Multi-Framing in Progressive Era Women’s Movements:
A Comparative Analysis of the Birth Control, Temperance, and Women’s Ku Klux Klan
Movements

Dissertation

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Abstract

Social movement theory emphasizes the central importance of framing but pays little attention to framing as a process. This thesis examines strategies of framing, especially the use of multiple frames to appeal to diverse audiences by balancing and reinforcing various ideas to mobilize support. It compares three women’s movements that were active during the Progressive era in the U.S.—the birth control movement (Margaret Sanger), the temperance movement (the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union), and the white supremacy movement represented by the Women’s Ku Klux Klan. Textual analysis of speeches and general audience articles by movement leaders document patterns and themes in framing strategies. All three movements used multiple frames, both balancing of liberal and conservative frames along with reinforcing of frames to appeal to core constituencies. Margaret Sanger was most likely to balance liberal with conservative frames—the most common conservative frame being the nativist eugenic frame—and the only one to use reinforcing liberal frames. Reflecting their more conservative agenda, the W.C.T.U. and WKKK relied on reinforcing conservative frames while also balancing liberal feminism with conservative nativist and patriotic ideas. These similarities reflect both direct and indirect diffusion among these groups as well similarities in their leadership and core constituencies, primarily white Protestant middle and upper class women. The relative liberalism of the birth control movement reflected its more equality-minded leadership and constituencies. Frame balancing and reinforcing are core features of resonant framing strategies and contributed to the social and political impact of these three movements.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my parents, Christine and Donald Slusar. Although I worry about a lot of things I have never worried that you would stop supporting me if I failed or took the “longer route” through graduate school. You have always had faith in me even if sometimes I didn’t give you reason to and you only bugged me sometimes about when I would finish my dissertation. During the last few years when I wondered if I would ever finish my dissertation what motivated me was to make you proud.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Social movement theory emphasizes the significance of framing, but pays less attention to leaders’ use of multiple frames, or to framing as a process. Through the act of framing, movement leaders attempt to align potential constituents’ beliefs with the movement’s ideology in order to gain and maintain member support. In framing theory, the identification of multiple frames within a movement or a social movement organization has been vague and not centered much around empirical evidence (Benford 1997: 411). While the identification of the issue (called articulation in framing theory) and “punctuation” of certain issues over others (called amplification) are important aspects of framing, social movement scholars have found that frame bridging (Benford and Snow 2000), frame balance (Hewitt and McCammon 2004), and the sharing of master frames (Tarrow 1998, Osa 2003, Noakes 2005) are all part of an effective multi-framing strategy. In order to achieve frame resonance (Snow and Benford 1988, Benford and Snow 2000), social movement leaders can use the strategies of frame bridging to connect “ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames” (Benford and Snow 2000: 623-624) or frame balancing by developing a neutral frame that balances a radical and conservative frame (Hewitt and McCammon 2004). In addition, master frames “provide the interpretive medium through which collective actors associated with different movements within a cycle assign blame for the problem they are attempting to ameliorate” (Snow and Benford 1992: 139). I consider an additional framing strategy in which leaders combine two frames—both liberal or both conservative—to reinforce each other.
My analysis examines social movement organizations (SMOs)—three social movement organizations associated with Margaret Sanger in the birth control movement, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.) which was central to the temperance movement and woman’s suffrage, and the Women’s Ku Klux Klan (WKKK) which promoted white supremacy and nativism—as revelatory cases from three different social movements in order to identify and compare leaders’ multi-framing strategies. As opposed to discourse analysis, framing studies refer less to the actual texts on which the frames are based (Johnston 2002) while discourse analysis analyzes the texts more closely. In order to address this disconnect, I created a systematic database of text for all three social movements. I content coded primary documents of public communication (speeches, articles, and pamphlets) written by leaders in each movement by segmenting the text into paragraphs and considering the text itself as the unit of analysis. I then analyzed the text for thematic structure and change across time using the methods of hand coding and computer-assisted coding with a computer software program (Atlas ti) which was developed for the systematic analysis of qualitative data. According to Benford and Snow (2000: 624), “the key to understanding the evolution of frames resides in articulation and amplification processes rather than in the topics or issues comprising the frames,” making a descriptive laundry list of framing topics less of a contribution. Therefore, I identify the content of frames and how leaders use frames as part of their multi-framing strategy.

I find that the importance of frame resonance or the extent to which frames mobilize support is evidenced by diffusion and the use of master frames. Frame resonance is defined as whether or not issues are relevant to constituents and effective enough to mobilize action (Snow and Benford 1988, Benford and Snow 2000). I combine the strategies of frame bridging (Snow et al. 1986, Snow and Benford 1988, Benford and Snow 2000) and frame balancing (Hewitt and McCarmon 2004) into an adaptation of frame balancing. With this multi-framing strategy, social movement
leaders can balance two seemingly opposing ideas by combining liberal and conservative frames. Additionally, leaders can also develop frame reinforcing combinations in which they combine two more complementary ideas—two liberal frames or two conservative frames. Social movements may also share master frames as a result of the diffusion of frames across movements or as leaders sample from the cultural atmosphere. My analysis examines social movement leaders’ use of balancing frame combinations, reinforcing frame combinations, and the sharing of master frames in the development of their multi-framing strategy.

I draw from three important historical cases: three social movement organizations associated with Margaret Sanger in the birth control movement, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, and the Women’s Ku Klux Klan. I consider these three cases as revelatory cases because each represents a larger social movement: the birth control movement, the temperance movement, and the white supremacy movement. While the birth control movement and temperance movement had progressive, or reform-oriented, goals and the white supremacy movement a conservative goal, leaders across all three movements incorporated both liberal and conservative elements in their framing strategy. I chose the three social movements because they existed at a common time in history (the first three decades of the 20th century), they were influenced by the first wave of the women’s movement, the leadership and constituents were primarily female, and there is evidence of movement spillover—membership overlap across the movements—and the diffusion of shared nativist, feminist, and maternalist master frames. The content of leaders’ framing was similar in that they used a nativist frame that centered on the rhetoric of patriotism, racism, eugenics, and the moral superiority of “true” Americans. Additionally, leaders’ framing of feminism and maternalism ranged from a more progressive conceptualization of women demanding equality with men both within and outside the family to a conservative conceptualization of women expanding their unique maternalist role from the private sphere to
the public sphere. The difference in the leaders’ framing strategy is characterized by how they combined frames, particularly these master frames, with other frames in their repertoire.

I identify one or more women as primary leaders in her respective movement. Within the birth control movement, Margaret Sanger held leadership positions in the American Birth Control League, the Clinical Research Bureau, and the National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control. Lillian M.N. Stevens (1898-1914), Anna Gordon (1914-1925), and Ella Boole (1925-1933) were national Presidents of the W.C.T.U. during the period leading up to and including Prohibition. Robbie Gill Comer was the Imperial Commander of the national Women’s Ku Klux Klan during its short existence from 1923-1931. Each leader presents an important sociological and historical case to study how leaders employ a multi-framing strategy in order to gain support from diverse audiences.

A social movement approach provides a new perspective to the study of historical social movement organizations as both unique to and representative of social movements. More importantly, literature on social movements has not emphasized the agency of leaders and rarely treats the construction and implementation of frames as a process that an actor is developing, manipulating, and articulating (Benford 1997: 415-418, Morris and Staggenborg 2004: 171). Neither sociological nor historical research has adequately addressed the question of framing as a process using these three historical cases that were integral to the cultural development of American society. Literature on the birth control movement has examined the movement from the biographical standpoint of one of its leaders, namely Margaret Sanger (Chesler 1992, Gray 1979, Douglas 1975, Kennedy 1970, Coigney 1969, Lader 1955). Similarly, the W.C.T.U. has primarily been examined in conjunction with Prohibition or as part of the larger Temperance movement (Gusfield 1963) and has centered solely on the movement’s most well-known leader,
Frances Willard (Gifford and Slagell 2007, Leeman 1992, Bordin 1986). While scholarly attention has been paid to the Klan during its less well-known second wave beginning in 1915 (McVeigh 2009; McVeigh, Myers, and Sikkink 2004; McVeigh 2001; McVeigh 1999; Jackson 1967), only one piece of research to date has examined the role of women within the movement but was not focused primarily on movement framing (Blee 1991).

The following five research questions guide this analysis: 1) How do leaders engage in prognostic framing in order to amplify frames? 2) How do leaders achieve frame resonance using a multi-framing strategy which balances a liberal and conservative frame or reinforces two conservative frames or two liberal frames? 3) Using Mill’s methods of agreement and difference as a guide to my choice of cases, what is similar about the leaders’ framing activities and what is different? 4) How does diffusion lead to the development of key frames, or master frames, that ideologically link these movements? 5) How does the leaders’ use of nativist, feminist, and maternalist, master frames differ and how do they converge? These are fundamental questions in social movement scholarship and questions that will guide my analysis.

This dissertation addresses the gaps which I have identified in the sociological literature related to the analysis of text in framing and the empirical study of multiple framing processes, diffusion, and frame resonance—frame balancing, frame reinforcing, and the incorporation of master frames. Systematic analysis of these processes will allow me to identify the agency of leaders and their role in the manipulation of liberal and conservative frames. Using multiple historical cases, I can also compare the thematic structure and patterns of key frames across movements. More broadly, issues of women’s roles in collective behavior and the resonance of nativist, feminist, and maternalist frames in social movements are just as relevant today as they were at the beginning of the 20th century. Study of these historical cases will provide us with a richer
understanding of contemporary social movements because the same causal processes examined in this study may be applicable across different historical contexts.
Chapter 2: Framing: A Process and a Social Movement Tactic

The perspective that organizes my investigation is frame alignment theory. The theory of frame alignment has been developed and refined by many theorists (Snow et al. 1986, Snow and Benford 1988, Tarrow 1992, Donovan 1995, Gamson and Meyer 1996, Zald 1996, Babb 1996, Ferree and Merrill 2000, McCammon 2001, Johnston 2002, Snow 2004, McVeigh, Myers, and Sikkink 2004). Framing theory is conceptualized by Snow and his colleagues (1986) as the linkage between individuals’ values and beliefs and the goals and ideology of social movement organizations (SMOs). According to Snow et al. (1986: 464), “by rendering events or occurrences meaningful, frames function to organize experience and guide action, whether individual or collective.” Citing Goffman, Snow et al. (1986) point out that frames allow individuals to perceive and label experiences within their world. Frames “focus attention by punctuating or specifying what in our sensual field is relevant and what is irrelevant” (Snow 2004: 384). Of course, this distinction between what is important what is not important is determined by whoever is employing the frame, most likely movement leaders and key activists. In this way, frames organize how we understand the situation that has necessitated a social movement and which the social movement seeks to change.

Social movement scholars argue that we need to consider framing as a process. Snow and his colleagues (1986: 467) identify frame alignment as a process that must occur to link or join an individual’s framework with the social movement organization’s framework. Using rhetorical skills, social movement leaders must “align” their audiences’ belief systems with the movement’s
ideology. “[M]ovements bring potential recruits’ individual viewpoints into congruence with the movements’ emergent and collective perspectives” (Taylor and Whittier 1995: 167). According to Benford and Snow (2000: 623) collective action frames are “continuously reconstituted during the course of interaction that occurs in the context of movement gatherings and campaigns.” I find that each leader’s use of multiple frames and the specific combinations she incorporated into her public writings was an ongoing, “interactive” (Benford 1997: 422), and dynamic process which is socially constructed, negotiated, and transformed (Benford 1997: 415).

Although social movement scholars do not necessarily agree that frame alignment is a new concept, they do agree that framing must be experienced collectively in order for a movement to be successful. Snow and Benford (1988) define framing as assigning meaning to and interpreting relevant events and conditions in order to mobilize potential adherents and constituents. Although action is what causes change, Klandermans and Goslinga (1996: 328) emphasize that “participation in collective action depends on the extent to which an individual adheres to a collective action frame.” This is where the role of the leader in effecting social movement change becomes most important. Without a change or reorganization of individuals’ beliefs in a way that makes them understand the social problem or issue in a manner complementary to the movement’s frames, mobilization towards action is less likely to occur. Johnston (2002: 66) emphasizes the dual nature of frames—that they are both individual and social—and points out that while a frame is an “individually held cognitive schema” it cannot be considered part of the collective action of the movement until “it is shared by enough individuals to channel their behaviors in shared and patterned ways.”

Frame alignment shares the characteristic of collectivity with both cognitive liberation and collective consciousness. According to Goodwin and Jasper (1999), scholars have renamed
McAdam’s (1982) cognitive liberation as frame alignment. Piven and Cloward (1977), in their discussion of the unemployed and industrial workers’ movements, note that once individuals began to perceive that political structures had begun to open and that change was possible a sort of collective consciousness occurred. “Social arrangements that are ordinarily perceived as just and immutable must come to be seen as both unjust and mutable” (1977: 12). Cognitive liberation and collective consciousness are defined in a very abstract and theoretical manner and empirical research has not made clear how either of these experiences occur. In most cases, outcomes are been used as evidence of their existence. Piven and Cloward (1977) point to unemployed workers’ recognition that their personal problem was a public issue as an example of collective consciousness. McAdam (1982) uses African Americans’ change in public opinion to demonstrate that they felt personal and political efficacy as part of their cognitive liberation experience. I use empirical data to argue that frame alignment can be used as a strategy to promote cognitive liberation or collective consciousness which leads to mobilization. In this way, social movement leaders use framing to create a sense of collective consciousness rather than potential constituents experiencing cognitive liberation first which then leads them to join a movement.

Leaders’ Alignment of Frames with Popular, Cultural, and Personal Ideology

There is much debate over the relationship between frames and ideology and over the necessity of not using the terms synonymously. According to Oliver and Johnston (2000: 37), “[t]he older, more politicized concept of ideology needs to be used in its own right and not recast as a frame.” Tarrow (1992: 190) heeds this distinction: “frames are more flexible and situationally influenced constructs than formal ideological systems and are more easily and rapidly communicated to target groups, adapted to change, and extended to blend with other frames.” In this way, it is easier for frames to change and transform as it becomes necessary, in order for the movement to
maintain consensus among its members and to keep them mobilized. Oliver and Johnston (2000: 45) also argue that “framing points to a process, while ideology points to content.” I try to address this clarification by addressing how leader’s framing strategy changes over time as well as how the meanings of frames can differ across movements.

What is integral to the construction of collective action frames is how “purposive ideological symbols of social movements interact with broader social mentalities and political cultures” (Tarrow 1992: 187). In this way, leaders create frames and utilize a multi-framing strategy to link their own social movement to the broader culture and to explain to potential constituents how the social movement’s goals are congruent with their own morals and ideology. “[I]deology serves as an economizing device with which leaders signal a movement’s goals to their adversaries, make a complex universe comprehensible to ordinary people, communicate messages among leaders, supporters, and outsiders, and provide movements with the solidarity that enables them to maintain themselves and expand their influence in the face of repression, cooptation, or indifference” (Tarrow 1992: 187). A complementary purpose of frames is to make not only the potential and real members, but also the opponents, of the movement aware of its goals. Snow and Benford (2000) believe that ideology serves as a cultural resource for framing activity, frames originate in ideology, and frames can be made up of one or more ideological strands. My conceptualization and definitions of frames begins with the position that both cultures and social movements identify with certain ideologies and that social movement leaders draw upon these ideologies in their framing activities.

Snow and Benford (1988) outline the three components of belief systems and their relation to the construction of frames. First is the centrality of the beliefs supported by the frame compared to those of the larger belief system of the culture or society. In other words, if the frame advocates
beliefs that are hierarchically less prominent than those in the larger society, creating consensus is more difficult. The second component concerns the range of the central ideas composed within the frame and their relevance to the lives of the individuals who could be potential activists. The third characterizes the degree to which the various ideas within the frame are interrelated. What movement activists can do to gain acceptance for their frames, or to popularize their frames, is to expand the ideas included in the frame to encompass ideas that may not have seemed that important to the activists, themselves, but have presented themselves as important to recruits. It is important for frames to change and expand and for current leaders and activists to refrain from creating strict and limited boundaries around their frames (Snow and Benford 1988: 205-206).

Public opinion and popular culture serve as the building blocks of movement frames. Movement leaders must be able to effectively and successfully sample applicable symbols from the political culture for use in their frame development in order to promote collective identity (Tarrow 1992: 177). In this way, although movement leaders may use these symbols in ways that oppose or question the dominant political culture, those predominant symbols from politics aid in the construction of influential frames that seek to compete in the power struggle in contemporary politics. Fine (1995: 130) defines the “activated context” as the requirement that the rhetoric used by a social movement leader be congruent with the contemporary morals of the society, or culture, that comprise the audience. In this way, legitimization depends on whether or not the presented text or frame is in alignment with public expectations or norms.

**Frame resonance**

In considering how to empirically test framing we must consider the ideas of frame resonance and effective framing. Frame resonance is defined as whether or not potential constituents and adherents relate to the issues being identified in the frames, in essence whether or not the frame is
effective and mobilizes individuals to action (Benford and Snow 2000, Snow and Benford 1988). Important to identifying which frames will resonate with audiences is our understanding of how leaders accomplish this daunting task. Integral to leaders’ success is the audience’s recognition that the leader is credible not only to a small core of activists, but also to a broader range of potential constituents (Benford and Snow 2000).

Benford and Snow (2000) and Snow and Benford (1988) argue that frame resonance is dependent upon whether or not the frame has credibility and/or salience. Credibility is measured by frame consistency, empirical credibility, and perceived credibility of frame articulators: do the frames make sense in the worldview of constituents and adherents and are the movement leaders credible to the individuals whom they are trying to mobilize? Salience is measured by centrality, experiential commensurability and narrative fidelity: do the frames mesh with the beliefs and values of individuals and are they resonant with individuals’ everyday experiences?

McVeigh, Myers, and Sikkink (2004) exemplify an interesting case of the relationship between framing and the outcome of recruitment during the second wave of the Ku Klux Klan. In order to measure success of recruitment, the authors identify the pool of potential members and then use Klan membership lists to calculate how many individuals joined in a particular county. They found that the economic frame was more successful than the collective identity frame because at the time economic issues were more salient in certain counties and the collective identity frame that was anti-Catholic and paternalistic in reference to blacks was seen as too exclusionary and alienated many potential recruits.

Some social movement scholars (Tarrow 1992, Tarrow 1998, Hewitt and McCammon 2004) argue that if we think about resonance as a continuum with the dominant culture at one extreme
and the oppositional culture at the other extreme, leaning too much to one side of the continuum can pose a problem for movements. Tarrow (1992, 1998) makes the point that the process of frame alignment is difficult in that movement leaders cannot sample too directly from the dominant culture and its symbols or the movement risks losing its oppositional character which is what draws most constituents and adherents to the movement and will alienate the more radical supporters. Movements need to seek a balance in drawing their frames somewhere in between the dominant and oppositional cultures.

**The Strategy of Framing**

According to Tarrow (1992), movement leaders are both consumers and producers of cultural symbols and meaning. In this way, movement leaders are given agency in this task which has been conceptualized at times in a vague manner as if frames just come into existence out of the air. One of Snow and his colleagues’ (1986) critiques of past research is that there has been a focus on grievances but not on how those grievances are interpreted. Framing allows movements to identify grievances to potential constituents. Movements need to be studied in a processual manner because they are constantly changing—in the same way, the framing of a movement is also redefined and renegotiated as movement leaders respond to cultural shifts and try to recruit and mobilize the most constituents (Snow et al. 1986, Benford 1997).

In order to sell their arguments to the public, social movement leaders must engage in three core framing tasks—diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing is the stage in which a leader or activist identifies some social problem, political issue, or grievance that needs to be addressed so that positive action can be taken to remedy the situation as well as the origin of the cause or who is to blame. Prognostic framing outlines a solution to the grievance—what needs to be done to remedy the situation. In this task, movement leaders must also outline
the strategies, tactics, and targets (individuals or institutions). Lastly, motivational framing is intended to mobilize constituents to action by pointing out the material, purposive, and solidary incentives which they can gain (Snow and Benford 1988, Benford and Snow 2000). While diagnostic and motivational framing was part of each leader’s strategy, I find prognostic framing was the most important in all three movements in that it was essential that leaders identified a solution—whether it was to legalize birth control, prohibit alcohol consumption, or protect the purity and morality of “true” Americans through political involvement. Motivational framing was most relevant to Margaret Sanger who spoke to audiences both within and outside the movement. W.C.T.U. presidents were likely to be speaking only to the organization’s members at annual conventions. Similarly, Robbie Gill Comer wrote for WKKK and KKK publications and spoke at Klan events. While their speeches and articles included motivating comments, W.C.T.U. and WKKK audiences were already aware of the problem and what needed to be done.

Donovan (1995) highlights the importance of the prognostic task in his comparison of the W.C.T.U. and the Anti-saloon League (ASL) in order to explain the difference in the longevity of the two organizations which were both part of the larger temperance movement. His argument hinges on the framing of each organization and the effect the strategy had on the survival of the organization and uses data from each organization’s monthly publication in California as well as primary and secondary sources outlining the organization’s financial resources. The W.C.T.U.’s frame was broader and incorporated the prognostic component of societal reform, including woman’s suffrage, child labor laws, and gambling. The ASL was focused on the alcohol problem alone and specifically focused on legislative reform as a solution. Donovan (1995: 153) concludes that “the only way to evaluate a frame other than in terms of its internal rhetorical strength is to give the prognostic component analytical preeminence.”
Further highlighting the importance of prognostic framing, Cress and Snow (2000) use Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to understand the combinations of factors that would lead to one or more of the outcomes that homeless SMOs were attempting to obtain from the cities in which they had organized. The four outcomes the authors identify are rights, representation, resources, and relief. The authors measure framing using the articulation of speakers at rallies and protest events, discussion with SMO members, and media coverage of SMO events. Cress and Snow (2000) conclude that diagnostic and prognostic framing were present in all of the pathways that led to the most favorable outcomes.

Initially, Snow et al. (1986) identified five main strategic processes in framing—frame articulation, frame amplification, frame bridging, frame extension, and frame transformation (Snow et al. 1986, Benford and Snow 2000: 623-624). Since 1986, other processes have been recognized. Articulation is the identification of the issue while amplification is the “punctuation” of certain issues over others, or the clarification or invigoration of a value believed to be important to constituents but which has not previously inspired them to action. Margaret Sanger amplified the maternalist frame, emphasizing the role that women occupied in society and how in that role, or because of that role, they must support the rights of mothers to obtain birth control. Frame bridging is the linking between two ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames. In the birth control movement, Margaret Sanger linked the maternalist frame to the feminist frame. She knew that some of her constituents would identify with the maternalist frame and others with the feminist frame. Frame extension occurs when a movement chooses to expand its initial repertoire of issues to include ones that will resonate with its audience. This can lead to conflicts and disputes within the movement and can overextend the resources of the movement. In Blee’s (1991) account of the WKKK we see elements of frame bridging and frame extension in the framing processes of the organization. Blee also argues that Comer combined feminist and
maternalist frames in her rhetoric through contradictory views of women’s place in society (at home) and in support of woman’s suffrage. In addition to Blee, other scholars who study the KKK (McVeigh, Myers and Sikkink 2004) argue that the Klan engaged in frame extension as exemplified by the fact that their recruiters would identify the particular issues of interest to towns and then add those issues to the Klan’s agenda. Lastly, frame transformation is the changing of old understandings and the generation of new ones. An example is the injustice frame in which a social issue which was once seen as unfortunate and tolerable is now considered unjust and intolerable. Resonance highlights the necessity of mobilizing supporters into action once a common consensus has been determined among them (Snow and Benford 1988: 199).

Hewitt and McCammon (2004) identify the strategy of frame balancing in their empirical study of suffrage mobilization. Distinguishing between effective and ineffective frames, the authors recognize that “the great challenge for movement leaders is to construct frames so that they simultaneously resonate with and contest movement elements of the broader cultural and political environment. For collective action frames to succeed in organizing potential recruits, they must strike the appropriate balance between resonating with the existing cultural repertoire and challenging the status quo. By balance, we suggest that if a frame either fails to draw adequately on dominant belief systems or mounts too great a challenge, it runs the risk of alienating potential recruits” (Hewitt and McCammon 2004: 150). In this case, the authors exemplify frame balancing as suffragists’ use of the societal reform frame which struck a balance between the more radical justice frame and the more conservative home protection frame.

In her study of greenbackism and the labor movement, Babb (1996) refines framing theory to include the framing strategy of frame reconstitution. Using labor newspapers in the late 1800s to identify frames, she argues that “a social movement could have two separate frames operating
simultaneously—the official one endorsed by its leaders and the unofficial one that is more attractive to its constituents. The discrepancy between these two frames could eventually lead to conflict within a social movement when leaders fail to use tactics or pursue ends that are important to constituents, or when leaders disapprove of constituents’ behavior” (Babb 1996: 1046). Babb (1996) goes on to say that frame reconstitution may occur when a frame is defined as ineffective. The old collective action frame is discarded and a new one replaces it without replacing the ideological basis behind it. In this case, greenbackism was reconstituted by constituents with not only banks being identified as the enemy but corporations also.

