THE DERADICALIZATION OF COLUMBUS, OHIO’S ANTIRAPE MOVEMENT, 1972-2002

DISSERTATION

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the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
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* * * * *

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The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate how both the structural process of institutionalization and the internal processes of identity conflicts have a deep and perhaps irrevocable impact on the deradicalization of the antirape social movement. I studied this issue by conducting two case studies of antirape social movement organizations in Columbus, Ohio during the time period of 1972-2002. I expected to find in this research that the deradicalization of the antirape social movement has led both to a stronger focus on the delivery of crisis and intervention services, as well as to a decreased emphasis on the broad (i.e., social change) goals of the radical feminist movement as conceived in the early 1970s. While much work on the antirape social movement thus far has tended to focus either on the effects that the external political context has on the institutionalization of rape crisis centers or on the successes of rape crisis centers that are already institutionalized, this dissertation takes that work a step further. Rather than focusing solely on institutional-level processes within antirape organizations, I also analyze both individual- and societal-level contexts. By assessing
longitudinally the relative importance of these factors in influencing the lifecycles of antirape social movement organizations, as well as by incorporating a feminist methodological perspective throughout the analysis, I explicitly link the bodies of literature on gender and social movements. I show in this dissertation how identity conflicts within antirape social movement organizations (over issues of racial/ethnic, sexual, and feminist identity) occur not just because of individual-level conflicts, but also because of the external social, cultural, and political contexts in which rape crisis centers are situated at different points in time. The major finding of the dissertation, which I discuss as being contrary to my hypothesis, is that these identity conflicts were as a whole both more salient and more devastating in the institutionalized antirape organization than they were in the grassroots antirape organization that I analyzed.
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INTRODUCTION

Description

This dissertation examines the evolution of the antirape movement in Columbus, Ohio over three decades (1972-2002) that saw a waxing and waning of intensely conspicuous feminist political activity across the United States. The bulk of the project focuses on two distinct but related antirape social movement organizations (SMOs) that served as the primary rape crisis centers in Columbus during this thirty-year time span: Women Against Rape (WAR), a radical feminist organization that was formed with the objective of eradicating sexual violence, and the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio (SARNCO), a politically neutral organization within a hospital system whose goal is to provide crisis services to rape survivors. Rather than being a primarily descriptive study that contributes to our understanding of what antirape social movement organizations look like, as much of the literature on this topic has been thus far (e.g., Largen 1985; Ledray 2001; Schmitt and Martin 1999), this dissertation is designed to improve upon chiefly descriptive work in several ways. By incorporating multiple levels of analysis (e.g., sociocultural, organizational, and individual/small group), using explicitly feminist theoretical and methodological tools, employing a longitudinal model, and investigating female antirape workers’ shifting personal and collective identities over time, this study will make much-needed inroads into our examination of the antirape movement and where it is headed in the
near future. Additionally, this dissertation’s integration of the feminist methodological stance that social science research should contain a “social change” component (e.g., Cancian 1992; Naples 2003; Taylor 1998) will allow me to discuss those elements that are necessary for antirape social movement organizations to achieve success with their stated goals.

Outline

The dissertation consists of five chapters. In the first chapter, there are two main sections. I first provide a brief contextual history of the feminist social movement that took place in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I then discuss how the antirape social movement arose from the broader feminist movement, both across the nation and specifically in Columbus, Ohio. This part of the chapter relies almost exclusively on a review of the literature on the feminist and antirape social movements, although I do include some more detailed information about Columbus that participants in these movements shared with me during interviews for this project. In the second part of this chapter, I describe my research question and the purpose of this study. I discuss the general deradicalization of the antirape movement over time and present some of the causes and consequences of this deradicalization. I frame my research question within the literature, arguing why it is important to ask not just how structural- or organizational-level institutionalization has contributed to the deradicalization of the antirape movement, as many other studies on the antirape social movement organizations have done (Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998; Campbell and Martin 2001; Collins and Whalen 1989; Largen 1985;
Ledray 2001; O'Sullivan 1978), but also how individual- or small group-level identity conflicts have played a part in this deradicalization. Finally, I illustrate the sociological significance of this project, explaining how its theoretical and analytical—rather than primarily descriptive—nature improves upon previous work in this field.

The second chapter of the dissertation focuses first on the variety of methods I use in this study and then on a description of the data sets I use to analyze the research question. I frame the methods discussion within a feminist perspective, drawing on the work of Cancian (1992), Naples (2003), Reinharz (1979), and Taylor (1998) to detail how elements of feminist research are present throughout my work. I ground my methods within the literature, explaining why qualitative methods—semistandardized interviews, content analysis, historical and archival analysis, and, to as lesser degree, participant observation—are most fruitful for answering my research questions. Both social movement organizations I am studying, Women Against Rape (WAR) and the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio (SARNCO), which can be loosely described as the “grassroots” organization and the “institutionalized” organization, lend themselves well to qualitative and feminist study, as there are many women from diverse backgrounds with salient emotional, intellectual, and practical stories to tell about their involvement in these organizations. These stories, as shared with me through a series of interviews with various women involved in the antirape movement in Columbus during the three decades under observation, comprise the primary data set I use for this study. In the second part of this chapter, I describe these
women and the interviews we conducted together, as well as the other types of data that help round out this project, such as meeting minutes, organizational newsletters, fliers announcing public events, informational and educational pamphlets, and grant proposals.

The purpose of the third chapter is to make some general yet fundamental comparisons between the two antirape social movement organizations in Columbus, WAR and SARNCO. I do this first by examining the “who, what, when, and where” of each organization’s formation and services, and then by investigating various concepts associated with social movement organizations—namely ideology, goals, organizational structure, strategies, and tactics—with a focus on the analytical differences between WAR and SARNCO. Rather than analyzing each of these organizations as an individual entity that evolved independently, it is critical to analyze the two organizations in tandem so that more appropriate and provocative comparisons can be made. For example, comparing the two organizations side-by-side rather than in separate sections highlights the stark disparities of the organizations’ vastly different ideologies, as well as some of the unexpectedly similar characteristics of their members. The comparisons I make in this chapter comprise necessary background information for the bulk of the study’s analysis, which I perform in the next chapter.

Chapter four contains an analysis of the two major processes that I argue have contributed to the deradicalization of the antirape movement in Columbus, Ohio: institutionalization and identity conflicts. Many studies on the development of the
antirape social movement in the United States and the social movement organizations that make up the movement have examined institutionalization in some level of detail (Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998; Campbell and Martin 2001; Collins and Whalen 1989; Largen 1985; Ledray 2001; O’Sullivan 1978); however, few studies have examined identity in the way I do. Therefore, while I discuss the elements of institutionalization that have played a part in causing the antirape movement in Columbus, Ohio to become less radical over time, such as changes in funding sources, increased professionalization, structural transformations, a growing emphasis on interorganizational support, and a more prominent focus on service delivery, my intent is to concentrate the better part of the chapter upon identity since it has been studied far less within the context of the antirape movement. The identity section of this chapter has two foci: collective identity and identity conflicts. First, the importance of collective identity in the formation, operation, and “success” of social movements and social movement organizations is well-documented, so this part of the chapter discusses the creation and empowering nature of collective identity, as well as the deterioration and even lack of collective identity at various stages within WAR and SARNCO. Second, and perhaps just as important despite their relative lack of attention in the literature, identity conflicts are the individual-level processes that I hope to show have had a deradicalizing effect on the antirape social movement organizations. I discuss identity conflicts in terms of feminist identity, racial/ethnic identity, and sexual identity to see if these conflicts have had simply a destabilizing effect on the SMOs in question (i.e., causing them to become weaker) or if the effect
was actually deradicalizing to the organizations (i.e., causing them to become less politically oriented).

In the fifth chapter, I conclude this dissertation by highlighting the theoretical and sociological contributions of my analysis to the fields of gender and social movements, its implications for further study of the antirape social movement generally, and its suggestions about the future of the antirape movement in Columbus, Ohio specifically. I begin by presenting a synopsis of my major findings regarding the deradicalization of the antirape social movement in Columbus, Ohio as it occurred within the two major rape crisis centers that served the city during the time frame of 1972 to 2002. I then argue that the sociological significance of this project lies in its investigation not only of the socio-cultural and political environments in which antirape social movement organizations function and of the organizational contexts in which institutionalization has occurred, but also of the individual- and group-level identity processes that can lead to organizational deradicalization. While the identity conflicts discussed in the fourth chapter are my most valuable contribution to our collective understanding of antirape social movement organizations, I also show that the overtly feminist analysis I perform in this study is an effective tool for disputing the notion that studies focused primarily on gender (or even “gendered”) issues are too constricted and too individually or psychologically biased for a general sociological audience to appreciate. However, while I contend that this project is important for substantive, methodological, and practical reasons, I also realize that there are many shortcomings in the research I have conducted. Therefore, I include a section in this
chapter discussing both these limitations and my proposed remedies for them, as well as directions that future research on antirape social movement organizations could take. Finally, the last section of the concluding chapter contains a discussion of what the antirape movement in Columbus might look in the next few years, including their ideas about whether deradicalization is inevitable and whether reradicalization is possible. As a longtime antirape advocate and a former volunteer at the contemporary antirape social movement organization in Columbus that I study, SARNCO, I incorporate my own thoughts into this discussion, being careful to examine my various biases that surely surface throughout the analysis. This conclusion will demonstrate that, although there are no explicitly radical feminist antirape social movement organizations currently in operation in Columbus, radical feminist work to stop sexual violence against women, while perhaps not formally organized, is definitely continuing.
CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

*Historical Background of Feminist and Antirape Social Movements in the United States*

**The National Feminist and Antirape Social Movements of the 1970s**

In 1920, following many years of tireless work by suffragists, the United States Congress granted women the right to vote with the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Once this huge hurdle for women’s rights was achieved, many people mistakenly assumed that the “women’s movement” that had been formed to fight on behalf of this issue was no longer necessary. However, vital recent scholarship has shown that the women’s movement did indeed continue to exist after the attainment of this goal, although in less visible and vocal forms, in “abeyance structures” that emerged to contain activists who no longer had a “unifying goal” to keep them mobilized and in the public eye (Taylor 1989: 762-3). These abeyance structures consisted of women’s rights interest groups that sustained their generally unpopular feminist activities and ideologies through such practices as the demand for extensive volunteer commitment, the creation of a supportive feminist culture, and a strictly exclusive membership. They helped women communicate their message of
the continued need for work on behalf of women’s rights, while also serving the additional purpose of allowing women to participate in communities that would in time become sympathetic to a second large-scale wave of pro-woman social movement activity in the United States (Taylor 1989). The resource mobilization perspective on social movements (McCarthy and Zald 1977) is often used to support the notion that once the amalgam of appropriate timing, sufficient financial and human resources, competent mobilization, and of course, critical social issues facing women were able to come together, the second wave of the twentieth-century women’s movement would be ready to rise up and take the form of a full-fledged social movement.

Conventional wisdom tends to mark the start of “second-wave” feminism in the United States somewhere between the publication of Betty Friedan’s seminal book *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, which gave a voice to women who had never before articulated—or in many cases, even been aware of—the numerous social oppressions still looming throughout their lives, and the formation of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966 by Ms. Friedan and others, because these events brought together women from various walks of life who could focus on social problems they had in common (Bevacqua 2001; Freeman 1975; Taylor 1989). The mass organization of women across the country may have seemed sudden to some, but it was supported in large part by the underlying abeyance structures that had lain in wait for decades. The large number of women who tended to focus on issues such as workplace equality and the Equal Rights Amendment came to be known as the
“liberal” branch because of their emphasis on working within legal, political, educational, and other institutions in order to improve women’s status. Another group of women, however, who had originally organized over issues such as civil rights (racial equality in particular) and the military conflict in Vietnam, came together in protest against the sexist conditions they experienced in these movements; they were subsequently labeled the “radical” branch of the women’s movement because they stressed less mainstream strategies, such as dismantling the institutionalized settings within which the liberal feminists were working, to end women’s oppression at the hands of male-dominated structures (Freeman 1975; Renzetti and Curran 1999).

While it is now recognized this “liberal versus radical” feminist dichotomy is somewhat inaccurate, in that there was much more cooperation occurring between the two groups than initially realized, the distinction served many feminists of the second wave well because it helped them to crystallize the ways in which they wanted to be involved, if at all, in social movement activity benefiting women (Bevacqua 2001; Freeman 1975).

During the second “cycle of protest” of the twentieth century (Scott 1993; Tarrow 1997), a major development of the U.S. women’s movement was the birth of the antirape social movement. This subset of the women’s movement, with its roots firmly entrenched in radical feminist politics, brought much-needed attention to the issue of rape as a “mechanism for female social control” (Schechter 1982: 34). As a highly politicized social movement in and of itself, the antirape movement was successful in combining two major aspects of radical feminist ideology. First, the
general ideology of radical feminism is that women are subjugated to men in virtually all aspects of their lives because of the patriarchal structures and relationships that are such a deeply ingrained part of our society. The ultimate goal for radical feminism is therefore to overthrow this patriarchal system once women become educated enough, angry enough, and empowered enough to do so (Freeman 1975; Hole and Levine 1971). Second, taking this notion of radical feminism a step further, activists in the antirape movement argue that “violence is a particular form of domination based on social relationships of unequal power” (Schechter 1982: 34) in which “sexual assault is tolerated…women are blamed for being raped…and male sexual privilege goes unquestioned” (Bevacqua 2000: 9; see also Collins and Whalen 1989; Largen 1985; Rose 1977; Schechter 1982; Scott 1993). With this conceptualization of sexual violence, many early antirape activists sought to unite these two ideologies into what Garner calls a “universalizing discourse” (1996: 19) by arguing that the end of male-dominated hierarchies and violence would be beneficial to both women and men. Thus, once radical feminists could topple the patriarchy, rape would cease and both women and men would be better for it (Rose 1977; Scott 1993).

When antirape activists began forming rape crisis centers in cities all across the United States in 1972, a critical and enduring element of the movement was created. These rape crisis centers, the social movement organizations of the antirape social movement, were often started following the successes of grassroots consciousness-raising (“CR”) groups where women could confess their stories of sexual assault to other women (Bevacqua 2001; Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998; Campbell and
Martin 2001; Largen 1985; Matthews 1994; Rose 1977; Schechter 1982; Scott 1993; Whittier 1995). While few scholars of the antirape social movement argue explicitly for the operation of the concept of the sociological imagination (Mills 1959) in the development of CR groups and then of rape crisis centers (but see Bevacqua 2001 and Largen 1985 for clear implications of this argument), the sociological imagination obviously was at play. Once women realized through the phenomenon of their CR group participation that sexual assault was not merely a personal trouble, but in fact a disturbingly widespread public issue, many women chose to deal with that realization by channeling their energies toward the foundation of rape crisis centers that they hoped would stem the problem of rape as a public and social issue. The rape crisis centers of the early 1970s were generally established by activists in the “younger” (Freeman 1975) branch of the feminist movement who were armed with such hope. As described by Freeman (1975), the characteristics commonly shared by social movement organizations within this branch included “a conscious lack of formal structure, an emphasis on participation by everyone, sharing of tasks, and the exclusion of men” (1975: 103), while the activities of such organizations tended to center on “educational work and service projects” (1975: 51). From the very beginning of the movement, these “radical” (as opposed to “reformist” or “liberal”) tendencies (Collins and Whalen 1989; Freeman 1975; Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985) in some ways lent themselves well to the kinds of work antirape organizations needed to do, but often they were also a source of shaky relations both within individual antirape organizations (Campbell and Martin 2001), as well as between

In addition to the ideologically-based organizing principles of these early antirape social movement organizations, many of the strategies and tactics that rape crisis centers adopted were outgrowths of their radical feminist beginnings as well (Campbell and Martin 2001; Fried 1994; Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985; Scott 1993; Whittier 1995). These strategies and tactics were typically far more “in your face” than other, more characteristically liberal strategies and tactics, such as using institutional mechanisms to lobby for legislative reform or to call for change in the medical establishment’s treatment of rape survivors (Largen 1985; Rose 1977). For example, the strategies, or “general approaches” (Campbell and Martin 2001: 237) most often employed by volunteers in antirape social movement organizations included educating both vulnerable populations and the public at large about rape as a social problem, creating safe spaces for women that prohibited men’s participation and involvement, and teaching women and children how to empower themselves against rape (Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998; Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985; Scott 1993). Similarly, the tactics, or “specific activities” (Campbell and Martin 2001: 237) that women volunteering for rape crisis centers used to bring attention to sexual assault as a public issue involved such actions as public “speak-outs”/demonstrations/marches/protests/rallies, teaching and learning self-defense and rape prevention strategies, passing out fliers and educational materials in areas where rapes were known to have occurred, and holding demonstrations outside the homes
and workplaces of both convicted and alleged rapists (Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998; Campbell and Martin 2001; Largen 1985; Rose 1977). However, despite the formative ideologies, strategies, and tactics initially employed in antirape social movement organizations, with their heavy emphasis on revolutionary social change, the character of many rape crisis centers has evolved over time to such a degree that the radical feminist political activity behind much of the antirape movement has in many cases been subordinated, set aside, or even destroyed by both structural and internal forces (Bevacqua 2000; Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998; Campbell and Martin 2001; Martin, DiNitto, Byington, and Maxwell 1992; Matthews 1994; Schmitt and Martin 1999).

There are various processes through which this “deradicalization,” or lessening/loss of a radical feminist ideology, can manifest itself, such as shifting organizational emphasis from community action to direct services, or de-emphasizing the social change orientation in community action work (Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985; Matthews 1994). This deradicalization appears to have two primary causes: first, the increasing institutionalization (e.g., the adoption of antirape organizations into more “mainstream” organizations such as hospitals and community mental health centers, an increased reliance on federal-, state-, and institutional-level financial support in place of community- and individual-level support) that many rape crisis centers have experienced, due in large part both to professionalization and to the need for external funding and interorganizational support; and second, the destabilizing effects of conflicts over the racial/ethnic, sexual, and feminist identities of both rape
crisis workers and the survivors they serve. The first of these causes, the institutionalization of rape crisis centers, is linked to deradicalization because certain types of political activity that are welcomed within radical feminist organizations are not possible within organizations structured by non-radical ideologies and goals (Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985). On the other hand, the identity conflicts that occur within rape crisis centers are associated with deradicalization because diversification of membership, often a positive change intended to create a larger and differently capable pool of rape crisis volunteers (Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985; Matthews 1989), can lead both to the increasing “centralization” of an organization’s directive and to a degree of conflict over the goals, strategies, and membership of a movement such that the most radical members will burn out or drop out of the organization or even leave the movement entirely (Fried 1994).

**The Antirape Social Movement in Columbus, Ohio**

As discussed extensively by Whittier (1995), Columbus in the early 1970s was in many ways typical of numerous other cities around the country in which rape crisis centers were forming. In Columbus, the feminist movement “emerged from an ad hoc state commission on the status of women and the New Left” (Whittier 1995: 27) a few years later than it developed in larger cities like Chicago, Seattle, Washington, D.C., and New York City (Freeman 1975). During the 1960s and 1970s when the feminist movement was gaining strength in cities such as these, both Ohio and its capital, Columbus, were governed by predominantly conservative Republican males (Whittier 1995), including the popular four-term Governor Jim Rhodes (1963-1971 and 1975-
1983) and the Republican-dominated Ohio Supreme Court. This conservative political climate led some Ohio feminists to form their own non-officially sanctioned commission on women’s status in 1969 through which they could lead an attack on gender inequality via the more “liberal” strategies of legislative and policy reform. However, this same climate led other feminists, primarily those in and around the Ohio State University community, to align themselves with other Civil Rights movement and New Left organizations. Because of these affiliations, these feminists were more prone to engage in more “radical” feminist activities such as consciousness-raising groups and anti-discrimination strikes and demonstrations (Whittier 1995). Through their joint participation in these types of activities, radical feminists formed Columbus-OSU Women’s Liberation in 1970, whose consciousness-raising efforts subsequently led to the formation of the Women’s Action Collective (WAC) in 1971 (Whittier 1995). It was from WAC that the first antirape social movement organization in Columbus, Women Against Rape (WAR) was born in 1972. For more than twenty years WAR persisted as an organization, doing its best to remain true to its radical feminist roots, but eventually it succumbed to both internal and external pressures.
Although WAR formally ceased to exist in the early- to mid-1990s, it had successfully established that there was a genuine need for a variety of rape crisis services for survivors—in addition to other, more typically radical antirape social movement activities—in Columbus. At least partially in response to WAR’s floundering and eventual death as a social movement organization, another antirape social movement organization that was vastly different from WAR was created. This group, the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio (SARNCO), is an organization characteristic of many rape crisis centers in existence today; it is far more institutionalized than WAR ever became, and it officially does not have an explicit radical feminist ideology as the driving force behind it. SARNCO is essentially the third—and by far the most successful—incarnation of antirape advocates’ attempts to create a more formal, better supported, and explicitly less radical (or even politically neutral), rape crisis center in Columbus, Ohio. The establishment of SARNCO was in many ways typical of the evolution of the antirape social movement in the United States that began in the late 1970s, in that radical feminism was essentially pulled out of the formula used to determine how rape crisis centers as antirape social movement organizations could best serve rape survivors (Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985;

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1 There is a significant amount of disagreement among former members of WAR about when exactly the organization came to an end. There are two important questions that this disagreement produces. First, at what point can a social movement organization be declared to be “dead?” Is it when financial or other resources are depleted, when members no longer do the necessary work, when demoralizing events for group members occur, or when a majority of activists declare an ending point? All of these events took place within WAR between 1994 and 1996, yet different members cite different circumstances as causing the death of the organization. Second, does there even need to be a formal “death” for a social movement organization to stop existing, or can it just fade away until no one recognizes it as a viable or relevant group? Even those WAR members who cannot agree on when the organization’s final days were do agree that WAR no longer functions as an antirape social movement organization.
Largen 1985; Matthews 1989; Schmitt and Martin 1999; Simon 1982). There were several interconnected reasons for the blatant removal of an official radical feminist ideology from the antirape social movement in Columbus, despite the personal radical feminist beliefs that many antirape advocates still held, and I will explore these reasons as the heart of this project.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this dissertation is to answer the question of how both the structural-level process of institutionalization and the individual-level processes of identity conflicts have a deep and possibly irrevocable impact on the deradicalization of antirape social movement organizations. I argue from the results of this research that the deradicalization of the antirape movement within the particular community of Columbus, Ohio, has led both to a stronger focus on the delivery of crisis and intervention services within a highly institutionalized rape crisis center, as well as to a decreased emphasis on the broad (i.e., social change) goals of the radical feminist movement as conceived in the early 1970s. While the groundbreaking work on the antirape movement thus far has tended to focus either on the effects that the external political context has on the institutionalization of rape crisis centers (Matthews 1994) or on the successes of rape crisis centers that are already institutionalized (Schmitt and Martin 1999), this study builds on that work in two ways. First, I show how identity conflicts within rape crisis centers (over issues of racial/ethnic, sexual, and feminist identity) occur not just because of individual-level conflicts, but also because of the external social, cultural, and political contexts in which rape crisis centers are situated.
at different points in time. Second, I shift the focus away from institutionalization as the major reason for the deradicalization of antirape social movement organizations and move it onto identity conflicts. Rather than focusing solely on institutional-level processes within antirape organizations, as many other studies in this field have tended to do, I also analyze individual- and societal-level contexts in this project. By assessing longitudinally the relative strength of external versus internal factors in determining the organizational characteristics—and ultimately the life course—of antirape social movement organizations, as well as by incorporating a feminist perspective throughout the analysis, I explicitly link the bodies of literature on gender and social movements (see Taylor 1999).

My initial hypotheses for this project are: 1) that the processes of institutionalization and identity conflicts have profound effects not only on the deradicalization of antirape organizations, but ultimately on their operation and survival; and 2) that identity conflicts are far more salient in the radical feminist than in the institutionalized antirape social movement organization because of the heavy emphasis feminism places on both personal and collective identity. My background knowledge on this subject indicates that as antirape social movement organizations become compelled to rely on various external sources for their funding, which is one of the processes of institutionalization, they almost necessarily grow less radical in practice. Additionally, as members of these organizations experience tensions among themselves regarding racial/ethnic, sexual, and feminist identities, their sense of collective identity is eroded, thus leading to shifts in organizational character. By analyzing the effects of
institutionalization and identity conflicts on deradicalization, I hope to expand social 
scientists’ knowledge of how social movements and the organizations that compose them 
evolve because of both structural and internal forces.

