1970s to the present.

The political conservatism and antifeminism of the 1980s gave rise to new forms of mass mobilization by men, including the mythopoetic movement. Schwalbe (1996) describes the mythopoetic movement as a spiritual, anti-intellectual movement in which men together construct positive male identities by rediscovering and reclaiming their

inherent masculinity. Robert Bly, whose national best-seller *Iron John* helped popularize the mythopoetic movement in the United States, asserts that men in postindustrial society lack masculinity rituals to connect to their deep masculine natures, which are neither feminine nor hypermasculine (Bly, 1990). Mythopoetic weekend retreats into the woods, attended by thousands of men in the 1990s, serve as such masculinizing rituals. Schwalbe (1996) argues that the mythopoetic men's movement's gender politics and strategic anti-intellectualism allow participants to deny the structural basis of gender, which creates fundamental differences in the foundations of women's and men's problems. Other scholars contend that the mythopoetic movement is essentialist, unjustly dismisses feminism, and overlooks differences of race, class, and sexuality among men (Kimmel, 1995).

Another all-male movement grounded in overt gender politics is the Promise Keepers, an evangelical Christian men's movement that emerged in the 1990s. Mobilizing through traditionally masculine organizational forms, the highly centralized Promise Keepers has orchestrated numerous mass rallies that have drawn over 2½ million men to 61 weekend conferences in football stadiums around the country. Messner (1997) contends that similar to the muscular Christianity movement at the turn of the century, which gave rise to organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Promise Keepers, who are mostly white, middle-class, and heterosexual, represent a reassertion of essentialist views of women's and men's roles in the family and a reaction to the perceived national crisis of the feminization of the American male. However, Messner (1997) also recognizes that there are multiple contradictions embodied in the Promise Keepers movement. He maintains that the Promise Keepers can be understood, simultaneously, as Christian masculinity therapy in a confusing and anxiety-producing era, as an organized and highly politicized antifeminist, anti-gay backlash, and as a bargain struck with women to become responsible breadwinners, fathers, and husbands within the traditional family structure (Messner, 1997, p . 35).

The 1995 Million Man March, which attracted an estimated 800,000, mostly African-American men, to Washington, D.C. is another contemporary example of men's mobilization. Messner (1997) asserts that, like the Promise Keepers, the Million Man March contains contradictions and tensions that demonstrate, on the one hand, a positive and meaningful mobilization of men of African heritage to stand up for justice, and, on the other hand, a reassertion of a conservative essentialist view of the gender order. In all men's organized responses to shifting gender relations—and more broadly to larger social and economic changes—there are dimensions of the organizations, ideologies, identities, and strategies of the mobilizations that simultaneously challenge and reaffirm the dominant gender order.

8. CONCLUSION

There is a growing realization among scholars that theories of gender have tended to emphasize the maintenance and reproduction of gender inequality and to neglect, as Thorne puts it, "the countervailing processes of resistance, challenge, conflict, and change" (1995, p. 498). Over the past two centuries there have been significant changes in the lives of American women and men brought on, in part, by large-scale social and economic transformations. Although we recognize the significance of broad structural processes in creating gender change, we also believe that it is important to understand the role of human agents who promote changes in gender relations in response to the oppor-

tunities created by structural conditions (see Staggenborg, 1998 for a similar argument). Gender movements, including feminist movements, countermovements, men's movements, and even other social movements not specifically focused on gender, have played an important role in increasing women's participation in the workplace, politics, and education, as well as in pushing for men's greater participation in family life. Indeed, if one looks at the significance of gender to the collective identities of the social movements of the late 1990s—including the gay and lesbian movement, women's self-help, and the variety of men's movements—it is difficult to deny the centrality of gender for contemporary collective action. We cannot, however, fully understand the way gender figures into the dynamics of social movements, nor can we assess the contributions social movement actors make to shifts in gender relations, without a set of concepts that allows us to examine the interplay between gender and movements.

In tracing the role of social movements in the transformation of gender, we have sketched a framework that is useful for assessing the gender outcomes of collective action at multiple levels. Gender is constructed and reconstructed on various planes and our examination of social movements should be attentive to this multistory process. Multilevel theories of gender suggest that to understand the impact that a given social movement has on the gender order, we must look for evidence of changes in gender at the interactional, the structural, and the cultural levels (Connell, 1987; West & Zimmerman, 1987). This approach allows us to recognize that gender can change in a myriad of ways that do not necessarily subvert the institutional basis of gender. These theories also allow us to analyze the role of gender in social movement processes, specifically the way the clash of interests constituted within gender relations exerts influence on the opportunity structures, collective identities and ideologies, structures, and strategies that are the ingredients of collective challenges. Viewing social movements as engaged in the social construction of gender helps explain the contradictory elements displayed in many gender movements. For example, modern women's self-help movements challenge the hierarchy and practices of male-dominated medicine, but at the same time adopt mobilizing structures and strategies that assume that women's modes of relating are fundamentally different than men's, thereby reinforcing traditional notions of gender difference. It also allows us to recognize how support for changing gender relations, ironically, can come from antifeminist women's and men's movements.

Finally, we must also recognize that gender interacts with other systems of stratification, such as class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality, that mediate the collective identities, strategies, and structures of gender movements. Women's movements, as we have seen, have taken multiple forms throughout history, and women who have organized under the banner of feminism have often disagreed about the nature of gender discrimination and the best ways to meet women's needs and interests. Both outside and within dominant social institutions, feminists have challenged male dominance and connected gender inequality to a myriad of problems in their lives. Although there is a multiplicity of feminist mobilizations around the world, and even in the United States, there are also unifying ideas and common themes that have persisted within women's movements. By and large, most feminist movements are focused on challenging structurally based gender stratification and gender oppression at various levels and spheres of interaction. Feminist identity, then, is one way that women express their common interests. Connecting feminist identity to movement organizations and the larger political and historical context offers insight into the changing meaning of feminism. We believe that fuller integration of the theoretical literatures on gender and social movements will advance our understanding of

gender change processes by making explicit the role of social movements in challenging and affirming the dominant gender order.

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