Kim Voss (1996) extends framing theory to include the idea of cognitive encumbrance as opposed to McAdam’s (1982) concept of cognitive liberation by investigating the collapse of the Knights of Labor. Voss (1996) conducts a case study of the Knights of Labor, more specifically the Newark Leather Workers, from its inception to its demise. What she finds is that the employers’ associations had a detrimental effect on the skilled local unions in Newark. After a failed strike attempt in Newark in 1887, “ideologically, local leaders were unable to offer a convincing argument for how the exercise of working-class solidarity might lead to anything other than another defeat in the future. Indeed, aside from statements in which local leaders blamed each other for the failure of the strike, no analysis at all was offered. As a result, the Knights’ vision was discredited in Newark. When the labor movement rebounded again at the end of the 1890s, it did so by eschewing both the inclusion of less-skilled workers and the Knights’ alternative vision of a workingmen’s democracy” (Voss 1996: 250-251). Voss notes that there were no articles or speeches from the time that evaluated the Knights’ collapse anywhere in the country. Without an explanation that interpreted the defeat for workers, cognitive encumbrance occurred and the movement was over. Voss’s research emphasizes that
social movement leaders’ framing, through communication with movement members and potential constituents, is critical to the development of cognitive liberation.

In discussing social movement outcomes, scholars make the distinction between new advantages (changes in policy) and acceptance (changes in the policy process). Rochon (1998) outlines three ways that acceptance occurs in society. Although he does not use the language of framing, it is clear that framing is instrumental in all of them. The first is value creation which is the development of new ideas, concepts or categories that apply to situations that had not previously been the subject of cultural values—an example is sexual harassment. Value conversion occurs when cultural values are replaced with new ideas on the same topic about what is important, equitable or legitimate—an example is the conversion of segregation in the civil rights movement. Value connection is the development of a conceptual link between phenomena previously thought to be unconnected to each other or connected in a different way—an example is movements against alcohol abuse. Rochon’s (1998) concept of value connection is similar to frame bridging. I argue that social leaders do not attempt to change potential constituents’ beliefs but only to align them with the ideology of the movement. At the same time the larger objective of social movements is to achieve acceptance of the values the social movement supports, which results in some kind of influence on individuals’ values. New ideas like the necessity of birth control and the importance of woman’s suffrage and political participation were developed and justified prognostically, eventually becoming part of mainstream culture. Value connection, for example the combination of feminist and patriotic frames, was one of the methods by which this was accomplished.
Importance and Role of Leaders in Social Movements

Discussions of frame alignment center more on the relationship between movements and their audiences and less on the leaders who are doing the actual aligning. Tarrow (1992) points out that leaders make conscious and strategic decisions to link their frames or arguments to ideas popular in the dominant culture in order to make them more appealing and credible. According to Tarrow (1992: 189), leaders are “both consumers of existing cultural meanings and producers of new meanings, which are inevitably framed in terms of organizers’ readings of the public’s existing values and predispositions.” Because they are targeting multiple audiences, leaders use multiple frames within their framing strategy (Morris and Staggenborg 2004) and may even combine incompatible arguments, especially when they are drawing upon frames from the larger culture (Scott 2000).

Important to social movement leaders’ success and management of a career as a leader is their audience’s perception of them and their position. Leaders must be motivational, a characteristic for which charisma is key. Integral to this perception is the audience’s recognition that the leader is credible to more than just a small core of activists, but to a broader range of potential constituents. “It is a well-established fact in the social psychology of communication that speakers who are regarded as more credible are generally more persuasive.” Leaders build on their credibility by providing empirical evidence and through their status and knowledge (Benford and Snow 2000: 620-621).

In discussing the public narration involved in social movements, Gary Fine (1995: 128-130) points out that a social movement is like a “bundle of narratives” and compares the interaction between actors in a movement and (potential) actors to a play, or “staging area.” According to Fine (1995), both the speaker and the audience members who are engaging in this interaction or
stage program have certain roles and expectations to fulfill. As Fine points out, the texts depend on the particular audience and its culture, and on the interaction between the speaker and potential recruits. The speaker must recognize that each audience should be treated uniquely and must identify the best way to gain support from, or legitimization by, a particular audience using various frames.

While Snow and his colleagues bring attention to “the relationship between social movement entrepreneurs and their potential constituents” (Noakes and Johnston 2005: 5), leaders’ agency in frame construction, alignment, and manipulation has not been sufficiently analyzed empirically. Using rhetorical skills, social movement leaders must align their audiences’ belief systems with the movement’s ideology by strategically linking their frames or arguments to ideas popular in the dominant culture in order to make them more palatable. “[M]ovements bring potential recruits’ individual viewpoints into congruence with the movements’ emergent and collective perspectives” (Taylor and Whittier 1995: 167). While a frame is an “individually held cognitive schema” it cannot be considered part of the collective action of the movement until “it is shared by enough individuals to channel their behaviors in shared and patterned ways” (Johnston 2002: 66). Resonance is crucial to the establishment of a frame as part of the larger movement.

According to the framing literature leaders do not change constituents’ beliefs—their goal is to align potential constituents’ beliefs with the ideology of the movement. Using various ideological symbols from public opinion and the dominant culture leaders explain to potential recruits how the social issue with which the movement is concerned is congruent with their own morals and ideology (Tarrow 1992). Fine (1995: 130) identifies this congruence as the “activated context” and cites the frame’s alignment with public expectations or norms as a requirement for legitimization. Because frames are “more flexible,” “adapt[able],” and can be “extended to blend
with other frames,” it is easier for leaders to manipulate and transform their framing strategy in order for the movement to maintain consensus among its members and to keep them mobilized (Tarrow 1992: 190). In contrast, Klandermans and Goslinga (1996) argue that adherence to a collective action frame cannot occur without a change or reorganization of individuals’ beliefs in a way that makes them understand the social problem in a manner complementary to the movement’s frames.

**Diffusion processes and social movement spillover**

Strang and Meyer (1993: 488) define diffusion as the “flow of social practices among actors within some larger social system.” Within social movement research, work on “cycles of protest” (Tarrow 1998) “has been on the interrelations between various actors, including movement participants, the state or other targets, and countermovements” (Soule 2004: 299). If we consider the Progressive Era to be a cycle of protest (Tarrow 1998), then it would follow that social movements that emerged during the first three decades of the 20th century were subject to movement diffusion. McAdam (1995) makes the distinction between initiator movements and spin-off movements. According to his definitions, initiator movements “signal or otherwise set in motion an identifiable protest cycle” while spin-off movements “in varying degrees, draw their impetus and inspiration from the original initiator movement” (McAdam 1995: 219).

But if we think about initiator movements as “nothing more than clusters of new cultural items—new cognitive frames, behavioral routines, organizational forms, tactical repertoires, etc.” (McAdam 1995: 231) then it seems plausible that diffusion could have occurred in the birth control, temperance, and white supremacy movements because they were entities within the same reform cycle. McAdam (1995: 237) additionally argues that initiator movements create new collective action frames, new organizational forms, and new tactics but “access to new ideas or
other innovations means little if one attaches no salience or relevance to them.” Here McAdam (1995) highlights the importance of frame resonance. McAdam (1995) uses the diffusion of leaders, strategies, tactics, and frames from the civil rights movement to the women’s, student, and anti-war movements as empirical examples of the direct transfer between initiator and spin-off movements. I loosely borrow McAdam’s (1995) theory and argue that social movements release “new cultural items” into the cultural atmosphere from which other movements may sample.

Meyer and Whittier (1994) conceptualize the idea of social movement spillover using the cases of the women’s movement spilling over into the peace movement. The authors posit that shared frames are one of the outcomes of social movement spillover. Specifically, the peace movement linked the feminist frame with the peace frame and attributed the arms race to patriarchy. We can also see the spillover of the civil rights movement as a direct influence on the women’s movement’s adoption of a rights frame (Evans 1980).

As an example of social movement spillover, McCammon and Campbell (2002) discover that framing processes influence coalition formation among SMOs as well as other movement outcomes. In their examination of the formation of coalitions between suffrage organizations and the W.C.T.U., the authors find that when suffrage organizations employed a separate spheres frame, coalition was more likely between the two organizations. They explain this by arguing that the separate spheres frame (that women’s knowledge of the home and children could make a unique contribution to politics) was very similar to the W.C.T.U.’s home protection frame which promoted the need for women to protect the interests of their families by supporting temperance reform. The authors use sources including suffrage newspapers, proceedings from the W.C.T.U. annual conventions, and the Handbook of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.
Master frames

While Snow and Benford (1992) and others believe that we can identify one overall master frame for a social movement, Gamson and Meyer (1996), Zald (1996), and Marullo, Pagnucco, and Smith (1996) disagree with this oversimplification. Snow and Benford (1992) and Tarrow (1998) agree that master frames originate within a cycle of contention. Tarrow (1998: 144) describes the cycle of contention as beginning when “political opportunities are opened for well-placed ‘early risers,’ when their claims resonate with those of significant others, and when these give rise to objective or explicit coalitions among disparate actors and create or reinforce instability in the elite.” Snow and Benford (1992: 139) define master frames as the “interpretive medium through which collective actors associated with different movements within a cycle assign blame for the problem which they are attempting to ameliorate.” Master frames signal “convergences among challengers” in a cycle of contention (Tarrow 1992: 144).

A master frame develops out of a successful collective action frame and is generic or abstract while a collective action frame is derivative (Snow and Benford 1992, Noakes 2005). For example, the rights frame made popular by the civil rights movement was adapted by both American and European social movements in the 1960s (Tarrow 1992) while the gay liberation movement used the master frame of minority group from earlier movements in the 1960s cycle (Valocchi 2005). In this way, master frames are broad enough to appeal to multiple movements during a cycle of contention or across time periods (Noakes 2005). J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI used a countersubversive master frame that had not been used since World War I. With this master frame, Hoover “portrays the Communist threat as primarily a domestic issue, arguing that a well-organized domestic Communist movement beholden to puppet masters in Moscow was engaged in a struggle for the hearts and minds of vulnerable working-class and immigrant Americans” (Noakes 2005: 92-93).
In her study of the Solidarity movement and the institutionalization of trade unions, Maryjane Osa (2003) observes that framing processes explain why initially mobilization failed to result in a movement. Beginning in the 1950s and coalescing in 1980 with the establishment of Solidarity, Osa (2003) finds that political opportunities, networks among SMOs, state repression, media access, changes in elite divisions, and influential allies were all important factors leading up to the development of Solidarity. But what tipped the scale was the long-awaited establishment of labor organizations and the change in the framing repertoire from frames that focused on the self-interests of the individual organizations to a master frame that pledged solidarity with organizations and other segments of society. This master frame incorporated the themes of nationalism and religion that were prominent in earlier collective action frames but combined them in a way that also stressed the cooperation and solidarity among all Poles that had been missing from previous frames.

Some social movement scholars argue that SMOs are too unique to allow such a simplification of frames. “A movement is a field of actors, not a unified entity. Convenience of language tends us to treat it as a single actor when distinctions are unnecessary.” According to Gamson and Meyer (1996), leaders, organizers, and activists are what make SMOs unique and difficult to classify by master frames. Gamson and Meyer (1996: 283) contend that it is a rare occurrence to find “unified and consensual frames within a movement,” making identification of a master frame difficult and contrary to the reality of what is actually happening to the leaders and activists.

Zald (1996) posits that competition between SMOs within a movement leads to “changes in the dominant frames of a movement and a succession in [movement organization] power and influence” (Zald 1996: 270). According to Marullo et al. (1996), conflicting frames and the lack
of a master frame may be effective tools in mobilizing broad and diverse audiences into action/activism to bring about the same, common end. While it may not be easy to identify the movement framing if frames are constantly being negotiated (Gamson and Meyer 1996), I find that one of the processes through which diffusion occurs is through the sharing of master frames.

Critics of the master frame argue that SMOs are unique, not unified, always changing, and in competition with other SMOs. I dispute the claim that any of these characteristics of a social movement preclude the possibility of a master frame. I also disagree with social movement scholars who distinguish between collective action frames and master frames and who argue that there can be only one frame for a movement. I claim that there are frames that are shared by more than one movement, and further that a movement can share more than one master frame with another movement. While collective action frames are specific versions of master frames, master frames are designed to be adaptable and employed differently across movements. Recognizing that master frames evolve out of a cycle of contention, it makes sense that social movement spillover and diffusion occurs because social movements can be characterized as challengers who are responding to the same social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Conclusions

With all of these guidelines, one would think it would not be so difficult to empirically test framing theory. According to Johnston (2002), one of the most significant reasons why framing theory is difficult to test empirically is a result of the methods that have been used to study it. As opposed to discourse analysis, framing studies refer less to the actual texts on which the frames are based (Johnston 2002) while discourse analysis analyzes the texts more closely. Focusing on the need to treat framing as a process, Benford (1997) argues that descriptive laundry lists of frames are less useful than describing how framing is accomplished and how the process changes
over time. One question that we need to ask ourselves is whether or not we can identify the movement framing (Gamson and Meyer 1996). Highlighting the importance of studying framing as a process, Gamson and Meyer (1996) argue that we cannot ascertain a movement’s master frames because movement leaders combines multiple frames which are constantly being contested and negotiated in response to constituents, adherents, and the larger society.

This dissertation addresses the gaps which I have outlined in the literature related to the empirical study of the multi-framing processes which operate in social movements. This mult-framing strategy includes frame balancing and master frames as well as frame reinforcing which has not been conceptualized in social movement scholarship. I provide evidence that master frames do indeed exist and that diffusion facilitates the sharing of master frames across movements. Systematic analysis of these processes will allow me to identify the agency of leaders and their role in the manipulation of liberal and conservative frames. Using multiple historical cases, I compare the evolution of the framing process across time as well as the thematic structure and patterns of key frames across movements.
Chapter 3: Methodology

To explore the evolving multi-framing strategy of social movement leaders, diffusion, and social movement spillover, I analyze speeches, articles, and pamphlet material written by leaders in the birth control movement, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, and the Women’s Ku Klux Klan. I use methods of hand coding and computer-assisted coding to analyze text (specifically paragraphs of text) as the unit of analysis and to describe the rhetoric and strategy of leaders’ framing. While social movement scholars have identified collective action frames, the level of analysis has in most cases focused on the frequency of frames rather than the strategic use of frames, including frame balancing, frame reinforcing, and master frames.

I have chosen to analyze the three social movement organizations associated with Margaret Sanger in the birth control movement (the Birth Control League of New York, the American Birth Control League, and the National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control), the W.C.T.U. as an organization within the temperance movement, and the Women’s Ku Klux Klan from the white supremacy movement. Because of their prominence in their respective social movements, each SMO can be considered a revelatory case study in which “a part or segment of the larger movement is used as the major conduit for grasping the whole” (Snow and Torm 2002: 162). While the SMOs represent the larger movements as a whole, they also provide an interesting comparison of SMOs based on similarity and difference.
Using speeches and articles written and delivered while a leader of several key organizations within the birth control movement, I analyze Margaret Sanger’s role in the movement from 1914 when she coined the term “birth control” through 1936 when birth control was federally legalized. My study of the W.C.T.U. covers the terms of three Presidents—Lillian M.N. Stevens (1898-1914), Anna Gordon (1914-1925), and Ella Boole (1925-1933)—through an analysis of the President’s addresses at the W.C.T.U.’s annual convention. Since the WKKK existed primarily from 1923-1931, I investigate the framing of the national movement through speeches and articles delivered and written by the organization’s Imperial Commander, Robbie Gill Comer.

Analysis of the three social movements provides the opportunity to examine the process of social movement spillover. All three mobilized at the beginning of the 20th century roughly spanning the period 1899-1936, focused on an issue(s) particularly relevant to women, incorporated female leadership, and were comprised of mainly female membership. There was also considerable overlap in the constituencies across movements, particularly among the W.C.T.U. and WKKK. The early decades of the 20th century in the United States were a time of social change characterized by progressive reform and prompted by immigration—cultural elements which were both incorporated into the framing processes of each movement. Although the SMOs across the three movements had very different agendas, they were connected by their similar responses to ideas popular in the dominant culture of middle-class White Anglo-Saxon Protestants which at that time constituted the dominant ethnicity in U.S. society. This dominance resulted in shared nativist, feminist, and maternalist master frames.

I use the characteristics of social and shared membership to determine similarities and differences in movement constituencies. The W.C.T.U. and WKKK shared membership and some aspects of their movement ideology, particularly the importance of suffrage and support for prohibition.
According to Blee (1991: 103), “[m]any rank-and-file Klanswomen, and some of the WKKK’s most prominent spokeswoman, had been activists in the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union or held strong temperance beliefs.” Robbie Gill Comer pledged the support of Klan women to the enforcement of prohibition and its protection against repeal.

“A great majority of the people of the American Union saw to it that there was placed in the country’s constitution the Eighteenth Amendment, outlawing alcohol as a beverage. That amendment, we women promise you, is going to stay. It is not going to be repealed and it is not going to be nullified. And never, with our consent, will be abolished or weakened either the statutes for its enforcement or the activities of the officials whose duty it is to see that swift and sure punishment follows law violation.”

While the secretive nature of the Klan makes membership lists almost nonexistent, Blee (1991: 121) gleaned from available records that most Klanswomen were active in their White Protestant Church and other civic organizations and could be categorized as middle or working class.

The majority of members in the W.C.T.U. were White and middle- to upper-class and concentrated in smaller cities and towns in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwestern regions of the country (McCammon and Campbell 2002, Giele 1995). They were likely to be conservative, religious women “who had lived their lives within the confines of the home and the church” (Slagell 2001: 4) and who believed in traditional gender roles (McCammon and Campbell 2002). While the W.C.T.U. grew out of the Protestant church, Giele (1995: 87) does not categorize it as a strictly religious organization:

“Although the W.C.T.U. bore the marks of a quasi-religious movement, it was neither the captive of any one religious group nor a solely religious entity. Instead the W.C.T.U. advanced women’s position as moral and upstanding members of local churches and communities and thereby helped to construct a broader identity for temperance women as citizens of the state and mothers of the nation. Thus the temperance cause, although it bore religious overtones, was not narrowly sectarian but ecumenical.”

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1 Address: Fourth Biennial Klonvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928
While this may seem to limit women to “feminine” and gender stereotyped roles, the W.C.T.U. in reality gave women opportunities that they would not have had otherwise.

Epstein (1981) characterizes the organization as providing women with a collective consciousness that they had not previously experienced through their participation in other church-related organizations. “To some extent, women of earlier generations had found female comradeship in the church and female power in the appeal to religious morality, but the sense of strength in female collectivity was greatly enhanced in an organization of and for women, one in which women could gain confidence through public activities and internal leadership and support in far-reaching bonds with other women” (Epstein 1981: 131). Giele (1995) further asserts that the W.C.T.U. was a valuable activist opportunity for women who did not live in urban areas where they would have greater options, such as suffrage organizations or women’s trade unions. In the areas where the organization’s membership was highest, “it is likely that the W.C.T.U. was the most progressive and activist women’s organization available, certainly much more politically involved than either the missionary societies or the women’s clubs” (Giele 1995: 89).

Birth control activists were also white and middle- to upper-class (Chesler 1992) but were women “whose economic privilege gave them options for careers and lifestyles preferable to child-raising” (Gordon 1974: 62). Scholars argue that although the birth control movement can trace its roots to Left-wing political ideologies such as Socialism, feminism, and bohemianism, it lost its radical quality when Sanger broke from the Socialist Party (Gordon 1974) and became more conservative as the movement progressed (Hodgson 1991). I disagree that this was the case for two reasons: 1) Sanger continues to use the feminist frame, which I consider a liberal frame, throughout her career and even more so during the time period leading up to the legalization of birth control, and 2) the eugenic frame, which I categorize as conservative, is consistently a
common and significant frame in Sanger’s framing strategy, particularly as a reinforcing frame between 1921-1928.

Although the SMOs across the three movements have very different agendas, they responded similarly to ideas popular in the dominant culture which resulted in a nativist—particularly racist, anti-immigrant, and eugenic—master frame. All three movements can be recognized as consisting of communities who were engaging in status conflicts with other segments of society (Gusfield 1963) and who promoted a racial hierarchy in society which placed native-born Protestant Whites (mainly of German and English descent) above immigrants (most of whom were Catholic, Jewish, and/or from Southern and Eastern Europe). Sanger advocated for birth control based on a eugenic agenda that cautioned against the overpopulation of the feebleminded and poor: “Any intelligent analyst must admit that today there are too many of the wrong kind of people in our world and too few of the right kind.” While the WKKK emphasized the importance of solidarity among white Protestants, women in the W.C.T.U. spoke of the differences between “urban and rural, Catholic and Protestant, immigrant and native” in their quest to preserve American culture (Gusfield 1963: 124). The leaders’ descriptions of race and emphasis on the republic, or the nation, indicate their nationalist beliefs, whether based on race or ethnicity. “Historians of ‘race’ and whiteness have touched on nationalism, especially as they have focused on how whiteness was embedded within concepts of citizenship, republicanism, patriotism, and nationality” (Cohen 1996: 710-711).

The three movements also share the framing strategy of combining feminist and nativist assertions which might initially appear to be paradoxical because they reify the cultural notions of

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women as protectors of the family and bearers of the nation but simultaneously promote the expansion of women’s societal roles. For example, Frances Willard, President of the W.C.T.U. from 1879-1898, used a “Home Protection” argument which appears to have both maternalist and feminist tones in the way that it attempted to draw women into the political arena as both caretakers and protectors of the home and family (Slagell 2001). In addition to their demand for the vote as an individual right, women in the WKKK made numerous feminist claims and complaints concerning their roles as wife and mother. “Klanswomen described the home as a place of labor for women…It also pictured marriage as a double-edge sword for women—at once women’s crowning glory and the burden they bore…Even motherhood—whether the mothering of children or the nurturance of a nation—the WKKK described as women’s work” (Blee 1991: 51). Sanger similarly called on women “[t]o become creative instruments for bringing a new race into being.”³ At the same time, Sanger affirmed that “We claim that woman should have the right over her own body and to say if she shall or if she shall not be a mother, as she sees fit.”⁴

Mothers were seen as the new activists who would expand their private domestic role to the public sphere by promoting moral reform in society. Using the tactic of frame balancing, leaders in these movements may have provided a solution for women experiencing role conflict in their maternal and feminist identities by combining somewhat incompatible frames and demonstrating that these roles were not exclusive. For these reasons, I affirm that leaders in all three movements prioritized nativist, feminist, and maternalist frames in their public platforms. The nativist frame combines the eugenic frame used by Sanger or the racist frame used by Stevens, Gordon, Boole, and Comer with the patriotic frame that leaders in all three movements invoked.

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⁴ Article: “Eugenic Value of Birth Control Propaganda,” 1921, refused by Eugenic Congress (#8).
The Value of Case Studies

Case study analysis is appropriate for the study of social movements because its advantages far outweigh its disadvantages. I begin with an evaluation of case studies, a description of Mill’s method of agreement and difference and the qualitative comparative method, and then distinguish between comparison and causation in order to address my research objective. After describing my data and sources I outline my methodology, including the methods of content analysis, both hand coding and computer-assisted coding, and text analysis.

Case studies analyze a particular phenomenon in a specific time and historical context. The argument can be made that all studies are case studies because they are bound by time and space (Snow and Trom 2002). Case studies of social movements can be considered a contribution because they focus on a particular process related to the movement, such as framing, recruitment, and the outcome of success or failure. Or the case study of a movement may be important because of its historical significance. The study may also provide a clear illustration of a social movement theory or concept.

The basic guidelines for conducting a case study are to: 1) identify the case, 2) collect data on the case, 3) ask questions of the case, and 4) answer those posed questions. Based on the theoretical constructs guiding the research, one must decide how the particular case(s) will be used to empirically elucidate the theory. What type of case is it? Is it a typical or normal case—an SMO that represents the larger movement? Most case studies of social movements are typical cases although the researchers do not always explicitly state this. Is it a critical case—does it allow one to assess a particular theoretical principle? Is it a negative or deviant case in that it is the exception to the rule or proposition? Or is it an extreme or unique case in that it isn’t comparable to other cases? Few case studies fall into the negative or extreme categories. Again, the theory
should guide the researcher to study a single case, multiple cases, or a revelatory case. With a single case study, the goal is descriptive—to provide an overview of the movement as a whole including its ideology and beliefs along with the movement’s processes and issues. A single case study extends or refines theory. The goal of a multiple case study is comparative. In this case, individual SMOs that are representative of the larger movement may be compared in order to determine variations among the cases in terms of movement processes and theories or concepts. A revelatory case is the in-depth, holistic study of a case in which a representative or critical case is used to represent the whole movement (Snow and Trom 2002). Because my objective is to draw comparisons among these three social movements though a multiple case study, I have chosen social movement organizations which I consider to be revelatory cases.