**Causes of the Deradicalization of the Antirape Social Movement**

*Institutionalization*

Theorizing about the causes of institutionalization within social movements 
and social movement organizations is nothing new (e.g., McCarthy and Zald 1977; 
Zald and Ash 1966), but theoretical discussions of the causes of institutionalization 
within the antirape movement are oddly lacking. Perhaps this is because, to many 
scholars, the more interesting or important question regarding antirape social 
movement organizations involves a descriptive rather than an analytic explanation of 
how institutionalization occurs. Without much substantive evidence from scientists in 
this field, however, it is difficult to argue this point. Some authors who address the 
thorny theoretical issues of institutionalization within rape crisis centers have used 
social constructionist arguments to support the position that an organization is what its 
members make it, and so characteristics that cause an organization to be considered 
institutionalized exist only because the organization’s members want it to be defined 
as such. In this conceptualization, institutionalization is a welcome process that 
usually unfolds along the following lines: rape crisis centers start out by blaming legal 
and medical organizations for the poor care of rape survivors, proceed to defining 
these organizations as external “others” with which they have little in common, and 
eventually come to accept them as organizations within their spheres of influence with
which they can work toward shared goals (Martin, DiNitto, Byington, and Maxwell 1992). Other scholars who attempt a theoretical explanation for the institutionalization of antirape organizations discuss the influences of organizational cultures in combination with both resource mobilization and new social movement approaches (Fried 1994). From this perspective, cultures created within organizations develop over time, and some changes may cause divisiveness among group members. These divisions, especially if they have the potential to fulfill individual goals more for some members than for others, can lead to changes in organizational structure that favor the newly empowered group members. In her case study of a rape crisis center, Fried (1994) found that those volunteers preferring a service orientation over a political one were more likely to stay in the group for a longer period of time, with the more politically focused members who dropped out citing the internal division between the two organizational subcultures as a reason for leaving. Finally, another sociologist who has studied rape crisis centers as antirape social movement organizations (Simon 1982), employing resource mobilization theory as well as Michels’ conceptualization of oligarchic organizations, actually found institutionalization to be a positive force within a rape crisis organization. This was in large part because of one particular leader who rose to the top position of power in the organization by using “feminist and socialist principles, administrative competence, and inspirational talent” (1982: 488). How frequently an ideal situation like this occurs—in which a leader brings appropriately feminist (and other) resources to the table, as well as in which the chosen leader is clearly an antidote to the Peter
Principle—is unknown. However, this evidence does show that the directive that radical feminist antirape advocates unquestioningly reject the institutionalization of rape crisis centers is not always necessary.

Many significant studies have described the process of institutionalization in antirape social movement organizations in great detail (e.g., Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998; Campbell and Martin 2001; Collins and Whalen 1989; Matthews 1994). Since institutionalization as a cause of deradicalization is not the primary focus of this paper, but rather conflicts over identity, only the most important ideas regarding institutionalization are discussed here. First, the major reason that many rape crisis centers came to cooperate with other, less radical organizations, or even to follow a path of deradicalization independently, was their need for financial support (Collins and Whalen 1989; Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985; Koss 1993; Largen 1985). Although some rape crisis centers were able to avoid certain types of funding problems by starting off as or by becoming institutionalized (Schmitt and Martin 1999; Simon 1982; but see also Matthews 1989), other centers did not want to take the risk of being co-opted by, for example, the medical, legal, or social service institutions from which they might receive funds (Campbell and Martin 2001; see Schechter 1982: 41-43 for a discussion of funding and co-optation in the antirape movement). As grassroots organizations, these rape crisis centers were often critical of the more mainstream bureaucratic organizations that deal with female rape survivors (Schechter 1982), and so they wanted to remain as independent as possible in order to infuse their work with survivors with their radical feminist philosophies. On the other hand, some
rape crisis centers chose to affiliate themselves with other institutional support
networks in order to create a broader base of support for rape survivors (Gornick,
Burt, and Pittman 1985; Martin, DiNitto, Byington, and Maxwell 1992; O’Sullivan
1977; Schmitt and Martin 1999). This ordinarily occurred at the cost of some of each
rape crisis center’s ability to put a radical feminist ideology into practice, although
there were occasional instances of other organizations cooperating with the feminist-
based ideology of the antirape movement (Martin, DiNitto, Byington, and Maxwell
1992; Matthews 1989; Schmitt and Martin 1999). A second cause of
institutionalization is professionalization, which is related to the need for funding
because it was often a requirement for receiving certain monies. While some antirape
organizations rejected funds that came with seemingly unpleasant strings attached,
others changed their strategies to employ social workers, psychologists, nurses, police
officers, and other trained professionals so that their organizations would look more
legitimate in the eyes of potential money granters (Campbell and Martin 2001; Collins
and Whalen 1989; Fried 1994; King and Webb 1981; Largen 1985; Ledray 2001;
O’Sullivan 1978). This professionalization represented a huge shift from the staffs of
rape crisis centers consisting almost entirely of volunteers, which was characteristic of
the antirape organizations early in the movement, and it also tended to generate more
hierarchical—or even oligarchic—organizational structures when some antirape
workers had, took, or were given more authority, education, influence, pay, work,
experience, etc. Professionalization within antirape organizations also signaled a
change from the earlier “in your face” way of doing things for many rape crisis
centers, as they became more accountable for their policies, positions, and activities, and thus opened the door even wider for institutionalization to occur.

Identity Conflicts

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1981) posits that conflicts within or between groups arise when there are in-group versus out-group categorizations that cause people’s self-concepts to be negatively affected (Stryker 2000). Self-identification is in part predicated on the basis of one’s membership in socially defined groups (or categories), and thus social identity is a social-psychological concept that straddles micro and meso levels of analysis and blurs the lines between individual and collective identity. It is a part of self-concept that comes from a person’s knowledge of being in a particular social group, along with the significance that s/he associates with that group membership (Tajfel 1981). When people in a given group compare their status to the status of people in another group, a positive or negative sense of self-concept arises. If people’s self-concepts are negatively affected by their out-group status, one option that is available to them is to try collectively to improve their group’s status (Klandermans and de Weerd 2000; Tajfel and Turner 1986). In the case of antirape movement activists, Social Identity Theory can help explain how their self-concepts and perceived in-group or out-group statuses change over time. For example, women of color (traditionally defined as an out-group in the United States when compared to white women) have certainly come to improve their status within rape crisis centers over the last thirty years, although whether they now constitute an in-group warrants further investigation. Less clear are the situations of women along the
lesbian/heterosexual and feminist/non-feminist continuums. The reason is that women in different positions have been more privileged than others at various points in time. For example, lesbians may have had the greatest strength when rape crisis centers first started being founded, as radical feminists also would have had, but today straight women and more moderate or even non-feminists seem to be the in-groups in rape crisis work. These changing definitions of out-group and in-group statuses are sources of conflict at both the individual and group level, and thus are a fundamental focus in this paper.

New Social Movement theory, most easily defined as a meso level theory, argues that collective identity, essentially the definition of “we” versus “they,” is of central importance in social movement formation (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1997; Melucci 1996; Snow and McAdam 2000). Not only does a sense of collective identity, which goes beyond individual-level identity, aid in the formation of social movements, but its construction and development are actually fundamental activities within such movements (Melucci 1995; Snow and McAdam 2000; Stryker 2000). I am extending the argument about the necessity of collective identity development in this paper to include the formation of social movement organizations—not just social movements in general—and the way potential members choose to participate in them.

A more precise definition of collective identity is “the shared definition of a group that derives from its members’ common interests, experiences, and solidarity” (Taylor and Whittier 1992). There are three specific components of collective identity that Taylor and Whittier discuss in their study of lesbian feminism (1997) that are also
applicable to the study of antirape social movement organizations: boundaries, consciousness, and negotiation. Briefly, boundaries highlight the differences in characteristics between members of the antirape organization and everyone else (e.g., woman, feminist, lesbian, rape survivor, radical feminist, etc. versus man, heterosexual, conservative, non-feminist, etc.). Second, consciousness is what the organization’s members use to define themselves as opposed to patriarchy. Given the ideology of the antirape movement that I described earlier, it can be seen quite clearly that the collective actors who subscribe to that ideology and who are involved in these antirape organizations—or at least the radical feminist organization examined in this paper—would argue that their discontent rests in the contemporary political and social climate in which they live rather than within themselves. Finally, negotiation is the process by which activists bring attention to the elements of their political activism that are not ordinarily recognized as social movement tactics. For example, some members of antirape social movement organizations have demonstrated tactics that are very similar to those used by lesbian feminists in Taylor and Whittier’s study [1997]), such as using terms like “womyn” and “rape survivor” rather than “woman/women” and “rape victim,” organizing with a collective, non-hierarchical structure, and not following norms of how women are “supposed” to look, act, and dress (e.g., by not shaving their legs and/or by wearing loose or non-feminine clothing). Ties to radical feminism are quite obvious in these examples, but perhaps even more important, these three components of collective identity can work together to give the members of an antirape social movement organization a sense of community. This is necessary to the
antirape social movement organization not just on a pragmatic level, but also because collective actors need a strong sense of collective identity to remain committed to the social movement as a whole (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1997). However, what is most important for the purposes of this paper is whether any sense of collective identity among the social movement actors in the organizations I study was eroded because of conflict over personal (racial/ethnic, sexual, and feminist) identities. A collective definition of “feminist” or “antirape advocate,” for example, is necessary in order for there to be a sense of collective identity, which in turn is essential for the in-group/out-group sense of “we” versus “they” and its implications for antirape action.

Another factor that has been recognized as contributing to tension among staffers and volunteers at rape crisis centers are the diverse individual racial/ethnic, sexual, and feminist identities of their workers as well as of the survivors whom they serve (Collins and Whalen 1989; Koss 1993; Matthews 1989; Scott 1993; see also Hercus 1999 and Ostrander 1999 for discussions of identity and of gender and race politics within other types of feminist social movement organizations). It has been recognized that early rape crisis centers were oftentimes not able to cater well to the needs of sexual assault survivors who were women of color (because of logistical concerns, cultural biases and stereotypes, inadequate resources, and so on), and so population-specific centers began to emerge and existing rape crisis centers began purposefully to recruit members of certain racial/ethnic minority groups in order to address this problem (Matthews 1989; Matthews 1994; Scott 1993; see also White 1999 for a discussion of African American feminists participating in antirape
movement activity without the support of any specific rape crisis center). In one case, a strategy that caused rape crisis centers in Los Angeles to become more inclusive in terms of race/ethnicity was adherence to guidelines for receiving state funding. Government funding, normally expected to be a conservatizing influence on radical antirape movement organizations, actually facilitated the development both of rape crisis centers run by and for persons of racial/ethnic minorities and of centers that placed more women with these cultural backgrounds in positions of power (Bevacqua 2001; Matthews 1989).

As for the issue of sexual identity, tensions between straight women and lesbian women have always existed not just within the radical feminist branch of the women’s movement, but in all branches (Phelan 1989; Taylor and Rupp 1993; Taylor and Whittier 1997). For example, within one of the rape crisis centers the current study investigates, some lesbian women either were or perceived themselves to have been more committed to the group’s radical feminist ideology than heterosexual women were. This viewpoint obviously could have the potential to cause the non-lesbian women to feel both judged by and alienated from the lesbian women in the organization, especially given the organization’s radical feminist ideological stance on equality and diversity (see also Matthews 1989). At the same time, these attitudes could also contribute to making the lesbian women feel that they were more committed to the goals of the antirape movement in general, and perhaps unfairly burdened in trying to meet them, than the straight women were. Therefore, although researchers have examined this issue of sexual identity within the antirape movement
far less than they have looked at concerns over racial/ethnic identity, its consequences for the ability of rape crisis centers to serve survivors are easily just as critical because of the high degree of discomfort or displeasure experienced by many non-lesbian and lesbian women working within antirape social movement organizations.

Finally, closely tied in with the issue sexual identity is that of feminist identity. While some studies actually ignore the explicitly feminist basis of grassroots antirape work (Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998), most others recognize that a stated feminist ideology is at the core of much of the work antirape social movement organizations do (Fried 1994; Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985; Martin, DiNitto, Byington, and Maxwell 1992; Matthews 1989; Matthews 1994; see also Thomas 1999 for a discussion of ideology within other feminist social movement organizations). Fissures within antirape social movement organizations that are based on issues of whether one is a feminist, the degree to which one identifies with feminism, and the type or style of feminism that one practices (e.g., socialist, liberal, cultural, radical) can run deep, and when these debates are combined with schisms over sexual identity, the results can be explosive. The popularly held notions that “the only true feminist is a lesbian” and that “all lesbians are radical feminists” (Phelan 1989; Wolf 2000) may contribute to the attitudes that antirape workers hold toward one another, whether positive or negative. Additionally, the identification of oneself as feminist or not

2 Herbert Haines’ (1984) concept of a “negative radical flank effect” may be applicable here, in the sense that both non-feminists and moderate feminists (e.g., liberal feminists, who tend to control large scale feminist organizations such as NOW) might try to crowd the more radical feminists out of antirape social movement organizations because of their fear of losing support for their cause because of its association with radical feminism (and, perhaps more important, radical lesbian feminism).
could have broader political ramifications for those working in different positions within rape crisis centers. Finally, the theory versus the practice of choosing whether to identify as feminist may even be a moot issue, as some “non-feminists” may act in decidedly “feminist” ways, and vice versa (Wolf 2000).³

Consequences of the Deradicalization of the Antirape Social Movement

While this dissertation focuses on the causes rather than the consequences of deradicalization within the antirape movement, it is critical to acknowledge some of these consequences in order to gain a perspective on how deradicalization has changed the antirape social movement. There are at least two fundamental elements that should be discussed when examining the effects of deradicalization on the antirape movement, but value judgments on these elements will be reserved for the later discussion in this paper about whether reradicalization is possible (or even desirable). First, the ability to help rape survivors and the types of assistance available to them have been affected by the deradicalization of the movement. As many rape crisis centers have become more institutionalized by merging with hospitals and other social service agencies, they have typically gained support that has allowed them to serve a

³ While racial/ethnic identity, sexual identity, and feminist identity are all critical components of a person’s self-concept that could contribute to conflicts with other people, class identity is another one that is most obviously omitted from this paper. My reason for deciding not to include a class-based definition of identity in this study is simple: in the few descriptive studies that have included class as a variable, it has been shown that both volunteers and paid members in rape crisis centers are overwhelmingly lower- to middle-class, and so there is little differentiation among antirape advocates along this particular dimension that might serve as a source of conflict (Bevacqua 2001; Matthews 1989; Scott 1993). Although class is an often-neglected element in studies that attempt to examine the “matrix of domination” (Collins 1990), and there are certainly research questions about it that could be pertinent to this study—such as why there is so little class variation in the antirape movement—the lack of class differentiation that exists makes it an unlikely basis for identity conflicts that have contributed to the deradicalization of the movement.
greater number of survivors, to provide more and better immediate and after care to survivors, and to extend their range of activities and resources (Campbell and Martin 2001; Collins and Whalen 1989; Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985; King and Webb 1981; Ledray 2001; O’Sullivan 1978). On the other hand, some of these expanded services that are now accessible by survivors may have come at the cost of certain types of prevention activities. While many early radical feminist rape crisis centers had a focus on education that emphasized ways to prevent rape from occurring (e.g., forceful and vigorous self-defense tactics), the loss of a radical feminist ideology in many antirape organizations has led to a decreased focus on prevention strategies in favor of helping survivors only after they have experienced sexual assault (Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998; Koss 1993). Second, the ability to keep rape in the arena of public debate has lessened as deradicalization of the movement has occurred. The radical feminist ideology operating in the earlier years of the antirape movement called for widespread social change to eradicate crimes of sexual violence, and the tactics employed by radical organizations proclaimed the need for this change loudly and proudly. Within more institutionalized antirape organizations, however, the demand for societal change is downplayed, often because of the desire to be viewed as more “respectable” and more “professional” by the other organizations with which many antirape social movement organizations necessarily have to cooperate (Bevacqua 2000; Campbell and Martin 2001; Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985; Largen 1985; but see Schmitt and Martin 1999). Additionally, many would argue that the social changes brought about by more liberal antirape activists (e.g., legislative
measures criminalizing marital rape, societal mores changing the way police officers
deal with rape survivors) have “fixed” the problem of rape in contemporary U.S.
society, and so there is no longer a need for politics advocating radical social change
(Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998; Largen 1985; Rose 1977). Consequences of
deradicalization such as these are relevant not only because they call into question
whether the antirape social movement is even a social movement anymore (Collins
and Whalen 1989), but also because they determine in part how—and how well—rape
survivors are treated within rape crisis centers (Campbell and Martin 2001).

Significance of Study

From a practical standpoint, the greatest strength of this dissertation is that it
has the potential to illuminate our understanding of which characteristics of social
movements and the organizations of which they are composed can best help them
achieve their stated goals. The reason that the stated goals of any particular social
movement organization must be discussed is that its “success” could be measured
differently depending upon its goals. For example, within a rape crisis center with an
explicitly radical feminist ideology, the most important practices of the group might be
such things as educating the public about rape as a social issue, acting as advocates for
rape survivors within medical and criminal justice proceedings, promoting harsher
punishments for perpetrators of rape, and teaching women how to defend themselves
in case of an attack. On the other hand, within a rape crisis center that is more
institutionalized and does not have a primary focus on any feminist ideology, the
utmost concern would probably be for such things as improving medical after care for
survivors of rape and helping to put survivors in contact with the community resources for recovery that are available to them. I expect to show with this research that the process of deradicalization within rape crisis centers is not only a reflection of the changing societal trend away from radical feminist ideologies, but also a reflection of the pragmatic concerns these centers have with the delivery of direct social services. However, any judgment about these processes has to be interpreted with the knowledge that the goals of antirape organizations, which one might expect to be similar across all cases, can actually be dramatically different.

From a more strictly sociological standpoint, my dissertation improves upon the current body of literature on rape crisis centers in several ways. First, it integrates micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis to the study of these social movement organizations. By examining individual- and small group-level interactions, organizational characteristics and processes, and the broader political and cultural structures within which antirape social movement organizations operate, I conduct a feminist analysis that successfully challenges the assertion that studies concerned with gender are too narrow and individually-oriented in focus. Second, this project uses feminist-oriented sociological theoretical perspectives, which have been previously under-utilized in the literature on the antirape movement (see Taylor 1999 for a discussion on the necessity of linking theories on gender and social movements), to explain the transformation of rape crisis centers into more mainstream organizations (e.g., Acker 1990; Taylor 1999; West and Zimmerman 1987), thus moving the literature beyond mere description of rape crisis centers’ activities. Third, my study
emphasizes the contribution that the internal stratification dynamics of antirape social
movement organizations make in their transformation into less radical organizations,
shifting the focus away from external (often structural) factors and their effects alone.

Fourth, this dissertation examines rape crisis centers over time and at various degrees
of institutionalization within one medium-sized Midwestern city. Much other
literature on rape crisis centers has focused on highly diverse and urbanized areas (but
see also Fried 1994 and Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985) such as southern California
(Matthews 1989; Matthews 1994; Schmitt and Martin 1999), Washington, D.C. (Scott
1993), and southern Florida (Martin, DiNitto, Byington, and Maxwell 1992). It may
well be the case, however, that the various processes contributing to deradicalization
operate differently within the generally more conservative Midwestern political
environment (see Taylor and Rupp 1993 and Whittier 1995), so it should be fruitful to
compare the results of this study to those attained for rape crisis centers in other cities.

Fifth, over the course of the antirape movement there appear to have been shifts in the
inclusion of women of differing racial/ethnic, sexual, and feminist identities, as well as
in the degree of conflict each of these identities posed within antirape social
movement organizations; I shall provide three examples here to help explain this
phenomenon. First, lesbian women have always been at the forefront of the antirape
movement, but there appears to have been a shift such that many more straight women
are now in positions of power and influence within rape crisis centers. As a second
example, many more women who identify themselves as not being feminists are now
involved in the movement, citing such reasons as a desire to “do good” in the world
and the need to help women in general (without any concern toward the patriarchal structure of society that many feminists claim causes sexual assault to flourish). Finally, women of color were denied early inclusion in the antirape movement (as they were in the 1970s women’s movement generally), but as time has progressed more of them are making inroads either by establishing minority group-specific rape crisis centers or by gaining acceptance within existing ones. The longitudinal dimension I employ in this study in order to examine shifts such as these is a strength that research on the antirape movement has tended either not to contain or not to explore in any detail (see Matthews 1994). Sixth, by focusing primarily and explicitly on issues of race/ethnicity, sexuality, and feminism, that is, by recognizing that women are not a “universal” category (Stacey and Thorne 1985), this project expands upon what other research on the antirape movement has done and thus makes a major contribution to the gender literature. Additionally, by examining identity within social movement organizations at not just the collective level, this study creates new arguments appropriate for the social movements literature regarding the relationships among identity, shifting institutional and political contexts, and, ultimately, the survival of social movement organizations. In summary, my hope is that analyzing the deradicalization of rape crisis centers with this new analytical and theoretical focus will increase our knowledge of the life course of the antirape social movement.
CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGIES, METHODS, AND DATA

Introduction

In order to analyze the extent to which the antirape movement in general and rape crisis centers in particular have deradicalized, I conducted two case studies of antirape social movement organizations in Columbus, Ohio, in which I explicitly analyzed their ideologies, goals, strategies, tactics, organizational characteristics, internal conflicts, and sociopolitical environments. The first of these organizations, Women Against Rape (WAR), was formed in 1972 during the heyday of the radical feminist movement and was in many ways typical of antirape organizations of that time period. Although WAR officially ceased to exist as a formal organization in 1996, many of its functions have been absorbed into other antiviolence and social service organizations across Columbus, and many of its former members have remained active in the antirape movement both locally and globally. The second of these organizations, the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio (SARNCO), was formed in mid-1996, partially as a response to the demise of WAR. SARNCO, an organization characteristic of many rape crisis centers in existence today, is far more institutionalized than WAR ever became, and it does not have an
explicit radical feminist ideology as the driving force behind it. By analyzing both the complete lifecycle of one of the most crucial social movement organizations in Columbus’ antirape movement, as well as the creation of a new and fundamentally less radical antirape organization that has taken on many of WAR’s former functions, I demonstrate the effects of deradicalization on the antirape movement in unique detail.

My analyses of WAR and SARNCO include the three defining characteristics of case studies described by Snow and Trom (2002). First, I chose the cases in this dissertation to be the antirape social movement organizations WAR and SARNCO primarily because of their convenience in terms of physical and historical accessibility, but secondarily because of their ability to “illuminate the movement” (p. 149), particularly via the identity conflicts that have contributed to the deradicalization of the antirape social movement. Second, I have created a thick description of each social movement organization that is typical of this research strategy, locating each organization within its proper historical and sociopolitical context. Third, I have attempted a triangulation of methods—participant observation, semistandardized interviewing, and content and historical analysis of both current and archival documents and artifacts—to generate a “more multilayered and nuanced” (p. 150) analysis of the antirape social movement in Columbus, Ohio than would be achieved with a single method.
A Feminist Methodological Perspective

Taking a position similar to Taylor and Rupp’s (1991) argument—that there is no single feminist methodology, or “general approach to research” (Cancian 1992: 625), and that therefore feminist social scientists should adopt methods that are both appropriate to their research question as well as to their feminist beliefs—is highly desirable given the pleasantly astonishing variation among feminist viewpoints and the scientific methods available to feminist researchers. For these reasons, I have cobbled together a feminist methodological perspective for this dissertation that pulls components primarily from the work of Cancian (1992), Naples (2003), Reinharz (1979), and Taylor (1998) to meet my scientific needs.

I have relied most heavily upon Cancian’s (1992) reformulation of Cook and Fonow’s (1986) combination of feminist epistemology with feminist methodology to create the feminist methodological perspective from which this dissertation is written, and which has been used successfully in other treatises on feminist methodologies (e.g., Taylor 1998). Cancian (1992: 626-7) argues that researchers using feminist methodology—which is actually a methodological perspective, in my case—should focus on five elements when doing research, although she acknowledges that all five elements may not be appropriate for any given research question. These elements are: 1) focusing on gender and gender inequality, with an emphasis on a commitment to lessening that inequality; 2) using methods that capture and demonstrate the importance of women’s everyday experiences; 3) including an explicit call for or practice of social change to improve women’s lives; 4) critiquing previous research to
show how it is shaped by both personal and sociocultural factors affecting the researchers, whether oneself or others; and 5) using participatory methods that allow for those people being “researched” (p. 627) to enhance their power by engaging actively in the research process. I shall elaborate on how each of these elements has been incorporated into this dissertation here.

The first element of a feminist methodological perspective, which calls for feminist researchers to focus on issues of gender and gender inequality, is apparent throughout this dissertation. While some have argued that the study of rape crisis centers in and of itself is automatically feminist (e.g., Schmitt and Martin 1999), I respectfully disagree. While it is true that researchers studying such organizations are likely to be feminists and to carry that feminism into their work (especially if they are following Denzin’s [1989] suggestion that social scientists should “work outward from their own biographies” [p. 49]), this perspective should not be taken for granted. When rape crisis centers are not contextualized as part of a larger movement, or when their political activities are downplayed or ignored, their researchers may well be succumbing to pressures within the academy to distance themselves from feminist politics, as Cancian (1992) suggests, in order to help their chances for publication, respect, grant money, tenure, etc. However, it is precisely by focusing on feminist activity within rape crisis centers (or the lack thereof), as well as by asking necessary “how” questions about feminist identity’s operation within the broader antirape movement, that illuminate gender and other inequalities within organizations such as those I am studying.
I discuss the second and fifth elements of a feminist methodology that Cancian (1992) describes, i.e., methods that demonstrate everyday experiences and that are bilaterally participatory, primarily in the “Methods” section of this chapter. My research question, which asks how institutionalization and identity conflicts cause antirape social movement organizations to deradicalize over time, can most sufficiently be answered with qualitative methods that enable a thick description of these processes. In selecting the semistandardized interview as the most informative and thus critical method via which I could learn about the history and inner workings of the antirape social movement in Columbus, Ohio, I was able to implement both of these elements of feminist research in this dissertation. While Reinharz (1979) goes so far as to claim that much (non-feminist) research is “conducted on a rape model” (p. 95)—a jarringly apt metaphor for the topic under study, to be sure—in which researchers “take, hit, and run” before abandoning the object of their study, I attempted to avoid such a model by requesting the full consent and active participation of each woman taking part in this project. Furthermore, Oakley (1981) discusses in great detail how the problem of objectification is inherent in situations of women “researchers” interviewing women “respondents,” which I was able to mitigate to some extent by using a participatory design that allowed and encouraged the women involved in each interview to ask questions, to answer questions, and to assist in formulating the direction of the research. Knowing that a disproportionately high number of women who work in the antirape movement have been either directly or indirectly victimized by sexual assault, I sought to avoid the models that Reinharz
(1979) and Oakley (1981) describe by being as sensitive and honest with the women assisting me as I possibly knew how to be—re-victimization of these women was simply not an option for me during the process of learning about their experiences in this field.

Regarding the importance of hearing and then interpreting women’s everyday experiences as an element of a feminist methodological stance, I have drawn from Naples’ (2003) work to understand more fully the scientific significance of the data obtained through the interviews in which I participated with female members of the antirape movement in Columbus, Ohio. Taylor (1998) discusses standpoint epistemology in the context of the need for reflexivity in feminist research (the fourth element in Cancian’s [1992] recommendations), because it allows for the researcher herself to understand both her privileged position as a researcher with access to “the dominant worldview” (p. 268) and her subordinated position as a woman in general. Naples takes this idea a step further by talking about the usefulness of standpoint epistemology—which is simply the belief that women’s ways of knowing and understanding the world stem from their uniquely varied “standpoints” in relation to other groups with and without power—not just for purposes of reflection but also for learning about the ways that women’s awareness of their social situations is colored by their positions within race, class, gender, sexual, and other matrices of inequality. In this conceptualization of standpoint epistemology, which Naples grounds in the work of other feminist researchers who create knowledge from their relatively subordinate positions involving, for example, race- or class-based inequality, it is not enough for
the feminist social scientist to be merely reflexive about the research process. She
must also treat the participants in her research as having completely valid ways of
knowing the world that she herself may not understand, and she must do her best to
interpret what she learns from them by using their perspectives rather than by
imposing her own ways of knowing upon them. While I have tried to do this in part
by framing my research question about identity conflicts to include conflicts that have
been important in the antirape movement but that I have not experienced myself to a
large degree (e.g., conflicts over racial/ethnic and sexual identity), I also addressed the
problem throughout the course of the interviews by asking clarifying questions about
women’s standpoints and the relations of power in which they were and are involved,
and by giving them opportunities to tell me about any questions they thought I should
have asked in order to best understand them. Truly appreciating the diverse
backgrounds of the women who participated in the research phase of this dissertation
has helped me to interpret their conversations with me in a way that I hope has
allowed me to represent their realities accurately, however different they may be from
my own.

The third and fourth elements of a feminist methodological perspective that
Cancian (1992) describes, a call for social or political action and the need for an
exploration of the personal and social prejudices that researchers carry into their work,
are discussed principally in the conclusion of this dissertation. To satisfy the third
component in this research project, I offer my recommendations for policy change
within the social movement organization in this study that is still operating today
(SARNCO). Since WAR no longer exists, I cannot address its possibilities as an extant social movement organization, although I have discovered other possibilities for women who used to be involved with WAR, or who were or are sympathetic to the radical feminist approach it employed. The recommendations I make include nothing so broad-based or significant as to drive other women to organize into action, as some other feminist researchers have been able to do (e.g., Naples 2003; Taylor 1998). However, this research—by way of the access it afforded me to a wide spectrum of women involved in the contemporary antirape social movement in Columbus—has allowed me to uncover one major pattern that others in the movement may not have noticed. The problem with this discovery is that it is quite politically sensitive, and so it could lead to consequences ranging from a condemnation of me personally to an upheaval among the movement’s current leadership in Columbus.

Finally, I also include the fourth element of a feminist standpoint in the conclusion to this dissertation when I discuss my own biases and the biases of other students of the antirape social movement. As Reinharz (1979: 73) notes, “[a]ttitudes are not context-free; they are time bounded and socially situated.” This insight plays into Cancian’s (1992) ideal model of research, which she calls the “social practice” perspective (p. 631). According to this perspective, science is a historically situated social activity that produces knowledge; the two strengths that keep such knowledge from being too relativistic are the solid evidence that supports it and its openness to debate and “alternative interpretations.” I offer supporting evidence for my claims throughout the analysis chapter (Chapter Four), and I discuss my personal biases, to
the extent that I am aware of them, at great length in the concluding chapter. Furthermore, I examine in the conclusion what Reinharz terms a “tripartite model” (1979: 124-5): the interrelationships between and among the problem being studied, the methods used to study it, and the researcher herself. This self-reflective process has been necessarily constant throughout this project, since it has allowed me as a researcher to “listen to and hear voices unlike” my own (Taylor 1998: 365) so that I would be able to tell the stories of women involved with WAR and SARNCO with the respect and understanding they deserve.

Methods

There are several complementary methods, or specific techniques for gathering data, that I employed in conducting the case studies of WAR and SARNCO in an effort to achieve the methodological triangulation recommended by numerous social scientists who are experts in the use of qualitative methods (e.g., Berg 1995). Two of these methods, which I used to examine the same source materials, are content analysis and historical and archival analysis. For this dissertation, I had access to both public and private archival records, such as meeting minutes, organizational newsletters, fliers for public events, informational/educational pamphlets, membership rosters, and grant proposals for both organizations (housed at the Ohio Historical Society for WAR, and at Grant/Riverside Methodist Hospitals of Columbus and in my own private collection for SARNCO). Additionally, there are various newspapers and internet Web sites that had articles or pages devoted to describing both organizations and events that took place within them during the time frame I am considering for this
project (i.e., 1972 to 2002). Finally, I was granted limited access to a videotape of a “final” meeting of sorts for WAR, held on August 26, 1994\(^4\) and dubbed the “WAR Wake” by its participants, in which some of WAR’s members announced a new plan for restructuring the organization and others decided to leave it permanently. I examined these various data sources, looking for: 1) information on important historical events in the establishment, institutionalization (e.g., significant changes in funding sources, facilities, membership, and services provided), and disbanding of the two social movement organizations; and 2) evidence of any conflicts over personal (racial/ethnic, feminist, or sexual) or collective identities within WAR and SARNCO. All of these types of public and private records and documents lent themselves particularly well to both of these research methods. The content analysis in particular allowed me to discover common and/or recurring themes, concepts, and semantics in the data sources at my disposal (Berg 1995), whereas the historical and archival analysis was especially relevant as an aid in reconstructing the timelines of important events for both WAR and SARNCO.

The third methodological technique I used in this study is the semistandardized interview, in which I included questions with “essential,” “extra,” “throw-away,” and “probing” designs (Berg 1995). I conducted a series of eighteen confidential interviews with two targeted groups of current and former volunteers and leaders

\(^4\) Although WAR did not officially disband until 1996, it was at this meeting that many core members started to disengage themselves from the group and that the organization changed drastically, to the extent that WAR as it had always existed ceased to be.
(whether paid or informally recognized) from WAR and SARNCO, and it is these interviews that I feel have provided me with the bulk of information necessary to address the research questions set forth in this dissertation. All voluntary interviewees were adult females because of this project’s focus on women’s sexual and feminist identities, the explicitly feminist theoretical perspective that drives the desire to capture women’s everyday but unique experiences, and the almost exclusively female makeup of antirape social movement organizations. Initial informants were recruited through purposive sampling (Berg 1995) from a pool of friends and acquaintances whom I met in one of three ways: 1) through my graduate program at Ohio State University; 2) via the rape crisis telephone hotline run by SARNCO where I volunteered from 1997 to 2002; or 3) at public feminist antirape events such as Take Back the Night. Additional informants outside of this initial pool were contacted by means of both convenience and snowball sampling methods in order to obtain the total sample size of eighteen interviews. At that point I assessed that “saturation” had occurred in that no new information relevant to my research questions seemed likely to be gained from further interviews (Ragin 1994). While I feel confident that I obtained enough “similar” interviews with women involved in Columbus’ antirape movement, there is some concern that I did not conduct enough “dissimilar” interviews (Rubin and Rubin 1995), so I will discuss that point in the dissertation’s final chapter. I contacted all potential interviewees by phone and/or e-mail, explained to them the scope and purpose of this project, and obtained their verbal and/or written consent to be interviewed both during our initial contact and at the start of their
individual interviews. I made it clear that their responses were entirely voluntary and would be kept completely confidential unless they explicitly stated that they wanted me to use their real names in the final research project (a scenario that was applicable only to those interviewees who were or are known to the public because of their organizational leadership positions). While I in no way presume that the final group of women who participated in interviews with me were able to present a complete picture of either WAR or SARNCO, my reliance on both leaders and volunteers from both social movement organizations should help me at least to offer something substantially more than a one-sided analysis.

A final method I used for this dissertation, although it was not officially sanctioned and so I cannot ethically draw any conclusions from it, is participant observation. Because of my own experiences working as a volunteer with one of SARNCO’s programs from 1997 to 2002, I have the distinctive ability in this project to combine a scientist’s rigorous analysis of the research questions with a participant’s depth of understanding of the everyday functions of a critical social movement organization, thus enhancing both perspectives. While I will go into further detail in the concluding chapter about the various advantages and difficulties I faced from being in the unique position of occupying the intersecting roles of researcher and volunteer, there are several salient points that need to be made for any methods discussion of this research project to be complete. It was actually a paper I wrote in the spring of 1997 about the “death” of WAR that inspired me not only to select WAR and SARNCO as the eventual topics of my dissertation, but also to re-involve myself
in the antirape movement following a two-year period of inactivity. After researching antiviolence organizations in Columbus, I decided to attend the next SARNCO training that was available to me, which occurred in the fall of 1997. I had been active in antirape activities during my undergraduate years at another state university, including volunteering for more than two years at a general crisis line and serving on a university-wide committee examining ways to integrate antirape education into campus culture, but I had not continued that work during the two years I had been in Ohio for graduate school. After going through a rigorous training and joining SARNCO, I quickly rose in the esteem of the powers that be because of my willingness to take on extra shifts, to serve on committees, and to be a peer mentor to my fellow volunteers. This special relationship I had with some of the leaders of the group afforded me the unusual freedom of being able to discuss problematic issues with them openly. Over time, I became aware of several incidents in which potential and actual volunteers felt that they had been treated unfairly or even discriminated against because of their various identities as feminists, lesbians, and women of color, and so these identity conflicts began to coalesce in my mind as a possible research topic. At roughly the same time I was learning about these sometimes disturbing instances of identity-based disparities in treatment and even retributions, I also heard about “volunteer staffing changes,” i.e., the supposed reasons that particular volunteers had left, from certain formal and informal leaders in the organization. I am certain that there was no intention on anybody’s part to be unprofessional in sharing information like this with me, but group dynamics are such that people talk about
serious issues with people whom they trust. Because I was, in those early stages, lucky enough to be considered a trustworthy person by others in the organization, information about some of the identity-based clashes facing SARNCO were shared with me. This led to my receiving what is a set of more balanced accounts in my later interviews of what was truly occurring, since I was able to hear more than one side of several of these stories. Methodologically, this is an important point to make because I feel more comfortable about making certain generalizations gleaned from my official interview data set because of the background information I had on identity conflicts prior to starting my formal research. Although I have a relatively small interview sample size of eighteen, I am confident in the results I obtained from the women I interviewed because I was able to gauge their responses about the conflicts occurring in SARNCO against the information that I already "knew" informally. The answers that my interview participants gave to particular questions I posed were able both to support and to discredit most of the stories I had been told by individuals who had either firsthand or secondhand experience with the actual incidents of conflict. While I obviously cannot ethically share any details of the personal conversations in which I learned about these conflicts, since I was in "volunteer" (and sometimes "friend") mode rather than in "researcher" mode when they took place, it is critical to note both how they led to the formation of my research question for the dissertation (i.e., how identity conflicts operate differently in a grassroots versus an institutionalized antirape social movement organization), as well as how they helped to triangulate my interview data by lending or not lending credence to the accounts I had already heard and by
sensitizing me to the types of responses I might receive from some of the interview participants. The background knowledge regarding identity conflicts that I carried into this project helped me to clarify which accounts given by interview participants—which I would absolutely never dismiss—were relatively more or less “biased” in a given direction because of their own knowledge about or experience with the identity conflicts taking place within SARNCO.

Data

Because the collection of interviews I conducted is so rich in information, a general description of the women who participated in the interviews with me is necessary for conveying the differences and similarities among them that contribute to their varied viewpoints. During and after the interviews, I noted bits of data about each woman that they had shared with me so that I could use those facts to inform myself better about their “standpoints” as described in the methodological section of this chapter. While I did need to collect a minimal amount of demographic data about each interviewee (i.e., racial/ethnic identity, sexual identity [only if the interviewee volunteered the information; I never asked directly about anyone’s personal sexual identity], and age), I did not ask interviewees to speak their names or to give any other personal information that they did not wish to reveal in the recorded interviews. There was one exception in this process: for those interviewees who are considered “public personae,” that is, they are publicly known within the community as antirape or antiviolence advocates (typically as leaders of present or former community organizations), I asked their preference on whether I should assign them aliases or use
their real names, in case they wanted their involvement in these organizations not to be disguised in the dissertation for any reason. Only those women who both served as organizational leaders and wished for me to use their real names in this study are identified; all other women are not identified by name or by any combination of characteristics that could jeopardize their anonymity.

The interviews took place in three waves during which I revisited and refined the questions in my interview guide as the direction of this research project changed, as recommended by Blee and Taylor (2002). They lasted anywhere from 20 minutes to three hours, with the majority of them clocking in somewhere between eighty to one hundred minutes. The first series of interviews occurred in the spring of 1997 as I was working on a paper in a social movements class about the “death” of WAR as a social movement organization. My major informant at that time, a self-defined 1990s core group member of WAR, participated in a set of three interviews with me, the second and third of which took place after she had consulted with another former WAR member (who did not wish to speak with me directly) about how to provide me with as accurate a picture of WAR as possible. These interviews can best be classified as “oral history” interviews (Blee and Taylor 2002: 102) because my aim in conducting them was to learn in great detail about WAR as an organization and the ongoing problems that had led to its implosion in mid-1996. I engaged in the second set of interviews in the winter and spring of 1999, during which my work in a women’s history seminar helped me decide how best to identify the most meaningful and outstanding research questions for the topic that I then knew would be the focus of my

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dissertation, the evolution of the antirape social movement in Columbus. I did not add any more interviewees from WAR at that time, but instead talked with four current volunteers, two current coordinators, and one former volunteer from SARNCO. These interviews are best described as a combination of oral history and “key informant” interviews (Blee and Taylor 2002: 105), in that I wanted to learn more about the origins of SARNCO as a social movement organization, and I took advantage of my involvement within the organization to secure interviews with those coordinators and long-term volunteers who I felt were most knowledgeable about SARNCO. The third and final wave of interviews occurred in late 2006 and early 2007 as I conducted independent research on the effects of institutionalization and identity conflicts within the antirape movement in Columbus. These interviews were conducted primarily with key informants, and I spoke with an additional ten women who had been members of WAR and/or SARNCO across periods of each organization’s lifecycle. In this last round of interviews, I engaged in a small degree of purposive sampling to ensure that I would be able to have interviews with women from a variety of diverse backgrounds related to my project.

Among the eighteen women who participated in interviews with me over the period from 1997 to 2007, five were affiliated with WAR, seven were members of SARNCO, and six were involved with both organizations. Three of the women were

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5 I use the past tense in all cases here, since the period of study for this dissertation is 1972-2002. However, it is a possibility in some cases and a certainty in others that various women who participated in these interviews are still involved with the contemporary antirape organization in Columbus, SARNCO, and I wish to protect their identities.
classified exclusively as leaders, nine were classified exclusively as volunteers, and six had experience as both volunteers and leaders within WAR and/or SARNCO. At the time they took part in interviews with me, two of the women were aged between 18 and 25, five were aged between 26 and 35, six were aged between 36 and 45, four were aged between 46 and 55, and one was aged between 56 and 65. Because some of them were no longer involved with WAR, SARNCO, or even the antirape movement at the time of our interviews, I also took note of the women’s ages at the time of their participation in both the antirape social movement organization(s) specifically and the antirape social movement generally. Among them, four were active in WAR and/or SARNCO between the ages of 18 and 25, eight between the ages of 18 and 35, one between the ages of 26 and 35, three between the ages of 26 and 45, one between the ages of 46 and 55, and one between the ages of 56 and 65. Involvement in the antirape movement, although not necessarily in the particular organizations of WAR and/or SARNCO, shows a wider spread in the women’s ages and thus a lengthier commitment to the movement: two were active in the antirape movement between the ages of 18 and 25, four were active between the ages of 18 and 35, three were active between the ages of 18 and 45, four were active between the ages of 18 and 55, three were active between the ages of 26 and 45, one was active between the ages of 46 and 55, and one was active between the ages of 56 and 65. Seven of the women were involved in either WAR or SARNCO at the time of our interviews, while eleven were not. However, these women were very likely to have remained active in the antirape social movement even if they had left WAR or SARNCO in particular—only three of
them had dropped out of the movement entirely by the time we conducted our interviews, whereas fifteen of them were still involved in antirape work in some capacity.

In addition to age, I categorized the women who took part in interviews with me according to the demographic and identity-based variables of interest in this dissertation: racial/ethnic identity, sexual identity, feminist identity, and even survivor identity. Of the eighteen women participating in this research, two were African American, while the remaining sixteen were European American. Although I had attempted to locate more women of color to participate in the interview process, my informants actually told me that there were very few women of color involved in WAR and SARNCO during their own periods of activity, and they felt that I was unlikely to be successful in expanding the pool of interview participants on this particular axis of diversity. As for sexual identity, which I only recorded in cases where the interview participants volunteered the information, thirteen women self-identified as heterosexual and four as lesbian (leaving only one woman whose sexual identity I did not know). Having just under one-fourth of my sample identify as lesbian seems slightly higher than would be expected, but since many lesbian women are drawn to antirape work (often by means of the radical feminist beliefs they may hold), this seeming over-representation is actually not all that surprising. There was a little more variation among the interview participants in terms of their feminist identities: while only two women did not consider themselves feminists at all, five thought of themselves as liberal feminists and eleven identified themselves as radical
feminists. This number also may appear unusually high, until one recalls the argument that radical feminism and antirape work are deeply intertwined, especially among women who participated in the earlier phases of the women’s and antirape movements when radical feminism was much more in vogue than it had been in the 1980s and 1990s. Finally, although it was not a specific variable under scrutiny within this dissertation, I also took note of women’s self-identification as survivors or co-survivors of sexual assault. Again, I did not ask about this status directly because of its sensitive nature, and I only recorded the responses of those women who volunteered the information. Not surprisingly, among the fourteen women out of eighteen who shared their status with me, eight had had personal experience with rape or sexual assault. All in all, these characteristics of the women who took part in the eighteen interviews we conducted for this dissertation are important because they relate back to the notion of standpoint epistemology. I will demonstrate their significance in the next two chapters about the history of the antirape social movement in Columbus and the identity conflicts that have contributed to its deradicalization over the past three decades.
CHAPTER 3

AN EARLY HISTORY OF WAR AND SARNCO AS SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Formation of and Services Provided by WAR and SARNCO

Women Against Rape

As already noted, Women Against Rape was formed in November 1972 by a group of women in the Ohio State University (OSU) area as part of the Women’s Action Collective (WAC) in Columbus, Ohio (Whittier 1995; Women Against Rape 1974a; Women Against Rape 1974b; Women Against Rape 1994), at approximately the same time as the antirape social movement organized all over the country (Schechter 1982; Scott 1993). Like other radical feminist organizations throughout the United States, WAC was a typical “umbrella structure” organization that included various affiliates focusing on specific community and women’s issues, of which violence against women was of primary importance (Whittier 1995).

The woman whose idea it was to start WAR, Sunny Graff, was an undergraduate student at Ohio State at the time, and she became involved with WAC via her work with the Columbus Free Press, an underground and politically leftist publication that had begun disseminating information on violence against women to its
readers by late 1971. When WAC formed in 1971, Ms. Graff joined both because of her interest in leftist political causes, as well as because of her personal experiences with violence against women. Although she “really was not at all political” when she started participating in antiwar riots in 1970, she quickly found that she liked the excitement of activism, and she became “radicalized” by the heady experience of being arrested at an antiwar riot—albeit accidentally—for her beliefs. Following her arrest, she sought more information about those issues about which she felt most passionate. Her personal experiences with violence and sexual assault, as well as the murder of a girlfriend whose death was essentially blamed on the victim herself, led her to investigate what kinds of political activities around Columbus were available specifically for women. Although “the women’s movement was just starting to be an issue,” she attended her first WAC meeting and immediately thought to herself, “[T]his is incredible…I’m home.” She started out by attending a small and intimate consciousness-raising group with a handful of other women, and the ways that sexual violence had shaped her own life began to crystallize for her in those discussions. Tragically, two of the women in this consciousness-raising group were brutally murdered, after which Ms. Graff decided that sexual violence “was my issue.” With the encouragement and assistance of a mentor within WAR, she started the rape crisis line on February 3, 1974, and it was named “The Toni Goman Feminist Rape Crisis Center” in memory of one of the murdered women who had been a member of the consciousness-raising group (Women Against Rape 1974a). There was no funding for WAR in the early years, so Ms. Graff published her own home telephone number as
the number for the rape crisis line. Within about a year, she had obtained space for an office inside a campus-area church that was sympathetic to leftist groups, and WAR had held a training session that netted about sixty new volunteers to staff the rape crisis line. At the same time that this rape crisis line—arguably the most enduring facet of WAR’s contribution to the antirape movement in Columbus—was being founded, WAR started or developed several other services for women affected by sexual assault.

From its very inception, WAR defined the two types of community action work it wanted to do: “provid[ing] supportive assistance to the rape victim” and “actively work[ing] to prevent and reduce the number of rapes and assaults against women in Columbus” (Women Against Rape 1974b: 1). At the time, it was “the only group in Columbus that has initiated programs to co-ordinate activities in all [these] areas” (Women Against Rape 1974b: 2). The services that WAR provided for support and prevention purposes were broken down into three main categories: 1) prevention; 2) community awareness; and 3) support and help for rape victims (Women Against Rape 1974a; Women Against Rape 1974b). The 24-hour rape crisis hotline was the major support component available to survivors throughout WAR’s existence; other “support” services, such as advocacy (e.g., accompanying sexual assault survivors to area hospitals for rape exams and possible police questioning following an assault), were also available but were initially classified as part of WAR’s community awareness efforts (Women Against Rape 1974a; Women Against Rape 1974b).
To address the prevention component of its community action plan, WAR developed four programs with varying degrees of success. First, the Whistle Alert project, which sold inexpensive whistles to women for them to blow “only when in danger and needing help” (Women Against Rape 1974b: 2), was the continuation of a community program begun in 1971 and then subsumed under WAR’s auspices.

Second, the Distress Shelters project designated certain safe houses in the community, made recognizable by a sticker emblem on a door or window, where women being “harassed, followed, or physically assaulted” (Women Against Rape 1974b: 2) could go for assistance. Third, the Self-Defense Training project offered low-cost self-defense classes taught by and for women exclusively, and it performed demonstrations of self-defense skills for women’s groups. Fourth, the Preventive Education Campaign project, initially envisioned as WAR’s most important long-term public service, was formed to “explore the reasons rape occurs with such a high frequency in our society” and to educate women about techniques for preventing sexual assault (Women Against Rape 1974b: 3).