The strengths of case studies are many and due in large part to the triangulation of methods and the common reliance upon qualitative methods. Considering the triangulation of methods, not only are multiple methods employed, but the research is often accomplished by multiple researchers. Both the triangulation of methods and the use of a research team provide the incorporation of multiple perspectives in the research and multiple sources of data. Because case studies, by nature, are more in-depth than other studies, they include multiple voices—of the protagonists, antagonists, and bystanders who are part of the movement. The focus of the research is also many times longitudinal, so that processes that occur over time within the movement may be captured. Also, while the case study may have been chosen to illustrate or extend a particular theory, the research process is inductive, flexible and open to the incorporation of new data sources and unexpected findings along the way. Case studies allow the researcher to choose which level of analysis on which to focus. At the micro level, recruitment processes and individual motivations can be studied. At the meso level, one can study the links between SMOs
within the same industry. And finally, at the macro level, cycles of protest can be considered within one city or society over a period of time.

While the single weakness of case studies is that they cannot be statistically generalized, they do provide theoretical generalization. Theoretical generalization includes theoretical discovery, theoretical extension and theoretical refinement. Together, all three provide the possibility of developing new theory, extending theory to incorporate new social contexts or processes, and modifying existing theories. It should be clear that case study analysis is a valid method of examination in which the advantages often outnumber the disadvantages empirically and theoretically.

**Comparison and causation**

Mill’s methods of agreement and difference expand upon the basic case study analysis by requiring additional justification of the cases chosen as well as the ability to make, at the most deterministic causal statements, and at the least to eliminate alternative causal factors. In defining Mill’s method of agreement, the outcomes of all cases are the same so that the independent variable is identified as the one that is constant across all cases. In Mill’s method of difference, the outcomes across cases are different, so the independent variable is the one that is not constant across cases. The significant difference between the methods is that multiple causations cannot be determined with Mill’s method of agreement but can be determined with the method difference.

Ragin (1987) emphasizes the fact that the goal of comparative case studies is to interpret historical outcomes. The strengths of the comparative method are that cases are treated as whole entities rather than a collection of variables so comparisons are made between whole cases. Also,
the comparative method deals with multiple causation—that there may be multiple combinations of factors that lead to the outcome under investigation (Ragin 1987).

Mill’s methods are most commonly used in small-N studies and are most effective with about 2-4 positive cases and 2-4 negative cases although the comparative method can include hundreds of cases (Ragin 1987). The question of the strengths and weaknesses of Mill’s methods of agreement and difference are a matter of controversy within the field of sociology more than 150 years after Mill devised them (1843). According to critics such as Lieberson (1991), researchers conducting small-N studies should use a probabilistic approach when conducting research for the following reasons: 1) there is measurement error, 2) the causal pattern may be characterized by multiple and/or interacting variables, and 3) it may not be possible to identify or measure all of the causal factors.

Despite all of these reasons, small-N studies still operate with deterministic causal explanations, mainly because they have difficulty examining probabilistic theories (Lieberson 1991). Mills never meant for either the method of agreement or the method of difference to be probabilistic. According to Lieberson, small-N studies cannot test probabilistic theories because they would require much larger N to have meaningful results. At the same time according to Ragin (1987), case studies using the comparative method are deterministic because they have presumably considered all possible instances of the phenomenon. The question still remains, though, if this is ever possible. If one is using the Mill’s method of difference and including all negative cases, then the researcher is able to argue that the identified causal factors are necessary and sufficient which is deterministic. Since Skocpol (1979, 1984) is repeatedly brought up in the debate of case study analysis, it seems that her claims should be part of the discussion. Unfortunately, Skocpol seems to be inconsistent in her claims for she identifies comparative historical analysis as trying
to develop, test, and refine theory. According to Ragin, most historical sociologists do not claim
to test theory, rather to refine and apply theory in order to interpret cases.

Similar to the strengths of general case study analysis, the benefits of the qualitative comparative
method are same as those of qualitative analysis more broadly. The researcher has a more
intimate knowledge of the cases and, as stated earlier, treats them holistically. In addition, the
research is both deductive and inductive in that the researcher starts out with theory to aid in the
selection of cases and then in the process of the analysis, if causal factors are not identified, the
researcher must identify additional causal factors. As with inductive studies, the researcher is not
tied to a particular model and is free to identify one that emerges empirically from the analysis
(Skocpol 1984). One of the most common critiques of the qualitative comparative method is that
the researchers attempt to make generalizations which most historical sociologists would agree is
untrue (Ragin 1987, Skocpol 1984). Skocpol (1979, 1984) would also add that the strength of the
causal argument is one of the merits of comparative analysis, even though this seems to be one of
the biggest points of contention among those interested in combining history and sociology.
Because cases are treated holistically, there is more of a focus on patterns and processes.

Skocpol (1984) identifies several weaknesses with comparative analysis. One is that there are no
procedures to guide the selection of secondary sources. It is important to recognize that you are
relying on someone else’s interpretation. My sense is that Skocpol also thinks that the use of
multiple secondary sources provides the researcher with greater confidence that the sources are
valid (if they are all saying the same thing) and lends more credibility to his/her claims. It is also
difficult to identify negative cases for comparison if one uses the method of difference. Skocpol
additionally admits that identifying causal regularities in history cannot replace theory. In order
to address any of the critiques of Skocpol’s secondary source methodology, I analyze original text
as primary sources as well as biographical, analytical, and historical secondary sources on the social movements and social movement leaders.

There is both support for and opposition to comparative methodology, particularly concerning its ability to determine causality and generalize. Lieberson’s (1991) critique of the methods is that only one causal variable can be identified so that multiple causes and interactions among causal factors cannot be considered. Lieberson (1991) also criticizes the confidence of researchers conducting small-N studies that their causal claims are deterministic, they have identified all possible causes, and there are no measurement errors.

Savolainen (1994) provides a thoughtful rebuttal to Lieberson by citing Theda Skocpol’s *States and Social Revolutions* (1979). Skocpol used Mill’s methods of agreement and difference in explaining the social revolutions in France, Russia, and China. According to Savolainen (1994), Skocpol employs Mill’s methods for the purpose of eliminating incompatible causal claims and not for the purposes of theoretical discovery or to test theories. To answer Lieberson’s (1991) critiques, Savolainen (1994) points out that if we consider Mill’s method of agreement, there are countless characteristics of prerevolution France and Russia. Since the method does not tell us which ones to pick as possible causes, it cannot be a method of discovery. Additionally, we can always come up with additional causes of the outcome, so this method cannot be used to prove any claims (Savolainen 1994). And considering the method of difference, Savolainen (1994) quotes Mill as saying that the same case cannot explain both an outcome and its opposite. Savolainen (1994) also contests that deterministic explanations do not necessarily imply that the outcome was inevitable. At the same time, Savolainen (1994) claims that particularistic explanations can apply to probabilistic theories. Savolainen concludes that small-N studies do not claim to generalize beyond the particular study. With respect to causal interactions and
multiple causal factors, both are possible in small-N studies using Mill’s methods. Savolainen rejects Lieberson’s use of atom variables. Regarding measurement error, no study can possibly claim to have perfect measures (Savolainen 1994).

My focus is on historical interpretation rather than causal analysis. Because my goal is to refine and extend theory, I am not concerned with making deterministic claims or generalizations. What is interesting, though, is that in the debate over whether or not you can determine causality with comparative methodology, there is little concern about primary versus secondary sources. In fact, Skocpol admits the weaknesses with the comparative method and particularly the use of secondary sources, but does not provide a clear justification to explain why she does not use primary sources. Using Mill’s method of agreement and difference my objective is to interpret revelatory cases from the birth control movement, temperance movement and white supremacy movement. In order to study the multi-framing strategies of social movement leaders through their use of frame balancing, frame reinforcing, and the incorporation of master frames I analyze both primary and secondary sources as data for comparative methodology. Through this analysis I hope to better understand leaders’ roles in the framing strategy of the movement and how social movements are interrelated. Using historical cases provides the opportunity to apply theory to empirical cases which are also relevant to other social movement and contemporary contexts.

Sources of data

My data includes both primary and secondary sources. I collected data from primary sources which include speeches and articles written by movement leaders of SMOs which I consider revelatory cases of larger social movements. My analysis merges the disciplines of sociology and history as I supplement the primary source data with a broad range of secondary sources.
including biographies of the social movement leaders as well as historical analyses of the movements.

**Analysis of SMOs associated with Margaret Sanger in the Birth Control Movement**

I use the speeches and writings of Margaret Sanger including: *The Papers of Margaret Sanger* and *The Margaret Sanger Papers Microfilm Edition: Smith College Collection Series*. The first collection contains diaries, personal correspondence, general correspondence, conference material, speeches and writings, and her professional file. Although the material spans the period 1900 to 1966, most of it is concentrated on the period 1928-1940. The second collection is organized into indices of the following categories: correspondence, organizations and conferences, legal/government, writings, and miscellany and contains almost 45,000 documents spanning the years 1914-1962. From the first I collected documents from the speeches and writings file and from the second I collected documents from the writings index.

Both collections contain speeches and articles written by Margaret Sanger, including handwritten drafts, typewritten drafts, and also a few reprinted copies from newspapers or magazines of editorials, speeches, lectures, and pamphlets. Although I include some unpublished and unidentified material that was clearly a speech or article, I exclude documents that are undated, handwritten drafts, or drafts consisting of only notes or incomplete versions of documents for which I have a final version. I also exclude articles or speeches which do not incorporate any of the frames I have identified. I begin with speeches and articles from 1914 when Margaret Sanger began her activism within the movement and continue through 1936 as long as the article or speech was written before birth control was federally legalized on November 30, 1936. I chose not to analyze documents past the date of federal legislation because at that point Sanger had
achieved her goal and there would be no need to continue to frame the issue. This results in 118 documents.\(^5\)

I split the sample into three time periods based on Margaret Sanger’s involvement with particular organizations. The first time period covers the years 1914-1920. Sanger established the Birth Control League of New York, a more local and state organization, in 1916 which then disbanded in 1918. The second time period includes the years 1921-1928 which are the years during which Sanger was affiliated with the American Birth Control League (ABCL) after she founded it in 1921 with the goal of expanding the organization to have a more national focus. Under the organization of the ABCL, Sanger established *The Birth Control Review*, the ABCL’s official newsletter, and the Clinical Research Bureau, a clinic whose purpose was to study contraception with patients as research subjects. The last time period spans the years 1929-1936. After leaving the ABCL in 1928 because of leadership conflicts, Margaret Sanger established the National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control in 1929 which existed until 1937 and which became her prominent lobbying tool with the federal government.

**Analysis of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union**

I collected presidential addresses delivered at the national W.C.T.U.’s annual convention from three presidents who held office between 1898 and 1933: Lillian M.N. Stevens, Anna Gordon, and Ella Boole. The Frances E. Willard Memorial Library located in Evanston, Illinois holds bound copies of the annual convention proceedings as well as articles written by each president during her term which were published in the national organization’s publication *The Union*

\(^5\) I began with 165 documents total from both collections and excluded 47 for the following reasons: 1) they were biographical sketches of someone associated with the birth control movement, 2) they were written on a topic related to but not directly concerning birth control, 3) they detailed Margaret Sanger’s international travels, or 4) they were meant to educate rather than mobilize and included facts rather than a political or social message.
Signal. The Ohio Historical Society in Columbus, Ohio provides access to The Temperance Papers microfilm which includes a wide array of documents from multiple temperance organizations. I collected copies of the presidents’ addresses from both the Frances E. Willard Memorial Library and The Temperance Papers microfilm. Annual conventions were not held in 1898, 1914, 1918, 1920, and 1931.

Analysis of the Women’s Ku Klux Klan
In order to collect speeches and articles written by Robbie Gill Comer, I travelled to various libraries and archives in Indiana and Arkansas including the library at Ball State University (Muncie, Indiana), the Indiana Historical Society (Indianapolis, Indiana), the Indiana State Library (Indianapolis, Indiana), the Arkansas History Commission (Little Rock, Arkansas), and the library of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (Little Rock, Arkansas). At the archives and libraries I was able to collect photocopies of two Klan publications: The Kourier Magazine (national publication of the KKK) and The Torch (the WKKK’s national publication). The documents written by Robbie Gill Comer were either addresses at Klan events or articles published in either The Torch or The Kourier Magazine or pamphlets published by the WKKK’s headquarters in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Content analysis and coding
My attempt is to bridge the empirical gap between frame and discourse studies. Johnston (2002) emphasizes that framing studies offer less reference to the actual texts on which frames are based, while discourse studies analyze texts more closely. I primarily use techniques of historical and content analysis to examine the archival sources that serve as my primary data. According to Krippendorff (2004: 18), content analysis is a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use.” My analysis is

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particularly suited to content analysis in which analyses are constantly reinterpreted, subjected to multiple interpretations, and contextualized with the data itself—in this case, text from speeches and articles (Krippendorff 2004).

In coding the data, I rely on central tenets of framing theory in the social movement literature. Within each piece of evidence, I looked for language used as an argument, which linked it to a particular frame. From the analysis, I inductively derived different frames or different variations of particular frames used by leaders in her public communications. My analysis began with Margaret Sanger’s SMOs within the birth control movement. As I proceeded to analyze the data I would find new frames and chose to focus on those that were mentioned most frequently. In consideration of the similarities I identify across the movements, I searched the W.C.T.U. and WKKK documents for the frames that were common in the birth control movement as well as for frames unique to each SMO. Again, the list of frames on which I focus in the W.C.T.U. and WKKK are those that were mentioned most frequently.

Coding is an essential part of the content analysis process. “When applied to the text, [codes] link features in the text (e.g., words, sentences, and dialog) to the analysts’ constructs…the code adds information to the text (rather than reducing the text) through a process of interpretation that simultaneously breaks the text down into meaningful chunks or segments” (MacQueen et al. 1998: 213-214). In this case, identifying codes to represent frames gives me the opportunity to identify frames that were used by movement leaders.

One of the difficulties associated with coding in qualitative analysis is how to create the boundaries when coding text. According to Macqueen and her colleagues (1998: 215):
“Text segmentation during in-depth analysis could be as simple as a text marker or tag placed over a word or phrase, with the boundaries of the segment free-floating; in this case, the segment can be continuously redefined during analysis to include only the word, a set number of lines above and below the word, or the full text document. Alternatively, rules for bounding segments can be established a priori, e.g., through use of textual units, such as sentences or grammatical guidelines such as requiring the inclusion of subject references.”

Nacos et al. (1991) similarly recommend coding by lines or paragraphs. Ferree (2003: 355) measures a single “utterance” as a paragraph or uninterrupted quote. “Each utterance was coded separately so that individual utterances could contain multiple ideas.”

Using the literature mentioned above, I chose to code by paragraph or multiple paragraphs if the author’s point continued past one paragraph and/or if the following paragraphs would not make sense without the preceding paragraph(s). I use each code to represent a frame and use the term “frame mention” similar to Ferree’s (2003) use of the term “utterance.” Because there could be multiple frames in a single frame mention, I code frame mentions as the unit of analysis by using utterances (one or more coherent paragraphs) as the unit of observation. As a result, a single utterance can contain multiple arguments, or frames. I am interested in whether a particular segment of text could be coded multiple times which would illustrate leaders’ use of a multi-framing strategy which includes frame balancing and frame reinforcing.

**Techniques of Text Analysis**

Documents from SMOs from all three movements were hand coded. I measure an “utterance” as an entire paragraph or multiple continuous paragraphs (if the idea continued or if the paragraphs would not make sense without each other). Because I have more documents written by Margaret Sanger, I additionally coded each speech or article using the computer program Atlas ti. I used the software program Atlas to systematically analyze the framing structure and framing processes.
in Margaret Sanger’s public rhetoric. Atlas allows the analyst to code chunks or paragraphs of
text (or utterances) and examine co-occurrences of frames in multiple documents to determine
how frames are combined (Weitzman and Miles 1995). Coding the data in Atlas allows me to
mark the same utterance with multiple codes, each which represent a frame. Because I am
interested in the combination of frames that social movement leaders use in their public
communications, I searched in Atlas for the co-occurrence of codes (frames) and then conducted
queries to derive a list of quotes in which two codes (frames) co-occurred. Single frames can
represent a master frame, while combinations or co-occurrences of frames represent frame
balancing or frame reinforcing.

**Qualitative analysis using human coding and computer-assisted coding**

One of my research objectives is to understand the meaning conveyed by the speaker of each text.
Shapiro (1997: 236) defines the representational model of content analysis as “the attempt on the
part of the analyst to represent the structure or thought found in the communication.” Shapiro
(1997: 236) continues by arguing that “the normal role of the source of a communication is to
express views, beliefs, attitudes, values or ideas that are held, whereas the normal role of the
receiver of a communication is to discover precisely what meanings are intended by the source.
This latter task is also what a representational content analysis seeks to do.” Because determining
each speaker’s beliefs and values as well as how these ideas were received by the audience is
beyond the scope of this project, I focus on the reception of the ideas represented by the frames I
identify. Nacos and her colleagues (1991: 251) advise that “it seems that human coders are more
inclined to recognize the meaning of text in the context of an entire article, or at least a few
paragraphs, while the computer scoring treats each paragraph separately.” Because of my interest
in the methodology of text analysis I view computer-assisted coding as a complement to human
coding.
Researchers identify multiple advantages to computer coding: conducting computer-assisted analysis is more cost-effective, time-effective, reliable (Shapiro 1997; Nacos et al. 1991), and is able to “determine trends over time when large samples of text are used” (Nacos et al. 1991: 251). Shapiro (1997) adds, though, that computer-assisted analysis is less valid. One of the disadvantages associated with computer coding is limited to those that make use of artificial intelligence.

While many of the studies I cite are historical in focus, Adams and Roscigno (2005) use the World Wide Web rather than historical documents (including organizational documents and newspapers) to identify the collective identity evident in the framing processes of two organizations—the Ku Klux Klan and Neo-Nazi groups. Using the mission statements as their source of frames, the authors use TextAnalyst to map the networks of frames based on the semantic weight of each, which they calculate as the semantic weight of the frame within the documents. The semantic weight of each frame is dependent upon the frequency of the frame and its connection to other frames in the network. A higher semantic weight signals the prominence of that frame within the network.

Adams and Roscigno (1995) conclude that while the two organizations share many similarities, their collective identities are quite distinct—the Klan values patriotism and nationalism and a restructuring of American democracy, while the Neo-Nazis advocate separatism and the desire to create a new nation. Also, the Klan’s network is less complex and less explicit than that of the Neo-Nazis. Analyzing the mission statements through the use of TextAnalyst, the authors argue that culture is not intangible and that beliefs and ideologies can be systematically analyzed. While I do not calculate a semantic weight for each frame, I instead count the frequency of utterances of a single frame or combinations of frames in order to determine the importance of a
particular frame or frame combination in a leader’s multi-framing strategy. Comparison of key frames, or master frames, and similar strategies of frame balancing and frame reinforcing may indicate diffusion and possibly social movement spillover.

**Conclusions**

Using Margaret Sanger’s social movement organizations within the birth control movement, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, and the Women’s Ku Klux Klan as revelatory case studies, I conduct a qualitative analysis using both primary and secondary sources. I use techniques of text analysis to analyze primary sources consisting of speeches and articles written by leaders in the three social movements. In my analysis I use both methods of human coding and computer-assisted coding which aids in data management and lends credibility to the results of a qualitative study. I also consider secondary sources in order to provide historical background and to contextualize the patterns that develop. I hope to accomplish two goals with this analysis. First, textual analysis of speeches and articles can be used to compare the framing strategies of social movement organizations. Secondly, using a revelatory comparison strategy allows for the identification of similarities and differences among SMOs with the aim of generating new insights into framing strategies and historical understanding of these particular social movements.
Chapter 4: Framing Birth Control: Was Margaret Sanger’s Framing Strategy Liberal or Conservative?

My analysis of each social movement leader’s multi-framing strategy seeks to answer my first two research questions: 1) How do leaders engage in prognostic framing in order to amplify frames? 2) How do leaders achieve frame resonance using a multi-framing strategy which balances conservative and liberal frames or reinforces either a liberal or conservative view with the combination of two liberal frames or two conservative frames? My goal is to identify Margaret Sanger’s overall pattern of frame usage, including individual collective action frames, her pattern of multiple-frame usage, including balancing and reinforcing combinations, and how these multiple-frame patterns change over time.

Margaret Sanger’s Role in the American Birth Control Movement

When Margaret Sanger coined the term “birth control” in 1914, she launched herself into a central role in the American birth control movement. Margaret Sanger has been identified as a primary leader of the American birth control movement having founded the Birth Control League of New York, the American Birth Control League (ABCL), the Clinical Research Bureau, and the National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control. Because of her leadership and establishment of multiple organization, I do not focus on just one SMO within the larger movement.
The early part of the birth control movement in the United States was led by feminists and socialists. As a Socialist during the very early part of her career, Sanger perceived that women’s lack of control over reproduction helped to perpetuate an undemocratic distribution of power. Because of her participation in the more radical segments of society, she tried to combine the goals of the women’s movement with those of the working class movement in the birth control movement (Gordon 1990: 207). Margaret Sanger encouraged a more liberal set of morals that would promote the dissemination of sexual knowledge and called for the right of women to choose motherhood and children (Kennedy 1970: 81). As her career progressed, Sanger’s goals and strategies progressed along with it, although her use of multiple ideologies as rhetorical strategies remained a constant in her public work. Sanger’s leadership began when the Post Office declared two of her pamphlets (“What Every Mother Should Know” and “What Every Girl Should Know”) unavailable in 1914 because of her frank discussion of venereal disease. These pamphlets violated a group of statutes passed in 1873 known as the Comstock Law and prohibited the mailing, transporting, or importing of “obscene, lewd, or lascivious” articles and specified that material that mentioned the prevention of conception fell under these categories (Kennedy 1970: 24).

The Comstock laws (named after Anthony Comstock, head of the Society for the Suppression of Vice) passed in 1873 were supposed to “protect sexual purity, and allegedly, to suppress quack medical advertisers” (Kennedy 1970: 23). Section 1142 of the New York Penal Code made it a misdemeanor to distribute “any recipe, drug or medicine for the prevention of conception.” Section 1145 made the transaction legal if the one distributing or prescribing the treatment was a physician and if the reason for the prescription or advice was to cure or prevent disease (Kennedy 1970: 84). Having been a nurse who served poor and working class women, Margaret Sanger chose to support the right of physicians to prescribe birth control as long as the phrase “for the
cure and prevention of disease” was eliminated from Section 1145. Without this phrase, women would be able to receive birth control in order to prevent not only the spread of disease but, more importantly, pregnancy.

Margaret Sanger’s movement goals and rhetorical strategy were different from other birth controllers who were attempting to publicize the issue across the country. Emma Goldman went on a national speaking tour to primarily radical audiences. The National Birth Control League was established with Mary Ware Dennett as the director. Sanger was opposed to the League’s tactics and to its organizational goal to amend state and federal laws that considered birth control obscene (Kennedy 1970: 76). Margaret Sanger herself traveled across the country, starting in the spring of 1916, giving motivational lectures similar to Goldman’s earlier ones. She too spoke to mainly radical audiences. But her strategy and style was very different from those birth control speakers who had come before her. “Her forensic technique was not to harass and harangue, in the manner to which her radical auditors were accustomed.” She detailed her experiences as a nurse with poor and working class women who had no hope and she emphasized the need for a solution to social problems other than charity (Kennedy 1970: 81).

The schism between the competing organizations of the American birth control movement can be traced to each group’s identification of the best way to frame the amendment of the law and the most efficient strategy to achieve the change in law. “The difference between Sanger and Dennett began in 1916, when Dennett criticized Sanger’s strategy of flamboyant lawbreaking and argued that a more effective and ethically defensible tactic would be to lobby for amendment of state and national Comstock laws” (Reed 1995: 32). Although it is true that Sanger was critical of Dennett and the National BCL because their focus was solely legislative (Kennedy 1970: 90),
it is ironic that her organization, the Birth Control League of New York, specified legislative amendment as one of its organizational goals.

The great difference in their definition of the problem, which led to each leader’s particular frame development, originated in each group’s emphasis on different sections of the law regarding the practice of birth control. Section 1142 of the New York Penal Code made it a misdemeanor to distribute (regardless of whether or not you received money for the transaction) “‘any recipe, drug or medicine for the prevention of conception.’” Section 1145 made the transaction legal if the one distributing or prescribing the treatment was a physician and if the reason for the prescription or advice was to cure or prevent disease (Kennedy 1970: 84). Mary Ware Dennett and the National BCL promoted the removal of the clause “‘for the prevention of conception’” from the list of illegal methods specified in Sections 1142 and 1145. Margaret Sanger and the NYBCL chose to support the right of physicians to prescribe birth control as long as the phrase “‘for the cure and prevention of disease’” was eliminated from Section 1145. Without this phrase, women would be able to receive birth control in order to prevent not only the spread of disease but, more importantly, pregnancy.

Under the Birth Control League of New York, Sanger established several birth control clinics in New York City and was arrested for distributing information and methods of birth control at the clinic. The American Birth Control League (ABCL) was Sanger’s national organization which published the organization’s newsletter The Birth Control Review and whose three-part goal included the amendment of the state and federal laws, giving physicians control over the dissemination of birth control, and advocacy of birth control as part of the current program of social welfare (Kennedy 1970: 90). Also under the ABCL was the Clinical Research Bureau
which collected data on patients for the purpose of studying contraception and saw 1,655 patients in 1925 with an average of three visits.

By 1930 the legalization of birth control had truly become a national issue, as there were 55 clinics in 23 cities and 12 states. Because of differences in opinion and strategy, in 1928 Sanger withdrew her clinic from the ABCL and left in 1929 after she had lost control of the league and *The Birth Control Review*. That same year she established the National Committee for the Federal Legislation of Birth Control, which became her prominent tool for lobbying with the federal government.

It is not clear whether Margaret Sanger’s goal was to develop a strong centralized national organization with local and state chapters. Chesler (1992) claims that it was not.

“Wary of all the squabbling and divisiveness she had experienced in radical politics, she conceived the magazine [*The Birth Control Review*] as an alternative to a national birth control organization. She would maintain it as her forum and leave the tedium of recruiting support, building programs, and raising funds to the twenty or so local birth control leagues that had been established in response to her 1916 tours, some by radicals, some by middle-class women and reformers, others an amalgam of the two that was only possible in the years before World War I heightened class tensions” (Chesler 1992: 165).

Regardless, this was something which she never really achieved. The SMOs associated with Sanger were more similar to the decentralized Women’s Ku Klux Klan whose chapters were autonomous from the national organization. Part of this may be a result of her success in establishing local clinics.

“At first, membership accounted for up to a third of the league’s total budget, and an ambitious expansion was anticipated, but the various objectives of the organization came quickly into conflict. Along with advocacy, Margaret’s goal was to mobilize local groups to provide clinical birth control services throughout the country. To this end, a field operation was immediately put into place to revive dormant interest in the nine states where it had existed prior to the end of World War I. As state and local leagues flourished, however, they drained energy and money from the parent organization. Over the years, various formulas would be adopted requiring them to share a portion of their
membership receipts with New York, but the tension was never fully resolved...Organized birth control, in fact, advanced only tentatively through the 1920s with the formation of state affiliates and local clinics as its major achievement…” (Chesler 1992: 226)

In 1936 Margaret Sanger designed and conducted a test case to draw attention to the participation of customs officials in the prohibition of the dissemination of birth control information. Customs confiscated a package of diaphragms sent to the Clinical Research Bureau from Japan. When the case went to trial, a Supreme Court Judge proclaimed birth control federally legal and admitted that birth control was not obscene, but was rather a medical tool. The judge based his claim on the opinion that “at the time of the passage of the Comstock law, information on contraception was poor, and that Congress would not have considered contraception immoral had it understood all the facts” (Gordon 1990: 321). It was not until the early 1940s that birth control was declared legal at the state level.

**Margaret Sanger’s collective action frames**

The frames I identify as comprising Sanger’s multi-framing strategy are six liberal frames: feminist, democratic, sexual autonomy, abortion, religious, and social class and five conservative frames: morality, responsible parenthood, maternalist, patriotic, and eugenic. I use these two categories to organize the frames, in my discussion and within the tables, and define liberal frames as espousing a greater orientation to change and conservative frames as espousing less of an orientation to change. I apply the two frame categorizations to all three movements and consider all of the frames to be prognostic. Although I identified a motivational frame in Sanger’s framing strategy I have chosen to focus on the prognostic frames. I am interested in how Sanger used arguments to focus on the identification of social problems (grievances), targets, and solutions to mobilize rather than motivational language (See Table 4.1).
Feminist Frame

Margaret Sanger implemented the strategy of frame extension when she appealed to all women to support the birth control movement. Although her movement was not initially directed at all women, but poor and working class women who did not have access to birth control, the movement was extended to encompass a feminist cause. It is not clear, however, whether the “feminine spirit” which she repeatedly invoked was meant to include not only mothers who wanted to limit the number of children to whom they gave birth, but also women who chose not to have any children at all.

It is important to recognize that Margaret Sanger used feminist language even though much of her maternalist rhetoric is more traditional. While I found that Sanger focused on birth control as a necessity and right of only mothers, it seems that she contradicted herself—sometimes within the same piece—and used the terms “mother” and “woman” interchangeably. Although it seems safe to assume that Margaret Sanger really meant that birth control should only be used by married women, we cannot be sure that she really did not see the inaccessibility of birth control as an affront to all women.

In one of her speeches, Sanger affirmed that: “We claim that woman should have the right over her own body and to say if she shall or if she shall not be a mother, as she sees fit.”6 Sanger also linked women’s freedom over their bodies to freedom in other arenas as well. “She can never gain political, social, or spiritual freedom so long as her body remains the slave of ignorance.”7 What is most radical about Sanger’s claim is the language that she used regarding women’s right

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to control their own body, which is now an integral component of the rhetoric used by the abortion rights movement.

Although I contend that Margaret Sanger often used the terms “woman” and “mother” synonymously—which assumes that all women want to be mothers—in one piece she did posit that women are equal to men, which is rhetoric that she seems to have borrowed from the suffrage movement.

“Only through the emancipation of woman’s creative energies, the liberation of her sex force, can humanity redeem itself…mankind cannot choose the road upward to the fulfillment of its true destiny until the other half of itself—woman—is released, emancipated. Emancipated? I hear you say. Has she not the right to vote? To work? The right to engage in any activity where man goes? Yes, and she has fought for these activities and shown an equal ability in her undertakings, but I do not consider such superficial rights as sufficiently important to be called emancipation.”

Not only would this piece be considered feminist in contemporary society, but it was probably viewed as radically feminist in the 1920s. What distinguishes it from other feminist pieces by Sanger is her declaration that woman is equal to man and ought to be treated as such.

Additionally, this piece is unique to the rest of her public writings and speeches because of Sanger’s allusion to the women’s movement and her charge that if women deserved the right to vote, did they not also deserve the right to limit their family size?

**Sexuality frame**

Margaret Sanger used the sexuality frame to promote sex education and to convey her belief that women had a right to knowledge about their sexuality and reproductive health as well as the right to enjoy sex for reasons other than procreation. “I take issue with those who claim that sex

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mating is for the sole purpose of reproduction.”

Sanger points out how little women know of their own bodies and how necessary this information is. “These women, advanced as they are in many ways, know simply nothing of their own bodies. Even the names of the reproductive organs are a mystery to them and must be imparted. The location, the functions, the use and care of these organs must be explained to them, for, hard as it is to believe, they are ignorant of all these things.”

She also uses this lack of knowledge to promote the idea of contraceptive advice as well as the distribution of contraception itself in her clinics.

**Democratic Frame**

What distinguishes the democratic frame from the feminist frame is its emphasis on the importance of the availability of birth control to both men and women. Margaret Sanger framed the issue of birth control as something that should be available to “all American citizens to direct their own destinies and to create a life more abundant for themselves.”

She repeatedly highlighted the importance of birth control as a basic freedom that all individuals deserved which would bring them “independence and dignity” and serve as an “instrument of human and social emancipation.”

Not only is the right to birth control a human freedom, but it is a liberty which is an integral part of what our country was founded upon, as described in the Declaration of Independence. Sanger emphasized that the United States lagged behind Europe with respect to the legalization of birth control despite the fact that the individuals who founded this country left Europe to gain freedom.

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“We in this country are proud of our boasted freedom and liberty, but it is generally known throughout Europe that most of our liberties are a farce. We have a political and religious liberty but individual moral liberty must yet be fought for us here.”14

According to Sanger, democracy promotes the standard that all individuals should have control over their future. “It interests every adult, mature individual. It makes no difference, whatever may be the race, colour of the skin, economic principles, theories, or religious creeds, Birth Control is of interest to every individual.”15 As one of her most inclusive statements, Sanger saw this right as a requirement for the achievement of a more educated, aware, and sophisticated country.

Abortion frame

Sanger was not a proponent of abortion—she viewed it as a dangerous, and sometimes fatal, consequence of the inaccessibility of contraception for poor women. I consider the abortion frame to be liberal because Sanger repeatedly distinguishes between abortion and contraception and emphasizes that women do not “choose” to have abortions because it is their only option. In this case, birth control would give women the ability to choose contraception over abortion. The most difficult misunderstanding with which Sanger had to contend was that abortion is a form of contraception.

“First, let me emphasize that birth control is not abortion. Birth control is the conscious control of the birth rate by means that prevent conception. The essential facts are: First, it is the prevention of conception, not the interruption of pregnancy after conception has taken place. In preventing conception one does not destroy life as no life has been conceived to destroy. Second, it is control, not necessarily limitation. To control the birth rate is to control the size of the family and the spacing of births with some regard to the mother’s health, to the inheritance both husband and wife are able or likely to pass on to their children, to the health of the children already born, to the father’s earning power, and to the standard of living the parents wish to maintain.”16

14 Address: “The Morality of Birth Control,” delivered at the Park Theatre on November 18, 1921 (#7).
15 Untitled Speech: unidentified meeting or conference, dated February 19, 1932 (#31).
In fact, Sanger repeatedly pronounced her opposition to abortion and argued that the availability of contraception and the proper contraceptive advice would decrease the high number of abortions in the United States. “Any attempt to interfere with the development of the fertilized ovum is called an abortion. No one can doubt that there are times when an abortion is justifiable, but they will become unnecessary when care is taken to prevent conception. This is the only cure for abortions.”17 Sanger blames society—specifically the government, the church, and the medical profession—for the prevalence of abortion. “When society holds up its hands in horror at the ‘crime’ of abortion, it forgets at whose door the first and principal responsibility for this practice rests. Does anyone imagine that a woman would submit to an abortion if not denied the knowledge of scientific, effective contraceptives?”18 According to Sanger, women will obtain abortions regardless of whether or not they are legal or a health risk because they have no other options.

“Thus the question is reduced in America not to whether family limitation should be practiced. It is practiced, by fair means or foul. It explains to a large extent the large number of maternal deaths. The problem that American society must solve is this: Shall family limitation be attained through abortion or through Birth Control? Shall normal, safe scientific methods be employed, or shall women be forced to continue to resort to dangerous, surgical operations, often performed in the most dangerous circumstances?”19

Sanger’s solution was to place the education and jurisdiction of birth control within the institution of medicine. “A little effort on the part of the medical profession would enable these thousands of women to obtain safe scientific knowledge to prevent conception and thereby do away with abortions and the necessity for them.”20

20 Unpublished article: sent to Editor of Medical World, 1917 (#3).
**Religious frame**

I also categorize the religious frame as liberal because Sanger points out that some religions, particularly the Catholic Church, impose their doctrines on their constituents without seeming to consider how the rules will have a negative impact on individuals’ lives. Sanger’s use of the religious frame was directed at vague “religious creeds” as well as the Catholic Church, specifically. In both cases, though, Sanger points out that all of these doctrines are in opposition to the creation of a new race and civilization.

> “Thousands, nay, millions of women have in the past sacrificed their lives in devotion to religious creeds. They have abandoned their beauty, interests, education, talents, ambitions, love, and motherhood in order to dedicate themselves to their faith. Is it not time that this same force, idealism and devotion be turned to science, to the building of a new civilization?”

Since Sanger’s birth control clinic collected demographic data on its patients, she was able to determine that many of the women who sought advice and treatment from the clinic identified as having a religious affiliation, and many to the Catholic Church. While Sanger did not specifically target the Catholic Church as much as she just mentioned the opposition of many religious beliefs to the practice of birth control, she sometimes was very direct and vocal in her opinions about the Catholic Church.

> “[T]he official teaching of the Catholic Church, even though ignored by many of its members, is sometimes an obstacle to general approval of the birth control movement by political leaders unwilling to oppose the authorities of that church...My own position is that the Catholic doctrine is illogical, not in accord with science, and definitely against social welfare and race improvement.”

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Social Class frame

I place the social class frame in the liberal category because Sanger considers those who do not have access to birth control as the victims of a society that does not provide them with the means to safely practice family limitation. She identifies knowledge of birth control as a right that all individuals should have. Again, she also highlights that there are social class disparities in the availability of birth control that lead to disparities in fertility which are not based on quality but rather quantity.

“The birth rate of the wealthy and educated has been in control for the past quarter of a century. The birth rate of the poor and ignorant has increased. Those least able to carry on the burden of the race are compelled to bring children into the world or not to marry. While those who can afford to keep and educate a good sized family are able to get information from their private practitioner to help them control the size of their family. I have no objection to this group of women having all knowledge. My fight in this country is to make the same knowledge available for the poor mother whose health is wrecked and whose life is hopeless for the lack of proper information. The farmer’s cattle is protected by laws from the abuse of overbreeding but the farmer’s wife is ignored or deprived the right to space her children as befitting her health and financial conditions. This is all wrong and must be changed.”

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Morality frame

Similar to the patriotic frame, Sanger uses the morality frame to argue that birth control is a responsibility to society. I include the morality frame with the conservative frames because of the restrictive norms and values that society imposed to regulate behavior, particularly sexual behavior. She also sought to contrast the use of birth control with immorality, one of the arguments frequently used by opponents of the movement. Sanger even goes so far as to say that the inaccessibility of birth control to all individuals is itself immoral.

“The laws as they stand today insult our intelligence and our morals. They debase love. Poor women are conscripted to childbearing, in ignorance and fear, by the laws of the U.S. Government. They have no choice. All avenues of knowledge are closed to them. They must bear, regardless of consequences to their own health, to the welfare of the

23 Outline of Address: Kiwanis Club, Beacon, July 1928 (#19).
children, or to the husbands’ ability to provide for them.”24

Sanger creatively equated the individual’s practice of birth control as a moral responsibility to one’s children, family, community, and society.

“There is probably no other subject that has such a practical significance, which at the same time cuts so deeply into the foundations of social evolution and world peace, as birth control. Birth control is a keynote—it is a signal of a new moral awakening; a moral responsibility, not only for those children who have already been born; a responsibility for those that are about to be born; but for those who have not yet been conceived. It is not only a health and economic expedient; it is a great social principle, and that principle is interlocked and interwoven with the spiritual progress of the race, and its future.”25

**Responsible Parenthood Frame**

Both the responsible parenthood and maternalist frames are classified as conservative because of the limiting roles and duties they prescribe. While Margaret Sanger claimed that birth control would improve the institution of motherhood, she also pointed out that it could strengthen the bonds of marriage and make both men and women better parents. While it has usually been the mother who is charged with nurturing children into productive citizens of society, Sanger posited this duty as something for which both parents should be considered accountable. “Parenthood, when it is responsible, can be a noble trust, a proud commission, an honored assignment.”26 In fact, Sanger takes her declaration one step further and explicitly reasoned that birth control is just as important to men as it is to women. “Every father has a right to knowledge which will permit him to plan his family in accordance with how many children he can support.”27 Unfortunately, Sanger then contradicts what she has advocated repeatedly—that mothers deserve the right to plan their families—and places the decision-making power in the hands of men.

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25 Untitled Speech: unidentified meeting or conference, delivered February 19, 1932 (#31).
As with motherhood, Sanger seems to have assumed that all men and women want to get married and experience the delights and satisfaction of parenthood. “The joys of parenthood are joys which every married couple want to experience.”  Although she confers upon them the right to demand birth control, she also expects them to fulfill their duty as parents. According to Sanger, birth control “signifies a new responsibility of parents toward their children, of men and women toward the race.”

Assuming that all married couples would want to have children, Sanger created strict guidelines for the planning of a family. Sanger detailed three considerations that should be made when deciding the number and timing of children including the mother’s health, the father’s earning power, and child spacing. These recommendations were designed not only to make them better parents, but also better spouses, which was a pretty radical assertion. Sanger advised couples to delay parenthood for two years after marriage. “This gives them time and opportunity to get acquainted with each other and to strengthen and cement the bonds of love before taking up the complex duties of a family.” Emphasizing that a happy and stable marriage was important for not only the children but also the husband and wife was a break with tradition.

Maternalist frame
Margaret Sanger saw herself as the spokesperson for the victims of uncontrolled fertility. Having worked as a nurse in the slums of New York City, she was begged numerous times by women who did not have knowledge of, or access to, birth control. Once she became an activist in the birth control movement, she also received hundreds of letters—some that she published in order

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28 Outline of Address: Kiwanis Club, Beacon, July 1928 (#19).
29 Address: “The Morality of Birth Control,” delivered at Park Theatre, November 18, 1921 (#7).
to bring attention to the problem and to arouse sympathy for its solution. For Sanger, birth control would allow motherhood to be voluntary which would improve the positive influence that a mother has over her children. “[A]bout 98% say the reason they [mothers] want information to control conception is because of the love they have for their children, to love their children and to bring them up decently.”32 The maternalist frame was a personal one for Sanger because her daughter Peggy died as a child in November 1916 from pneumonia. While Sanger was with her daughter when she died she had returned to New York just a month before after spending a year in Europe researching methods of birth control. According to Chesler (1992: 134), “Margaret never fully stopped mourning Peggy or exorcised the guilt over having been absent during the final year of her brief life.”

Since women have always been entrusted with the primary care of children and expected to raise good citizens, Margaret Sanger extended the power of birth control from improvement of the institution of motherhood to the creation of a new and better race. In order to mobilize mothers, she identified women without access to birth control as “not the mother of a nobler race but a mere breeding machine”33 and called on them “[t]o become creative instruments for bringing a new race into being.”34 Equating women with selfless protectors of the race, Sanger elevated the role of mothers by empowering them to limit the size of their families and to only bear children which their family could support.

Sanger’s rhetoric surrounding motherhood is contradictory. Although at times she advocated birth control’s legalization as part of a feminist freedom for all women, in policy she believed that birth control should only be used within the institution of marriage. “We claim that every mother

32 Address: “The Morality of Birth Control,” delivered at the Park Theatre, November 18, 1921 (#7).
in this country, either sick or well, has the right to the best, the safest, the most scientific
information.” What is interesting in all the discussion of motherhood is the underlying
assumption that all women want to be, and should be, mothers: “Every normal woman wants
children.” At the same time, she saw motherhood as a choice: “to decide for herself if and
when and how, she shall fulfill the function of motherhood... For, remember, without free mothers
we can never produce free and strong children.”

**Patriotic frame**

I consider the patriotic frame conservative because of its focus on the responsibility that all
Americans and citizens have to their country. One of these responsibilities, according to
Margaret Sanger, is to be a “good citizen” which is to control one’s fertility, especially if you are
“feeble-minded.” The patriotic frame is used most in combination with the eugenic frame in
order to complement Sanger’s argument that citizens need to be more concerned with the
American race, and essentially the quality rather than quantity of the population.

“It is the foremost duty of every patriotic American to do everything in his or her power
to make possible the creation of a healthy and vigorous race of Americans for tomorrow. If the American citizens remain passively indifferent to the obstacles which are now
obstructing the road to the fulfillment of our racial destiny, he cannot be called a good
citizen.”

Again, she emphasizes every American’s duty to their country. The patriotic frame also
highlights the importance and necessity of the birth control movement. Many of the quotes I
label as patriotic are also meant to be motivational and draw individuals to participate in the
movement or to at least support it.

“To join in this national campaign is to align oneself with the forces of intelligence. This

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37 Ibid (#40).
is the most profoundly patriotic act now possible for American citizens. It means to play an active part in a great human drama. Here is an opportunity to be embraced joyfully, reverentially, religiously. To present a united front-valiant, indefatigable and undefeatable, against the powers of prejudice, prurience and stupidity-to gain strength by our very solidity, and to march joyfully into the future! There is an increased sense of living, more thrills in fighting, than the passive critic ever feels. Support the Federal Committee and discover this for yourself!\(^{39}\)

**Eugenic Frame**

As Margaret Sanger sought to ally the birth control movement with the eugenics movement by means of her own organizations, she took advantage of the fear of “race suicide” that had become prevalent first in scientific, political, and international opinion and then in popular opinion. What permeates Sanger’s public rhetoric is the racist, ethnocentric, and classist language emphasizing the declining quality of the American population that was a consequence of differential birth rates. Her description of race is both similar to and different from our contemporary understanding in that she saw it as biological difference based on social class and ethnicity.

Margaret Sanger’s alliance with the medical profession and the eugenics movement allowed her to benefit from the credibility associated with “experts” in the male-dominated institutions of medicine, academia, and science but was also one for which she was criticized. “Her intense desire to have the support of the major secular thinkers of her day may have cost her far more than it was worth” (Chesler 1992: 217). The eugenics agenda emphasized that the low birth rate of the educated upper class combined with the “out of control” birth rate of the undereducated poor would lead to “race suicide.”

Sanger could be quite blunt in her discussion of the quality of the population. “Any intelligent analyst must admit that today there are too many of the wrong kind of people in our world, and too few of the right kind. Even the most compassionate and least snobbish of observers must admit the truth of this fact.”40 It is likely that she was voicing popular concerns and fears. In describing the different groups of which society is comprised, Sanger classified three categories. The first is:

“[t]hose intelligent and wealthy members of the upper classes who have obtained the knowledge of Birth Control and exercise it in regulating the size of their families…The second group is equally intelligent and responsible. They desire to control the size of their families, but are unable to obtain knowledge or to put such available knowledge into practice…The third are those irresponsible and reckless ones having little regard for the consequences of their acts, or whose religious scruples prevent their exercising control over their numbers. Many of this group are diseased, feeble-minded, and are of the pauper element dependent entirely upon the normal and fit members of society for their support.”41

From this assertion, we can see the powerful, yet brutal, terms Sanger used to describe those elements of society whose fertility was uncontrolled. This quote exemplifies her prejudice and judgment as one of the “intellectuals” of society who had access to birth control but who did not need it as much as the “irresponsible” segments of society. Her declaration also implies that the more responsible, intelligent members of society should control the fertility of the “less desirable” citizens by making birth control accessible.

Part of Sanger’s eugenics rhetoric underscores the relationship between population growth and 20th century American social problems. Referring to the poor of society, she affirmed that “Here we find that poverty and lack of birth control go hand in hand…It is in this group that we have almost all the great social problems of the day. You have slums, overcrowding, high maternal and infant mortality, child labor, illegitimacy, illiteracy. Many in this group are not only

40 Speech: Untitled, delivered at the Birth Control Conference, February 27, 1929 (#21).
41 Ibid (#21).
unemployed but unemployable.”

Sanger believed that birth control would be the panacea that modern society needed as it embarked on a new, and changing, era. The goal that Sanger outlined was not so much the prevention of “race suicide” in the United States but, more broadly, the improvement of the whole human race.

**Frequency of single frames**

If we only consider single frames, Sanger was more likely to use conservative frames rather than liberal frames in every time period. It was only during the period 1914-1920 that her usage was more balanced—46.5% of the frames she used were liberal and 53.6% were conservative. Between 1921-1928 and 1929-1936, the percentage of conservative frames was 68.6% (31.3% liberal) and 60.6% (39.3% liberal), respectively. Sanger prominently used the eugenic, maternalist, feminist, and responsible parenthood frames in her multi-framing strategy (See Table 4.2). The eugenic and maternalist frames were always one of the top two most commonly used frames although their ranking changed in different time periods. Between 1914 and 1920 the maternalist frame was most common, accounting for over a quarter of all frame mentions (25.5%) with the eugenic frame accounting for 17.7% of frame mentions. Between 1921 and 1928 Sanger used the eugenic frame (28.8%) more than the maternalist frame (16.6%). Finally between 1929 and 1936 the eugenic and maternalist frames were almost equally used with 22.3% of frame mentions being eugenic and 21.3% of frame mentions being maternalist. As an individual frame, the feminist frame was not as common in Sanger’s strategy although it still accounted for 16.6% of frame mentions from 1914-1920, 7.6% in 1921-1928, and 12.5% in 1929-1936. It was the

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42 Speech or Article: “Compulsory Motherhood,” February 1917 (#104).
third most used frame in the first time period, the fourth most used frame in the second time period, and again the third most used frame in the last time period. While Sanger used the feminist frame in 150 frame mentions across the three time periods and the responsible parenthood frame in 124 frame mentions, Sanger concentrated her use of the responsible parenthood frame between 1921 and 1928 when it turned up in 12.2% of all frame mentions, outnumbering her feminist frame mentions (7.6%).

**Frame balancing and frame reinforcing in a multiple-frame strategy**

Margaret Sanger rarely used just one frame in each document. Rather in each speech or article she wrote Sanger usually made more than one argument. What is interesting about this strategy is that she regularly used certain combinations of frames in order to make her argument more effective. But when she did use only one frame in an utterance, Sanger was more likely to rely on one of the conservative frames—with the eugenic frame the most common. I consider Sanger’s use of frame combinations as a variation on Hewitt and McAmmon’s (2004) concept of frame balancing. The authors demonstrate that suffrage organizations created a new frame (societal reform frame) to balance the conservative home protection frame with the radical justice frame. I find that social movement leaders combine liberal and conservative frames—which I call frame balancing—as a way of broadening the appeal of their frames. An example of this is Sanger’s combination of the feminist and maternalist frames. Sanger also used the strategy of frame reinforcement by combining two conservative frames or two liberal frames. Most often her reinforcing combinations were conservative—the eugenic-maternalist and eugenic-responsible parenthood combinations were most popular. I analyze Sanger’s use of frame combinations to determine which frames she combined most often (See Tables 4.3-4.6).
Sanger’s repertoire of frame combinations included twenty balancing combinations and nineteen reinforcing combinations (ten liberal and nine conservative). Because they were the most prominent combinations, I discuss the feminist-maternalist balancing combination, and the eugenic-maternalist and eugenic-responsible parenthood conservative reinforcing combinations. While the liberal reinforcing combination as a group accounts for 20.3%, 11.8%, and 13.5% of all frame combinations in each time period, respectively, no specific combinations occurred in more than 3.5% of all frame combinations (See Table 4.4). Because there was no combination that was significantly and consistently used in all three time periods I do not discuss any of the liberal reinforcing combinations.