The second type of community action work that WAR performed, community awareness, consisted of four activities that brought “the problem of rape into public arenas for discussion and education” (Women Against Rape 1974b: 3). The first of these activities involved establishing better working relationships with the police in order to increase the reporting of rape, arrests for rape, sensitivity toward survivors, and awareness of police procedures in rape investigations. Second, WAR hoped to improve community awareness by creating a hospital liaison program via which WAR
volunteers would “facilitate relationships between hospital personnel and rape victims” (Women Against Rape 1974b: 3), particularly during the immediate aftermath of rape. Third, WAR founded a speakers’ bureau staffed by members who could offer rape literature to interested parties, write articles about sexual assault and related issues, and give speeches to groups of people concerned about rape. The fourth component of the community awareness campaign was a legal action program that assisted individual rape survivors in preparing for court appearances, and also made broader recommendations for legislative reform regarding sexual violence. In summary, WAR offered a wide spectrum of nine services in three categories not only to rape survivors, but also to the community at large. These services were fairly typical of those provided by feminist rape crisis centers in other areas of the country (Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998; Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985; Largen 1985), and although not all of them continued throughout WAR’s tenure as the primary antirape social movement organization in Columbus, they did provide a multitude of resources to rape survivors over the years.

**Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio**

In comparison to WAR, the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio was formed under markedly less personally- or politically-motivated circumstances. The seeds from which SARNCO eventually sprouted were originally sown in 1980 at St. Anthony Medical Center’s Rape Treatment Program, which offered hospital advocacy services only for sexual assault survivors. When a for-profit hospital, Park Medical Center, bought St. Anthony’s in 1992, the Rape Treatment Program was cut,
only to be revived two years later in 1994 when Grant/Riverside Methodist Hospitals adopted what then became known as the Columbus Area Rape Treatment Program. The name “Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio” replaced the name “Columbus Area Rape Treatment Program” in 1997 for several reasons: first, to reflect the addition of new services to the hospital advocacy program; second, to represent SARNCO more accurately as an “umbrella” organization with various programs “comprising a collective whole;” and third, to demonstrate the desire to reach out to all survivors of sexual violence rather than only to those who are raped (Riccobono 1997).

When Grant/Riverside Methodist Hospitals adopted the hospital advocacy program for sexual assault survivors in 1994, they inherited some disarray from the two-year lapse during which hospital-sanctioned advocacy services were barely available in Columbus. This is not to say that there were no advocacy services available between 1992 and 1994—WAR was still providing them on an ad hoc basis at the hospitals with which it had cooperative relationships—but hospital advocacy was only on the official menu of services available to survivors at one area organization (the Emergency Department at Ohio State University’s Main Hospital). Thus, there was a sort of cleanup period as the Columbus Area Rape Treatment Program (CARTP) transitioned into SARNCO. Terri Allred, who was the second CARTP Coordinator, was in charge in 1995 when WAR was in the midst of closing its doors. She was hired by OhioHealth, the organization in charge of Grant Medical Center and Riverside Methodist Hospital, following an approximately eight-month
period during which CARTP did not have a coordinator and had only a handful of
volunteers providing hospital advocacy services. The previous coordinator for
CARTP had run into serious roadblocks in trying to get hospital personnel to agree
that allowing WAR volunteers into their emergency rooms as advocates for survivors
was necessary; in fact, according to one woman who worked closely with her during
her stint as CARTP Coordinator, she probably left CARTP “because she was just so
frustrated” with having to convince others of the value of the work she was trying to
accomplish with so few resources. Understandably, then, the tasks Ms. Allred faced
were daunting, despite her educational background and professional experience in
dealing with organizations in a state of disorder—when her job started, she “didn’t
even have an office, and there [were] just boxes of stuff” for her to sort through.
Perhaps most important, there was nobody there to help her understand the history of
antirape work in Columbus up to that point. Although it had always “been [her]
goal…to run [her] own rape crisis program,” she felt equally passionate about
“repairing organizations” and bringing them together within a community. Unlike the
founder of WAR, she did not mention a history of violence, either against herself or
against other women she knew, as a driving force behind her desire to manage a rape
crisis center. Nonetheless, feeling that this work was her “calling,” she set out to
overhaul CARTP by making sure that rape crisis services were better, more plentiful,
and more easily available to sexual assault survivors throughout the city.

Knowing that the main focus of CARTP was hospital advocacy, Ms. Allred
started working to repair that program immediately. She collaborated from the
beginning with the Ohio Coalition Against Sexual Assault (OCASA), a statewide board comprised of members of several antirape organizations, to prioritize what she wanted to accomplish with CARTP. After spending about six months sorting out the boxes of information she had been provided and learning about the history of the antirape movement in Columbus, the first two jobs she tackled were to recruit more volunteers and to “reestablish relationships” with various medical, social service, and law enforcement groups whose experiences with WAR had unfortunately caused the cooperation and respect among the organizations to deteriorate. When she learned about the rape crisis line that WAR members were staffing, Ms. Allred decided to approach WAR about joining forces and resources. What she discovered was that there were only two women still working for the rape crisis line, and that it was the only remaining service WAR was providing in 1994. Both of these WAR volunteers were unpaid, and they were living at the house where the crisis line was housed, so things looked fairly bleak for the organization. Given this bleak outlook, rather than continuing her push to cull more hospital advocacy volunteers for CARTP from WAR, Ms. Allred instead recommended that WAR close for good, which it did shortly thereafter, allowing CARTP to take over its responsibilities. She then had to recruit for both crisis line and hospital advocacy volunteers. She started at OSU, which had the only hospital at that time with a formal advocacy program, and was quite successful in her efforts to have OSU’s advocates join CARTP, essentially expanding the volunteers’ arenas of possible assistance to two additional hospitals. Recruiting and then training the existing volunteers from both WAR and OSU, as well as the new
volunteers from the community, in “medical accompaniment” protocol took about six months, and there were about sixty volunteers for CARTP in the rape crisis line and hospital advocacy programs by that point.

In her attempts to repair relationships with other antiviolence organizations in the Columbus area, Ms. Allred made many inroads within a remarkably short period of time. Her tenure with CARTP lasted only about two years, but she was able to establish cooperative interactions with several groups and agencies dealing with sexual assault survivors during that time. One of her first things advances on this front was to collaborate with a local domestic violence organization so that the CARTP volunteers would be well-versed in issues facing domestic violence survivors and would be available to respond to domestic violence situations in the hospitals they served. There was a joint training between the domestic violence organization and CARTP, which led to a sharing of volunteers and services. Next, Ms. Allred concentrated on reestablishing positive working relationships with two important legal organizations with which sexual assault survivors often had contact, the Columbus Police Department’s Sexual Abuse Squad and the Victim Witness Assistance Program, by establishing cross-trainings for both their members and the CARTP volunteers. These training sessions were held to create awareness for people on many different fronts about how their jobs interacted with one another’s when assisting survivors of sexual assault, as well as to ensure that the CARTP volunteers were knowledgeable and respectful of both the effects of sexual assault on survivors and the roles that each person within the system had to play in order to best serve these
survivors. Finally, once again with the assistance of OCASA, Ms. Allred started the process to apply for a grant from the Ohio Department of Health that helped set up a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program within CARTP\(^6\) (see Ledray 2001 for a detailed description of the typical characteristics of SANE programs). At Riverside and Grant Hospitals, this program taught specialized techniques to particular nurses to make them especially sensitive and proficient when helping the rape survivors who came to their emergency rooms. The CARTP volunteers also went through this training, so that, in the event that no SANE nurse was available and another hospital staff member had to perform the rape exam, they would be aware of the basic procedures that should be followed. Again, the purposes of creating a program like this were not only to help volunteers learn how to serve sexual assault survivors in the best possible manner, but also to foster cooperative relationships with other social service agencies that offer assistance to survivors but are not actually part of the antirape movement.

Following this flurry of activity rebuilding and then expanding the services that CARTP could offer to the Columbus community, Ms. Allred left Ohio as her family pursued other opportunities outside of the state. This was particularly “bittersweet” for her because she had written a grant that provided money for two additional paid

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\(^6\) While Ms. Allred did start the process of writing the grant for the SANE program, it was actually the next Coordinator of CARTP, Nina Riccobono, who completed that grant application and implemented the SANE program at Grant and Riverside Hospitals in January of 1997. Ms. Riccobono was the first Program Coordinator of SARNCO—who was at the helm when the name of the organization changed from CARTP to SARNCO—and she was unofficially mentored by Ms. Allred on a long-distance basis as she continued some of the projects that had already been started while Ms. Allred was the Coordinator of CARTP.
positions within CARTP, and while she did hire the women who were to fill these positions, she did not get much chance to work with them before she moved away with her family. The first position that was filled was Coordinator of the 24-Hour Rape Helpline, Debbie Green, who was hired in July of 1996. By October of that year, the Helpline was operational, with its initial funding provided by a Community Crime Prevention grant. The second position for which someone was hired was the Program Coordinator. Nina Riccobono started as the Program Coordinator at roughly the same time Debbie Green started as the Helpline Coordinator, and one of her first major accomplishments in the job was putting the SANE program described earlier into practice. Just two months later, in March of 1997, Ms Riccobono successfully added the fourth and final component to the organization now known as SARNCO: the Education and Prevention Program. This group consists of volunteers who participate in speaking engagements at high schools across the Columbus area to educate teenagers about sexual assault. Ms. Riccobono’s accomplishments with SARNCO cannot be overstated—within months of being hired, she had followed through on the SANE grant and brought in a nurse examiner from Texas to train the nurse examiners at the hospitals, written her own grant for the Education and Prevention Program and hired its coordinator, written a grant for and hired an office assistant, and recruited (and then maintained) a body of roughly eighty-one hundred volunteers. Since her departure from the organization, there has been some shuffling of coordinators, as well as a few small periods of inactivity, among the four core services SARNCO has offered to sexual assault survivors since 1997—the Hospital
Advocacy Program, the 24-Hour Rape Helpline, the SANE Program, and the Education and Prevention Program—yet all four components of SARNCO have remained operational.

Comparison of Social Movement Organization Components within WAR and SARNCO

Ideology

As noted previously, WAR’s ideology—its “ideas, beliefs, values, symbols, and meanings that motivate individual participation and give coherence to collective action” (Buechler 1997: 198)—was explicitly radical feminist. While Freeman (1975) argues that structure and style are better axes along which to characterize a social movement and its organizations than ideology, the ideology of radical feminism is clearly what gave WAR (and other Women’s Action Collective organizations) its impetus for social change. The stated ideology of WAC, of which WAR was an integral component, was that “any ideology (view) of [the] world needs to encompass all problems of women” in such a way that women are not “viewed as sex objects...harassed...[or] treated as second-class citizens” (Women’s Action Collective 1981). According to WAR, “[v]erbal and physical assaults as well as a perpetual fear of attack violate [women’s] rights, and keep [them] confined” (Women Against Rape 1974b). WAR developed this ideology—that rape is a patriarchal tool that functions to control women through actual or potential sexual violence—to formulate its goals, strategies, and tactics as a social movement organization.
Unlike WAR, SARNCO has no official documents outlining a particular ideological stance for the group as a whole; aside from being organized around the inherently political topic of rape prevention and education, the group seems to be from all outward appearances rather apolitical as a social movement organization. When I spoke with individual volunteers and coordinators, most of them expressed some degree of alliance with radical feminist politics, but several women declined to use the word “radical” to describe their brand of feminism, while others did not think of themselves as being feminists at all. While many of these SARNCO members believed personally that a radical feminist ideological standpoint infused their own volunteer and/or paid work for SARNCO with meaning, none of them felt that they could freely express their radical ideas without being informally or formally sanctioned either by the SARNCO coordinators or by the hospital itself. So, while SARNCO’s official ideological position is nowhere clearly stated, members definitely acquired the idea that their personal beliefs expressed while working for SARNCO “better not be” radical for fear of censure or even termination from the hospitals sponsoring the organization.

Goals

The goals of the Women’s Action Collective in general were to put an end both to patriarchy and to capitalism through revolutionary rather than reformist means (Women’s Action Collective 1981). The ways that WAR envisioned carrying out these goals were of course intimately tied to its radical feminist ideology, but also were intertwined with its choices regarding strategy and tactics. The intermediate
goals of WAR, which were to be reached while radical feminists in general were on the road to overthrowing patriarchy and capitalism, were to bring attention to rape as a societal problem at the crisis stage, to educate people about rape, and to provide social support services to women who had been raped (Women Against Rape 1974b). Ultimately, however, the goal of WAR was collectively “to fight rape and to regain and protect our rights of privacy and freedom” (Women Against Rape 1974b).

Just as it had avoided articulating an organizational ideology, SARNCO also never clearly spelled out its goals for its volunteers or the people it serves. The Columbus Area Rape Treatment Program Coordinator in charge of the group just before it changed its name to the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio stated two goals in our interview, though neither was explicitly expressed in any literature for the organization. These goals were: 1) to treat sexual assault survivors and assist them in finding adequate aftercare; and 2) to foster interagency collaboration while providing rape education and prevention services to the community. Similarly, one early SARNCO newsletter states that “we pledge to serve ALL survivors of rape and sexual assault, and address the needs of the larger community” (Riccobono 1997), although it does not delve into how exactly it will do so. These goals naturally go hand in hand with the strategy and tactics the organization employs, and so perhaps it is easiest to assume that the official goal of SARNCO is twofold—to educate the community about sexual assault, and to improve the services available to people who have already been sexually assaulted. On a personal level,
however, many informants perceived a clash between these two goals, as typified by this coordinator’s response:

“I think the primary goal is to stop the violence—to get out there and to do the prevention work and do the education work and that type of stuff and try to prevent it. Unfortunately, most of what we do, though, is putting the band-aid on...after the assault…and it’s something that we struggle with all the time, not feeling like...that we’re not able to do enough of the prevention work, because we do spend so much time putting the band-aid on.”

What is interesting to note in the comparison of WAR and SARNCO’s goals is that while both organizations espouse(d) community education as a primary goal of the anti-rape movement, WAR explicitly used education more so as a means to the end of overthrowing patriarchy (stopping sexual violence in the process), whereas SARNCO seems to use it more as a tool for informing people about what rape is and how it can be avoided on an individual level. While both organizations performe(d) both “band-aid” and community education work, the emphasis on the “band-aid” work is much greater in SARNCO, while the emphasis on education as an instrument for undermining the patriarchal system in which we live was stronger in WAR.

Organizational Structure

WAR officially adopted a non-hierarchical organizational structure that was consistent with its radical feminist roots because such a structure theoretically would allow no one to have control or power over anyone else (Whittier 1995). Within this structure, there were four half-time positions with equal pay and authority: staff coordinator, training coordinator, preventive program and research coordinator, and publications and correspondence coordinator (Women Against Rape 1974b).

Additionally, a central coordinating committee, composed of representatives from
each “task group” within WAR, was charged with overseeing the day-to-day operations of the organization (Women Against Rape 1974b). Although problems associated with this structure and its funding possibilities later developed, it remained in place through June of 1994 (Women Against Rape 1994); while these kinds of organizational and funding problems certainly were not unique to WAR (see Scott 1993), they did contribute greatly to its eventual demise as a social movement organization. Despite the “official” non-hierarchical structure that WAR consciously adopted because of its radical feminist ideology, there did exist several informal hierarchical structures among coordinators and volunteers. For example, many women who participated in interviews with me noted that certain women in WAR tended to have more power than others because they were doing more work or were more vocal in their interactions within and outside of the group. As one volunteer from the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s put it:

“It really had to do with how much time people put in. So if you were there a lot of hours, you had more power. The more involved you were, the more power you had. … Those of us who were getting paid of course were there more hours. We had more recognition. We had more say in how we wanted things to go.”

Other women mentioned the fluidity of the paid positions within WAR and how they changed over time, the fact that various groups of women (particularly lesbian woman) seemed to be more powerful than other groups of women at certain points in time, the predominance of white female volunteers, and the frustrations with maintaining a non-hierarchical structure as results of patterns in the organizational structure of WAR.
SARNCO’s organizational structure is almost entirely determined by the hospital system through which it operates. There is essentially one overall program coordinator who is in charge of the four individual program coordinators, who in turn manage the volunteers for their various programs. The manager of the hospital’s Behavioral Health Department is in charge of the overall coordinator, and the vice president of the Behavioral Health Department is in charge of that manager (Riccobono 1997). Despite SARNCO’s official position within one particular hospital department (Behavioral Health), it also coordinates its activities closely with the Emergency Department via the SANE Program. In fact, according to one coordinator, the whole of SARNCO was originally under the auspices of the Emergency Department of the hospital, but it was judged to be a “misfit” in terms of getting the “acceptance and support” it needed to meet its goals. Hospital administration aside, however, several of SARNCO’s coordinators felt it important to stress during our interviews that the program coordinators themselves try to operate on a non-hierarchical basis in spite of their official job titles and duties, thus demonstrating in some way their more radical feminist tendencies within an officially nonpolitical (at least according to hospital policy) organization. For example, they can unofficially encourage volunteers who want to engage in radical feminist antirape activities (e.g., participating in the “C.U.N.T. Militia,” a radical lesbian feminist protest group often associated with the Women’s Studies Department at Ohio State University, at a Take Back the Night rally/march), as long as they make it clear to the volunteers that they can in no way associate themselves with SARNCO while taking part in such activities.
This subversion of the rules on the part of both coordinators and volunteers demonstrates perfectly how the “in your face” radical feminist ideology that was the backbone of WAR is not acceptable within SARNCO. The hierarchical structure put into place to run the organization has means for suppressing that ideology (e.g., paying salaries of some coordinators whom the hospital administration can direct or even fire, and controlling all aspects of any public written or oral communication the organization wants to disseminate).

**Strategies**

One way to classify a social movement’s strategy is to consider whether it is a revolutionary or reform movement (Garner 1996). WAR certainly appeared to be revolutionary in its ideology, as the radical feminist and radical lesbian feminist political ideologies prevalent in the antirape movement during the 1970s advocated completely overthrowing patriarchal and/or heterosexist social structures. A characteristic example of a revolutionary strategy that one WAR member described to me is that, as a grassroots organization, it was critical of more “mainstream” organizations that had to be “under the law,” which is a criticism leveled by other antirape movement organizations of the period as well (Schechter 1982). Rather than using a cooperative or collaborative approach with organizations that they viewed as “mainstream,” WAR members felt justified in treating these organizations with open disdain or even hostility, and many volunteers were not afraid of the consequences of operating “above the law” on behalf of WAR. Other evidence of WAR’s revolutionary strategy was offered by this volunteer:
“The way WAR defined being a radical feminist, is to change things from the root. Right? Changing things from the root means that you cannot work within the system because...you have to change the system. I think that’s the core difference. [It] was that WAR was out to change the entire system of male domination.”

However, underneath the ideological preferences its members commonly expressed, WAR actually seemed to use a more reformative than transformative strategy. This is because in practice, WAR sought change through the relatively standard channels of providing social services. WAR did much of its work in concert with police departments, hospitals, legal entities, and other antiviolence organizations—even if it did so begrudgingly and at times combatively—in order to provide some basic level of services to survivors. In effect, the provision of these services aimed to change only a small number of specific societal practices dealing with rape (such as ensuring that medical personnel are sensitive to a survivor’s psychological needs during a rape exam), rather than to change society as a whole by getting rid of the various structures supporting the perpetration of rape; this marks the overall strategy as reformative (Garner 1996). This difficult tangling of strategy and ideology is best articulated by one woman whose words show how the ideals of an ideological position and the realities of everyday practice are necessarily interconnected:

“The issue wasn’t simply violence against women; violence against women was simply a primary focal point—like, ‘this is the extreme of the problem, and if we can emancipate ourselves economically, and physically, and if we can emancipate ourselves from abuse then the patriarchy will tumble [emphasis added].’”
This woman understood quite astutely that sexual violence is only one of many issues that could potentially serve as the ideological motivation for dismantling the patriarchy, but that its uniquely urgent need for intermediate action, i.e., providing assistance to rape survivors, could cause some organizational actors to lose their focus on that endgame in favor of “just” helping survivors of sexual violence.

SARNCO’s strategy as a social movement organization, like the one upon which WAR relied heavily, involves not only the provision of social services to survivors of sexual assault, but also the improvement of those services so that they are as beneficial to survivors as possible. Within the model of classifying social movement strategy as either revolutionary or reformative, SARNCO’s strategy would definitely be categorized as reformative, meaning that it is working with existing institutions and systems to combat the problem of sexual assault rather than trying to create new institutions and relations to prevent it (Garner 1996). The organization’s offices are physically located within a hospital building, and its hierarchical structure is dictated by that hospital’s policies. It has typically had cooperative agreements and arrangements with many other interested organizations throughout the central Ohio area (e.g., Ohio State University’s Main Hospital, the Franklin County Prosecutor’s Victim Witness Assistance Program, Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization [BRAVO], the Columbus Police Department’s Sexual Abuse Squad, the Ohio Coalition Against Sexual Assault [OCASA], Ohio State University’s Rape Education and Prevention Program [REPP], CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence, and Franklin County Children’s Services). The multitude of productive relationships
SARNCO has with other agencies and groups concerned directly or indirectly with sexual assault, whether or not they are organizations within the antirape social movement themselves, testifies to the extent of SARNCO’s entrenchment in existing social structures. It willingly shares volunteers, trainings, expertise, authority, and other resources bilaterally in its efforts to stop rape, which is in stark contrast to WAR’s oftentimes counterproductive practice of not “cooperating” with other organizations that work with survivors of sexual assault. Besides the cooperation with similar organizations that SARNCO enjoys, another advantage that SARNCO receives from working within existing systems to address the problem of sexual assault is the protections it is afforded by being associated with the OhioHealth hospital system, as expressed by this coordinator:

“[I]f we weren’t operating within a hospital, we wouldn’t be able to help survivors in the emergency department. ... [A] free-standing rape crisis center [faces a challenge in] trying to make it OK for their advocates [and] support people to go into all the different emergency departments even if they’re not affiliated with the department. The problem comes up where…if something went wrong [with an advocate], that community would be up in arms. … [I]f we weren’t under this bureaucracy, I don’t know [what] would fix [that problem].”

In agreement, another coordinator shared:

“[W]e do have access to the emergency departments. We do get our office space for free and our business loan for free and that type of thing. We also have a cushion. Being grant-funded, there were times that I would not have had a paycheck for a couple months had it not been for the hospital keeping that going. Same thing with the [24-Hour Rape] Helpline—the Helpline would have been disconnected if the hospital wouldn’t have footed that bill until the next round of money came in.”

When comparing SARNCO to WAR, it should be clear that WAR members would never have viewed hospital oversight of the organization as providing any benefits.
Although both antirape organizations can be described as employing a primarily reformative strategy, SARNCO does so more openly and obviously than WAR did because of its placement within a hospital network. It operates with the principal goal of assisting survivors by means of the “band-aid” work, whereas offering similar support services was viewed by many in WAR as an intermediate goal at best.

**Tactics**

Because the bulk of the social movement organizations in the antirape social movement in fact operate as rape crisis centers to some degree, organizations such as WAR and SARNCO are unlike organizations in other social movements that do not provide actual social services to the communities in which they are located. There are of course additional tactics besides providing rape crisis services that antirape social movement organizations employ, but so much energy is spent on the maintenance of rape crisis centers that those tactics most likely to keep the organization alive are often favored over the more radical tactics that could hurt a rape crisis center’s ability to “stay in business.” As professional staffs and even professional cadres, as defined by McCarthy and Zald (1977), are formed in antirape social movement organizations, and as their members start to concentrate more on the social services they wish to provide, tactics that had been acceptable at one point may no longer be viable. Thus, while tactical repertoires may be the key differentiating factor between social movement activity and “routine” political activity (Taylor and Van Dyke 2004: 263), the assumption that the tactics of a grassroots rape crisis center (e.g., WAR) will be very different from those of an institutionalized rape crisis center (e.g., SARNCO) has to be
challenged because both types of organizations have an interest in using tactics that will allow them to continue to provide rape crisis services to sexual assault survivors.