Although there were no significant liberal reinforcing combinations, their presence as a group distinguishes Margaret Sanger’s multi-framing strategy from those of W.C.T.U. Presidents and Robbie Gill Comer. Liberal frames played a significant role in Sanger’s multi-framing strategy—they served as a supplement to the feminist frame both as single frames (See Table 4.2) and as part of balancing combinations (See Table 4.3). The best explanation to account for Sanger’s less common reinforcement of liberal frames can be traced to the composition of her audiences—they were likely to be ideologically mixed. While it is important for a leader not to alienate the more radical segments of her/his membership, it is also important to appeal to diverse potential constituents.

**Feminist-maternalist balancing combination**

The feminist-maternalist combination played an important role in Sanger’s multi-framing strategy. It is interesting that Sanger inherently contradicts herself within this frame combination. She assumes that all women will (and should) be mothers yet she advocates a radical point of view which originated during the suffrage movement that the act of sex should be experienced
not only for procreative purposes and that the sexual experience should be enjoyed by both partners:

“Our ecclesiastical fathers decreed that there were only two states of respectable womanhood open to women—virginity or motherhood. Sex in any of its manifestations was akin to sin and, for the woman, only the bearing of a child sanctioned its expression. Thus we find that woman’s bondage in the past as well as today is based solely on the biological task of childbearing. Consequently, until that function is under her complete control woman can never hope to rise to the heights of her own spiritual destiny.”

This quote exemplifies Sanger’s elevation of the role of motherhood and belief that women cannot fully experience this role unless they have control over their own body. At the same time, she recognizes that women’s roles should be expanded to include sexual beings in addition to virgins and mothers.

Many times when Sanger combined the feminist and maternalist frames she reminds women of their position in society. This knowledge is meant to empower women to act as individuals in order to promote the goals of the birth control movement.

“Birth control when based on the theory of voluntary motherhood becomes the new moral standard and social principle which shall be the foundation of a new glorified womanhood. Long has woman been called the gentler and weaker half of humankind; long has she borne the brunt of unwilling motherhood; long has she been the stepping stone of oligarchies, kingdoms, and manmade democracies; too long have they thrived on her enslavement. The time has come at last when she demands her physical and spiritual freedom—and her liberty.”

Although Sanger is trying to empower women and identifies women’s ability to bear children as a creative power and something over which she should have control, there is still the question of whether women who do not have children still have power.

“I want to see Woman of the Future liberated, spiritually emancipated, conscious of her invincible creative powers, autonomously and imperiously wielding them with vision and intelligence for the peace of the world. But before this, Woman as a creative entity must

45 Article: “Voluntary Motherhood,” written in Queens County Penitentiary, 1917 (#2).
liberate herself; she must give voice to her female longings, her intuitions, her wishes and her desires.”

Sanger is clearly influenced by the sexual revolution, and it is revolutionary that she advocated women’s sexual and reproductive autonomy which is exemplified by her rhetoric that woman should not be denied the right to have control over her own body.

“Only through birth control will women gain control of their bodies or develop their souls. Only through a new spiritual vision can they ever unlock the great gates to a future in which joy and happiness will prevail. Only through a new consciousness of birth can humanity at large ever extricate itself from the manmade muddle in which it is grounded today. Instead of a world created by irresponsible hordes in hatred and antagonism, awakened woman shall guide us into a future created by all—embracing love through the consciousness of birth.”

According to Sanger, this control is instead governed by laws.

“Woman has always been the chief sufferer under this merciless machinery of the statutory law. Humbly she has borne the weight of manmade laws, surrendering to their tyranny even her right over her own body. For centuries, she has been the helpless victim of excessive childbearing. Meekly she has submitted to undesired motherhood.”

The feminist and maternalist frames are often combined with the democratic frame, particularly when she extended the idea of rights from women’s control over her own body to individuals’ right to obtain birth control knowledge from medical professionals.

“A new civilization is in the making. Ignorance of sex force-creative energy already has given way to knowledge and enlightenment. Parenthood—conscious, enlightened and responsible, shall become a proud commission to carry on the torch of illumination to the new race. Birth Control information should be the right of every adult man and woman. It should be their privilege to go to the medical profession to obtain the proper suitable methods for prevention of conception. It should be the woman’s right to have knowledge, not because she is sick, diseased, or poor, but because as a woman whose body must be used in the creating and incubating of the new life, she should be given the right or choice, and time, consistent with her desires.”

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48 Article: “Shall We Break This Law?” published in The Birth Control Review, February 1917 (#104).
Sanger extends this idea of rights further to include the rights of the children and race that women create.

“Briefly, this is the case for Birth Control in its individual and social aspect. It is my belief that woman must free herself from the forces which have made her childbearing machines throughout the ages. She must choose the time to be a mother or not to be a mother, as she sees fit. Women, through knowledge of birth control, will not only free themselves, but will also free the children from social conditions which otherwise will remain inevitable. As they free themselves and their children, then can they go forward with men, toward that greatest of all goals—the emancipation of the human race.” 50

Although Sanger more often used a balancing combination rather than a reinforcing combination in 1914-1928 (55.9% and 44.1%, respectively) and in 1929-1936 (56.7% and 43.3%, respectively) only one particular balancing combination stands out as a significant proportion of all her frame combinations (See Table 4.3). Sanger’s balancing of the feminist and maternalist frames was an effective strategy because it appealed to two segments of her audience who did not necessarily overlap—feminists and mothers. This combination also closely resembled the rhetoric of difference feminism. Between 1914 and 1920 the feminist-maternalist combination accounted for 13.8% of all combinations, in 1921-1928 the percentage declined to 6.7%, but then increased to 14.4% of all combinations by 1929-1936. Between 1921-1928 Sanger was more likely to combine the eugenic and maternalist frames (12.5% of all frame combinations) which is why we see this combination replace the feminist-maternalist combination as the most popular frame combination. But the reinforcing of eugenic and maternalist frames does not seem to have been effective because Sanger returns to using the feminist-maternalist combination most often in the period leading up to the federal legalization of birth control—1929-1936.

Eugenic-maternalist reinforcing combination

With the eugenic and maternalist frame combination Sanger elevated the institution of motherhood by positing that mothers should not only have the right to control their fertility but also the duty to do so responsibly to promote the welfare of the country and civilization. She simultaneously propagandized on the fear of “race suicide” that was popular at the time and placed the burden of the perpetuation of the American and human race on women’s shoulders. Sanger presented the perpetuation and creation of a better race as women’s responsibility, victimization, and glory.

Seeking to portray women as victims, Sanger outlined how motherhood can be a burden for women.

“But every argument that can be made for preventive medicine can be made for Birth Control clinics for the use of a woman who has not yet lost her health. Sound and vigorous at the time of marriage, she could remain so if given advice as to by what means she could space her children and limit their number. When she is not given such information, she is plunged blindly into married life and in a few years is likely to find herself with a large family, herself diseased, damaged, an unfit breeder of the unfit and still ignorant.”51

Sanger reiterated this victimization in an article printed in 1936: “Freed from fear of unwanted pregnancies, freed from the dread of bringing into the world children whom they cannot adequately rear, the women of America will build ever happier families and better homes and create a new race.”52 In this case Sanger uses the analogy of a machine in order to portray women without access to birth control.

“All of the creative energy of womanhood, the internal energy that is looked to for the renewal of the world, goes into a sordid, dead, unfeeling machine. That is society’s decision in the matter, and from it there is no appeal. But until society permits woman to

give to the bearing and rearing of children the maternal energy given her by nature for that purpose, and so long as she must give it to a factory machine, she must for her own sake, for the sake of other workers, for the sake of the child, avoid bearing children.‖

That women’s role has been stripped of its privileges is another important point that Sanger made.

“Age after age has shown woman taken from her lofty heights—where previously she was referred to as Creative Deity, Giver of Life, Divine Mother—and placed on the level of nurse-maid, permitted to care for man’s offspring, allowed to compete with his animals as pack-horses whose honored destiny it was to suffer and to serve. With this vast reservoir of racial and spiritual energy, why has woman never challenged the supremacy of the male? In the answer to that question lies the problem which confronts us today and which must be solved if we are to evolve upward and onward in the march of civilization.”

Sanger emphasized the particular victimization of poor women to mobilize support for the movement. Speaking to social workers in 1929, she says:

“And because of my knowledge of woman’s needs as a woman and a mother I entered the movement as a representative and protagonist of the overburdened women of this country. It is as a suppliant representative of womanhood as well as of motherhood that I appeal to you, the members of the most understanding and philanthropic profession of the world to aid us in our battle for a conscious and voluntary motherhood and the creation of a new emancipated race.”

Similarly, Sanger repeatedly used the term “slave” to describe the way women have historically been treated despite the function they provide in the population. Sanger explicitly states that eugenics can prevent motherhood from enslaving women without access to birth control.

“The almost universal demand for practical education in Birth Control is one of the most hopeful signs that the masses themselves today possess the divine spark of regeneration. It remains for the courageous and the enlightened to answer this demand, to kindle the spark, to direct a thorough education in Eugenics based upon this intense interest. Birth Control propaganda is thus the entering wedge for the Eugenic educator. In answering the needs of these thousands upon thousands of submerged mothers, it is possible to use this interest as the foundation for education in prophylaxis, sexual hygiene, and infant welfare. The potential mother is to be shown that maternity need not be slavery but the

54 Article: “Woman of the Future,” published in Unity, November 27, 1933 (#212).
55 Speech: Medical Meeting, NYC, Eastern Medical Society, 1928 (#27).
most effective avenue toward self-development and self-realization. Upon this basis only may we improve the quality of the race.”

Sanger also incorporated feminist ideas into the eugenic-maternalist combination. “The basic freedom of the world is woman’s freedom. A free race cannot be born of slave mothers. A woman enchained cannot choose but give a measure of bondage to her sons and daughters. No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body. No woman can call herself free until she can choose consciously whether she will or will not be a mother.” Giving women autonomy, Sanger argued that one of the ways women would improve the quality of the race would be accomplished by her choice of mate.

“I place this stress upon healthy bodies for the future mothers of this race, because I am firmly convinced that strong healthy women will not choose as the fathers of their children puny anemic men, and thus if our girls become more and more gloriously healthy, the boys will likewise have to be. The day is passing when any puny, underdeveloped male can ‘Choose the mother of his children.’ The new strong young woman will only be attracted to the physically fit young man. In this matter, we may trust the girl more than the young man.”

While Sanger glorified the sacred responsibility of motherhood, her definition excluded the other social positions that women are capable of fulfilling and again assumed that “woman” equals “mother.” Public opinion during this time, and even today, was concerned with the institution of the family and with the instrumental role that mothers play in the lives of their children. Sanger hoped to attract support for her cause from more conservative elements of society who esteemed the institution of motherhood and would not have otherwise advocated the legalization of birth control without Sanger’s maternalist framing. Sanger likely adjusted her multi-framing strategy to align with the specific culture and norms of the general public.

57 Article: “A Parents’ Problem or a Woman’s?” published in The Birth Control Review, March 1919 (#122).
58 Article: “Mobilizing for Motherhood (Through Birth Control),” published in Physical Culture, January 5, 1921 (#6).
Eugenic-responsible parenthood reinforcing combination

Similar to the eugenic-maternalist combination, the integration of the eugenic and responsible parenthood frames also emphasized the responsibility of parents to recognize the importance of their role and the responsibility of the government to allow them to exercise this role. “Those who are practicing birth control because they are fully conscious of the moral responsibility of bringing a child into the world, are laying the foundation of a vast experiment in race building which is without precedent in the history of mankind.” 59 Sanger repeatedly stressed that parents must develop a consciousness of responsible parenthood. “Only by self-control of this type, only by intelligent mastery of the procreative powers can the great mass of humanity be awakened to the great responsibility of parenthood.” 60 Sanger recognized that a change in cultural attitudes toward marriage and parenthood would have to precede legislative changes as well as changes in sexual and reproductive behaviors.

Sanger is clear that parenthood is not only an individual responsibility but also a national responsibility.

“Birth Control is of inestimable value not only to the individual parents; but its popularization would enable us to draw a line between the worthy, intelligent and self-respecting types of parenthood among the poorer classes and the delinquent and irresponsible. Until this dividing line is definitely established, it will be impossible for society to establish any definite, just, constructive and yet withal self-protective policy in its dealing with the complex problems of the criminal, mental defective and feebleminded classes. Sterilization will undoubtedly become a necessity; but unsupported by a policy of arbitrary sterilization the practice of self-directive Birth Control could not without injustice be imposed upon the people at large.” 61

Sanger advocated sterilization for individuals who could not be held responsible for their own fertility and labeled these individuals as unpatriotic. “We must recognize the responsibility of

60 Article: “Eugenic Value of Birth Control Propaganda,” refused by Eugenic Congress, 1921 (#8).
61 Article: “Mobilizing for Motherhood (Through Birth Control),” published in Physical Culture, January 5, 1921 (#6).
Parenthood. We must consider the bringing of a child into the world as a great moral responsibility. It must no longer be a matter of chance and accident, or irresponsible recklessness. No loyal or patriotic citizen has the right to bring diseased or probably diseased children into the world for others to take care of them.\textsuperscript{62}

Although Sanger saw parenthood as a patriotic responsibility, she also conceived of it as something larger than a national issue.

“Birth control is not a panacea for all the social and economic ills in the world but at least it is the most immediate help which can be applied as a solution to the present problems of millions of men and women here and now. Those who are practicing birth control because they are fully conscious of the moral responsibility of bringing a child into the world are units in the building and reconstruction of the new world. They are laying the foundation for the unfolding of a vast experiment in race building never before known in the history of mankind.”\textsuperscript{63}

According to Sanger, parenthood that is a choice rather than a burden signaled the development of a better race.

“‘Conscious’—conscious birth. No longer shall the race be brought into being through recklessness or the abandon of the moment, but considered, planned for, wanted and loved, not only after individuals are born or while they are on the way to being born, but before they have been conceived. When once we begin to consider our children as invited guests and not as policemen over us, they truly shall we begin to usher in a new race, and I firmly believe that greater things are in store for the human race when this consciousness takes place.”\textsuperscript{64}

The eugenic frame was part of Sanger’s two most often used reinforcing combinations (See Tables 4.4 and 4.5). During the 1914-1920 period, Sanger most often used the eugenic-maternalist combination out of all frame combinations. It occurred in 12.5% of all frame combinations in 1914-1920, 12.5% in 1921-1928, and 6.9% in 1929-1936. Similarly, the eugenic-responsible parenthood combination accounted for 3.9% of all frame combinations in the

\textsuperscript{62} Outline of Address: Kiwanis Club, Beacon, July 1928 (#19).
\textsuperscript{63} Article: “Birth Control,” published in \textit{Church and Society}, February 1932 (#204).
\textsuperscript{64} Article: “Birth Control” published in \textit{Theosapist}, August 1936 (#229).
first time period, 10.2% of all frame combinations in the second time period, and 7.2% of all combinations in the third time period. The only other reinforcing combination that Sanger used more often was the maternalist-parenthood combination in 1921-1928 (7.5%). While Margaret Sanger’s use of the eugenic-maternalist combination as a proportion of all frame combinations declined between the first and third time periods, the proportion of the eugenic-parenthood combination actually increases.

**Conclusions**

The results indicate that Sanger engaged in both frame balancing and frame reinforcement (See Table 4.6). In order to create frame balance, Sanger frequently combined a liberal and conservative frame using the feminist-maternalist combination. The feminist-maternalist combination was the most popular combination in 1914-1920 and 1929-1936, while the most common frame combination between 1921 and 1928 was the eugenic-maternalist combination.

It has become scholarly consensus that Margaret Sanger gave up part of the movement’s and her own autonomy to eugenicists and doctors when she forged a link between the birth control and eugenics movements. Academics (Gordon 1974: 79, Hodgson 1991: 16) have argued that the birth control movement became more conservative as it began to ally itself more closely to the eugenics movement and as eugenic ideas became even more integrated into Sanger’s multi-framing strategy. “That birth controllers would wish to join forces with eugenicists and restrictionists to form an association aimed at dealing with America’s population problem ‘in both its quantitative and qualitative aspects’ indicates how complete this transformation had become by 1930” (Hodgson 1991: 16). Chesler (1992: 16) argues that Sanger “deliberately shifted her tactics and strategies to accommodate changing political or economic currents and left herself open to the accusation that she was trying to be all things to all people.” My research does
not support these claims. Sanger published articles written by leading eugenicists in *The Birth Control Review* as early as 1917. Similarly, although the “reputation of eugenics had finally begun to decline” by the end of the 1920s (Chesler 1992: 217), Sanger still incorporated its rhetoric as an integral part of her multi-framing strategy at least until birth control was federally legalized.

Why did Margaret Sanger balance and reinforce frames? She was a social movement leader whose goal was to attract and maintain support for the movement’s goals which meant appealing to the broadest audience. According to Chesler (1992: 220), “She seemed remarkably pliant as a public figure in these years, willing to alter her image to suit the tastes—even perhaps some of the prejudices—of her audience.” Sanger’s use of both balancing and reinforcing frame combinations can be explained by the differences in the characteristics of her audiences and her membership. While the typical league member was Protestant, native-born and white, Republican, more educated than most Americans, married, under 35, had less than three children and a higher income than the national average (Kennedy 1970: 100), Sanger’s audiences were not so homogenous. “Margaret’s success as an activist and organizer in the 1920s would rest on her capacity to alternatively inspire and provoke the three constituencies that accounted for all the attention given the First American Birth Control Conference—feminists, eugenicists, and Catholics. She motivated a new generation of feminists, cajoled eugenicists, and then relied on the support of both groups, first, to escape her own past, and, second, to neutralize increasingly virulent attacks mounted against her by religious opponents” (Chesler 1992: 205).

As a social movement leader, Sanger recognized the importance of elite resources and sought support from upper class women, or “clubwomen” (Kennedy 1970: 100), and prioritized her alliance with the eugenics movement. The scientific study of eugenics lent legitimacy to the
movement because respected members of society (notably doctors and various academic eugenicists) promoted it as a solution to numerous social problems—unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, child labor, divorce, prostitution—that they attributed to immigrants. Even before the 1920s “Margaret’s view of the ability of upper class women to make things happen had by then dramatically changed from the unbridled contempt of her Woman Rebel days. ‘It is true that the fashionable seem far removed from the cause and its necessity,’ she wrote back. ‘But we cannot doubt that they and they alone dominate when they get an interest in a thing. So little can be done without them’” (Chesler 1992: 156). For Sanger the development of a multi-framing strategy that both balanced and reinforced frames gave her the opportunity to appeal to audiences who could provide economic, organizational, and constituency resources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Keywords/Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Feminist              | Emancipation of womankind  
                         | Control of own body  
                         | New womanhood  
                         | Control of sexual lives  
                         | Feminine spirit                                                                                                                                 |
| Sexual autonomy       | Sex education and separation of sexual act from procreation                                                                                                                                 |
| Democratic            | Freedom of expression, free speech, censorship  
                         | Threat to democracy  
                         | Individual liberty  
                         | Available to every man and woman  
                         | Rights as citizens  
                         | Right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness  
                         | Right to knowledge                                                                                                                                 |
| Abortion              | Not contraception, opposition to                                                                                                                                 |
| Religious             | Any mention of religion in general, “the church,” or the Catholic church specifically                                                                                                                                 |
| Social class          | Distinction between upper class and poor                                                                                                                                 |
| Morality              | Any mention of morality, immorality, or morals                                                                                                                                 |
| Responsible Parenthood| Responsibility of parents  
                         | Guidelines for parents  
                         | Conscious procreation                                                                                                                                 |
| Maternalist           | Liberation of motherhood  
                         | Voluntary motherhood  
                         | Forced to be child-bearing machines  
                         | Love for children                                                                                                                                 |
| Patriotic             | Duty to country  
                         | Patriotic or patriotism  
                         | American citizen                                                                                                                                 |
| Eugenic               | Quality not quantity of population  
                         | Overpopulation of certain segments of society (i.e. feebleminded, defectives, criminals, paupers)  
                         | Social problems as a result of uncontrolled fertility of certain segments of society  
                         | Race improvement  
<pre><code>                     | Improvement of civilization                                                                                                                                 |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame (in order from liberal to conservative)</th>
<th>1914-1920 Birth Control League of New York</th>
<th>1921-1928 American Birth Control League</th>
<th>1929-1936 Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control</th>
<th>Total across time periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>45 (16.6%)</td>
<td>33 (7.6%)</td>
<td>72 (12.5%)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>16 (5.9%)</td>
<td>7 (1.6%)</td>
<td>15 (2.6%)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>14 (5.2%)</td>
<td>26 (6.0%)</td>
<td>14 (2.4%)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>20 (7.4%)</td>
<td>17 (3.9%)</td>
<td>40 (7.0%)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>9 (3.3%)</td>
<td>23 (5.3%)</td>
<td>46 (8.0%)</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social class</td>
<td>22 (8.1%)</td>
<td>30 (6.9%)</td>
<td>39 (6.8%)</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % of liberal frames</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>17 (6.3%)</td>
<td>31 (7.1%)</td>
<td>23 (4.0%)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible parenthood</td>
<td>10 (3.7%)</td>
<td>53 (12.2%)</td>
<td>61 (10.6%)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist</td>
<td>69 (25.5%)</td>
<td>72 (16.4%)</td>
<td>122 (21.3%)</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>17 (3.9%)</td>
<td>14 (2.4%)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenic</td>
<td>48 (17.7%)</td>
<td>125 (28.8%)</td>
<td>128 (22.3%)</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % of conservative frames</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for time period</td>
<td>271 (100.1%)</td>
<td>434 (99.9%)</td>
<td>574 (99.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing combinations</td>
<td>1914-1920</td>
<td>1921-1928</td>
<td>1929-1936</td>
<td>Total across time periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-maternalist</td>
<td>21 (13.8%)</td>
<td>17 (6.7%)</td>
<td>46 (14.4%)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-eugenic</td>
<td>7 (4.6%)</td>
<td>9 (3.5%)</td>
<td>18 (5.6%)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-morality</td>
<td>5 (3.3%)</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
<td>3 (0.9%)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-parenthood</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
<td>3 (0.9%)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic-eugenic</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>10 (3.9%)</td>
<td>7 (2.2%)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic-maternalist</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>4 (1.3%)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic-parenthood</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
<td>5 (1.6%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic-morality</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion-maternalist</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>14 (4.4%)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion-eugenic</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>5 (1.6%)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion-morality</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
<td>1 (0.3%)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion-parenthood</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>6 (1.9%)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality-maternalist</td>
<td>5 (3.3%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>5 (1.6%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious-maternalist</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
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<td>11 (3.4%)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious-eugenic</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>5 (2.0%)</td>
<td>14 (4.4%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious-morality</td>
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<td>6 (2.4%)</td>
<td>7 (2.2%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social class-eugenic</td>
<td>5 (3.3%)</td>
<td>16 (6.3%)</td>
<td>10 (3.1%)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social class-maternalist</td>
<td>11 (7.2%)</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
<td>15 (4.7%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social class-parenthood</td>
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<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
<td>5 (1.6%)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-class morality</td>
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<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>2 (0.6%)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total balancing combinations</strong></td>
<td><strong>85 (55.9%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>101 (40.0%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>181 (56.7%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

83
### Table 4.4  Frequency of liberal reinforcing frame combinations, Margaret Sanger, 1914-1936

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liberal reinforcing combinations</th>
<th>1914-1920</th>
<th>1921-1928</th>
<th>1929-1936</th>
<th>Total across time periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-democratic</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
<td>4 (1.3%)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-abortion</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
<td>10 (3.1%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-sexuality</td>
<td>6 (3.9%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>4 (1.3%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-religious</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
<td>11 (3.4%)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-social class</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
<td>4 (1.3%)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic-religious</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>9 (3.5%)</td>
<td>1 (0.3%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic-social class</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
<td>2 (0.6%)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social class-abortion</td>
<td>5 (3.3%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>3 (0.9%)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social class-religious</td>
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<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>2 (0.6%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion-religious</td>
<td>5 (3.3%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>2 (0.6%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liberal reinforcing</td>
<td>31 (20.3%)</td>
<td>30 (11.9%)</td>
<td>43 (13.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

84
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservative reinforcing combinations</th>
<th>1914-1920</th>
<th>1921-1928</th>
<th>1929-1936</th>
<th>Total across time periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eugenic-maternalist</td>
<td>19 (12.5%)</td>
<td>32 (12.5%)</td>
<td>22 (6.9%)</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenic-parenthood</td>
<td>6 (3.9%)</td>
<td>26 (10.2%)</td>
<td>23 (7.2%)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenic-patriotic</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>14 (5.5%)</td>
<td>7 (2.2%)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenic-morality</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>15 (5.9%)</td>
<td>7 (2.2%)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist-parenthood</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>19 (7.5%)</td>
<td>19 (6.0%)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist-morality</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
<td>5 (2.0%)</td>
<td>6 (1.9%)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist-patriotic</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
<td>2 (0.6%)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenthood-morality</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>6 (2.4%)</td>
<td>6 (1.9%)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenthood-patriotic</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>3 (0.9%)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total conservative reinforcing combinations</td>
<td>36 (23.7%)</td>
<td>124 (48.8%)</td>
<td>95 (29.8%)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6  Summary of balancing and reinforcing frame combinations, Margaret Sanger, 1914-1936

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1914-1920</th>
<th>1921-1928</th>
<th>1929-1936</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total balancing combinations</td>
<td>85 (55.9%)</td>
<td>101 (40.0%)</td>
<td>181 (56.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liberal reinforcing</td>
<td>31 (20.3%)</td>
<td>30 (11.9%)</td>
<td>43 (13.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>combinations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total conservative</td>
<td>36 (23.7%)</td>
<td>124 (48.8%)</td>
<td>95 (29.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reinforcing combinations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total reinforcing</td>
<td>67 (44.0%)</td>
<td>154 (60.7%)</td>
<td>138 (43.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>combinations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total combinations</td>
<td>152 (99.9%)</td>
<td>255 (100.7%)</td>
<td>319 (99.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

The following combinations were excluded because their frequency was less than 5; the frame combination had to occur at least 5 times total to be included in the calculations

Balancing:
Feminist-patriotic = 4
Democratic-patriotic = 0
Class-patriotic = 4
Religious-patriotic = 3
Sexuality-patriotic = 0
Abortion-patriotic = 0
Religious-responsible parenthood = 3
Sexuality-eugenic = 4
Sexuality-responsible parenthood = 4
Sexuality-morality = 4

Reinforcing:
Sexuality-social class = 2
Sexuality-religious = 3
Sexuality-democratic = 2
Abortion-sexuality = 1
Abortion-democratic = 0
Patriotic-morality = 1

Percentages in the preceding six tables may not equal exactly 100% because of rounding.
Chapter 5: “Made in America Mothers”: The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union

The W.C.T.U. is the now the “oldest, voluntary non-sectarian woman’s organization in continuous existence in the world” (www.wctu.com). In contrast to Margaret Sanger’s more decentralized organization with autonomous and independent chapters, the W.C.T.U. “had a single national body, strong state and local organizations, published minutes, a substantial budget, and a cohesive plan of action” (Giele 1995: 137). The W.C.T.U. has been identified as the “largest mass movement of women of the 19th century” (Slagell 2001: 2) and is estimated to have had 245,000 members in 1911 when about one million women were associated with women’s clubs in 1914. President Ella Boole described the structure of the organization:

“The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union is an organization, not a committee. Our local unions are to be found in practically every community in the United States. The National program is put over through the states, the state program through the local unions, usually through the intermediary of the county or district, but the officers bear the responsibility for inspiring enthusiasm in the members, for the education in the underlying principles of prohibition and for leading the entire membership in a campaign to sell prohibition to the community” (1927).

The organization was successful for several reasons: their appearance and presentation, their rhetorical strategy, and the message which they conveyed.

“Temperance women were remarkably effective for the very reasons they are often criticized. They presented arguments in comfortable, familiar language that made both women and men amenable to new ideas and evidence. Words are most effective when an audience admires its speakers and finds the messages non-threatening. The great strength of temperance leaders was their ability to meld a progressive message with a rhetorical presentation an image comfortable to a large number of women and men. By the hundreds of thousands, women came to hear temperance women’s ideas because they could identify with and admire these speakers. Men came to accept women temperance speakers and their positions because, through their rhetoric, these women provided a way for men to see change as imminent and non-aggressive. Temperance women connected
theory to practice, and made the connection both important and comprehensible to the general populace through speeches, fiction, and even dress” (Mattingly 1998: 2).

The three principles of the W.C.T.U. were peace, purity, and prohibition. The W.C.T.U. was established with the goal of national temperance but developed into a multiple-issue movement with multiple associated frames, including women’s right to vote as well as labor and educational reform.

“In a very real sense it may be claimed that among the courageous signers of this wonderful twentieth century emancipation proclamation, the supreme temperance triumph of the ages, is listed the W.C.T.U. We dared be one of the unified forces that educated, agitated, organized and legislated to achieve this unprecedented victory. We were first among the temperance societies to ask for national constitutional prohibition” (1921).

I analyze the President’s annual address at the national conventions of the W.C.T.U. from 1899-1933 which covers the terms of three Presidents: Lillian M.N. Stevens was president from 1899-1914, Anna Gordon served from 1914-1925, and Ella Boole served from 1925-1933. I chose these dates to capture the time period leading up to and during Prohibition. Ella Boole’s term ends with the repeal of the prohibition amendment although it was not the end of the W.C.T.U. The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union presented many arguments similar to those which Margaret Sanger made in the birth control movement. Recognizing the prevalence of diffusion across social movements and that the frames used by a movement are influenced by the larger culture it is not surprising to find that there is significant overlap in the frames used by leaders in each movement.

All three Presidents received more education than most women of that era and shared similar career trajectories in that their service to the W.C.T.U. included Presidential positions at multiple levels—in addition to being National Presidents they also were also Presidents of either state chapters or the World’s W.C.T.U. Born in 1844, Lillian M.N. Stevens attended Westbrook
Seminary in Maine and became a teacher. She helped organize the Maine chapter of the
W.C.T.U. in 1875 and was initially the treasurer before becoming State President in 1878.
Although she was married and had a daughter, the author of a short biography of her life
published as a pamphlet by the W.C.T.U. was quick to point out that once she became active in
the Maine chapter as treasurer, she did not ignore her duties as wife and mother and was able to
do so with the support of her husband. “Whenever possible, she visited different sections of the
state, speaking, awakening, and organizing women into locals W.C.T.U.’s. Her home duties were
not neglected. She never went out without leaving at home a competent young woman, a family
friend, who was able not only to look after the cares of the household but also to give the young
daughter any necessary aid in the preparation of her lessons and to otherwise tenderly minister to
the young girl’s needs during her mother’s brief, if frequent, absences from home.” Lillian M.N.
Stevens became Vice President to Frances Willard in 1894, President of the National W.C.T.U.
when Willard died in 1898, and Vice President of the World’s W.C.T.U. in 1900. Stevens was
well-known for the speech she gave in 1911 when the State of Maine voted to reconsider its
prohibition law. In order to raise the spirits of members of the temperance campaign Stevens
predicted that “within a decade, prohibition shall be placed in the Constitution of the United
States; and to this end we call to active cooperation all temperance, prohibition, religious and
philanthropic bodies; all patriotic, fraternal, civic associations and all Americans who love their
country!” (W.C.T.U. pamphlet). In one statement Stevens outlined all of the organization’s
frames, except the feminist.

Anna A. Gordon became President of the National W.C.T.U. after Lillian M.N. Stevens died in
1914 and was the only President out of the three who never married. Gordon grew up outside of
Boston, and attended Mt. Holyoke and Lasell Seminary but did not graduate from college. In
addition to being President, she served as Willard’s private secretary for 21 years, wrote
songbooks and hymnals, and organized a children’s chapter of the W.C.T.U. While still President of the National W.C.T.U., Gordon was elected President of the World’s W.C.T.U. in 1922. Throughout her life, Gordon held executive positions in various organizations promoting peace, suffrage, and temperance. On Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, she proclaimed “World democracy, world purity, and world patriotism demand world prohibition” (W.C.T.U. pamphlet).

Ella Boole was born in Ohio and attended the College of Wooster and, like Lillian M.N. Stevens, was married, became a teacher, and served as President of a state chapter. Boole was President of the New York W.C.T.U. chapter from 1898-1903 and 1909-1926 and was Vice President of the National organization for ten years before being elected as President. In 1931 Boole was elected to the Presidency of the World’s W.C.T.U. She knew that she would have to give up her position as National President but stayed on during the last few years of Prohibition until the law was repealed. In addition to her roles in the W.C.T.U., Boole was also active in other temperance efforts. She ran for the U.S. Senate as a nominee of the Prohibition Party in 1920. Although she did not win, she received the “largest number of votes than any woman had received for public office up to that time” (W.C.T.U. pamphlet).

Ella Boole described the W.C.T.U. as an “organization of Christian women, devoted to the protection of the home and the child in the home” (1930). Anna Gordon gave a similar description:

“The W.C.T.U. had its sacred origin in the wonderful crusade of gentle, home-loving women who, in Ohio 45 years ago, out of the agony of their souls startled the nation by visiting bar rooms and saloons in the hope that by prayer and persuasion they could close these iniquitous places” (1919).
In its simplest terms, this is the most frequently used frame: the home protection frame. At the annual convention in 1912 President Lillian M.N. Stevens highlighted the importance of the home in the life of a W.C.T.U. member:

“Of all the conventions of the convention year, the annual convention of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, which so auspiciously opens here this morning, is, from the viewpoint of the home, the most important. It is composed of home-making, home-keeping, home-loving women, many of whom have made heavy sacrifices in order to be present; all of whom have a profound interest in the great home question—protection from the curse of strong drink” (1912).

According to the W.C.T.U., the most pressing problem facing the home was the abuse of alcohol. Prohibition would solve all of the problems that affected the home: unemployment, education, finance, the relationship between husband and wife, and the parent-child relationship.

The influence of the W.C.T.U. is difficult to measure because there was much social movement spillover between the temperance and suffrage movements. According to Gusfield (1963: 88), “[m]ost of the great figures in the history of the Woman’s movement were active in the Temperance movement at some time or another. It was one of the few organizational activities open to women in the mid-1800s.” Ella Boole echoed this sentiment.

“It was the first religious enterprise in which all Protestant churches shared. It was a movement of home-loving women, inspired by divine zeal against the saloon which they recognized as destructive of all they held dear. It led these women, unaccustomed to participation in public prayer, unable to share in civic responsibilities and inexperienced in organization outside their homes, into new paths and it gave them a new outlook on life” (1933).

Regardless, the W.C.T.U. gave women at that time opportunities they would not have had otherwise and influenced all of the women’s social movements that came after it.

**W.C.T.U.’s collective action frames**

The frames I identify as comprising the W.C.T.U.’s multi-framing strategy are feminist, maternalist (home protection), morality, religious, patriotic, and racist. Following my earlier
categorization of Margaret Sanger’s frames, I categorize the feminist frame as liberal, espousing a
greater orientation to change, and the maternalist, morality, religious, patriotic, and racist frames
as conservative, espousing less of an orientation to change (See Table 5.1). In comparison to
Lillian M.N. Stevens and Anna Gordon who have similar frequencies of frame mentions—167
and 168, respectively—Ella Boole has 75 frame mentions, which is the lowest frequency of all
three Presidents (See Table 5.2). A probable explanation is that each president served for
varying term lengths, with Ella Boole serving the least amount of time out of the three. There
were years in all three presidencies in which the organization did not hold an annual convention
and, as a result, there was no annual address (1898, 1914, 1918, 1920, and 1931). Lillian M.N.
Stevens served from 1898-1914 and gave fifteen Presidential addresses. Anna Gordon served
from 1914-1925 and gave nine Presidential addresses. Ella Boole served from 1925-1933 and
gave six Presidential addresses.

Stevens, Gordon, and Boole were each more likely to use conservative frames rather than liberal
frames with conservative frames accounting for 80.4%, 87.5%, and 81.3% of their total frame
mentions, respectively (See Table 5.2). It is difficult to label one single frame that was most
common for each time period. There are usually at least three whose numbers are close or
identical. Lillian M.N. Stevens used the feminist (19.8%), morality (19.8%), religious (19.2%),
and maternalist (18.6%) frames with similar frequency. During Anna Gordon’s presidency she
most often used the patriotic (26.2%), religious (25.6%), and maternalist frames (23.8%). The
maternalist (21.3%), religious (21.3%), and patriotic (20.0%) frames were most common in Ella
Boole’s annual addresses. It is clear, though, that the popularity of the maternalist frame is
common to all three Presidents.
**Feminist frame**

Frances Willard was not the first W.C.T.U. President but she is the most well-known, both for her leadership in the organization as well as her role in promoting feminism. “In 1883, the W.C.T.U. formally endorsed the demand for female enfranchisement but justified its action as necessary to protect the home and women, within it…The first resolutions introduced by Frances Willard in support of suffrage asked for the vote for women in their roles as wives and mothers, to enable them to protect their homes from the influence of the saloon” (Dubois 1998: 39). In order to attract mainstream support for the vote, Willard did not present suffrage as a radical cause.

Interestingly, while Willard has been identified as a feminist and credited with the organization’s support of the suffragist movement, many scholars question whether or not her rhetoric can be characterized as feminist. Barbara Epstein (1981: 116) asserts that “by avoiding the language of feminism, she initiated discussion within the W.C.T.U. about female equality in the home and outside of it.” In this way, Willard was a savvy social movement leader who recognized what would resonate with potential constituents and current members and what would alienate them. “Willard’s more circuitous suffrage argument, focusing primarily on home protection and the benefits of suffrage for the nation, appealed to the wide range of women who perceived a grave threat to themselves and their children, their homes and communities from male drunkenness. As she presented it, the ballot was no radical demand; rather, it was a powerful means to counter this threat” (Gifford and Slagell 2007: 18). According to Willard and other suffrage leaders, the right to vote was a way for women to bring their feminine perspective to the arena of politics.

Hewitt and McCammon (2004) identify three frames within the suffrage movement: the justice frame, societal reform frame, and the home protection frame. Although the authors describe the home protection frame and the societal reform frame as more conservative in its view of gender roles, they distinguish between the two. “The reform and home protection frames differed in one
important respect. While the home protection frame firmly maintained women’s place in the private domestic sphere, the reform frame invited women to use their unique attributes to enter the public sphere” (Hewitt and McCammon 2004: 151). It may seem odd that such a conservative frame was used to gain support for a radical cause until you realize that the emphasis is on the home, which women were reminded not abandon. Although I consider scholars’ hesitance to use the term “feminist” to identify Willard’s rhetoric I choose to use this label for the three Presidents in my analysis.

The integration of the temperance and suffrage issues was not established until Willard’s presidency. Annie Wittenmeyer, the first president of the W.C.T.U. (1874-1879) and the president who preceded Frances Willard, did not want the organization to include suffrage as part of the W.C.T.U.’s agenda. Wittenmeyer and Willard differed in that Wittenmeyer wanted the W.C.T.U. to be a single-issue organization while Willard wanted to ally the organization with other social reform movements at the time (Gusfield 1963: 4, 76). “The struggle between Willard and Wittenmeyer reflected the social biases and ideologies of conservatism and progressivism” (Gusfield 1963: 77). While the W.C.T.U. is known for its focus on temperance, the organization recognized that one way to achieve prohibition was to extend women’s influence from the private sphere into the public sphere. According to Willard, the best way to achieve this goal was through suffrage. This was a natural alliance because many of the W.C.T.U.’s leaders and members were active in both movements each which had its origins in the Protestant church. And it was successful because “the mammoth and powerful Woman’s Christian Temperance union of the 1870s and 1880s developed out of Frances Willard’s creative efforts to synthesize the militance and political outlook of women’s rights with the traditional values and intense loyalties of women’s culture” (Dubois 1998: 46).
Whether scholars more than a hundred years later consider the W.C.T.U. a feminist organization may or may not be congruent with the organization’s own self-identity. Its support of the suffrage movement can be considered feminist in itself. “The support the W.C.T.U. gave to the Woman’s movement had two important consequences. It established a critical posture toward the status quo and it identified the organization as one dedicated to progress and the future, rather than upholding the traditions of the past” (Gusfield 1963: 90). As I mentioned earlier the W.C.T.U. did not support the suffrage movement until Frances Willard became President. According to Ella Boole, Willard “sensed the power of organized womanhood and put it to work” (1926). Willard even supported women receiving “equal pay for equal work” (1929). As a testament, Ella Boole identified Willard as having a strong belief in equality, which doubtless influenced the members, and particularly presidents, who followed her.

“Miss Willard was much interested in removing all limitations on the service of women in the church as elsewhere. In fact, her belief in woman’s equality in the home, the church, and the state, was one of the issues on which she was elected president of the National WCTU here in Indianapolis in 1879” (1929).

Over the years, presidents described the influence of the W.C.T.U. on women as the “awakening of American womanhood” (1924) and “aroused womanhood” (1926).

**Maternalist frame**

The most frequently used frame by far was the home protection frame which was derived from Frances Willard’s involvement in the suffrage cause indicating direct diffusion across social movements. Frances Willard is one of the most well-known leaders in the temperance movement. She served as a leader in various temperance organizations and chapters of the W.C.T.U. before becoming President of the national W.C.T.U. in 1879. She presided over the W.C.T.U. until her death in 1898. In 1876 Willard attended a meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Women and heard a speech given by Letitia Youmans, a temperance leader from
Canada. Willard adopted the “Home Protection” slogan and first used it when addressing the Association for the Advancement of Women in Philadelphia in 1876. This then became the dominant frame in the W.C.T.U. promoted to support the suffrage movement, which can definitely be described as a radical cause.

Speaking in Philadelphia in 1876 before the Association for the Advancement of Women, Willard introduced the home protection frame for the first time in an address. Frances Willard explained the qualities which all women share, and which distinguish them from men:

“But, besides this primal instinct of self-preservation we have, in the same class of which I speak, another far more high and sacred—I mean the instinct of a mother’s love, a wife’s devotion, a sister’s faithfulness, a daughter’s loyalty. And now I ask you to consider earnestly the fact that none of these blessed rays of light and power from woman’s heart, are as yet brought to bear upon the rum-shop at the focus of power. They are, I know, the sweet and pleasant sunshine of our homes; they are the beams which light the larger home of social life and send their golden radiance out even into the great and busy world. But I know, and as the knowledge has grown clearer, my heart has thrilled with gratitude and hope too deep for words, that in a Republic, all these now divergent beams of light can, through that magic lens, the powerful sun-glass which we name the ballot, be made to converge upon the rum-shop in a blaze of light which shall reveal its full abominations, and a white flame of heat which, like a pitiless moxa, shall burn this cancerous excrescence from America’s fair form (Frances Willard as quoted in Gifford and Slagell 2007: 20).

Although my analysis does not focus on the rhetoric of Frances Willard, I think it is important to understand where a frame originates, especially one as dominant as the home protection frame. I relabel the home protection rhetoric as the maternalist frame in order to draw comparisons among the movements. The home protection frame was most importantly used to integrate the two issues most important to the W.C.T.U.: temperance and suffrage.
Religious frame

More so than others the religious frame seems meant to mobilize. Because of the fact that her name comes up in several frames, referencing Frances Willard seemed to be an effective symbol of mobilization.

“Together let us agitate, educate, organize and legislate, until the exalted vision of the founder of the World’s W.C.T.U., Frances E. Willard, is realized; until the Gospel of the Golden Rule of Christ is worked out in the customs of society and in the laws of every land” (1919).

The strong connection between current members of the W.C.T.U. and past members was also an effective reminder of the women who came before them.

“It is a sacred privilege to count one in the ranks of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union—to become an inheritor of its radiant past, a participant in its luminous present and a builder in its brightening future. No matter how numerous or how varied the great interests that may claim a Christian woman’s time and sympathy, she should have abundant room in her heart for the temperance reform and give to it some of her best activities” (1915).

The theme of duty and responsibility is reinvigorated in the combination of the maternalist and religious frames. According to Gordon, women were responsible for their home, their family, their church, and their country.

“Members of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union accepted from the early crusaders a legacy of faith and faithfulness. From the day they first prayed and knelt on the sanded floor of an old-time saloon an extraordinary task has challenged the home-loving, home-protecting women of this nation. For over four decades this God-given task has been ours. We have been true to its sacred obligations, patient under its daily discipline, happy in its heavy hardships, undismayed at its severest storms. Its hope, its happiness, its bigness and its blessedness have led to a consecration commensurate with its challenges. At this convention we are to consider the problem connected with the further conduct of our great, our responsible task. We have a magnificent work in an electric age. Eagerly let us grasp its inspiring opportunities” (1916).
Morality frame

During the Progressive era many of the social problems that reformers were attempting to improve were connected to morality. Temperance was a solution to several of the social problems often addressed by reformers. “The heart of the doctrine of Temperance lay in the manner in which it coupled economic and social success with moral virtue. The theme of uplifting the underdog through drinking reform is a major one in the Temperance literature of this period” (Gusfield 1963: 81).

According to the W.C.T.U., women’s role was seen as a great responsibility, power, and expansion of roles. This expansion of roles allowed women to extend their influence outside of the home.

“This is an extraordinary assemblage of elect women! It is not only a wonderful fulfillment of prophecy, but it is also a blessed and hopeful fore-gleam of the glad day when in every land the legalized saloon shall be outlawed and women, ‘in whose hands are the conservative and moral forces of the world,’ shall have the power to destroy the evils which corrupt the nations and bring untold misery to thousands of homes” (1906).

It may not be surprising, though, that this responsibility given to middle-class women could lead to judgment of other groups in society—men and members of the lower and upper social classes.

“Temperance advocates assumed that the drinkers should be converted to the modes of life of the middle class, respectable citizen. The assertion that Temperance is morally right and that it is a way to middle class membership is taken for granted. Not only is Temperance legitimate to the abstainer, it is dominant in society and worthwhile for others to copy. It is in this way that the Temperance worker could see himself as bringing about a solution to social problems without fundamental changes in the economic or social arrangements. What could be done for the poor, the downtrodden, and the underprivileged was conceived in status terms, as methods to improve his morality. This was the first stage in economic welfare. It was presented in terms which advocated a change in customs rather than a change in the distributional systems or in the political structure” (Gusfield 1963: 82-83)

As with the feminist frame, the maternalist rhetoric minimized the distinction between the public and private spheres when it came to the issue of morality.
“We still insist upon a single standard of morals for men and women, and will continue to emphasize the existence of nature’s inexorable decree that the laws of morality are identical for the two sexes, and this truth must be recognized, if the health and vigor of the nation is to be maintained. We continue to emphasize the need of wise instruction of children; the enlightenment of men and women as to the results of immorality and the upholding of the highest ideals of purity both within the home and in society” (1908).

As those who define, control, and enforce morality women had the power to influence not only the country but the rest of the world as well.

“The mission of the white ribbon women is to organize the motherhood of the world for the peace and purity, the protection and exaltation of its homes. We must send forth a clear call to our sisters across the seas and to our brothers nonetheless. We must be no longer hedged about by the artificial boundaries of states and nations. We must utter as women what great and good men long ago declared as their watchword: ‘The whole world is my parish, and to do good my religion’” (1921).

Regardless of whether or not it was one of the W.C.T.U.’s goals, the organization’s combination of maternalist and morality frames was able to justify the expansion of women’s experiences, ranging from the acceptability of women participating in activities outside of the home to the right to vote.

**Patriotic frame**

The patriotic frame aligned one’s love of country with one’s love of the home and family. “This is in some degree indicative of the progress that is making toward the emancipation of woman from everything that unjustly deprives her of her God-given rights and opportunities—opportunities for better serving home, community, and country” (1902). According to the principles of the W.C.T.U., women were expected to be patriots as well as mothers, wives, sisters, church-goers, and active members of their community.

“In this crucial time of a stupendous world crisis it is peculiarly fitting that our unit, representing half a million patriots, should assemble for its forty-fourth annual convention in the city of Washington. Side by side with Old Glory, gleam our banners with the sacrificial motto, “For God and Home and Every Land.” For forty years a
mighty host of home-loving women in our republic with untiring energy and patriotic devotion have wrought marvelous things for the material and spiritual advancement of our own and other lands. We praise God for the prohibition victories rising Phoenix-like from war’s awful gloom and overwhelming anxiety. The psychology of good cheer is well understood by our brave, patriotic women” (1917).

This love and protection is seen not only as a choice but also as a responsibility:

“This is the opportunity for the average citizen to get into the fight. To every man and woman in the United States there is personal responsibility for helping our country to get the full benefit from the prohibition law. Everyone has the opportunity to support the law by personal observance of its prohibitions through being a total abstainer from intoxicating liquors, by establishing these same standards in his home, and supporting these standards in his own community, in the state, and in the nation. Having the opportunity begets the responsibility” (1930).

The W.C.T.U. did not preach responsibility that only benefited the country as a whole but also one which promoted individual rights for citizens of the country.

“The worst foe of democracy is the liquor traffic. Arrayed against this colossal wrong and united for the triumph of democracy, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union may well adopt this new slogan: “Patriotism and Prohibition, Now and Forever, One and Inseparable” (1917).

Similarly, Ella Boole, asserted that the creation of a nation of respectable and patriotic citizens began in the home.

“Happily for America and the whole world, women of sterling character and a civic conscience, women whose first concern is the building of a nation with better manners, purer laws—women dedicated to work for a warless world, women of the home, the school and the church are raising the quality as well as the quantity of the voters who, because of a seething desire in their very souls, cannot forget, on any election day, the sacred privilege afforded them” (1924).

Again, while women’s feminine characteristics are not directly contrasted to men’s masculine characteristics, the allusion is that this particular responsibility to the nation is not one that men could perform. It is difficult to determine whether the elevation of motherhood is an advantage or disadvantage for women. In one way it is the recognition that women can make a valuable
contribution to society. At the same it inevitably associates women’s role with the private sphere.