Within WAR, members selected tactics, or “methods of accomplishing a precisely defined intermediate or short-term goal” (Garner 1996: 33), that were quite varied for a single social movement organization, but also relatively standard for the antirape movement in general (Matthews 1989; Schechter 1982; Scott 1993). Some of these tactics were actually services the organization provided to rape survivors and to women in general, such as self-defense classes for women that emphasized the way powerlessness is an imposed condition, support groups for survivors of rape or sexual assault, educational community outreach programs exposing myths about rape, the 24-hour rape crisis telephone hotline, and the Whistle Alert program (Whittier 1991; Women Against Rape 1974b). While tactics such as these were clearly geared toward providing social services to women victimized by rape as either a means to an end or as an end in themselves, others were inherently more political and thus more intended to help WAR achieve its revolutionary goal of stopping sexual violence. Even a short list of WAR’s most prominent tactics for bringing attention to rape would have to include the following: engaging in public demonstrations to protest rape; holding “Speak-Outs” where women could come talk with other women about their experiences with sexual assault; publishing materials about self defense; writing and distributing nationally the pamphlet *Freeing Our Lives: A Feminist Analysis of Rape Prevention* (Graff, McCrate, McCarthy, and Sparks 1978); creating a courtwatching project to help prepare sexual assault survivors for their experiences with the justice
system; organizing a “Pray-In” for Joan Little, a young African American woman who was put on trial in North Carolina for murdering her white rapist; advocating for more and better street lighting in Columbus; creating “Women’s Distress Shelters” as safe houses for women at risk of falling prey to sexual violence; confronting medical and legal personnel during rape exams for exhibiting insensitive or inappropriate behavior; making television and radio appearances to educate the general public about rape; and organizing city-wide Take Back the Night marches. While many of these tactics might seem tame to feminists of today, many of them were actually quite revolutionary at the time. For example, a public march at night through the streets of a large city during which women yell out in unison such slogans as “We’re here to fight! Take back the night!” may be alarming to many people in contemporary American society, but it made an even more powerfully distressing political statement thirty years ago. However, regardless of how radical WAR’s tactics were, it could be argued that few of them would hamper its work as a rape crisis center in its provision of social services to sexual assault survivors.

In a manner very similar to that of WAR, SARNCO employs tactics toward achieving the dual goals of public education and social support that are typical of many modern rape crisis centers (Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985; Martin, DiNitto, Byington, and Maxwell 1992; Matthews 1994). These tactics include all of the services SARNCO provides—the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners Program, the 24-Hour Rape Helpline, the Hospital Advocacy Program, and the Education and Prevention Program. Few tactics outside of these services are employed, because of
the organization’s position within a hospital structure that controls all of its public and some of its private activities. However, certain tactics are deemed acceptable activities for the organization, including the following: letter writing; “fliering” (i.e., passing out fliers or pamphlets to people) at public or crowded events such as Columbus, Ohio’s monthly “Gallery Hop; “tabling” (i.e., providing an information table or booth) at feminist-friendly events such as Tori Amos and Lilith Fair concerts and Take Back the Night rallies; putting stickers or cards listing SARNCO’s phone number and services in public areas; and preparing media and conference presentations. SARNCO’s tactics are telling for at least two reasons: first, they are not explicitly tied to a radical feminist ideology as many of WAR’s tactics were, especially if they are viewed with a historical eye toward the changing meaning of the term “radical;” and second, they tend to reinforce rather than supplement the idea that SARNCO’s primary goal is to be a good sexual assault service provider, rather than to change the societal structures that allow rape to occur. While the discrepancies between WAR’s tactics and SARNCO’s tactics are neither inherently good nor inherently bad, they do point to a critical difference between the organizations: the degree to which each antirape social movement organization incorporated radical feminism into their efforts to bring about social change regarding sexual assault. As the antirape movement grew less radical both nationally and locally, WAR did not weather the changes well and eventually disbanded, and the far less feminist organization of SARNCO has essentially taken its place as the primary rape crisis
center in Columbus. An analysis of both organizations within the context of this deradicalization of the antirape movement is the topic of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4

INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND IDENTITY WITHIN THE ANTIRAPE SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS WAR AND SARNCO

Institutionalization

Although some antirape social movement organizations are institutionalized from their very beginnings, others become institutionalized over time. Neither SARNCO nor WAR fits perfectly into either of these research-driven characterizations of other antirape social movement organizations, but an examination of the antirape movement in Columbus as a whole shows how the process of institutionalization took place across both WAR and SARNCO. WAR started out as a strongly radical feminist, grassroots antirape social movement organization that changed drastically over its lifecycle, although it never became institutionalized. SARNCO, on the other hand, began as an institutionalized organization, but there were several remnants of WAR that carried over into SARNCO as it was being formed. This has caused an underlying tension within SARNCO between the “older,” more radical ways of achieving the goals of the antirape social movement and the “newer,” less radical and non-radical ways of operating as an antirape social movement organization. The process or state of institutionalization is not by definition a necessarily good or a
necessarily bad thing for an organization to experience, as there are both benefits and
detriments associated with institutionalization; the more important questions for this
dissertation are how institutionalization has contributed to the deradicalization of the
antirape movement and whether this deradicalization has had a helpful or harmful
impact on the ability of antirape social movement organizations to meet the goals of
the antirape movement.

There are many overlapping reasons that the institutionalization of rape crisis
centers has grown increasingly attractive or viable since the start of the antirape
movement in the early 1970s. Institutionalization is linked to deradicalization because
much of the inherently political activity of radical feminist organizations is not
possible within organizations structured by non-radical ideologies and goals (Gornick,
Burt, and Pittman 1985). One process contributing to institutionalization is the need
for rape crisis centers to have to cooperate with other less radical organizations and
institutions because of their need for financial and interorganizational support, while a
second development leading to institutionalization is the increasing professionalization
of rape crisis centers’ workers and the structural changes often accompanying such
professionalization. Both institutionalized and non-institutionalized antirape
movement organizations have found success, depending upon their individual needs
and the needs of their communities. However, looking at the successes of rape crisis
centers that were founded without an explicit feminist (especially radical feminist)
ideology and within institutionalized settings such as hospitals (see Collins and
Whalen 1989 and Schmitt and Martin 1999 for case study examples) is not entirely
helpful when trying to ascertain the overall success of the antirape movement over its life course thus far. Rape crisis centers that were formed under these conditions are entirely different from rape crisis centers that were formed when radical feminism was at its most visible in the United States in the early 1970s. While these studies do an excellent job of celebrating the strides that certain rape crisis centers have been able to make because of their cooperation with and access to institutional resources such as money, staff, and political connections, they are not able to provide any evidence that grassroots, feminist, non-institutionalized antirape social movement organizations were or would have been any less successful in meeting their goals. One question that emerges is, “What exactly are the goals of the rape crisis centers as individual entities?” While the goals of the antirape movement have repeatedly and consistently been stated as: 1) eradicating the social problem of rape; and 2) treating sexual assault survivors, individual rape crisis centers oftentimes emphasize one or the other of those goals more heavily or even exclusively because of their organizational structures, ideologies, resources, etc. When examining the antirape movement in Columbus, Ohio during the 1972-2002 time period, it becomes clear that WAR tried to avoid many of the factors that typically contribute to the institutionalization of social movement organizations, while SARNCO has embraced several of those same factors. Much of this difference between the two organizations can be directly attributed to their differing emphases on the goals of ending rape and providing social services, which are in turn predictive of their acceptance of certain monies, need for cooperating with other organizations, degree of professionalization, and so forth.
When WAR was founded in 1974, there was very little funding to run the organization. All kinds of resources that the group needed—telephone service, meeting space, materials for publications, teaching skills—were donated by other organizations friendly to WAR’s goals or by members themselves. The Women’s Action Collective (WAC), the radical feminist organization from which WAR was born, provided some money, as did the Episcopal General Conference Youth Program Fund, with which WAR could operate during its first year (Women Against Rape 1974b). However, WAR produced a budget for the 1974-1975 operating period totaling $22,826, and so members of the “Funding and Planning” group quickly began learning how to write and apply for grants (Women Against Rape 1974b). Although WAR received several grants over its lifecycle, the most important of these was undoubtedly the roughly one-half million dollars awarded by the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape of the National Institute of Mental Health from 1976-1980 (Community Action Strategies to Stop Rape 1980; Whittier 1991; Whittier 1995; Women Against Rape 1994). This grant funded the Community Action Strategies to Stop Rape (CASSR) rape prevention project, which allowed WAR to: 1) create four “community prevention programs” (i.e., a series of antirape education and prevention workshops, the Whistle Alert and Distress Shelter projects [described in the previous chapter], and the Women’s Rape Prevention Network); 2) evaluate longitudinally the effectiveness of each of these four programs by analyzing pre- and post-test data for workshop participants and by examining media and other community organizations’ reporting on rape and offerings of rape prevention programs; and 3)
publishing *Freeing Our Lives: A Feminist Analysis of Rape Prevention* (Graff, McCrate, McCarthy, and Sparks 1978), which was the first national publication to promote feminist strategies for preventing rape (Community Action Strategies to Stop Rape 1980). A second project that came out of WAR in the late 1970s and received a significant amount of funding was the Child Assault Prevention (CAP) project. CAP received a Ms. Foundation Challenge Grant and produced the book *New Strategies for Free Children: Child Abuse Prevention for Elementary School Children*, an internationally-used curriculum for conducting child abuse prevention workshops for schools, parents, teachers, and children, and a Leaders’ Manual that teaches people how to hold their own child assault prevention workshops in their communities. The CAP Project eventually grew so successful that its members broke the organization’s ties to WAR and renamed it the National Assault Prevention Center; it now operates nationally and internationally as an independent organization implementing the “Safe, Strong, and Free” curriculum across the globe.

One unfortunate effect of the CASSR and CAP grants, which could be seen as a sign of increasing institutionalization of the organization, was that they created what some members felt were “elite” groups of women within the supposedly non-hierarchical organization (Whittier 1995). Because the women working on the various CASSR and CAP projects were viewed as staff and were receiving pay and widespread respect for their work while the majority of WAR members were not, some women who were not involved with these projects felt alienated from WAR because they felt it was no longer a collective organization composed of women of
equal stature—a common sentiment among women working for rape crisis centers that accepted government funding (Campbell and Martin 2001). This disparity between WAR volunteers and staff (paid by the CASSR grant, in this case) was described by one woman who was a member during the late 1970s and early 1980s:

“[M]y interaction with them—and I loved that group of women because they were really trying hard and were dedicated and weren’t sure sometimes whether they were going to get paid—and I would often feel bad for them because it seemed like the organization was becoming institutionalized or there were folks who were trying to institutionalize it and…the staff were the ones paying the price. Because they were still the public view of WAR and they had to answer all the public comments and questions and yet it was the folks in the back room who were making the decisions.”

This notion that there were paid staff members who were thought to be making decisions and unpaid volunteer members who were actually making decisions demonstrates the tension developing between the two groups of women, even when they felt great love for one another. It also shows how some members were trying to subvert attempts at institutionalization by not allowing all of the organization’s power to fall into the hands of only a subset of its members simply because they were getting paid. Unbeknownst to WAR’s members at that point, however, this strain resulting from having such large grants and all of their associated responsibilities would not last for long. Despite the huge national significance of the programs funded by NIMH’s CASSR grant, the grant itself lasted only until 1980, and CAP eventually “outgrew” WAR and went national because of its revolutionary successes. At that point, WAR began to rely once more on the strategies it had previously used to raise the money necessary for its sustenance, such as teaching feminist self-defense classes via Ohio State University’s Rape Education and Prevention Program, holding training
workshops for legal and mental health professionals who worked with rape survivors, and canvassing neighborhoods to solicit donations door-to-door. While these methods worked for a short time, WAR’s financial situation, like that of many antirape social movement organizations across the country, became nothing short of desperate by the mid-1980s (Campbell, Baker, and Mazurek 1998; Campbell and Martin 2001; Gornick, Burt, and Pittman 1985; Largen 1985; O’Sullivan 1978; Whittier 1995).

Interview and video data for this dissertation indicate that WAR’s reluctance to expand its fundraising strategies during the period from 1984 to 1996 made it unique among antirape social movement organizations in at least two ways. First, while many other antirape organizations came to rely almost exclusively on external funding sources and thus became subjected to certain requirements of receiving those monies, WAR did not. According to several interview participants, although WAR did indeed accept money from some federal sources, such as the National Institute for Mental Health, it would not compromise its radical feminist ideological position in order to open itself up to some other more “mainstream” sources of funding such as the United Way and the Playboy Foundation (see Whittier 1991 and Whittier 1995). Compounding this problematic fiscal stance was the fact that when many social movement organizations exist within a social movement industry, they have to compete with one another for a finite amount of resources (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Since WAR had its own self-imposed limitations on what kinds of funding would be acceptable, its potential pool of resources was even smaller than that of other related social movement organizations. The second way that WAR’s uncompromising
ideological stance made it unusual in comparison to its contemporary antirape social movement organizations is that despite its refusal to apply for federal funding—which had in large part “dried up” during the Reagan and Bush years of the 1980s and early 1990s—WAR not only managed to remain viable, but it continued to serve as the primary antirape organization in Columbus for approximately another decade. Rather than closing down in the face of dire financial pressures, WAR continued its commitment to sustaining its radical feminist ideology and surprisingly, was successful in maintaining the antirape movement in Columbus during this time. Unfortunately, its financial situation eventually became perhaps the most critical factor in WAR’s downfall, although at least one volunteer felt that WAR’s financial and other problems were merely symptoms of an “organization that could not evolve any further” because WAR had “become stagnant and…unwilling to change” and thus unable to be “useful.” Canvassing and fundraising efforts had become much less effective over time, partially because of the persistence of the hostile political environment in which feminist organizations were generally not favored, and partially because of a brutal attack and rape of one of WAR’s own members in its offices that created a sense among the volunteers that going out into the community to fundraise door-to-door was unsafe. In a last-ditch effort to cut back on its expenses, WAR discontinued paying payroll taxes and then was heavily penalized by the IRS for doing so (Women Against Rape 1994). It also cut its full-time, paid staff from four people in 1992 to three people in 1993 and two people in 1994 (Women Against Rape 1994). The staff members who remained were overwhelmed with the amount of work they
had to do, so in the end certain things just could not get done. In terms of membership, there were roughly eighty active and semi-active members in WAR at the time of the August 1994 “wake” (Women Against Rape 1994). However, the bulk of the office work and fundraising efforts seemed to be falling on only a few members. Members were not able to cover all of the shifts for the 24-hour rape crisis line, leading those who were covering them to fear a negative response from possible funding sources. They were afraid that funding agencies would argue that if WAR could not even staff the telephone hotline—its major contribution to the community—then what would the point of funding it be? According to several members who were active in WAR in the 1990s, the organization was approximately $20,000 in debt by August of 1994. Roughly half of that amount was owed to paid staff members, while the IRS was demanding the other half to cover back taxes, penalties, and interest (Women Against Rape 1994). By January of 1996, the total debt had ballooned up to an estimated $30,000, and although a handful of WAR members had tried to establish a plan for taking responsibility for the debt and working out a payment schedule with the IRS, this plan ultimately fizzled and WAR closed its doors for good. While accepting certain kinds of funding—and the greater degree of institutionalization it likely would have promised—might have salvaged WAR if action had been taken early enough, upholding its radical feminist ideological position by not bowing to funding sources that could have compromised those ideals meant that the institutionalization similar to what was occurring in other antirape organizations across the country would have to wait in Columbus.
The transition between WAR and SARNCO between 1994 and 1996 saw a complete shift in the Columbus antirape movement’s acceptance of institutionalization. I have already discussed two changes that are often signals of increasing institutionalization—greater emphases on direct social services and cooperation with similar organizations—in the previous chapter, but there are several other indicators of the growing institutionalization within the Columbus antirape movement that I shall analyze here. Despite some shaky times, SARNCO has enjoyed some of its success as an antirape social movement organization precisely because of its institutional affiliations and requirements. SARNCO in each of its three incarnations has always been part of a hospital-based program for providing prevention, education, and treatment services to survivors of sexual assault, whether as the limited Rape Treatment Program at St. Anthony Medical Center, the short-lived Columbus Area Rape Treatment Program at Grant/Riverside Methodist Hospitals, or finally the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio within the same OhioHealth hospital system. As a result of its position within the institutionalized hospital structure, SARNCO itself has never had to shut down when grant funding has trickled up in the past because the hospital system has been willing to step in and provide a financial “cushion” that can pay salaries and bills. This is a source of both frustration and relief for the paid staff members, since they are glad not to lose their jobs immediately if the money runs out, but they are also angered that the hospital will not assume full financial responsibility for the program and thus prevent these funding problems from occurring in the first place. There are constant funding struggles for
SARNCO since only one of the full-time staff members is paid by the hospital system, while the other staff members have to apply for grant funding several times a year, not only for their salaries, but also for operating expenses and special projects. This time spent on administrative tasks occurs at the cost of being able to provide direct community services. One coordinator explained the tug-of-war this way:

“I think one of the things that personally speaking I have felt constrained by is just funds. You know, having to be funded by a grant and all of the time and maintenance that goes into that, writing the grant, doing the research, doing the monthly reports, doing the quarterly reports, and that take as a big chunk of my time. And yes, that’s frustrating because I’d much rather be out doing more, I don’t know if you want to call it more radical stuff, but just being out talking about it. Raising awareness about it. Getting at the root of the problem and taking the components and addressing the components that perpetuate violence against women. But I’m here behind my desk punching numbers so that I can keep [the bills paid]. … [I]n order to prove to a funder that we need the service, we need to go back and we need to do the numbers and show how many people are using the [service], and what we’ve done over the last three-four years.”

Even though SARNCO does enjoy some institutional-level support, its members are forced to use the strategy of producing the paperwork and the statistical analysis—at great cost to some of the volunteers as well as the coordinators themselves—that the funding agencies require in order to continue contributing money to the organization. This keeps SARNCO’s coordinators from being out in the community doing antirape work as much as they would like, but their prevailing attitude seems to be one of resignation to their administrative efforts so that continuous and plentiful services can be provided to the people who need them. However, knowing that their work to keep SARNCO protected by the hospital so that they can continue to provide necessary services to survivors is enough to keep them satisfied both as professionals within the
organization, and as antirape advocates in a more general sense. Their ideas about how they, as feminists, should handle the social issue of rape within SARNCO have had to be somewhat pushed aside to allow for the way they need to work in order to get things done for the organization. While their feminist ideals may give their work personal meaning, they cannot and do not play as large a part in its professional meaning.

SARNCO demonstrates a far greater degree of institutionalization than WAR ever experienced in several other ways. This has often been a result of three interrelated shifts that the antirape movement has seen nationally as the replacement of older and more experienced antirape workers with younger, less politicized members who have brought greater diversity to the movement has occurred (Campbell and Martin 2001). First, many rape crisis centers across the country have taken on hierarchical organizational structures rather than the collective, non-hierarchical structures favored by radical feminist-oriented groups such as WAR. My interview data show that this change has taken place in the local antirape movement as well, as WAR died out and SARNCO became the primary antirape organization in Columbus. While WAR’s members often touted the benefits of the collective structure that in theory allowed everyone to have an equal say in decision-making power, most of them also recognized the problems with this structure in that “consensus is wonderful but it is self-limiting” because “there has to be some flexibility to allow for growth of an agency or organization.” No member of SARNCO who participated in an interview with me even mentioned the organization’s hierarchical decision-making structure,
much less discussed the benefits or limitations that such as structure might hold for their work; it is simply taken for granted as the way that SARNCO operates. No discussion of the radical feminist ideals that were interwoven throughout WAR’s very fabric ever arose with SARNCO’s members; although there are certainly women who identify as radical feminists working within SARNCO, this identification was never connected directly to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the organization’s structure itself, and thus it seems that feminism—whether radical or not—has lost importance as the movement has become more institutionalized in this fashion.

The second and third shifts in rape crisis organizations that Campbell and Martin (2001) describe are highly intertwined because they increase the likelihood of a given antirape organization to be able to secure better and more reliable funding. The increased stress placed upon the members of these organizations to have professional credentials and the need for the antirape organizations themselves to become affiliated with larger, more independently-funded organizations are changes that have come about so that antirape organizations can not only procure the money necessary to provide services to sexual assault survivors, but also to maintain themselves as organizations by paying for materials, bills, salaries, etc. Within Columbus, Ohio’s antirape movement, the level of professionalization is higher in SARNCO than it ever was in WAR. First, although it took several incarnations and coordinators before a good fit was found, SARNCO did eventually find its home within the OhioHealth system. As discussed earlier, SARNCO’s relationship with its affiliated hospitals has at times been rocky, but even a cursory search of the OhioHealth Web site, for
example, shows how deeply entrenched SARNCO’s program is within the system, just as the hospitals’ cancer care and trauma services programs are. However, the issue of rape has been sanitized to such a degree that one coordinator finds herself repeatedly having to remind hospital leadership that “rape isn’t pretty” when she is trying to explain the organization’s needs, and so feminist discussions of how to prevent or treat rape simply cannot take place within this context. Second, while WAR certainly attracted its share of better educated and more “credentialed” women—who seemed, at least to one of those highly educated women, to gravitate toward the more celebrated projects like CAP—education and experience were far less important characteristics of WAR’s members than enthusiasm, time, and a basic sense of feminism and justice. In SARNCO, however, an educational degree in a relevant field such as Women’s Studies or Social Work is a prerequisite for any paid position, and while grants are what will pay the salaries of the women who fill these positions, their hiring has to go through the Human Resources Department of the highly-bureaucratized OhioHealth system. For example, the second Columbus Area Rape Treatment Program (CARPT) Coordinator had an advanced degree in Feminist Theology, the first SARNCO Coordinator had a degree in Social Work, and multiple later program coordinators within SARNCO have had degrees in fields such as Women’s Studies and Education. The original coordinator of SARNCO herself had actually left WAR in favor of joining SARNCO as a volunteer—when it was still known as the Columbus Area Rape Treatment Program—because of her need to fulfill internship duties with a professional social service organization for her Social Work
degree. WAR had never had an intern, and while she did have “to talk a lot of people into allowing” her to do an internship for CARTP, including the CARTP coordinator and managers at Grant/Riverside Hospitals, SARNCO ran with that program and has continued to employ college interns on a regular basis in the many years since her original internship. The professionalization evidenced in examples such as these has not always occurred at the cost of being able hire radical feminists for the paid and professional positions that SARNCO has to offer, but the de-emphasis on feminist “credentials” in favor of educational and experiential credentials is yet another striking difference between WAR and SARNCO. Continuing with this theme of radical feminism gradually losing its footing within the antirape social movement in Columbus, Ohio, I shall now move to a discussion of radical feminism being driven out of the movement because of conflicts over identity.

Identity

Organizational Membership and Collective Identity

WAR’s membership originally consisted of “university area women” (Women Against Rape 1974b) who participated in consciousness-raising groups that Columbus-Ohio State University Women’s Liberation began arranging in the fall of 1972 (Whittier 1995); the primary identifying characteristic of women who worked for WAR was their belief in radical feminism as a source of societal change. There were several women who worked together to form WAR, and in their first training session they added about sixty volunteer members (Whittier 1995). Whittier (1995) notes the difficulty in trying to distinguish clearly between university and community members
and the organizations they established, because membership in both types of groups
was not limited to either students or nonstudents, and this pattern is confirmed in my
interview data for this dissertation. Particularly in the early stages of WAR’s
formation, women could straddle many different organizations that may or may not
have been part of the Women’s Action Collective (WAC), and their interest in other
leftist political causes meant that many of them were indeed working not just for
organizations with radical feminism as the focus, but for others as well. Regardless of
the blurry lines between the university and community women who joined WAR, most
of them, as in the Women’s Action Collective as a whole, were young (25-30), white,
educated women (Whittier 1995). Many identified—or came to identify themselves
during the tenure of their involvement with WAR—as lesbians, which was a source of
tension among the organization’s members throughout WAR’s history.

As for SARNCO’s membership, the major identifying characteristic that its
volunteers share is that many of them are survivors and/or co-survivors who have been
“intimately involved” with sexual violence. Whereas the subscription to radical feminist
ideals was, in practice, virtually a requirement to be in WAR, no mention of feminism is
made when people apply to be volunteers or paid staff for SARNCO. Most of the
volunteers are university students from throughout Columbus, and redacted demographic
information provided to me about the organization’s volunteers indicates that, while there
is a wide range in the age of the volunteers, most of them fall into the early- to mid-
twenties age group. In terms of racial/ethnic diversity, there has been a move away from
the predominantly white membership of WAR, as evidenced by the moderate number of
volunteers primarily from African American and Asian American backgrounds who have participated in the organization. There have also been many lesbian women involved with SARNCO, which similarly has been associated with particular tensions within the organization. Finally, unlike WAR, and in direct contradiction to its exclusively female membership, there have also been men involved as volunteers for SARNCO.