Combining the feminist and patriotic frames, Anna Gordon indicated the influence that women could have on the country. She attributed suffrage with serving the most important institutions in society according to the W.C.T.U.: the home, school, and church.

“Woman suffrage is coming! There is no valid argument against it. It will exalt the home, the school, the church, social and civic service. It will overthrow the saloon, the brothel, the gambling den, vicious and political rings. It will give the nation just what it needs—good, sound, sensible mothering! Good, chivalrous, patriotic men are realizing the vital need of woman’s work in the larger home—the Nation” (1915).

According to Gordon, women’s noble responsibility was to mother her children as well as her country. And patriotic men supported this role for women!

**Racist frame**

In contrast to Margaret Sanger, W.C.T.U. Presidents rarely used a racist frame and when they did it was not as harsh as the eugenic frame, but still addressed the threat of immigrants. Stevens’ comment is a stereotype of immigrants.

“We should remember that comparatively few of the million immigrants who have come to our shores during the year bring with them temperance ideas and total abstinence habits. The temperance reform has great obstacles to overcome and it is well for us to consider how much worse the conditions would be but for the work of the great army of temperance people who are heroically battling for the complete overthrow of the liquor traffic and we of the W.C.T.U. are sure of ultimate victory. How soon depends upon our faith, our courage, our steadfastness and our holy determination” (1910).

While not only judging immigrants, Stevens also substantiates Gusfield’s (1963) categorization of the W.C.T.U. as a coercive reform movement. The organization saw its members as saviors who were performing a great moral duty for the United States. Gordon transformed Stevens’ desire to reform immigrants and instead blamed them for the country’s dependence on the liquor industry and the alcoholism of the individual. Gordon asserted that “The Eighteenth Amendment to the
national constitution, to go into effect in January, 1920, will free our twentieth century
civilization from its greatest enemy—the un-American liquor traffic. Disclosures of
Congressional investigating committees reveal the fact that from the beginning the liquor traffic
in this country has been of alien and autocratic origin” (1919).

**Frame balancing and frame reinforcing**

While the paternalist, patriotic, and religious frames were most common as single frames, how
the frames were used in combination with others is more important (See Table 5.3). All three
W.C.T.U. Presidents invoked a total of four balancing combinations, all of which contained the
feminist frame, and no liberal reinforcing combinations because the feminist frame was the only
liberal frame in their repertoire. The Presidents also used a total of ten conservative reinforcing
combinations. I only excluded one combination from the analysis—the feminist-racist
combination because it was never used by any of the Presidents.

Ella Boole used the feminist-maternalist and feminist-religious balancing combinations equally as
often as the used the patriotic-morality reinforcing combination—each accounted for 15.0% of
Boole’s total frame combinations. Because it was Lillian M.N. Stevens’ most popular frame
combination (16.3%), I discuss the feminist-maternalist balancing combination and then the
feminist-religious balancing combination. I do not discuss any of Anna Gordon’s balancing
combinations because the top two most common frame combinations she used were both
reinforcing. I then consider the reinforcing frame combination most often invoked by each
President: the religious-morality combination for Stevens (11.3%), the patriotic-religious frame
for Gordon (22.4%), and the patriotic-morality combination for Boole (15.0%).

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Feminist-maternalist balancing combination

What characterizes many of the early women’s movements—suffrage, temperance, birth control—is the tension between the private and public spheres. According to separate spheres rhetoric, women’s and men’s spheres should remain separate—women in the private sphere and men in the public sphere. Women’s activism, beginning with the suffrage and temperance movements, gave women the opportunity to participate in life outside the home in an acceptable way. “My hypothesis is that the significance of the woman suffrage movement rested precisely on the fact that it bypassed women’s oppression within the family, or private sphere, and demanded instead her admission to citizenship, and through it admission to the public arena” (DuBois 1998: 31). Ideally, in the public sphere, women’s social roles should not be dictated by her familial roles.

Somehow, the W.C.T.U. was able to define women’s social position in both spheres as complementary and equally important to society. “Suffragists accepted women’s ‘special responsibility’ for domestic activity but refused to concede that it prohibited them from participation in the public sphere” (DuBois 1998: 34). In opposition, Lillian Stevens argued that women’s role in the home naturally extended outside the home into other institutions in society.

“All right-minded people agree that home is the citadel of woman’s influence and power. Since so much that is vital centers in the home and radiates from it, women, whether they will or not, are in active and close touch with that which goes on outside the home—in the schools, the church, in society, and the state” (1907).

This characteristic of the private sphere imbuing women with influence and power helped to make the transition of women into the public sphere more palatable to society at the turn of the century. It is also implied that women would not abandon the private sphere for the public sphere—that because of their influence and power, they could do both!
DuBois (1998) argues that the W.C.T.U. endorsed suffrage so that women could use it to protect the home. Both Stevens’ and Boole’s assertions provide support DuBois’ (1998) argument before and after women won the right to vote.

“As temperance women, we desire the right of franchise because we believe we could, thus armed, deal more effectually with the liquor problem, and the fact that the liquor element is always opposed to woman’s suffrage furnishes ample proof that we are right in our belief. Those who think that women should have equal opportunity with men in the medical field have reason to rejoice as little by little the barriers built up by custom, prejudice and superstition are being swept away. Those who believe in woman’s equality in the church may rejoice as one woman after another is being elected as a delegate to the general conference of the Methodist church with no possibility of her being turned away because she is a woman. Those who believe in the equality of women in governmental affairs may well rejoice as they read the statements of fair-minded men living in those communities and states where the ballot with all of its responsibility has been granted to women. These are but a few of the encouraging prophecies of that better time towards which Christian civilization is leading” (1903).

In order to make women’s activism outside of the home acceptable to the larger society and to women themselves, the impetus for their transition from the private sphere into the public sphere had to be their domestic role.

“We congratulate the state of Minnesota on having had the services of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union for fifty years. The homes are better, the children better trained and better protected because of this woman’s organization and there is a strong public sentiment for law observance because of the seedsowing of the years. This is not all however for the reflux influence upon the women themselves has been far-reaching. Because of association with the WCTU, women have had higher ideals of womanhood, have accepted their responsibilities as mothers with greater seriousness of purpose, have learned foundation principles of government which have helped them to use the ballot intelligently for public betterment” (1927).

“Unlike the woman suffrage movement, the W.C.T.U. took as its starting point woman’s position within the home…As the W.C.T.U. developed, its concerns went beyond the family to include the equality of community life, but its standard for nonfamilial relations remained the family and the moral values women had developed within it. The W.C.T.U. spoke to women in the language of their domestic roles” (Dubois 1998: 38). While both movements achieved success in the 20th
century, because it remained “[a]nchored in the private realm, the W.C.T.U. became the mass movement that nineteenth-century suffragism could not” (Dubois 1998: 39).

**Feminist-religious balancing combination**

Suffrage was viewed by women in the W.C.T.U. as a God-given right. Stevens pointed out that “This is in some degree indicative of the progress that is making toward the emancipation of woman from everything that unjustly deprives her of her God-given rights and opportunities—opportunities for better serving home, community, and country” (1902). From these reformers’ perspective, there was no question that suffrage was imperative and that women required this right in order to carry out their maternal and Christian duties. Once women had the right to vote Gordon concluded that “Today, with Christian courage, and panoplied with the political power of the ballot, we boldly defy our mighty, determined and relentless foe” (1921). Although Gordon emphasized the importance of the ballot for women she also added that their additional source of power is derived from their religiosity. Later in 1929 Boole celebrated the numerous options for women’s political participation and organizational involvement.

“The National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union has completed fifty-five years of activity centralized about the temperance reform. It began as a total abstinence society. Its membership was made up of Christian women whose love of home prompted them to take an active part in the protection of the home. It was a woman’s organization, managed and carried on by women in a day when women’s organizations were few. Now women’s organizations are numberless, and while there have been changes in methods of work to keep pace with the changing times, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union still maintains its singleness of purpose—the destruction of the liquor traffic” (1929).

While the suffrage movement may have opened the doors for women to enter the public sphere their participation was not always welcome. Boole is right to give credit to the W.C.T.U. for opening the doors even wider to opportunities outside of the home that were considered appropriate for women.
Religious-morality reinforcing combination

From Stevens’ simple description of intemperance as “a spiritual as well as a moral curse” (1907) we can see that the two frames ideologically fit together. Stevens’ repeatedly identified the church as an integral part of the temperance movement’s fight to preserve morality. “Thus it has come to pass that there is a mighty warfare between the vilest financial trust the world has ever known, and the great company of men and women who through the church, the temperance societies, and other organized measures, and as individuals also, are working for a purer moral atmosphere, for better habits of living, for the rights of children, for the ennobling of men, and for the uplifting of women” (1912). Stevens gave credit to the (Protestant) church for being one of the mechanisms through which individuals interested in civic and moral issues could become involved in temperance work. “While the church and its direct allies are preaching temperance from a moral and a spiritual standpoint, the social and commercial importance of total abstinence is widely recognized, not only by employers of labor, but by all intelligent, well-informed, people who are interested in public welfare” (1912).

Patriotic-religious reinforcing combination

For members of the W.C.T.U. Christianity, patriotism and religion were closely intertwined. The reinforcing combination mobilized women by reminding her that it was her duty as a Christian woman to participate in the W.C.T.U.

“To be a Christian citizen today—to help younger women to develop and ripen in the golden sunshine of Christian civilization is a consummation devoutly to be wished and is a necessary fine art in the complex school of life. The close and constant study and practice of this fine art of Christian citizenship, dear comrades, is essential to the stability and growth of our local unions, and will give us added power for our greater task ahead” (1924).

According to Stevens, women’s influence was evidenced by her multiple roles: mother, W.C.T.U. member, churchwoman, American citizen. Additionally, these roles were
characterized as having a spiritual quality.

“On my office desk beside my Bible is a package of letters encircled with a white ribbon. Letters written by the state presidents near the close of this convention year, telling of WCTU plans, efforts and achievements in their respective states. These letters constitute a volume which I believe represents more of love to God, love for home, love for country, more of self-sacrificing work, unselfish devotion, and glorious realization than does any other record of the year, unless it be the unwritten story of mother love, of love bestowed directly upon those entrusted to the mother—that love which is akin to Divinity” (1909).

The Presidents used the religious principles of their Protestant faith as evidence of the church’s support of woman’s suffrage.

“If Church membership is a symbol of righteousness and goodness it would be helpful to civic life to give that section of the Church which comprises two-thirds of its membership an opportunity to express itself on all points of great general interest. If criminal statistics have any significance, it would be well to give that sex which constitutes less than one-twentieth of the prisoners, an opportunity to vote on questions relating to governmental affairs. From this viewpoint, woman’s ballot should be welcomed by all those who desire to have purer manners and better laws, and it should be feared by none, except by evil-doers” (1908).

W.C.T.U. Presidents were adept at justifying their right to vote by citing women’s inherent religiosity and morality. This argument successfully combined essentialism and separate spheres rhetoric. They knew that it would be difficult for anti-suffrage individuals to question the legitimacy of these qualities which were associated with femininity. Gordon echoed this argument by pointing out that women were interested in issues outside of the home because they were intricately connected to the private sphere. This gave them the opportunity to further argue that women’s knowledge of matters related to the home and the family put her in a position to bring a more moral perspective to politics.

“Paramount issues that today throb through the press and deeply concern the home, the church, the school, the community and politics are closely interrelated with the lofty ideals that brought into being the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. These living issues have a vital bearing on the national and international enthronement of our basic principles. Let us increase our educational pace until every member of our heaven-born organization is alert to the tremendous significance of these issues, intelligent as to their background and progress, and fearless in their systematic promotion” (1925).
Gordon addressed members and reminded them of what should be important to them and activated them to educate those in the organization so that they may presumably be better prepared to vote in order to further the W.C.T.U.’s goals.

**Patriotic-morality reinforcing combination**

Due to Boole’s Presidency coinciding with Prohibition, the patriotic-morality combination focused on the enforcement of Prohibition. Her arguments outlined an us-them rhetoric that distinguished between those who followed the law and those who did not. This placed those who were patriotic citizens and true Americans in opposition to those who were unpatriotic citizens and un-American.

> “Every patriotic citizen ought to ask himself the question, ‘Am I helping or hindering?’ Who are the helpers? The temperance organizations which stress law observance and are carrying on campaigns of education in support of law enforcement; the churches which, by resolutions supported by the private lives of their members, are rendering moral support to the whole prohibition movement; Federal and State prohibition officers who are faithfully performing the duties of their office, often at personal risk and at financial loss; newspapers that publish the facts about the benefits of prohibition; patriotic citizens who obey the law because they believe it and are prepared to defend it against false propaganda; the physician who limits the amount and number of his prescriptions of distilled spirits to actual necessity and warns his patients against the use of impure liquor for beverage purposes, and the home prescription of distilled spirits; the college authorities and alumni who set the example of law observance and insist that the opportunities afforded by educational institutions involve emphasis on character and good citizenship” (1927).

It is ambiguous why Boole emphasized the importance of being a law-abiding citizen, particularly when it came to Prohibition, to those in the organization who had participated in the effort to get the amendment passed. It is possible that Boole was attempting to encourage W.C.T.U. members to individually ensure that the law was enforced. She extended her definition of a patriotic citizen as one who was a temperate and law-abiding citizen to one who supported other reform measures that would lead to national improvements.
“There are great numbers of people who have never cost the Federal or State Government anything through violation of its laws because they go about their business as upright citizens, generally obedient to the moral code and without in any way violating it. We believe they are in the majority and it is these people who are contributing to the greatness of America. They are ready to contribute to the expense of the government for constructive improvements. They urge more and better schools, better roads, improved transportation, purchase of airports, good housing, better marketing conditions, hygienic labor environment, hospitals and childcare, all of which increase the prosperity of the nation and improve social conditions. These people are adding to the wealth of the nation. On the other hand, those who refuse to obey the laws of the country are a financial burden upon the country for the maintenance of prisons, jails, penitentiaries, homes for the feeble-minded, many of whom are the result of inherited alcoholism” (1928).

The last part of Boole’s statement sounds not unlike some of Sanger’s eugenic rhetoric in which she blames the poor, uneducated and “feeble-minded” for all of the nation’s social problems. To all of the same social problems that Sanger lists and which she similarly attributes to genetic abnormalities, Boole adds alcoholism.

**Conclusions**

It was sometimes difficult to separate many of the frames used by W.C.T.U. Presidents because they blended them together, particularly the feminist and maternalist frames. Love of God, country, and home were connected and each was implied by the other. At the same time, McCammon and Campbell (2002) emphasize the influence of suffrage rhetoric on the W.C.T.U. as a result of the formation of coalitions between local organizations initiated by the W.C.T.U.

While it was progressive that the organization supported suffrage, much of the reasoning behind it was based on a more conservative view that women deserved the right to vote in order to serve God, as well as their county, home, and community. Using essentialist arguments it was thought that women would be able to bring their unique perspective to politics because of their social position as women and mothers and because they were considered to be more moral than men.

While the W.C.T.U. advocated women’s entry into the public sphere the organization implied
that their new role should be used by women as a method of social control to guide the morals and politics of the country.
Table 5.1 Keywords/phrases used to identify each frame, W.C.T.U.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Keywords/Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>Suffrage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emancipation of women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expansion of societal roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equality of men and women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist (home protection)</td>
<td>Home, motherhood,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>Morality or purity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>Protestant, church, God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic</td>
<td>Patriotic, country, citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist</td>
<td>Eugenics, race, and/or immigration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.2  Frequency of single frames, W.C.T.U., 1899-1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1899-1913 Lillian M.N. Stevens</th>
<th>1914-1925 Anna Gordon</th>
<th>1926-1933 Ella Boole</th>
<th>Total across time periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>33 (19.8%)</td>
<td>21 (12.5%)</td>
<td>14 (18.7%)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % of liberal frames</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist (home protection)</td>
<td>31 (18.6%)</td>
<td>40 (23.8%)</td>
<td>16 (21.3%)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>33 (19.8%)</td>
<td>17 (10.1%)</td>
<td>12 (16.0%)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>32 (19.2%)</td>
<td>43 (25.6%)</td>
<td>16 (21.3%)</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic</td>
<td>24 (14.4%)</td>
<td>44 (26.2%)</td>
<td>15 (20.0%)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist</td>
<td>14 (8.4%)</td>
<td>3 (1.8%)</td>
<td>2 (2.7%)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % of conservative frames</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for time period</td>
<td>167 (100.2%)</td>
<td>168 (100.0%)</td>
<td>75 (100.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
Lillian M.N. Stevens (1899-1913) = 15 presidential addresses
Anna Gordon (1914-1925) = 9 presidential addresses
Ella Boole (1926-1933) = 6 presidential addresses
Table 5.3  Frequency of balancing and reinforcing frame combinations, W.C.T.U., 1899-1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1899-1913 Lillian Stevens</th>
<th>1914-1925 Anna Gordon</th>
<th>1926-1933 Ella Boole</th>
<th>Total across time periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balancing combinations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-maternalist</td>
<td>13 (16.3%)</td>
<td>8 (9.4%)</td>
<td>3 (15.0%)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-patriotic</td>
<td>7 (8.8%)</td>
<td>8 (9.4%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-religious</td>
<td>8 (10.0%)</td>
<td>5 (5.9%)</td>
<td>3 (15.0%)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-morality</td>
<td>7 (8.8%)</td>
<td>6 (7.1%)</td>
<td>2 (10.0%)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total balancing combinations</strong></td>
<td><strong>35 (43.9%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>27 (31.8%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>8 (40.0%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reinforcing combinations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist-patriotic</td>
<td>4 (5.0%)</td>
<td>14 (16.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist-religious</td>
<td>6 (7.5%)</td>
<td>8 (9.4%)</td>
<td>2 (10.0%)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist-morality</td>
<td>5 (6.3%)</td>
<td>3 (3.5%)</td>
<td>2 (10.0%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic-morality</td>
<td>5 (6.3%)</td>
<td>2 (2.4%)</td>
<td>3 (15.0%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic-religious</td>
<td>7 (8.8%)</td>
<td>19 (22.4%)</td>
<td>1 (5.0%)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious-morality</td>
<td>9 (11.3%)</td>
<td>8 (9.4%)</td>
<td>2 (10.0%)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist-patriotic</td>
<td>5 (6.3%)</td>
<td>1 (1.2%)</td>
<td>2 (10.0%)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist-religion</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
<td>1 (1.2%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist-maternalist</td>
<td>1 (1.3%)</td>
<td>1 (1.2%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist-morality</td>
<td>1 (1.3%)</td>
<td>1 (1.2%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total reinforcing combinations</strong></td>
<td><strong>45 (56.6%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>58 (68.4%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 (60.0%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total combinations</strong></td>
<td>80 (100.5%)</td>
<td>85 (100.2%)</td>
<td>20 (100.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The following combinations were excluded because their frequency equaled zero:
Feminist-racist
Percentages in the preceding two tables may not equal exactly 100% because of rounding.
Chapter 6: The Women’s Ku Klux Klan: Independent Organization or Auxiliary to the Ku Klux Klan?

The WKKK was chartered on June 10, 1923 in Little Rock, Arkansas and was initially created by the KKK to be its auxiliary. “It is not accurate, however, to portray the WKKK as a dependent auxiliary of the men’s order. Klanswomen created a distinct ideology and political agenda that infused the Klan’s racist and nativist goals with ideas of equality between white Protestant women and men…But women and men of the Klan often found themselves in contention as women changed from symbols to actors in the Klan” (Blee 1991: 2). The WKKK identified itself as an organization “by women, for women, and of women that no man is exploiting for his individual gain” (Blee 1991: 28). The organization’s charter membership was around 125,000 and increased to 250,000 in the first four months (Blee 1991).

According to the Imperial Commander of the WKKK, Robbie Gill Comer, the organization’s accomplishments benefited not only the community but also the women themselves:

“We have aided in many and vital ways in the advancement of American womanhood. We have educated Protestant women as to their responsibility for the maintenance of free government, and as to the ways in which they can make most effective their desire for such maintenance. We have furnished them the opportunity, by the strength of organization, to improve the communities in which they live, and have exerted a force for better government, both local and National, in every community in which one of our units has been established.”65

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65 Address: Third Imperial Klonvokation, June 1931, reprinted in The Kourier Magazine, August 1931. 114
Comer became Imperial Commander in 1924 and spoke throughout the 1920s. She gave a final konvocation speech in 1931 but by 1928 the WKKK’s strength in numbers had begun to drastically deteriorate with membership based mostly in the South (Blee 1991).

While male and female members of the Klan may have agreed that women should be enfranchised, they disagreed on why it was necessary and what they hoped it would accomplish. “The men’s position was instrumental, intended to augment the political muscle of white Protestant men with a cadre of enfranchised female followers. The WKKK, however, insisted that women needed the vote for two reasons: to maintain a moral white Protestant nation and to ensure women’s rights” (Blee 1991: 51). Comer asserted that women in the Klan had brought their unique perspective to politics, were moral voters than men, and would not allow men to influence their vote.

“Strong and vigorous leaders, vigilant and capable, are being developed among the women in both parties. Probably for the first time in the history of the world woman will hold the balance of power in the exercise of the national franchise. She has proven that she is not an echo of masculine policies but that she possesses a mind of her own, and a keen sense of governmental requirements that will not readily be deceived by the sophistries of political chicanery.”

Robbie Gill Comer’s collective action frames

I categorize Comer’s feminist frame as liberal, and the morality, maternalist, Protestant, patriotic, Roman Catholic threat, and racist frames as conservative. Within Comer’s multi-framing strategy, 30.2% of all frame mentions were liberal (which consisted of only the feminist frame) and 69.9% were conservative frame mentions. The feminist (30.2%) and patriotic (21.9%) frames were the two individual frames most often used by Comer (See Table 6.1). Because Comer used the racist frame so infrequently I limit its discussion to the diffusion of the nativist master frame in Chapter 7.

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Feminist frame

We might not expect that the Imperial Commander of the Women’s Ku Klux Klan would use a feminist frame. But Comer repeatedly emphasized women’s equality with men and the importance of the ballot for women to expand that equality. “The time has come when, in the United States, a woman may order her own life, so long as she orders it virtuously, without incurring the disapprobation of society as a whole. She possesses rights at least equal to those possessed by man and in some respects, greater, because in giving her the same political rights that are given to men, society has not seen fit to take from her certain privileges and protections which she has long enjoyed.” Comer’s assertion is simultaneously and essentialist at the same time—she advocated women’s equality while at the same time the preservation of women’s special treatment. Although Comer did not specify what these “privileges and protections” it is likely that she was referring to work limitations and protections which she supported and which were not outlined as part of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (Blee 1991).

Comer was inconsistent in her use of feminist and essentialist language and some of her positions are remarkably radical for such a conservative organization. While she thought that women should not give up those undefined “rights and privileges” accorded to them because of their sex, she also praised woman’s suffrage as having removed women from their inferior status in society.

“The voting power that she has so recently acquired is but a detail of what changes have come to her, although a most important detail and one which should—and will—make for the improvement of woman’s new freedom from her ancient handicaps and inhibitions. A number of things have occurred to give her this freedom that she is learning to enjoy and trying to learn to exercise properly. Some of them have been political, some of them have been social, more of them have been economic.”

67 Address: Fourth Biennial Klondykeation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
68 Address: Fourth Biennial Klondykeation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
Similar to the W.C.T.U., Comer was concerned with training women to use their new freedom—the vote—wisely. For both organizations, it is unclear if this is for women’s own benefit or for the benefit of the organization. Is it that women needed to be socialized to think politically or to vote according to the recommendations of the W.C.T.U. or WKKK? Comer used words like “handicaps” and “inferiority” which sound convincingly feminist. “Always, in American life, the woman has had a strength and influence greater than in most of the other countries of the earth. She, in pioneering days, was man’s assistant and helpmeet. She has continued to be his companion, his friend, his adviser and his associate. Freed of the fetters of the centuries—of that age-old heritage of inferiority which narrows the vision and dwarfs the soul—she will mean more than ever in the nation’s life.”69 Comer identified women as men’s “helpmeet” multiple times in her public communications, most of which were speeches given at KKK events or in The Kourier Magazine, which was a Klan publication. In both cases, men were in her audience. It is interesting that Comer would make these claims when there was disagreement between the WKKK and KKK over the purpose of the women’s organization (Blee 1991).

While Klan members saw the women’s organization as their auxiliary, members of the WKKK saw their own organization as autonomous and with its own distinct goals. Neither organization was permitted to have knowledge of the other organization’s membership nor attend the other organization’s meetings (Blee 1991). While this does not necessarily affirm the WKKK’s autonomy it does at least demonstrate that there were boundaries between the organizations. As I will argue later, Comer may have emphasized women’s role as men’s partners and their rise from inferiority to assert the WKKK’s independence from the men’s organization.