Within WAR, collective identity was carefully constructed and maintained to create both a sense of community among its members and a feeling of commitment to the goals of radical feminist rape prevention. The three components of collective identity that Taylor and Whittier (1997) discuss—boundaries, consciousness, and negotiation—were apparent among WAR’s members. The most powerful boundary between the women in WAR and everyone else not in WAR was female-ness, followed closely by radical feminist identity. Although one might think that these two boundaries would be clear-cut, this was not always the case. One longtime WAR member mentioned, for example, a transgender male volunteer who identified as a woman, and the discussions that other members had among themselves asking “Was she really…?” Another problematic issue that played out along boundary lines was male survivors of sexual assault. The topic made many WAR members wary not only because they had to deal with a fair share of male offenders and verbally abusive males (primarily on the rape crisis line), but also because not all radical feminists believe that men can be raped. There was much discussion and a lot of disagreement over how to handle male survivors, and much of this had to do with the unclear boundaries between women and men and between victims and perpetrators that treating male survivors would create.
Consciousness among WAR’s members was also heavily intertwined with the radical feminist ideology that they put into place via their goals, structure, strategies, tactics, and so forth. Subscribing to this particular ideology showed just how opposed to patriarchy and the problems it creates these members were. Even in the middle and later stages of WAR’s existence, when the radical feminist movement had fallen far out of political favor among most women across the country, WAR offered its members a sort of sanctuary in which necessary discussions about patriarchy and heterosexism’s roles in sexual violence could continue vibrantly. Finally, the negotiation by which WAR’s members could highlight political activities in which they engaged but that were not typically viewed as social movement tactics was once again often a product of the organization’s radical feminist ideology. For example, the organization’s non-hierarchical structure demonstrated that patriarchal models of family and business (i.e., those models with a powerful male “head”) were not acceptable for the way WAR wanted to conduct its political action against rape. Another example of this component of collective identity is that some WAR members purposefully played with the negotiation related to norms of traditionally feminine appearance and dress by having discussions about whether it was true that “you can’t dress like a dyke if you want this [respect/benefit/service/funding from others who are not radical feminists]” and adjusting their appearance if necessary. Overall, all of these instances show that WAR’s members had a strong sense of collective identity that they were not afraid to define, discuss, and re-define as different needs arose. This malleability, always within the parameters of a
radical feminist ideology, allowed them to sustain their commitment both to the antirape social movement organization and to the antirape social movement in general.

The most striking feature of SARNCO’s collective identity, on the other hand, is its almost complete absence. Not only is there no collective sense of cohesiveness, common goals, or political beliefs, there is little interaction among volunteers at all.

One coordinator described the difficult situation this way:

“[T]he work we do is so isolated with respect to the volunteers, and…we don’t get together that much. And when we do offer meetings, there’s not a high turnout, so I don’t know if it’s because the volunteers aren’t working together. When you need to do the helpline, you’re doing it by yourself. When you go to work at the hospital, you’re doing it by yourself. When you go out to schools, you’re by yourself. … We’re doing collective work, but we’re doing it by ourselves.”

While there was some hope on the part of new volunteers when the 24-Rape Helpline was originally formed in late 1996 that SARNCO would help maintain the sense of collective identity that was so strong in WAR, many volunteers do not feel that this has happened. In contrast to the members of WAR, there do not appear to be any explicit boundaries that SARNCO volunteers use to differentiate themselves from those not working in this field, as evidenced especially well by the inclusion of both men and non-feminists in the organization. Furthermore, because of its ideology that—while not entirely clear—is definitely not radical feminist, there is no collective sense of consciousness that the end of patriarchy is the ultimate goal of rape crisis work. Finally, some negotiation (i.e., using identity to bring attention to political activism) that occurs in SARNCO, such as the use of more “politically correct” terminology, is widely practiced and accepted, while other negotiation (e.g., not
following feminine appearance norms) is squelched by the hospital via the coordinators who are required to implement its policies. It is perhaps this lack of a collective identity that is most unfortunate for SARNCO as a social movement organization, because these three components of collective identity worked together to give the members of WAR a sense of community. With WAR’s demise, this community was irrevocably lost, and it is perhaps the most grievous loss that occurred for the members themselves. There is an overwhelming feeling among some former members of being burned out, disillusioned, and sensitive as a result of the difficult breakup of WAR as an organization. However, in terms of the broader antirape social movement in Columbus, WAR’s dissolution had a different kind of an impact: no other organization, and certainly not SARNCO, appears to have taken on the types of characteristics that serve to distinguish its members as politically outside the mainstream and strongly opposed to patriarchy. WAR was necessary to the antirape social movement because it provided its collective actors with a strong sense of collective identity that allowed them to remain committed to the movement as a whole (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1997), and SARNCO has not afforded its members with a similar feeling of collective identity that keeps them involved in the organization or the movement. The loss of many WAR veterans from the antirape movement following WAR’s death, as well as the constant turnover among SARNCO’s members, serve as illustrations of how the breakdown or lack of the sense of community that collective identity can grant has led to antirape workers dropping out of the social movement entirely.

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Identity Conflicts

Three other important issues that have been recognized as contributing to problems among staffers and volunteers at rape crisis centers, similar to what has occurred within the feminist movement in general, are the racial/ethnic identities, sexual identities, and feminist identities of their workers and the survivors they serve (Freeman 1975; Matthews 1989; Scott 1993). The first chapter of this dissertation described these issues in some detail, so I shall only summarize them here before moving to the analysis. First, several studies have described how many rape crisis centers are not able to serve women of color who are survivors of sexual assault very well, and so the development of population-specific centers and the active recruitment of women of color to work in rape crisis centers has occurred in an effort to remedy this problem (Matthews 1989; Matthews 1994; Scott 1993). In addition to the need for such population-specific centers, other antirape activists have noted the difficulties in making sure that women from all racial and ethnic backgrounds feel welcome and comfortable in doing this kind of work within organizations that are almost always predominantly composed of white women. Second, regarding sexual identity and feminist identity, tensions between straight women and lesbian women have been well-documented within the women’s movement (Taylor and Rupp 1993; Taylor and Whittier 1997). These tensions may be particularly evident when examining the lives of women who identify as feminists, but they are visible as well among women who do not identify as feminists, as not all antirape workers do. The issue of sexual identity is closely tied to that of feminist identity, as evidenced by the assertion on the
part of some radical feminists that the only “truly radical feminist [i]s a lesbian” (Freeman 1975: 139). This viewpoint naturally could cause straight women to feel both judged by and alienated from the lesbian women in the women’s movement, the antirape movement, or a given antirape social movement organization, especially given the radical feminist ideological stance valuing equality and diversity (see Matthews 1989).

For this dissertation, I categorize the tensions over racial/ethnic identities, sexual identities, and feminist identities as “identity conflicts” and examine their effects on the deradicalization of the antirape movement the same way I analyze institutionalization as contributing to this deradicalization. To revisit the original hypothesis I had regarding identity conflicts, my prediction was that identity conflicts would be far more critical within WAR than in SARNCO because of the way feminism emphasizes the importance of identity. The very purpose of the consciousness-raising groups in which many women began participating in during the mid-1960s was to allow women to explore their identities, their relationships, and their “personal troubles” in such a way that they could channel their energies toward positive personal and societal change. Identity is such a continuously malleable and negotiable process that not only are people naturally focused on their own developing identities, they are concerned with how well they are able to interact with other people based on their similarities and dissimilarities related to identity. Within the antirape movement, this focus on identity is magnified by the sensitive nature of the work, the fact that many antirape workers are survivors of sexual assault themselves, and the
way that, as one woman with whom I spoke put it, many rape crisis centers serve as an “outlet for outrage” in which women can explore their most deeply-felt assumptions about men, feminism, control, violence, and other powerful topics. Within the potentially volatile atmosphere of an antirape social movement organization, conflicts over identity can cause those women with “fringe” identities or issues to drop out of the organization, thus leading it to become more moderate—i.e., less radical.

**Talking about Identity**

Identity and its evolution were more frequent and salient topics of discussion within WAR than they were within SARNCO. One woman who participated in both organizations noted differences between WAR’s focus on individual identity and SARNCO’s emphasis on organizational identity:

“I think WAR was very focused on maintaining individuality and their identity as individuals, which is a radical feminist thing to do. And SARNCO, they tried to create an identity around their organization and the service they provided. … And certainly having the mechanism to listen to everybody [in WAR] is great, but you still need a process to make decisions and not talk about it for four meetings straight. Yeah. Whereas I feel like SARNCO did a better job of laying the ground rules, and [saying that], ‘[T]his is our organization’s mission. This is what we can do; this is what we can’t do. This is how we would like you to represent the organization.’ Whereas with WAR, you were the organization. Which are very different things.”

This woman volunteered with WAR in the mid 1990s as it was fading out as an organization, so she noticed lots of problems that the members were having with maintaining WAR’s membership, services, and structure, while at the same time appreciating the organization’s commitment to giving every woman a space to speak; she saw that within WAR, women identified themselves as the very organization itself. Her involvement with SARNCO, on the other hand, occurred very closely after...
its inception, so things were relatively fresh for her as the organization set up the rules and regulations that the hospital system decreed. To her, SARNCO was a more “organized organization,” so to speak, because identity was not at the forefront of what the group was about, and that made SARNCO seem better equipped to serve sexual assault survivors as an organization.

On the other end of the historical spectrum, some women felt that identity was perhaps discussed too much and over-politicized. One woman’s recollections of how WAR members talked about difference indicate that there was some room in the early years to evolve in terms of acceptance of those who are “different,” but that WAR made some strides in this evolution:

“I think some of the judgmental attitudes that we had [were] about women who weren’t radical feminists. That we were pretty sure that we had it right and then if you lived a traditional life and, you know, what we call a male identified life, then I think we were judgmental. And I’m not sure how that judgmentalness played out, but we tended to be a fairly homogenous group. You know, pretty white. [Two women] are the only two African-American women that I can remember at all being involved. So it was a homogenous group in terms of being white. It was very highly leaning towards most people being lesbian. And so perhaps that didn’t attract straight women as much. I think when I started with WAR, I was one of the very few heterosexual women that identified with heterosexual women—that was considered to be, in those days, that was considered to be a bad political choice. You know, now I like to say I didn’t choose this life style. That makes people laugh, but at the time, it was almost as if you were aligning yourself with what we would call the enemy. [T]here was a certain amount of exclusivity in terms of the demographics and the politics and the sexual orientation and the race and those kinds of things. And I think now the movement has definitely embraced heterosexual women. I don’t think we’ve necessarily embraced other demographics.”

While this WAR volunteer and staff member felt that WAR was “judgmental” in some ways, she also recognized the organization for exactly what it was—a group of radical
feminists coming together to stop rape. In that sense, there were no apologies needed for the lack of diversity within the organization, because diversity was not the ultimate goal or purpose of WAR. However, as one member throughout most of the 1980s explained, “Well, it was a glorified consciousness-raising group every time we got together, although we would never call it that!” For her, stopping rape was not always WAR’s primary goal, either, but continuing the discussions about identity was. However, by the time WAR crumbled away and SARNCO became the major rape crisis center in Columbus, identity discussions had become virtually unnecessary, as described by this SARNCO volunteer:

“I think ‘diversity’ is such an interesting word because it means so many different things to different people. You know, diversity may mean we want a larger segment of gay[s] and lesbians, which may be a turnoff to people who are of certain minorities, you know, who are minorities. Or we want people who are strongly feminist-based, which may completely turn off other—you know, again you have those dynamics where it’s like, ‘Okay, if I don’t self-define as a feminist how does that, how does that make me [unable to do this work]?’ It’s like an illegitimacy that’s given to you, like, ‘Are you really about the [anti]rape movement?’ And it’s like, ‘What does that have to do with the [anti]rape movement?’”

For this woman, the negotiation of identity wasn’t a necessary component of antirape work. In fact, identification with feminism itself, which was the primary characteristic shared by members of WAR, was not only no longer a prerequisite for participating in the antirape movement, it simply did not matter at all. As long as someone was able mentally and physically to do the “work” that was required for the “job,” then identification as a feminist or anything else was not important. While this example shows a more extreme viewpoint that certainly not everyone in SARNCO shared, it is critical to note that among all eighteen women who participated in interviews for this
dissertation, the only two who did not identify as feminists were associated exclusively with SARNCO; of the five women who described themselves as liberal rather than radical feminists, two worked only within SARNCO, while the other three worked for both WAR and SARNCO but were limited in their involvement with WAR to the mid-1990s period when WAR was dying out as an organization. According to these data, the typically radical feminist activity of talking about identity grew less and less important within the antirape movement in Columbus once the shift toward institutionalization—and away from radical feminism—took place. My hypothesis that identity conflicts would be far more serious within WAR than within SARNCO because of the way feminism emphasizes the importance of identity is partially supported by these initial data, but examining specific conflicts over racial/ethnic identity, sexual identity, and feminist identity reveals a clearer picture of how deradicalization from such conflicts did or did not occur within both organizations.

**Racial/Ethnic Identity Conflicts**

The most noticeable problem with analyzing racial/ethnic identity conflicts within WAR and SARNCO is that there have been very few women of color involved in either organization over the 1972-2002 time period. Some women could name one or possibly two women of color who had participated in one of the organizations, but many could not. In general, there seemed to be a lack of awareness of any problems with racial/ethnic identity conflicts, although women who were members of WAR appeared generally more cognizant of why they did not know about or experience any
conflicts of this nature. As one member of WAR put it, “We didn’t want to just be a ‘white women’s’ organization, but (shrugged) it’s very hard for people from different places to talk, and agree, and even communicate.” Many women who had been in WAR, or in both WAR and SARNCO, talked about the difficulty in attracting women of color to the organization—although these conversations did not seem to take place as much during WAR’s very early years when the focus was far more upon feminist and sexual identity much as it was within the broader women’s movement. One white woman who volunteered for WAR in the 1970s and early 1980s recalled the situation this way:

“I know we had discussions about, ‘Why don’t other women join us?’ which now I see is very naïve on our part. What we were doing to be open to other women? You know, and this is a discussion that still goes on in our communities. And I think that we moved away from, ‘What’s wrong with these women? Why won’t they just join us?’ to now a much more healthy, realistic perspective of, ‘What’s wrong with us that women won’t join us?’ … So we’ve stopped looking at the populations that don’t participate in radical feminism and trying to find some reasons that’s wrong with them and [now we are] saying, ‘What’s wrong with radical feminism? Why isn’t this more welcoming to other populations?’ So there has to be some evolution of thought and discussion, and to a certain extent some greater involvement of the non-dominant culture, the non-white culture. But there’s still a huge gap.”

While she did not recall any specific conflicts over racial/ethnic identity occurring within WAR, she and other members in the 1970s and 1980s did recognize that women of color were not joining or participating in the organization as much as they would have hoped. They first placed the blame on “other women” for not taking part in WAR, but discussions about the problem eventually led them to question the attractiveness of radical feminism to women of color, rather than to question women of color themselves. However, this recognition that a radical feminist group like
WAR might not be one that would draw in radical feminists who were not white did not necessarily change anything; while the discussions about racial/ethnic identity were productive for some of the white women taking part in WAR, those discussions did not really cause the organization to become more diverse. Another white woman whose involvement with WAR occurred during roughly the same period and even into the 1990s described the problem of welcoming women of color into WAR:

“We didn’t encounter the discrimination overtly because people of color, women of color were not involved as a general rule—probably because we were so damn ‘90s that we didn’t realize that we weren’t making WAR accessible to women of color. Were we promoting it to women of color? Were we, considering the fact that there were so many lesbians involved, and the difficulties of, particularly back in the ‘70s and ‘80s, of being in the Black community particularly or the Latina community and identifying with lesbians? You know, we never put a thought into how to do outreach, necessarily.”

At least by the early 1990s the discussions had evolved to acknowledge the difficulties that many women of color face when trying to come to terms with either their own or other women’s non-heterosexual sexual identities. However, according to this member of WAR, who is a lesbian woman herself, outreach efforts to women of color were quite limited even though the organization had been around for fifteen or so years. Even by the mid-1990s, there was still very little change that had occurred. One white WAR member who participated in negotiations to help salvage the organization up until its dissolution talked about the very same conversations continuing even as the organization was waning:

“And there were women who were, you know, critical of the fact that WAR was a predominantly white organization…like a lot of organizations in the rape crisis movement were, white women were predominantly represented there. And so…the challenges that were being made in the antirape movement about
that were also there in WAR. The volunteers, we didn’t have very many women of color. Why was that? You know, ‘What do we need to do about that?’ those types of discussions. And how could we make sure that all women did have an equal voice? How could we challenge our privilege? There was just a lot of ways that it just kind of could be intimidating...and so it was challenging. It was welcoming and it was challenging.”

Over the twenty-one year time span that WAR officially existed as an organization in the antirape social movement, there was very little practical progress made toward the inclusion of women of color in the organization. Although plentiful discussions shifted the framing of the problem over time from being a problem with women of color to being a problem with radical feminism, outreach efforts were limited and, for the most part, ineffective. However, once SARNCO entered the Columbus antirape movement as the primary rape crisis center in the city, the framing of problems regarding the inclusion of women of color in the movement generally and the organization specifically shifted drastically. One white woman involved as a coordinator with SARNCO during its beginnings as an organization described the issue this way:

“We really did make efforts in that area [the recruitment of women of color] to like not much avail. We had a lot of our education/prevention stuff translated in different languages, tried to do outreach in different communities. And since we were able to disseminate the information but never really seemed to get a whole lot in regard to recruitment, what I found when I was there was there was—it was a self-selected group. It was self-selected individuals that come in. It doesn’t matter where they’re coming from, I mean, race, ethnicity, you know, what your sexual orientation is, they say to themselves, ‘I want to help rape survivors.’”

This attitudinal change about how to get more women of color involved in the antirape movement via SARNCO was important in two ways. First, it signaled a regression back to the thinking from thirty years earlier when the reason that women of color did
not choose to join the antirape movement was thought to be related to the women themselves as individuals, not related to problems related to the organization or to radical feminism more broadly. As in WAR during its early years, the responsibility for non-white women’s lack of inclusion in SARNCO was placed once again upon their own “self-selection” into the organization. Second, this change in attitude about the participation of women of color in SARNCO shows how being a radical feminist was no longer a requirement for being involved in the movement. One’s feminist identity had become a moot issue in favor of one’s desire to help rape survivors. Because of this, WAR’s goal of stopping rape throughout society ceded to SARNCO’s goal of helping survivors of sexual assault, demonstrating yet another facet of the deradicalization of the antirape movement in Columbus, Ohio.

While understanding the perspectives of various volunteers and leaders in WAR and SARNCO about increasing the participation of non-white women in their organizations is important, getting a glimpse of what that participation looked like for women of color who did join these organizations is critical as well. Although I was only able to speak with one African American woman who was a member of WAR and one African American woman who was a member of SARNCO for this dissertation, it was not surprising that I was unable to locate more women of color who were willing to take part in this project—there simply are not that many women of color who were members of one or both of the organizations and who were available to assist with this study. Regardless of this situation, however, it was important to be able to assess whether there existed any racial/ethnic identity conflicts
within the two organizations, and both women who participated in interviews with me were able to describe what volunteering in WAR and SARNCO was like for them in those terms.

Being an African American woman within WAR was not always easy. There were sometimes problems with being treated as a token—which is ironically happening in this dissertation, as well—because you would often be the only woman with a non-white racial/ethnic background in the organization. There was a tendency for women of color in this position to be viewed as different enough from the white members that they would be expected to serve as a sort of spokesperson for all women with a similar background or from a similar community, which, of course, was not always welcome. The one African American woman with whom I spoke who was a member of WAR for many years saw her involvement in the organization as both a challenge and an opportunity. While her feminist identity never really seemed to come into question, as it did for the many white women who were constantly tackling the idea of what radical feminism meant both personally and within the context of the antirape movement, issues related to her racial/ethnic identity did become important. She talked about the difficulties of people wanting her to choose the primary identity with which she wanted to be associated, as if her being both a woman of color and a feminist were somehow inconsistent to the point that she could only be one or the other. It rarely seemed as if her white WAR colleagues wanted her to speak as a feminist; instead, they expected her to speak as an African American woman:
"[N]ow my friend was a black woman, but she was a black lesbian. She was involved in a relationship with a white woman, which I didn’t know until later, but everybody sort of was picking and choosing what their primary identity was. And that—I think that people always wanted me to do that. … I think there was always discussion about, ‘What are you first?’"

This idea of having to choose a primary identity with which the other members of WAR could characterize you seemed to happen only for women who had a non-white racial/ethnic identity in addition to whatever feminist identity they chose. None of the women with whom I spoke who identified as lesbians, for example, were similarly called upon to make one or the other (i.e., sexual identity or feminist identity) their primary identity. The one African American woman who worked with SARNCO and who took part in an interview with me encountered the very same issue, only fifteen years later:

“You have those push and pulls and you know, I don’t necessarily self-identify as a feminist and then people get all bent out of shape and I’m like, just ‘cause you don’t self-identify as a feminist doesn’t mean that you hate feminism, it just means that there’s other stuff going on and that doesn’t rise to the top. You know, I’m an African American Muslim woman and everything that I am comes from that and everything that, anything above that is just, you know, sugar on top, I guess. So it’s not like I find everything in feminism to be inconsistent with my faith or inconsistent with my ethnic background or that ethnic American history that’s here. I don’t find anything…there are things that do bump up against that but there are many things that don’t. And then people get really stressed out over that and it becomes an inadvertent litmus test at some level, particularly when you start talking about issues involving forms of oppression and anti-oppression work and so it gets really fascinating.”
Again, this “litmus test” seemed to apply only to women of color in SARNCO, but in this case, feminist identity also came under scrutiny for this woman because she gave her racial/ethnic identity and her religious identity a primacy that she did not give to her feminist/non-feminist identity.

The African American woman who was a member of WAR for roughly ten years and who spoke with me for this dissertation was quite passionate about the antirape social movement and her involvement in it, but she approached her work within WAR with a somewhat more businesslike perspective than many other (white) WAR members did. For example, she looked at the many opportunities to learn how to lead support groups, hold group discussions, write grants, do different types of office work, and other things of that kind of administrative nature as activities that she could do to improve her own skills while at the same time serving sexual assault survivors via the more targeted radical feminist tactics that WAR members used to speak out against and educate people about rape. In this way, she managed to use the organization for her own benefit, while at the same time benefitting the organization with her own skills. In fact, as she described it, this was the aspect of being a member WAR that she liked best:

“What I liked best was that it was a huge learning opportunity. I learned just how to do so many things. I think that that was it. I think it was…some leadership skills, organizing skills. I mean in terms of my self-confidence, it was huge. It was—it helped to grow me. That’s what I would say. Not that I didn’t have some of that already. I was in college you know and stuff like that. But it was new knowledge that I could apply to things.”
Although she was excited by the many “professional development” opportunities available to her in WAR, there were also things about being in the organization that she did not like:

“I disliked being the only woman of color there. Most of the time. It was [having no] sense of community, it was kind of being the educator a little bit. It was not being able to share, until I was involved with [one of the grant projects] as fully. I mean…I think that I would’ve liked to have done a few more social things. But I wasn’t interested in [things that many white WAR members were interested in]. … [But that was OK because] I was having that need met someplace else—all my friends, my two best friends, [my] neighborhood community. I was still black. I was still doing the things that we did—hanging out, jazz, going to clubs to dance—you know, that kind of stuff.”

So, while WAR itself was not fulfilling all of her needs as an African American woman, she stayed with the organization for a long while in part because of the opportunities that it did afford her, and in part because she was having her social needs met elsewhere—in addition, of course, to feeling strongly about being able to do antirape work. When I asked her what the environment for women of color within WAR was like, and whether she remembered the discussions that other members did about how to attract and include more women of color in the organization, she had this to say:

“[T]here wasn’t anything there for us really. … [W]e didn’t really have a lot of entrée into communities of color. … So really there wasn’t a whole lot there for us, which was unfortunate because in terms of our status, women of color were colored all the time. I did support groups, they were always ethnically diverse. Isn’t that deep? I don’t know if it was because I was a facilitator, but—I still have all my notes from the two or three groups I did, when we would write down the ethnicities, the names, the ages. And, because then there was something there for them. But that was, it just wasn’t, it wasn’t attended. It was not well attended. There wasn’t a whole lot of energy [put into] women of color.”
This perspective is critical because it shows that while many white women were having discussions about how to include more women of color within WAR, one of the organization’s very active African American members was not even being included in those discussions. She was able to draw some women of color into the fold herself, for example, with the support groups she led, but her perception is that WAR’s members who were not women of color were not putting a lot of “energy” toward attracting and keeping women of color in the organization. This was certainly a cause for frustration, both for her and for some white women who were particularly sensitive to issues of privilege and diversity. One of these women, who volunteered during WAR’s latter stages as an organization, recognized both the complications of WAR not being able to fulfill the desire of many women of color to serve their own communities, and the naïveté of many WAR members in not understanding this desire. She explained the situation like this:

“Well, we did have women of color who participated, but when the women of color left WAR and I would talk with them, a lot of times it was just like, ‘I need to just, I’ve done enough of this kind of work with white women. I need to do something else. I really want to focus on my community.’ And so I think that we did have women of color who volunteered and who felt part of the organization. The problem was that there were all of those different issues, the privilege, some subtle and some not so subtle. And I think that it just required a lot of stamina on the part of women of color and so you had people who were involved for greater or shorter periods of time. And then the members would [say], “Well, you know, what happened? I thought we were nice. We had some good conversations, I thought.’”

All in all, nobody who participated in an interview with me for this project, whether African American or white, remembered any serious conflicts over racial/ethnic identity that occurred in either WAR or SARNCO. While there was
certainly a lot of discussion about how to get women of color involved in the antirape movement via these two organizations, there did not seem to be a truly concerted effort to communicate with women of color in order to understand exactly why they tended not to join or not to stay with WAR or SARNCO for very long. This lack of recognition of the importance of community and kinship ties for many African American women, for example, shows that these discussions could likely continue well into the future without causing any real change. However, the shift in attitude that one SARNCO coordinator described as the population of volunteers being self-selecting—people who simply want to help rape survivors regardless of their own personal identities—suggests that those conversations are probably over for now. The evidence gathered for this dissertation does not show that there were any overt conflicts over racial/ethnic identity within either WAR or SARNCO, and so this dimension of identity probably has not contributed much to the deradicalization of the antirape movement in Columbus. However, the lessening focus on diversity, while not really a conflict, is definitely a characteristic of a movement that has grown less radical as time has progressed.

**Sexual Identity Conflicts**

When compared to conflicts over racial/ethnic identity, overt conflicts regarding sexual identity were far more apparent—and divisive—in both WAR and SARNCO. While publicly expressing condemnation of a woman simply because of her racial/ethnic identity became highly taboo following the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s (in which many members of WAR, especially from the organization’s early
years, had themselves participated), a parallel attitude toward lesbian women never came into being. One reason for the higher visibility of sexual identity conflicts in both WAR and SARNCO is the way that sexual identity is highly intertwined with feminist identity for many women. In WAR, many members were not just radical feminists, they were radical lesbian feminists. WAR was an organization that they felt should have been welcoming to them, possibly even to the exclusion of non-lesbian women because of their “sleeping with the enemy” of antirape activists—i.e., men.

On the other hand, straight women in WAR often felt that because rape is an issue affecting all women, and certainly not just lesbian women, they should not have had to dilute WAR’s resources in order to fight issues of heterosexism and homophobia when they really wanted to concentrate solely on rape. Because identity was such a hotly-discussed topic within the women’s movement at the time that WAR came into being, it makes sense that this tension between lesbian and non-lesbian feminists would be so prominent within the organization. In SARNCO, on the other hand, being a radical feminist—or any other type of feminist, for that matter—was not taken for granted the way it was within WAR. For many members of SARNCO, feminist identity was not even a concern while doing antirape work, and so sexual identity was not either, as long as they felt someone was able to be an effective antirape advocate regardless of their sexual identity. For other SARNCO members, however, their own heterosexist or even homophobic attitudes and behaviors, whether underlying or overt, kept sexual identity in the picture even when they did not feel that feminist identity was important. Even though the focus on sexual identity was far less critical in SARNCO than it ever
was in WAR, it was still present enough for enough women that conflicts over it did indeed arise.

Just as tensions over racial/ethnic identity in the two antirape social movement organizations were noticed and analyzed more by women of color than white women, it is lesbian women who have tended to remember or who were themselves involved in conflicts over sexual identity in WAR and SARNCO. One straight woman who was involved with WAR from the very beginning noted:

“We had our share of problems. I mean we had some women—we had our share of problems with different women in the group and stuff, and you know, there were early, very very early issues between lesbians and non-lesbians.”

Although this member was active with WAR for several years, her feeling was that any problems between lesbian and non-lesbian women both were resolved early on in the organization’s history and were more of a problem within the broader Women’s Action Collective than within WAR itself:

“I think it was more the Women’s Action Collective that had a problem in the various groups, but nothing that really sticks out. At the very very beginning, I know that there was sort of like the radical lesbians wanted more from the Women’s Action Collective than the Women’s Action Collective was willing to give. Then at some point, the entire Women’s Action Collective became lesbian, so the dynamics changed then somewhere along the line. Or at least that’s my perception.”

Other women who were involved in WAR shared this perception. The shift from WAR being an organization composed of mostly straight women to mostly lesbian women did not go unnoticed by anyone, and for a while straight women experienced what it was like to be “in the minority” in terms of their sexual identity. A straight African American woman recalled this situation with quite a bit of humor:
“I remember it feeling at times that the only people in positions of power were lesbians, white lesbians. … Sometimes we’d get along, most of the time, and then there were these sort of ripples of race and things we’d have to deal with. … You know, it got to a point [where] you got kind of embraced and welcomed and acknowledged. You know if a straight woman became attracted [to a lesbian woman], people sort of were encouraging a spark or something. [Or if] two straight women maybe ran off, I don’t know, on vacation or something together and everybody [wa]s like, ‘Did anything happen, did anything happen?’ (laughs). And they, they sort of dabbled a little bit. That was just celebrated.”

For a short period beginning in the late 1970s, it seemed as if perhaps some of the tension between women based upon sexual identity really had been resolved, in large part because of a power shift that left lesbian women more likely to hold real or perceived positions of power within WAR, and that provided them with a numerical majority over straight women as well.

By the early 1980s, however, it was evident that conflicts between lesbian women and non-lesbian women had in fact not completely become a thing of the past. One member of WAR during most of the 1980s, who came out as a lesbian woman within the comfort of the radical feminist movement but prior to her involvement with WAR, talked about a feeling among many lesbian women that they were looked down upon within the organization because of their sexual identity:

“[T]here were some pretty major divisions as far as sexual orientation and sexuality. There were some heterosexual women involved in the group, some of whom were fabulous allies to the lesbians in the group and some of whom were really dealing with the National Organization for Women, you know, “lavender menace” kind of philosophy, so you know, you had this undercurrent of homophobia on some people’s parts. And of course, it was never openly voiced because that would have been frowned upon, but it was palpable. You could really feel it in the comments and in the tones at some of the meetings.”
This woman’s comments indicate that, at this point in the organization’s history, it was apparent that lesbian women had in fact attained some of the “protection” that women of color had; prejudicial attitudes toward them were similarly unmentionable, and perhaps this was a remnant of the popularity and power that lesbian women in WAR had enjoyed for some time in the 1970s and early 1980s. Her reference to the National Organization for Women is also interesting because of that group’s association with liberal—as opposed to radical—feminism, thus pointing to a trend toward deradicalization within the antirape movement in Columbus. She felt that some members of WAR had assumed the liberal feminist attitude that lesbian women were somehow trying to “take over” the feminist movement in general and antirape organizations such as WAR in particular. When I asked her how this fear of the “lavender menace” took shape for her and other lesbian women with whom she was friends, she told me this:

“I had discussions with some folks who were feeling an undercurrent, nothing that they could really identify. It could just be well-known that this small subgroup wasn’t really gonna socialize with this subgroup because of—just the gulf was too wide. … I’m not sure that I would be able to say [that lesbian women were] discriminated against because I doubt that it was that overt. But feeling unwelcome can be a lot more covert and a lot more subtle.”

While there may not have been any overt instances of discrimination against lesbian women by non-lesbian women, the prevailing mood between the two groups remained one of divisiveness. Rather than working together to try to overcome differences and stay true to the common goal of stopping rape, it was simply accepted that, in general, lesbian women and straight women were not going to get along with one another.

This situation, coupled with the inability to feel truly welcome within WAR, did lead...
to some radical lesbian feminists leaving the organization, or even the antirape movement entirely, in search of other environments where they would feel welcome. These problems continued throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, when the organization started to fold at least in part because of its failure to retain enough members willing to do difficult antirape work. One straight woman who was quite influential during the waning years of WAR recognized that the organization was providing a more open environment than many lesbian women and women exploring their sexual identity might find anywhere else, but that this relatively more open environment simultaneously afforded non-lesbian women opportunities to express their possibly negative attitudes about lesbian women. She described WAR’s environment for lesbian and straight women alike in this way:

“You know, I think that some women, at the same time that they were participating in WAR, were also exploring their own sexuality or questioning their own sexuality and I think there was homophobia...and there were conversations along those lines, you know? In theory you may think that all people are created equal—and women certainly—and we’re not, you know. We’re not valued and we’re not heard but are you really comfortable with women having relationships with other women? You know, hanging out and holding hands? You know what I mean? I mean there’s just lots of ways that there was intimacy within the different people who worked at WAR and different comfort levels along those lines.”

While some women were exploring their sexual identities, others were left to explore their biases, whether conscious or not, about women “different” from themselves. Yet there did not seem to be an easy way to bridge the gap between these two groups. Certainly there was some discussion of these differences, but the lessening emphasis on identity discussions in general seemed to lead to more discomfort and feelings of not being welcome that could not be surmounted.
Within SARNCO, the more telling juxtaposition regarding sexual identity was between coordinators and volunteers, rather than between lesbian women and straight women, although it needs to be noted that all of the coordinators from different points in time with whom I spoke identified as straight women. This coordinator herself saw no discrimination or conflict directed toward lesbian women, even though she was aware that such conflict could certainly exist and trusted the volunteers who told her that it did:

“I am a straight woman. I have no issue with anybody’s, what they want to do with their personal life. I never felt like I discriminated against anybody for that reason, but I, the volunteers did come to me to tell me they felt that [they were discriminated against]. Yes. I always asked them why they felt that way and I honestly was never made to understand why. We were criticized for that and I was very aware of it, because at the time, we were all straight women that were working there. Maybe that was the reason. I don’t know. I don’t think anybody I hired, I don’t think anybody there had any issues with, you know, lesbian women. I really, I never saw any discrimination and honestly I never participated in it in any way that I was conscious of. … I’m not a lesbian so I don’t know what it is like to be discriminated against because of that, but I honestly never heard of one negative thing or one bad word out of anyone’s mouth, myself included, about any of our lesbian volunteers. And they were always, anybody was always welcome. That was appropriate, so, I never saw any of that.”

While she tried to understand the perspective of the lesbian-identified volunteers who brought problems to her attention, she did not witness any actual conflicts and so she could not verify that what they said was happening. She only could speak about her own behavior and attitudes, and she felt that because she was accepting of all women regardless of their sexual identities, she was making every effort to be as inclusive as possible. Another coordinator, who had clearly put a great deal of thought into her own beliefs about and treatment of lesbian women, described a shift in the antirape
movement away from the entanglement of sexual and feminist identity and toward the near-silencing of lesbian women’s proclamations of their sexual identity:

“[H]ow much of sexual orientation do you put into the rape crisis movement and how much of it do you leave out? Take Back the Night always seems to have a struggle with that where some of the people involved in organizing things are saying, ‘This is a rally about sexual violence, so stop chanting these things based on your sexual orientation.’ The people that are chanting [about] these lesbian issues are saying, ‘Well, that’s part of me being a woman, so get over it and I’m going to chant it here.’”

Although she was describing a Take Back the Night Event that had taken place shortly before our interview together, her words are applicable to SARNCO as well. Within SARNCO, the implication was that such an argument never would have taken place. There was not an outlet for lesbian women to publicly compound their sexual identity with their feminist identity within SARNCO’s brand of antirape work, as that would have been censured by the institutionalized hospital of which SARNCO is a part.

The lesbian women who participated in interviews with me as volunteers for SARNCO all agreed that this particular organization was not one that was particularly friendly to women who identified as lesbian. While two of them did and one of them did not experience any overt identity conflicts based on their sexual identity, they all witnessed conflicts involving other lesbian women. Although some of SARNCO’s coordinators believed that sexual identity was a moot issue for women who wanted to work with SARNCO, this clearly was not the case for these volunteers. The two volunteers who were victims of sexual identity-based conflicts have both since left the antirape and antiviolence social movements altogether, with one of them literally being forced out of SARNCO, while the other now focuses on more feminist-based
activities that are not exclusive to antiviolence work. All three of these women not only identified as lesbians, they also were vocal radical feminists. Simple logic dictates that the loss of these three women and others like them from the antirape movement in Columbus is a sign of the movement’s rapid deradicalization in the years since SARNCO replaced WAR as the major antirape organization in the city, especially given the way that at least two of them felt pushed out of the organization and eventually the movement. While I will cover their stories more fully in the next section on feminist identity conflicts, there are two illustrative examples from one woman’s experiences that demonstrate strikingly what the deradicalization of the antirape movement felt like on a personal level. One woman described her interaction with other volunteers within SARNCO as being somewhat cautious, fearing that she would be negatively pressured if they knew about her true identity as a lesbian woman:

“But like when I knew those people [who were as involved as I was] I would feel sort of inside because I knew them and then, other than talking to them I would mostly talk to other lesbians that would be there. … I don’t know, but you know what I guess I really should say is that when I would be talking to these straight women, especially newer ones who would know me because I came to their training or something, I would always, I never really felt outside [of the other volunteers], but I felt sort of like wondering whether they knew I was a lesbian and wondering how they would respond to that. And I wouldn’t talk about it because of that. And also I would be very selective about what I would talk about in terms of my politics.”

Rather than allowing the organization to stifle her expression as a lesbian woman, she took the initiative to police her own interactions and discussions with others whom she could not necessarily deem friendly. While this still resulted in her sexual identity being hidden, she at least had some agency in the decision, and she did not fault the
other volunteers for it. Appearing less radical to her peers was a temporarily acceptable strategy to her for gaining their respect and trust, but her conscious manipulation of what a radical lesbian feminist should look like played right into the trend that radical identities, whether lesbian or feminist, were increasingly being frowned upon by others in the antirape movement. With the SARNCO coordinators, on the other hand, she was very open about her sexual identity and its part in clarifying feminist activism for her. However, what she unexpectedly experienced in her interactions with the coordinators was the feeling that her sexual identity in fact should have been hidden:

“I felt that not that I was marginalized because of my sexual identity, but like almost that my sexual identity was marginalized as part of me. Like it was sort of what I got from NOW when I was involved with NOW, like, you know, ‘You are here as a person, not as a lesbian.’ But I am a lesbian, so I am here as a lesbian. And what I would get from the coordinators a lot would be like when I would mention anything about being a lesbian, it would be just sort of skipped or glossed over or the subject would be changed or I’d get a weird look.”

During her involvement with the liberal feminist National Organization for Women (NOW), she expected to be treated as a woman whose lesbian sexual identity was moot at best and shunned at worst, and so she dealt with those expectations for a time until she no longer felt able to volunteer with an organization that did not accept her for who she was. Upon her introduction to the antirape movement, she thought that she would no longer have to hide her sexual identity because of the movement’s longstanding association with radical feminism. When she found out that this assumption was incorrect, however, it was only a matter of time before she felt that her true identity was once again being compromised by an organization, and so she—a
highly decorated, respected, and experienced member of SARNCO—left the organization and eventually the movement, depriving it of yet another radical feminist.

**Feminist Identity Conflicts**

The nature of feminist identity conflicts has changed over the course of the antirape social movement. In the beginning, the expectation was that all women involved in antirape work were either radical feminists or radical lesbian feminists, even if they did not yet have the academic language to describe their beliefs as such. As discussed previously, much of the conflict in these early years was based on the intermingling of feminism with lesbianism, which was disliked by some straight feminists (who were privileged enough to fall into the majority group, of course). At that point, sexual identity was often a troublesome issue among radical feminists, but at least in antirape social movement organizations such as WAR, uneasy alliances were developed that allowed lesbian women and straight women to coexist in their efforts to end sexual violence. The issue of being “too feminist” or “not feminist enough” was largely confined to the lesbian/non-lesbian debate, in that women working in the antirape movement overwhelmingly identified themselves as radical feminists. By the mid-1980s, however, many women had bought into the cultural stereotype that feminism had achieved its general goal of female equality, while others went even further and declared “feminism” to be a “dirty word.” During this period, radical feminism lost footing to liberal feminism and non-feminism. It became acceptable for women who did not identify as radical feminists, as well as women who explicitly identified themselves as not being feminists at all, to be active and
successful in the movement. This shift is perhaps the best example of the
deradicalization of the antirape social movement both nationally and in Columbus,
Ohio, as being a radical feminist went from in most cases being a requirement, to in
many cases being an embarrassment.

WAR’s founders were quite aware of the radical feminist leanings of the
national antirape social movement; many of them were members of the explicitly
radical feminist Women’s Action Collective (WAC) before they created WAR with
WAC’s assistance. Self-identification as radical feminists was not difficult for the
first members of WAR, such as this woman who explained:

“You know, WAR was a feminist organization, the women’s movement was
feminism, that’s who we were, that’s what we did, and we were very proud of
what we did. And [we] had no problem; today I think people have a problem
labeling themselves feminist.”

Not only did the members of the organization during its early years have “no problem”
calling themselves feminists, but by labeling themselves as such, they were being
“good” feminists:

“[T]hese were really intelligent women all in different fields and, I don’t
know…we meshed really well. And we worked together very well. I’m sure
we had our disagreements and our problems, but it just seems to me that we
did an awful lot of very good work at that time. And produced a lot of really
good materials; so…yeah, very good feminists. We were all very dedicated
and committed feminists.”

Admittedly, this woman’s recollection of the halcyon days of feminism within WAR
was probably favorably tinted because of the passage of time, but she was insistent
that the early work of WAR was relatively unblemished by conflicts over feminist
identity unless they were related to sexual identity as well. There was a lot of
collaboration, cooperation, and conversation, which allowed the early members of WAR to work together in a fairly harmonious atmosphere. According to another member, who was intermittently involved with WAR throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, this perspective of radical feminism within the organization was not that far off from what many other women experienced:

“Most of the group, both in the early days and even towards the end, were pretty rooted in the radical feminist politics. Um, we’d be a joke if we weren’t, you know, radical feminists—we would be in NOW [if we weren’t] (laughs). So that in and of itself, you know, although sometimes we might disagree about strategy, um, [regarding] the basic philosophies of feminism, we were pretty much on the same page.”

By the mid-1980s, however, radical feminism was no longer in vogue as it had been in the 1970s and early 1980s. Within WAR, some earlier members had left the organization to do other things, some members had begun working on the more professional projects paid for by the NIMH-funded Community Action Strategies to Stop Rape grant, and some newer and younger members had come on board who had not been defined as radical feminists during WAR’s (or even their own) formative years. Tensions between lesbian women and straight women resumed following their short détente from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, and lesbian women garnered more power than straight women within the organization for the first time. A particularly active lesbian woman who was a member of WAR throughout much of this decade described the predominant flavor of feminism within the organization during this period:
“[T]here were a lot of preconceived notions about the group of women who were in WAR and a lot of times, we, as a community, would foster those assumptions. You know, “Yes, we are the big, radical, lesbians, feminists, separatists. Angry.”

So, for a time, the “in your face” politics that had become a hallmark of radical feminism were also a hallmark of WAR, but that did not last for long. As this same woman noted, “It’s very difficult to maintain a relationship with mainstream organizations, if that’s the face you’re putting on it, um, intentionally.” Although she herself is one of the self-proclaimed “big radical lesbian feminists,” she also recognized limits on the practicality of presenting oneself in this way at all times. She chose instead to manipulate the system by putting on her “execu-drag” when necessary for making a different kind of impression on people; doing so, however, did not lessen or negate her identity as a radical lesbian feminist—it only strengthened her identity because she could almost have fun at the expense of those who were not in on the joke. For other members of WAR, such an identity was not acceptable. Some felt that radical feminism should not be compromised in this kind of manner, while others thought that the whole reason for needing to compromise was that radical feminism was, simply put, too radical.

These differences in opinion over whether radical feminism was still a good fit for WAR did not improve during the 1980s and into the 1990s; if anything, the feminist-based politics became even more divisive. One particularly astute woman who was a member of WAR during its later years attributed this in part to the extremely sensitive nature of antirape work and the fact that many WAR members were themselves survivors of sexual assault. While certain radical feminist
components of the organization were in theory especially welcoming to women who had experienced rape (e.g., the emphasis on consensus-building, the non-hierarchical organizational structure that allowed everybody to have an equal voice, the focus on identity and its malleability), in practice they often were not. The insistence that radical feminists “had” to act in certain ways or that rape survivors “should” deal with their experiences in particular fashions was disheartening to many women who held more moderate positions. When asked whether WAR was welcoming, this woman, who identified as both a radical feminist and a sexual assault survivor, responded by recalling the apparent ambiguity inherent in identifying as both:

“Yeah…and no. I think different women who were in there had different versions of feminism, different comfort levels, and a lot of us had, you know, issues that were related to just survivorship. So it was…I think just a really fertile ground to kind of understand how different women saw and felt. So, on the one hand it felt welcoming but on the other hand it could also feel pretty intimidating.”

For her, the pressures of being a “good” radical feminist while at the same time working through her issues with being a rape survivor sometimes caused a tug-of-war, since rigidity over feminism and how some WAR members thought it should look was not always her primary concern.

Yet another conflict over feminist identity served as one of the final death blows to WAR. Tragically, one of WAR’s members was raped one night in the organization’s very own office. For the radical feminists within WAR, beyond the huge and draining blow to morale that an event such as this obviously had (e.g., causing them to question if the woman was “targeted” to send a sick message to WAR), the problem was with what they thought the survivor “should” do in the
aftermath, which was intrinsically related to their feminist sensibilities. This survivor chose not to report the rape to the police, which was difficult for some others to accept. Ideologically, they felt that the only way to surmount the problem of rape in this country (and eventually overthrow the patriarchy as well) was to deluge the system with so many instances of rape that they could no longer be ignored. On the other hand, some other members supported the survivor’s decision on the grounds that she had the kind of history that a rapist’s defense attorney would love to rip apart. The conflict over the woman’s feminist responsibility led this crystallizing event to divide the already tension-filled organization even further, and it was shortly after the rape that a large contingent of WAR’s members decided to close down the organization.

Other women experienced highly emotional challenges to their beliefs, although they were certainly not as devastating as the rape, such as when the realities of working within a seemingly radical feminist organization started to chip away at their ideas about what feminism could accomplish. That is what happened for this woman, who actually left WAR for SARNCO:

“[I]t took me a little while to find out, but there is obviously a lot of emotion and a lot of sort of political energy. It’s really woven into these [grassroots] organizations. I really, I have to say, was quite innocent when I got into all of this. I had this very idealistic view that—I called myself a feminist. I accepted all other women as they were, whatever their perspective. Somehow if we all had the same goal, we’d be able to work it out, talk it out, respect each other, and move forward together. That was how idealistic I was when I first got into all this.”

Unfortunately, this woman was later quite brutally forced out of SARNCO over personal, almost petty differences over feminist identity. When she first joined the organization, she felt that women with similar perspectives regarding feminism should
be able to work together toward the common goal of serving survivors—a goal that was already leaning away from the radical feminist goal of stopping rape that she had embraced as a member of WAR. However, she came under intense scrutiny for things as seemingly minor as her appearance (e.g., for wearing makeup) and as major as her entire belief system. She was treated repeatedly as if she “were not feminist enough,” although “feminist enough” was never defined for her or anyone else within the more institutionalized organization of SARNCO, since its ideology is not officially documented anywhere.

Sadly, her story is not unique. At least two other SARNCO volunteers with whom I spoke directly were pushed out of the organization as well, only they were forced to leave because they were viewed as too radical rather than not radical enough. The same thing happened to me, and I will discuss that story in the conclusion to this dissertation. They each had evidence that their feminist beliefs were under attack, although they were officially “let go” for reasons as mundane as not turning in paperwork on time. One of them was told that “her values did not coincide with the work we [SARNCO] are trying to do here,” while the other was not hired for a position for which she had been heavily encouraged by the coordinators doing the hiring to apply. When she did not get the job, she had this to say:

“[T]hey’ll use anyone that’s willing to do work. Like however radical you are, however non-radical you are, they need people to staff the helpline. They need people to do the advocate hours. And so, in some sense they will take advantage of you if they think that you fit in at all. If they think that you are committed to the work and that you can do the work, they’ll use you. Well most of the people, except [for women who are really radical]. But for the
most part, they’ll use anyone that they can. And I understand that. They need the personnel. But...sometimes they have a much more narrow definition of who they’re willing to accept for the institutional job.”

The failure to hire a truly radical feminist for “the institutional job”—for which a liberal feminist with no experience in the antirape social movement was hired—indicates yet again the trend away from radical feminism that was caused in part by these clashes over identity.

Perhaps it speaks to the intensely personal nature of one’s feminist beliefs, especially when they are at work within the antirape movement, but of these three women whose feminism was not viewed as a good fit for SARNCO, one of them told me her story completely off the record, one of them is not quoted directly anywhere in this paper, and one of them did not want her name or any other identifying information to be used. The feelings they had about leaving SARNCO—anger, sadness, fear, bitterness—were still strong and very present for them in telling their stories to me even after many months or even years. Not one of them is still involved with the antirape movement in Columbus, which serves as further evidence that the movement is losing some of its most radical members. Ironically, before I even knew about the women who had been forced out of SARNCO for being too radical as feminists, I spoke with the person who was mostly, if not fully, responsible for ousting them as volunteers. While at the time I was conducting research on what had led to the demise of WAR and what its aftereffects were, we also talked about SARNCO and its future as a major player in the antirape movement in Columbus. Since SARNCO was still a somewhat fledgling organization at that point, we talked about what things she thought
were particularly helpful or harmful to the organization. Her response is quite
provocative given the rest of the research I have since done on WAR and SARNCO:

“[What hurts the organization most is] just pitting women against women, which takes away from this whole collective power that women could have. We see that a lot and if you’re not this kind of particular feminist then you’re not good enough. And I have been, I have been guilty of this because I had issues with [another member] when I first started because I came in with that radical, unusual, non-mainstream [viewpoint], and I’ve fallen prey to that whole mindset myself because society—patriarchy in general—does a very good job of pitting women against women and I think that’s a problem. … Very unproductive, very much a pitting kind of thing. You’re not good enough because you don’t do this and this and this instead of trying to work together [toward] a collective goal.”

If that “collective goal” is to stop rape, or even if it is to serve survivors of rape, then
how is getting rid of committed antirape activists whose feminist beliefs do not happen
to match your own conducive to meeting that goal? I do not expect to answer that sad
question here, but I will address it in more depth in the conclusion.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION ON THE ANTIRAPE SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN COLUMBUS, OHIO

Summary of Findings

Institutionalization

My examination of the deradicalization of the antirape movement in Columbus, Ohio has produced several expected—and a few unexpected—findings. The first process contributing to deradicalization, institutionalization, happened in a fairly predictable manner. The many other studies that have analyzed institutionalization in the antirape social movement in general or in rape crisis centers specifically have found fairly consistent patterns of antirape social movement organizations cooperating with more conservative funding sources, creating and maintaining relationships with social service organizations that do not share their feminist goals, and becoming more professionalized. My longitudinal analysis of the antirape movement in Columbus over a thirty-year period has shown that the grassroots antirape social movement organization founded in the 1970s, WAR, tried to stave off institutionalization in several ways: 1) by refusing funding from sources that were not friendly to its radical feminist ideology; 2) by not cooperating with other
agencies that did not share its radical feminist ideology; and 3) by becoming only partially professionalized (largely in response to the huge grants that the organization received for the Community Action Strategies to Stop Rape [CASSR] and Child Abuse Prevention [CAP] projects, which were nationally and internationally revolutionary projects in the antirape and antiviolence movements). Throughout WAR’s existence as an organization, the clash between resources—or lack thereof—and ideology was clear. The radical feminist ideology that was practically a requirement for earlier members and that was certainly strongly encouraged among later members was both an asset and a liability. It was advantageous because it helped create a collective identity for the members that drove them to devote extraordinary levels of human resources toward their goal of ending rape in society, but it was also a burden because of its inflexibility toward accepting or working with particular resources. WAR had completely depleted its resources, whether financial, human, or material, by the end of its lifecycle. At the same time that WAR was becoming far less politically viable in the antirape movement, both because of its uncompromising radical feminist stance and because of its substantial financial troubles with the IRS, SARNCO was established as an alternative rape crisis service provider. Without a guiding radical feminist ideology behind it, SARNCO formed within a hospital system, applied for grant monies wherever possible, developed mutually beneficial relationships with other service providers, and operated with a fully professional staff. Although the shift in power from WAR to SARNCO as the primary rape crisis center in Columbus took roughly two and one-half years (mid-1994 through 1996), small
inklings of institutionalization within WAR existed almost from the beginning; however, WAR members were able to implement elements of their radical feminist politics to such a degree that institutionalization was avoided for the most part. This was largely not a concern for SARNCO members, who, despite the internal struggles among some volunteers and coordinators over how to express their feminist ideas, generally welcomed the institutionalized environment of the hospital and viewed it as a helpful “brand name” and “cushion” for the people doing antirape work.

The process of institutionalization within antirape social movement organizations is best explained by a resource mobilization perspective on social movements. Using this perspective, one way to assess the impact that the loss of an important social movement organization has had on a social movement is to see whether the former members have remained active in the movement via other organizations—the question is whether human resources are still being mobilized within the movement, even if they are not all in the same organization anymore. If the members of the former organization are still doing the same kinds of work in similar organizations, then at least its death did not rob the movement of many of its active participants. There are many former members of WAR who have rechanneled their activism into other antirape and antiviolence organizations, yet there are also many who have devoted their energies elsewhere. Although the majority of the women involved with WAR who participated in interviews with me had remained active in the antirape or antiviolence movements (out of eleven women, seven are still active in Columbus, while three are active in other cities; only one is no longer doing this type
of work), they were able to recall many other women who had not continued antirape or more general antiviolence work. Based on their recollections, the majority of the approximately eighty active members of WAR as of August 1994 have at this point discontinued their activism in the antirape movement in Columbus. So, while there are certainly many former members of WAR who are still active in the antirape movement, one can assume that the death of WAR led to a substantial loss of antirape activists in the local antirape movement in Columbus, Ohio.

A second method of ascertaining the effects of the loss of a particular social movement organization on the movement is to determine whether its strategies, tactics, and ideology are being carried out by other existing organizations. First, both prior to and following WAR’s death, its reformative strategy of providing services to survivors of sexual assault was taken over by other antirape and antiviolence organizations in Columbus, such as SARNCO, that are trying to change the way we as a society handle the problem of rape. On this front, WAR’s disbanding did not seem to cause great waves. Second, just prior to WAR’s death in August 1994, all of its services were discontinued except for the telephone crisis line. While services and tactics are not interchangeable, they do have more overlap than expected because antirape social movement organizations typically do provide social services to their communities. The reasons for cutting WAR’s services were to save money and conserve time, and the rationale given was that other agencies in Columbus offered services such as self-defense classes, support groups, and “speaks.” Some of the groups fulfilling these functions were SARNCO, Choices, Buckeye Region Anti-
Violence Organization (BRAVO), Huckleberry House, Ohio State University’s Rape Education and Prevention Program, Columbus Sexual Assault Task Force, Women’s Outreach to Women (WOW), and the Victim Witness Assistance Program. Even before WAR had completely died off, many of the services it had originated in Columbus had already been absorbed by other groups. In looking purely at tactics, one can see that the death of WAR as a social movement organization has not had too great an impact on the services the antirape movement in Columbus provides, except that now the various services offered at one place are scattered about in many different organizations. Third, regarding ideology, neither I nor any women who participated in an interview for this dissertation could name for certain any openly radical feminist activist organizations in Columbus (although that is not to say that there are none). It is true that there are plenty of radical feminists in and around Columbus, but they are not mobilized for action. This is why the idea that “the personal is political” is so important. The impact that the dissolution of WAR has had on ideology is to cause radical feminists to pursue that ideology on primarily a personal level, rather than on organizational and societal levels as well—at least for now.

Identity Conflicts

What I expected to find in my analysis of identity conflicts is that they would have a greater impact on the deradicalization of WAR than on the deradicalization of SARNCO. I formulated this hypothesis for two reasons. First, identity politics are such a critical component of radical feminism that I assumed that the openness in talking about identity and the commitment to diversity that are often associated with
radical feminism would cause members of WAR to be more rigid in their beliefs about who was “good enough” to be a member of the organization. Second, again because of the emphasis that radical feminism places on identity, I thought that an organization with a radical feminist ideology (WAR) would place more importance on various identities and how they interplay with one another, whereas an organization without any explicit ideology, feminist or otherwise (SARNCO), would have members who did not care as much about the identities of the other members. In the 1990s when SARNCO was founded, the buzzword “multiculturalism” taught many people that things were supposedly equal among all groups of people, regardless of background, whereas in the 1970s when WAR was formed, many people knew that things were not equal among all groups of people, having just witnessed or participated in the Civil Rights movement.

I found while doing research and analysis for this dissertation that I had my hypothesis backwards—identity conflicts were in fact a much greater contributor to deradicalization within SARNCO than they were within WAR. First, WAR experienced minimal problems because of racial/ethnic identity conflicts. As the women who participated in the project noted, discussions about the inclusion of more women of color happened often but were not really successful in attracting more women of color to the organization. Some white women felt that WAR was doing all it could to make women of color feel welcome, but the one African American woman with whom I spoke thought that differences in cultural interests played a larger part in keeping more women of color from joining or staying with WAR for too long. There
were not any overt conflicts over racial/ethnic identity that anyone who participated in this project could recall, although women of color often reported that they felt some degree of pressure to choose a radical feminist identity as being primary over their racial/ethnic identity. Similarly, within SARNCO, no obvious conflicts about racial/ethnic identity were relayed to me, but the one African American woman who talked to me for this dissertation thought that the pressure to identify as feminist was irrelevant because her work as an antirape advocate had nothing to do with her racial/ethnic heritage. One of SARNCO’s coordinators expressed a comparable opinion when she said that she learned, after many unsuccessful attempts at outreach to women of color, that racial/ethnic identity was not even a consideration for people who wanted to join SARNCO—it was their desire to help survivors of rape that brought them to the organization, regardless of their racial/ethnic background. In this analysis, WAR and SARNCO were very much alike in that there were no noticeable conflicts over racial/ethnic identity in either organization, but members of the two rape crisis centers attributed this to different factors. Within WAR, the popular notion was that conflict was minimized through all of the talking and the attempts to bring women of color into the organization, whereas within SARNCO, racial/ethnic identity was almost viewed as a moot issue because it appeared no longer to be a “hot-button” issue within the antirape movement or to have any bearing on whether one wanted to become an antirape advocate. Racial/ethnic identity conflicts not only did not seem to contribute to the deradicalization of the antirape movement in Columbus, they did not seem to have much importance at all.
Second, sexual identity conflicts had a deradicalizing effect on both organizations, but this effect was more obvious and more critical in SARNCO than in WAR. Lesbian women experienced problems with prejudicial attitudes in the earlier years of WAR, but then they enjoyed a period of marked influence and esteem—not to mention a numerical majority—during the late 1970s and mid-1980s. Lesbian and non-lesbian women alike were often faced with confronting their feelings about numerous differences among the members of WAR, but sexual identity seemed to be an ever-present issue that was never really “resolved,” so to speak, and instead was debated within discussions throughout the organization’s lifecycle. The conflicts that did take place usually had to do with power struggles over who had more say in the organizations’ direction, what the public face of the organization should be, who the most “dedicated” feminists were, and so forth. Despite this evidence of sexual identity conflicts, however, there is little support for the idea that they contributed to the deradicalization of WAR. According to several lesbian women with whom I spoke, conflicts over sexual identity did not tend to drive the more radical members of WAR out of the organization; rather, these conflicts actually tended to create a stronger sense of collective identity among lesbian women as they dug in their heels, embraced one another as fellow radical lesbian feminists, and recommitted themselves even more fully to their antirape activism. Within SARNCO, on the other hand, conflicts over sexual identity were more rampant and often more obvious than they tended to be in WAR. Questioning the validity of—or casting aspersion upon—another woman’s “lifestyle,” which would have been very much frowned upon in WAR, was often...
acceptable among members of SARNCO. While the lesbian women with whom I spoke who worked with SARNCO felt at times that the environment of member gatherings was openly hostile to lesbian women (even causing several lesbian women who went through SARNCO’s rigorous training to decide ultimately not to join the organization), they felt at other times that their sexual identity was marginalized or even ignored. While none of the coordinators who talked with me felt that there were any overt instances of heterosexism or homophobia against volunteers, volunteers did try to bring such instances to their attention. However, when they did this, their feelings were very often not understood, not heard, or not validated. This gap in communication may have just been a function of the volunteer versus coordinator chasm, but it did lead some of the more radical lesbian women to leave SARNCO after a period of dissatisfaction, thus contributing to the movement’s deradicalization.

Third, feminist identity conflicts were far more salient within SARNCO than within WAR. Throughout its history, even up to the point that it closed its doors, WAR remained a radical feminist organization. While there were certainly clashes over the exact meaning of radical feminism and how women should live their lives as radical feminists, the fundamental truth is that there was always a consensus that the women who worked with WAR did so as radical feminists. The same cannot be said for SARNCO, which has welcomed women with all sorts of different backgrounds and without any particular feminist sensibilities in mind to the organization. The lack of any ideology as the driving force behind the organization also contributed to its attracting a broader spectrum of women, many of whom did not personally identify as
feminists in any way. This diversification of a sort led to several egregious examples of women being treated unfairly because of their feminist beliefs, whether they were viewed as too radical or not radical enough. Often these conflicts were tied up with volunteers’ identification as lesbian women, but not always, since non-lesbian women were targets of these conflicts as well. Unfortunately, little of the problem seemed to lie among volunteers themselves—in every case where a woman assisting me with this dissertation was involved either firsthand or secondhand in a conflict over her feminist identity, the problem was always between a volunteer and a coordinator. In fact, it was actually only one particular coordinator to whom all the examples of feminist identity conflicts discovered in the research for this dissertation can be traced. As discussed in my analysis, these conflicts have led to the loss of several dedicated, experienced, and active volunteers not just from SARNCO, but from the entire antirape movement. Their absence signals a deradicalization for Columbus, Ohio’s antirape movement, where feminists who supposedly do not fit have been repeatedly forced out of the major antirape social movement organization, SARNCO, with little fanfare or even thought.

Contributions to the Field

This dissertation has made several sociological contributions to the bodies of work on gender, social movements, and the antirape movement in particular. First, my focus on identity conflicts rather than just institutionalization integrates multiple levels of analysis. Previous work on identity within what are typically termed “New Social Movements” has most often looked at collective identity, and while I do address
collective identity, I really center this dissertation on group-level identity conflicts, which in some cases erodes the sense of collective identity that social movement actors have. Second, my historical data allow for a longitudinal analysis that enables not only an examination over time, but also over organizations. Looking at the antirape movement holistically instead of just analyzing antirape social movement organizations separately from one another provides a richer understanding of how these organizations are born, grow, and die. Third, by using Columbus, Ohio as my place of study, I confirm some findings regarding larger cities’ involvement in the antirape movement, while also offering new findings that may well be applicable only in smaller areas that do not have the resources to support multiple antirape organizations simultaneously. Fourth, using “deradicalization” as a concept has allowed me to frame this research within a more politicized context than employing a concept like “destabilization” would have. By constantly going back to the idea of what “radical” means within the antirape social movement, I asked myself repeatedly to compare the two concepts to determine which one fit better. Since the loss of some of the most radical antirape advocates from the movement is what has occurred in Columbus, it is clear that something significantly more than destabilization has taken place. Finally, by incorporating a feminist methodological perspective throughout this dissertation, I demonstrate how the study of women and the social movements in which they are involved is highly relevant even more than forty years after the modern women’s movement began.
Options for Future Study

Successes and Problems

There are several positive situations I encountered while completing this dissertation that should be mentioned here. I believe that my position as an antirape movement activist and highly respected volunteer in Columbus, Ohio led to my being granted exceptional interviews by several women. I was able to use my status as entrée in several relationships that I personally would have been afraid to approach had I not had that badge of honor. Additionally, of course, being an antirape advocate afforded me the opportunity to interact with some of the women who participated in interviews with me on other levels. While some might see the potential for bias in those relationships, I think that, for the most part, I was able to minimize bias and use those interactions to understand the women’s positions more fully. This topic is also highly engaging, and even women who have been interviewed many times before about their involvement in the antirape movement were more than happy to participate in interviews with me. I really had only one interview in which the participant was unfriendly, but even she warmed up to me once I had “proven” myself to her in terms of the knowledge I had about the antirape movement in Columbus.

As for negative situations, there were only a few. I was unable to obtain a larger sample of women who were able and willing to take part in interviews for this dissertation, largely because of time constraints. However, I feel confident that I obtained an unusually well-rounded sample for its size. Had I had more time, I would have liked to have had conversations with more women who were involved with WAR
as it was winding down as an organization, as well as with more women who were involved with SARNCO from its inception as an organization, to achieve a larger number of “dissimilar” interviews (Rubin and Rubin 1995). I also would have liked to obtain a more appropriate sample for learning about the specific identity conflicts under study. Although very few women of color participated in either WAR or SARNCO, I feel that I should have been able to find more of them. I was happier with the number of lesbian women who agreed to take part in this research, but I was not able to locate any women in the middle of the spectrum who identified as bisexual rather than as lesbian or straight. Finally, a greater number of non-feminist women participating in the project might have helped to bolster my arguments about the deradicalization taking place primarily in SARNCO, but they were difficult to find as well.

**Future Research**

The most obvious direction that I believe future research in this area should take is an incorporation of other rape crisis centers besides WAR and SARNCO. While it is true that these were the major antirape social movement organizations in Columbus during the time period under study, there were at least three other organizations of interest that might help complete the picture that I have only started to paint here. First, Ohio State University has had a hospital advocacy program that has been in operation intermittently over the past three decades. At times it has been both a competitor and an ally of both WAR and SARNCO. In fact, when SARNCO was just getting started, there was some question as to which program would “win
out” in terms of getting funding and other institutional support. Although SARNCO won that battle, the two programs were so close at times that the trainings for both programs were the same, and volunteers who worked for one organization could work for the other as well. At other times, the OSU program has had its funding cut completely, and so cooperation between the two groups was irrelevant. A second organization of interest is OSU’s Rape Education and Prevention Program (REPP). This program actually has employed several former WAR members over the years, and it uses some curricula that were developed during WAR’s heyday. Any look at competing social movement organizations should include REPP in order to get an idea of how resources are allocated and mobilized. Finally, Take Back the Night, while more of an event rather than an organization at this point in time, started in Columbus as an offshoot of WAR. For a time, the organization was technically in competition with WAR for resources, but now it is an event that is sponsored primarily by OSU. Unlike REPP, which has had greater staying power and far more institutional resources directed toward it, Take Back the Night is probably as close a thing to a radical feminist “entity” that Columbus has today. Although it only takes place on only one night per year and is exponentially smaller in scope than it used to be, it is the one place where even feminists who have left the antirape movement can go for just an evening to get in touch with their deepest radical feminist needs again in Columbus.
Feminist Methodological Perspective Components

Self-Reflection

This dissertation has been, bar none, the most intellectually and emotionally challenging and even distressing research of which I have ever been a part. The main problem is that I have such a deep affinity and love for antirape work, and yet I was forced out of the movement in Columbus like so many others before me. My greatest fear in putting all of this to paper was that my dissertation would end up looking like an indictment of the one person whom I and others hold responsible for our dismissal from SARNCO. While it is true that this person has done a lot of things over the years to bring wrath upon herself, I do not believe that an academic endeavor is the appropriate forum for expressing all of the wrongs that have been committed by this person. I want to be able to be taken seriously with my academic pursuits, and I even want this person to be able to read my dissertation and take it constructively, even though she and I will never make peace between ourselves. At the time that I started this project twelve years ago, I was not even a participant in Columbus’ antirape movement—my involvement with SARNCO began in 1997 and ended abruptly in 2002, when I was still letting this project percolate in my head. As of 2002, I had not yet taken part in interviews with several women who later told me their stories of being ousted from the organization, and so I had no idea where this research was headed. Given everything that I found, however, I do think that one important lesson to learn from this dissertation is that “one bad apple can spoil the whole barrel.” Many women involved in this project relayed similar themes to me, and we discussed our
feelings of helplessness in ever changing the situation. However, even though I personally can speak without invective about this person, some of the participants in this project could not (and cannot, to this day). So the questions for me became, “How do I represent their voices fully and accurately? How do I temper my own opinions of this person with the “objective reality” of a researcher?” Certainly within the qualitative framework, and within a feminist qualitative framework in particular, there is more than enough room for self-reflection. Unfortunately, self-reflection is not the only issue here. My job as a scientist is to represent completely and honestly what others have told me. I have been afraid of taking off-the-record-conversations and unwittingly incorporating them into the “story,” which I would view as a serious breach of trust, not to mention safety and perhaps even legality. I had to ask myself, “What is my role as a researcher versus that of a participant/volunteer versus that of a confidante for some of my interviewees?” This question absolutely paralyzed me for months at a time, and I could not even begin writing because I was afraid that I was going to do more harm than good. I completely believe in the social activism component of a feminist methodology, and so I think that telling the truth about the ways people have been shut down and forced out of the movement is critical, for it would show that the character of the movement is changing. If we are forcing out (perhaps that is sometimes too strong a word, but not in all cases) some of our best (again, an extreme word choice) volunteers, then how can we expect the antirape work to continue fruitfully and meaningfully? How can we best serve rape survivors and work toward stopping rape if we cannot even stop fighting amongst ourselves? I
believe that we cannot continue on this path of forcing people out of the movement because we do not like their brand of feminism, and if the best solution for keeping as many of our antirape advocates in the movement is to fire the SARNCO coordinator who is creating the problems described in this study, then so be it.

**Advocating for Social Change**

Within the context of a feminist methodological perspective, I believe that there are three questions we need to ask about the antirape social movement when considering a need for social change. First—is reradicalization *desirable*? One would have to ask how participants in current or former antirape social movement organizations feel about the prospect. Many of them might no longer be available to participate in reradicalization, since they are channeling their energy into other endeavors. Others would ask the perfectly legitimate question of what reradicalization could achieve. If, in answering this question, we find that women interested in radical feminist antirape work are either too busy or too blasé to believe that a radical movement would do any good in the fight against rape, then there is little question about whether reradicalization could occur. Second—is reradicalization *necessary*? A first consideration in answering this question would be what one views as the goals of the antirape movement. Some argue that the primary goal is radical societal change that would eradicate sexual violence, whereas others believe that the most important goal of the movement is to provide social services to sexual assault survivors. Views on what the goals of the antirape movement are can be affected in part by how one views rape as a social problem; if we could tell for certain whether there has been an
increase or a decrease in the incidence of rape over time (or whether there have just been fluctuations in reporting), it might affect whether one views the need for another radical wave of the antirape movement. Finally, reradicalization might not be necessary if the radical work of the antirape movement is being carried on within other organizations or movements; domestic violence, child abuse, incest, women’s health, and other organizational platforms could be serving the purpose that radical organizations once fulfilled. Third—is reradicalization possible? We have to apply the concept of abeyance structures to answer this question. There are certainly plenty of members who have continued their work in the movement, but there are several factors affecting the ability to recruit and retain participants for the cause, such as burnout, political differences, and a lack of appropriate resources. A comparison to other social movements that swing along the pendulum of activism is apt here as well. Perhaps the radical antirape organizations have completed their natural or normal lifecycles, but perhaps they are just in a latent period and will again become active when resources are mobilized properly.

The Future of the Antirape Social Movement in Columbus

The loss of WAR meant the end of the radical feminist antirape social movement in Columbus, Ohio. However, that does not mean that the movement has died completely. One possibility for the future of the antirape social movement in Columbus is that it will continue in its current state, composed of relatively mainstream organizations that do not challenge the male-dominated social system in which we live. Another is that former members of WAR and SARNCO have moved
into abeyance structures that will eventually lead back to a full-fledged radical feminist antirape movement. Although the term “abeyance” has primarily referred to discussions of social movements rather than their organizations (see Taylor 1989), I argue that it can also be applied to the organizations themselves. We know that there are structures that have had to absorb at least some of the radical feminist former members of WAR and SARNCO, but the real question is whether these structures (i.e., other antirape and antiviolence organizations) are still contributing to social change. The answer is that of course they are—even if a particular organization does not have an explicitly radical feminist ideology, there is plenty of evidence that radical feminists are still at work, interspersed throughout antirape and antiviolence organizations. Alternative organizations to WAR that are not radical feminist (such as SARNCO, for example) may indeed help keep things the way they are for the time being, but they also allow members to have an outlet from which more radical ideas may eventually arise. My personal opinion is that factors related to ideology (many women maintain and practice the idea that “the personal is political”), membership (many women remain active in other antirape and antiviolence organizations), and identity (non-radical feminist organizations may shift and become able to create a feeling of community for their radical feminist members successfully), could easily contribute to the formation of a new radical feminist antirape social movement organization. Consistent with Taylor’s (1989) argument about abeyance structures, the possibility certainly exists that, if these structures in which former antirape social
movement members may be currently treading water remain in place long enough, a similar social movement organization could arise once sufficient resources can be mobilized.


Fried, Amy. 1994. “’It’s Hard to Change What We Want to Change’: Rape Crisis Centers as Organizations.” Gender and Society 8: 562-83.