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69 Address: Fourth Biennial Klonvocation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
Maternalist frame

Much of Comer’s maternalist framing is sometimes difficult to differentiate from her feminist framing which illustrates how important balancing was in her multi-framing strategy. Comer used maternalist rhetoric to elevate women’s social status even if it was in the private sphere. She asserted that it was women’s responsibility to preserve the race for God and the country. “Woman is half the created kingdom of mankind, which is of the Kingdom of God. He made mankind in His own image—male and female created He them. That they should be fruitful and multiply was the divine command, and each sex has its share in obeying the mandate, with women the mothers of the race and theirs the duty to exercise care and watchfulness over the sons and daughters of the race during the years when character is formed, if ever it is going to be.”\(^7^0\) Much of her maternalist rhetoric advocated women’s position as men’s partners. “In all matters where the community interests of man and woman—the family interest—is uppermost, they should both assist from their knowledge and wisdom, in the solution of the problems that arise. It is the right of woman that she should be a partner in the joys and the sorrows, the happiness and the disappointments, the prosperity and the adversity that come to her husband.”\(^7^1\) For Comer, being partners with men was not restricted to just the home. “We feel like ours is a mighty task and a big responsibility, indeed. We pledge our loyal comradeship in the solving of the nation’s problems, the churches’ problems, the homes’ problems—and we lay beside men’s votes and aspirations, our own. We dedicate that strength which no man dares question, that power which is dignified, but nevertheless to be reckoned with—woman’s strength, woman’s power.”\(^7^2\) Although it was important for women to expand their roles into the public sphere, Comer emphasized that women’s first priority was as mothers.

\(^7^0\) Address: Fourth Biennial Klonvocation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
\(^7^1\) Address: Fourth Biennial Klonvocation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
\(^7^2\) Article: “American Women,” The Kourier Magazine, April 1925.
Morality frame

Comer used the morality frame as the basis for the essentialist argument that advocated women’s political participation. “Women by nature, training and environment, are more pronounced in their convictions as a rule than are men. The average woman, although she may seem insignificant to the casual observer, possesses a deep-seated sense of justice and right.” Comer emphasized the importance of women’s role as enforcers of social control because of their distinct morality. “The function of the ballot has been defined as ‘the register of the individual’s will in determining the character of social control,’ and the will of women as a whole will be registered for a better and more moral social order.” While Comer usually invoked the morality frame to give women agency, she often imbued it with a more paternalistic tone. “The white of our flag’s folds cries out for unstained purity and virtue in manhood and womanhood, and bears silent testimony that the men of the nation would rise as one to protect and keep spotless the honor and chastity of our home-builders—our women.” Comer’s argument is simple—in order for women to be the more moral sex and infuse a stronger morality into politics, their morality must be protected by men.

Protestant frame

Comer used the Protestant frame to highlight the importance of Protestantism, and religion more generally, in the lives of men and women in the Klan. According to Comer, Protestantism should be credited with women’s improved position in society.

“It is also interesting to note that wherever Protestantism is in the ascendancy, there woman is held in the highest honor and esteem. In what country, under what form of government, under what profession of Christianity is woman most honored? I unhesitatingly answer: Women are better educated, more refined and more honored in Protestant countries than anywhere else—in Protestant countries, under free governments

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74 Address: Fourth Biennial Klouvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
which are the fruits of Protestantism. Our own great America leads all nations of the earth in its recognition of woman.”

Whether or not women’s position in the United States was better than that in other countries is debatable. But if we consider that women’s participation in social movements—suffrage, temperance, and the Klan—can all be traced back to their participation in church organizations, then Comer is clearly correct. Comer also underlined the Klan’s contribution to the Protestant Church.

“The Klan has strengthened the morals of the nation, and has beyond doubt made violators of law and manipulators of crooked politics fear and tremble. This service has been of incalculable value to the entire country. The Klan has solidified the activities of Protestant Christians, and has made possible the accomplishing of results that otherwise would have been impossible. The Klan has led scores and scores of men to unite with various churches and to give their strength and support to the work of local church organizations and general church work.”

While the goal of a leader is to outline the goals and achievements of the movement, Comer credited the Klan with monitoring politics, spreading Christianity, and maintaining the social order.

**Patriotic frame**

Similar to the W.C.T.U., it is difficult to separate the Protestant and patriotic frames in the WKKK because for women in both of these organizations, Protestantism equals patriotism. Comer highlighted this in a Klonvokation address in 1926. “I am particularly happy to address both men and women, because it is so evident to us all that our work must go hand in hand if we

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are to fully realize our purposes as great National, American, Protestant Orders.”

Comer also frequently referred to the patriotism of early Americans.

“I would be less than properly grateful if I did not express to all loyal Klanswomen my full and sincere appreciation of the manner in which, in the past, they have upheld my hands. And I would be less than sufficient in faith if I did not look forward—as I do—to an even greater and more glorious future for our Order; to a vast increase in its membership from among the good Christian women of our land who shall become educated to the need of a strong Protestant militancy, so that we shall go on conserving the ideals of the Founders of America and building for the future generations which shall follow us with an ever stronger patriotism and an ever greater safety.”

According to Comer, current members of the WKKK had a responsibility to uphold and protect the ideals of patriotism and Protestantism.

**Roman-Catholic threat frame**

For members of the Klan, it was Roman Catholics who were challenging the patriotism and Protestantism of America. “Without a doubt, under the guise of religion, a great conspiracy against liberty and truth is fostered by Romanism. It is fidelity to the highest obligations and not religious animosity that leads us to tear away the mask and show the diabolic face which threatens our country’s welfare, the progress of mankind and the extermination of Protestantism.”

Much of the Klan’s rhetoric on the Roman Catholic threat is typical of most right-wing movements—the fear and resistance of social change. The dramatic immigration of Southern and Eastern Europeans between 1880 and 1920 is a perfect impetus for this fear.

“I am moved to believe that the major reason too many Protestants fail to understand that Roman Catholicism will in the years to come so gnaw upon the vitals of Protestants in America as to break down faith lines and little by little beat it back to a place where it will not have the courage to withstand the onslaught of the Romanists of America is because they do not know the plans and purposes of the Roman Catholic Church. If they have been merely told about them, they have failed to grasp the importance and to believe

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78 Address: Third Biennial Klonvocation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, September 1926, published in *The Kourier Magazine*, November 1926.
79 Address: Third Imperial Klonvocation, June 1931, reprinted in *The Kourier Magazine*, August 1931.
80 Article: “Upon the Answer to These Questions Depends America’s Welfare,” *The Torch*, November 1930.
the atrocious things committed by them in the years gone by. They fail to know or believe the things that are transpiring. The facts would convince any unbiased Protestant that the Roman Catholic Church is a menace to Protestantism.\textsuperscript{81}

The WKKK and KKK were not alone in their fear of what the influx of immigrants would do to American institutions and American values. Members of both the temperance and birth control movements as well as the eugenics movement were concerned with the effects of immigration on the “quality” of America.

**Frame balancing and frame reinforcing**

When she was frame balancing, Robbie Gill Comer most often combined the feminist and patriotic frames (12.1%), while her most popular reinforcing frame combination was the patriotic-Protestant combination (18.2%) (See Table 6.2). As balancing combinations, Comer also combined the feminist and maternalist frames (10.1%) and feminist-Protestant frames (10.1%). Two additional important reinforcing combinations were the maternalist-patriotic combination which accounted for 11.1% of all frame combinations and the maternalist-morality combination which Comer used in 6.1% of all her frame combinations.

**Feminist-patriotic balancing combination**

While it might seem surprising that the leader of the WKKK would combine feminist and patriotic frames in her public communications, Comer achieved this as well, stressing that while the WKKK’s objective was to further the goals of America and the Klan, it also furthered the position of women. “We have aided in many and vital ways in the advancement of American womanhood…We have furnished them the opportunity, by the strength of organization, to improve the communities in which they live, and have exerted a force for better government, both

\textsuperscript{81} Article: “Upon the Answer to These Questions Depends America’s Welfare,” *The Torch*, November 1930.
local and National, in every community in which one of our units has been established.”82 In Comer’s opinion, members of the WKKK derived more than just a sense of accomplishment for the good works that they did, but also improved their own status as women through their participation and education in the organization. Affirming the importance of women’s vote to America, Comer stated: “Strong and vigorous leaders, vigilant and capable, are being developed among the women in both parties. Probably for the first time in the history of the world woman will hold the balance of power in the exercise of the national franchise. She has proven that she is not an echo of masculine policies but that she possesses a mind of her own, and a keen sense of governmental requirements that will not readily be deceived by the sophistries of political chicanery.”83

**Feminist-maternalist balancing combination**

Because they appear to represent such contradictory ideas, the co-occurrence of the maternalist and feminist frames was one of the most interesting combinations. In an article, Robbie Gill Comer argued that “Since the American Revolution, women have journeyed far. We have been given property rights. We have acquired a voice in the control of our children…we have been given the last boon of true equality—the equal right to make the laws and elect the officers who administer the laws.”84 Comer contended that women were using their newfound suffrage for the betterment of their children’s lives. While this is feminist in that it emphasizes the importance of women’s rights, it also hints at the fact that the issues that are most relevant to women are those concerning their children and family. Another quote illustrated this point: “With greater education, more equality of experience, with the large affairs of the world, she will become in the future, far more than she has been in the past, the partner of her husband, the adviser of her

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82 Address: Third Imperial Klonvocation, June 1931, reprinted in *The Kourier Magazine*, August 1931.
sons.” Similarly, Comer ignores women’s gains in education and entry into various professions from which she was previously barred and outlines instead the ways that suffrage and women’s new status in society will allow her to broaden her more traditional roles of mother and wife.

**Feminist-Protestant balancing combination**

Comer consistently promoted women’s roles in both the private and public sphere but she used an essentialist argument to do so. She reminded women that they were men’s partners and not subservient to them. “I see arising in the future an even better and greater and freer America, under the direction not alone of men, not alone of women, but of men and women, consecrated to the service of Almighty God. They will work together in a friendly partnership which shall utilize the special experience and wisdom of both sexes. They will cooperate to make our beloved country the happiest and best in all the world—a footstool upon earth for our Father, which is in heaven.” Regardless of whether or not she used an essentialist argument to justify women’s role as men’s partners, she at least encouraged women to participate more equally in their marriages and in their service to God and their country.

Comer also advocated women’s participation in politics and highlighted the influence that women can have in this realm. Referring to Hoover’s election, she pointed out that society had noticed the power of women’s vote.

“The leaders of both parties and political prognosticators realized from the first that in the hands of this practically new element in American politics, the women of America, rested the balance of power. They realized that in women they were confronted by a new element with which they had to deal and which they were unable to coerce or direct. Very early in the history of the suffrage movement the women demonstrated their ability to think for themselves and not to become slavish followers of those who would misdirect the affairs of the nation.”

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85 Address: Fourth Biennial Klonvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
86 Address: Fourth Biennial Klonvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
Comer credited the suffrage movement for developing women’s identity as worthy participants in the political process. “Therefore, the Protestant womanhood of American became active, qualified themselves as voters, and with a sense of duty peculiar to women they went undaunted to the polls. They cast their votes unafraid, reflecting their conscience, voting not so much for a man, a citizen, a candidate or a partisan as for the great and glorious principles that reflect the spirit and purpose of the founders of the nation, and the very genius of true Americanism.”\(^88\) At the same time she made an essentialist distinction between men and women and insinuated that women were more moral than men, would vote with more purity and honesty than men, are more immune to political propaganda than men, and are somehow better voters than men.

**Patriotic-Protestant reinforcing combination**

Comer used the language of the Klan in her idealism of what the organization termed “real Americans” and “100% Americans.” For the Klan, Americanism was so closely tied to Protestantism that they seemed to be governed by the same doctrine. “We want our citizenship to count for real Americanism and we want the ideals of the Great Teacher to control our lives and your lives, and the lives of our young people. We believe with gripping conviction that a rediscovery of Jesus Christ, and of His teachings on social, ethical, moral, spiritual and universal lines, will be the only thing that will save our nation in these days of unrest and disturbance.”\(^89\)

Much of the Klan’s, and Comer’s, rhetoric clearly distinguished between Protestants and Catholics, and even sometimes between Protestants and non-Catholics. “Protestants—and other non-Catholics who are not Protestants in the strict sense of the word, not being active members of Protestant faiths, but who are good and patriotic Americans—need to be made aware of the


menace.”\textsuperscript{90} Even when she separated the non-Catholics from the Catholics, though, there is the judgment that an individual is not a “real” Protestant if they do not practice religion. The Klan was suspicious of Catholicism because of the assumption that Catholics would be more loyal to their native country and the pope rather than the United States. “Without a doubt, under the guise of religion, a great conspiracy against liberty and truth is fostered by Romanism. It is fidelity to the highest obligations and not religious animosity that leads us to tear away the mask and show the diabolic face which threatens our country’s welfare, the progress of mankind and the extermination of Protestantism.”\textsuperscript{91} Comer admitted that the Klan feared that Catholicism would overcome Protestantism in the United States.

In other cases “the menace” or “conspiracy” that threatened the country was not named. “Ours is not only a free land, the product of a free civilization, but it is so because ours is a Christian civilization. And there have been evidences for all who have eyes to see that alien influences are altering free America—that upon some of the altars of our peculiar institutions the fires are dying down. They call for fresh fuel. They call for careful tending. There are places where they burn so low and smolderingly that they need to be almost wholly rebuilt.”\textsuperscript{92} The phrase “alien influences” was most likely meant to address the enemy as both Catholics and immigrants. “Many good Protestant women have failed to ally themselves with the Women of the Ku Klux Klan because they have not appreciated the danger that confronts America and realized the vital necessity of a movement like ours to combat it—because they have not comprehended the need of a Protestantism that is militant. Let them become fully informed, and it will follow that they

\textsuperscript{90} Address: Third Imperial Klonvocation, June 1931, published in \textit{The Kourier Magazine}, August 1931.
\textsuperscript{91} Article: “Upon the Answer to These Questions Depends America’s Welfare,” \textit{The Torch}, November 1930.
\textsuperscript{92} Address: Third Biennial Klonvocation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, September 1926, published in \textit{The Kourier Magazine}, November 1926.
will be awakened to America’s need of their help, and freely give it.”93 Although the “danger” was not clearly identified Comer demonstrated the coercive nature of the Klan. The Klan felt threatened enough to threaten others to join the organization. The Klan can be labeled as a coercive reform movement because of the fact that in many small towns in which the Klan was concentrated, individuals in the community felt that they had to join or risk being targeted by the Klan as well.

**Maternalist-patriotic reinforcing combination**

For women in the WKKK, motherhood and patriotism went hand in hand with mothers held in high esteem as those who would bear and raise the next generation. Combining the maternalist and patriotic frames, the Imperial Commander declared: “Women of America love the men of America. We believe in the things that are high and good and holy. Our homes will be kept as sanctuaries for them. Our lives will never be marred by lack of virtue. We will mother their children, share their sorrow, multiply their joys and assist them to prosper in the way of this world’s goods. In return, we expect the men to recognize our power for good over their lives, and in the nation.”94 According to Comer, the high status held by women as mothers was a responsibility that they willingly accepted for the good of their country. “Then—and since—woman taught her sons, encouraged her husband, held up the hands of her fathers, in the cause of justice and liberty. What to her are the risks and suffering necessary to save men? She forever endured risk and suffering that men may be born.”95 Again, Comer affirmed that the familial duty of motherhood was also a patriotic duty. Comer further argued that “The women are interested in the establishment and maintenance of a nation suitable for the rearing of their

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93 Address: Third Imperial Klonvocation, June 1931, published in The Kourier Magazine, August 1931.
95 Address: Third Biennial Klonvocation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, September 1926, published in The Kourier Magazine, November 1926.
children, wherein may be laid the foundation of honesty of purpose in their developing mind.”96 From Comer’s perspective, women were interested in politics in order to improve the nation for their children.

**Maternalist-morality reinforcing combination**

By reinforcing the maternalist frame with the morality frame, Comer constructed her essentialist argument and applied it to multiple national issues. She defined these issues as more relevant to women because of their role as mothers. Referring to Prohibition, Comer claimed that:

> “These matters raised inevitably a moral issue, in which women generally, and especially Protestant women, are deeply concerned and personally interested. This should be by rights their attitude toward such questions since they are that potential half of the citizenry whose divine mission it is to bear children and rear them, and give them their early training and discipline; to direct their youthful steps along the right way, to provide for their education and to mould their plastic minds into Christian character.”97

In addition to Prohibition, Comer contended that women were more moral and non-partisan voters because they had not been exposed to the evils of the public sphere as men had.

> “Women for the most part are fundamentally honest-minded. I do not wish to be understood as saying that men are not honest-minded. They are. But their long training in political affairs, their commercial and professional interests, their political alignment and their association with the business world and their loyalty to party have made some of them more or less callous to the niceties of a strict and rugged rule of righteousness. The first impulse of women is to be honest with themselves and with others, and therefore, they must necessarily be politically honest in making up their minds for whom they shall cast their votes. Because of the fact that they are mothers of the nation, they are therefore, equally concerned with Christian fathers in the establishment of conditions favorable to the proper training and environment of the coming generation, and as to what the Nation should do on moral issues.”98

Framing the moral essentialism of women was an effective strategy to mobilize women for both temperance and political involvement.

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Conclusions

From my textual analysis of Robbie Gill Comer’s public communications, it is apparent that as a leader she was able to successfully balance frames, combining the liberal feminist frame with the conservative maternalist, patriotic and Protestant frames. These combinations may be surprising to us today but Comer was able to seamlessly join them into one cohesive argument meant to mobilize women to join or remain active in the WKKK. Comer, more expectedly, reinforced the patriotic and Protestantism frames and combined the maternalist frame with both the patriotic and Protestant frames. Although reinforcing combinations (all conservative) accounted for 57.5% of all frame combinations, this proportion was not overwhelming. Comer combined liberal and conservative frames in 42.4% of all frame combinations. The feminist frame was part of every balancing combination because it was the only liberal frame in Comer’s framing repertoire.

Similar to the W.C.T.U., the prominence of the feminist frame in both Comer’s frame balancing and frame reinforcing demonstrates social movement leaders’ use of a multi-framing strategy. While Comer may have used essentialist arguments to legitimate women’s political participation, she nevertheless considered women and men as partners in the home, the community, and also the organization. While men in the KKK viewed the WKKK as an auxiliary organization, that is not how women viewed their own activism. It seems that Comer had two goals—one conservative and the other liberal. The first was to recruit women and maintain constituents in a movement that resisted social change. The second was to mobilize women to engage in political participation. In order to achieve both goals Comer attempted to help women develop a sense of personal and political efficacy by using an argument that would be more appealing to a conservative audience.
Table 6.1 Keywords/phrases used to identify frames and frequency of single frames, WKKK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Keywords/Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>58 (30.2%)</td>
<td>Equality with men&lt;br&gt;Political, economic and social freedom&lt;br&gt;Women as leaders&lt;br&gt;Women’s power and/or strength&lt;br&gt;Suffrage&lt;br&gt;Power of the ballot&lt;br&gt;Political power&lt;br&gt;Voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist</td>
<td>24 (12.5%)</td>
<td>Mothers of the race, future generations&lt;br&gt;Women as home-builders&lt;br&gt;Power of motherhood&lt;br&gt;Women as child-bearers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>13 (6.8%)</td>
<td>Moral social order&lt;br&gt;Moral issues&lt;br&gt;Against vice&lt;br&gt;Questions of right and wrong&lt;br&gt;Purity of womanhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>29 (15.1%)</td>
<td>Importance of Protestantism&lt;br&gt;Protestant America and Americans&lt;br&gt;Christians&lt;br&gt;Christian civilization&lt;br&gt;Militant Protestant women of America&lt;br&gt;Protestant womanhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic</td>
<td>42 (21.9%)</td>
<td>Rights and duties as citizens&lt;br&gt;Loyalty to country&lt;br&gt;Improvement of the country/nation&lt;br&gt;National spirit&lt;br&gt;Americanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic threat</td>
<td>22 (11.5%)</td>
<td>Influence of Rome/Catholic Church/Pope on social issues in America&lt;br&gt;Authority of Catholic Church over Catholics in America&lt;br&gt;Roman hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist</td>
<td>4 (2.1%)</td>
<td>Race&lt;br&gt;White&lt;br&gt;Immigration&lt;br&gt;Alien influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total % of liberal frames</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.2%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total % of conservative frames</strong></td>
<td><strong>69.9%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total frame mentions</strong></td>
<td><strong>192 (100.1%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.2 Frequency of balancing and reinforcing frame combinations, WKKK, 1923-1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame combinations</th>
<th>Frequency of frame combinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balancing combinations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-maternalist</td>
<td>10 (10.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-patriotic</td>
<td>12 (12.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-Protestant</td>
<td>10 (10.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-morality</td>
<td>7 (7.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-Roman Catholic threat</td>
<td>2 (2.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist-racist</td>
<td>1 (1.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total balancing combinations</strong></td>
<td><strong>42 (42.4%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reinforcing combinations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist-morality</td>
<td>6 (6.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist-patriotic</td>
<td>11 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist-Protestant</td>
<td>3 (3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist-racist</td>
<td>1 (1.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic-Protestant</td>
<td>18 (18.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic-Roman Catholic threat</td>
<td>5 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic-morality</td>
<td>3 (3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic-racist</td>
<td>3 (3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant-Roman Catholic threat</td>
<td>4 (4.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant-morality</td>
<td>2 (2.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant-racist</td>
<td>1 (1.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total reinforcing combinations</strong></td>
<td><strong>57 (57.5%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total frame combinations</strong></td>
<td><strong>99 (99.9%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

The following combinations were excluded because their frequency equaled zero:
Maternalist-Roman Catholic threat
Morality-Roman Catholic threat
Morality-racist

Percentages may not equal exactly 100% because of rounding.
Chapter 7: Diffusion Processes and Master Frames

My selection of social movement organizations is based upon the fact that there is historical evidence that suggests the demographic similarities of movement constituents as well as diffusion across these movements which resulted in considerable overlap in membership across movements. All three mobilized at the beginning of the 20th century during the Progressive era roughly spanning the period 1899-1936, focused on an issue(s) particularly relevant to women, incorporated female leadership, and were comprised of mainly female membership. Research on movement spillover and inter-movement influence has shown that it is both organizational and tactical in nature (Isaac and Christiansen 2002, Meyer and Whittier 1994), occurs through indirect and direct diffusion processes (Soule 2004), and exists within a particular cycle of protest (McAdam 1995, Tarrow 1998). Because this spillover and diffusion in some cases leads to the alignment of key frames across movements, I expect to find leaders’ use of similar master frames, specifically the nativist, feminist, and maternalist.

In this chapter I focus on my last three research questions: 3) Using Mill’s methods of agreement and difference as a guide to my choice of cases, what was similar about the leaders’ framing activities and what was different? Although there was some overlap in constituencies, at least between the W.C.T.U. and WKKK, there were major differences in movement goals. The birth control movement and temperance movements can be categorized as progressive movements because of their focus on reform and their advocacy of women’s rights, either accessibility to contraception or the right to vote, respectively. Although the WKKK promoted women’s
political participation and women’s role as men’s partners, the organization resented the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the United States. As part of the white supremacy movement, the WKKK identified societal changes, particularly immigration, as a threat to what it termed “100 Percent Americanism.” 4) How did diffusion lead to the development of common key frames, or master frames, that ideologically linked these movements? 5) How did the leaders’ use of feminist, paternalist, and nativist master frames differ and how did they converge? These are the questions that will guide my analysis of diffusion processes and the sharing of master frames.

**Processes of indirect and direct diffusion**

Soule (2004) argues that movement diffusion can be direct or indirect. Direct diffusion involves direct and frequent contact between social movement organizations. Indirect diffusion can occur when there is a “sense of shared identification between actors” or through the media (Soule 2004: 295-296). So there are two different ways that a commonality of frames could occur across the three movements. The modes of direct diffusion can include shared constituencies, shared leadership, or coalition formation (McCammon and Campbell 2002) between SMOs. With indirect diffusion movement leaders may independently borrow a variety of ideas from the larger social arena, or cultural atmosphere. Or leaders may turn to specific movements which they strongly support. Because both diffusion processes are likely to be bound within a particular protest cycle, “initiator” and “early riser” movements influence the strategies and tactics of “spin-off” and “late riser” movements and are responsible for releasing ideas into the cultural atmosphere (McAdam 1995).

While I have some evidence of indirect diffusion, I have limited evidence that there was a direct transfer of frames between these movements or between one or more of these movements and
another movement outside of my analysis, other than Sanger’s relationship with the eugenics movement and local coalitions between suffrage and W.C.T.U. organizations. The suffrage movement can be characterized as an “initiator” movement, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union as an “early riser” movement, and the birth control movement and Women’s Ku Klux Klan as “spin-off” movements. Elements of the suffrage movement diffused into both the W.C.T.U. and Sanger’s birth control SMOs. Dubois (1998) and McAmmon and Campbell (2002) argue that mutual influence existed between the suffrage movement and W.C.T.U. although the W.C.T.U. was much more interested in allying itself with and supporting the suffrage movement. Feminists were represented in Sanger’s audiences and there was social movement spillover of constituents from the suffrage movement to Sanger’s birth control organizations during the 1920s (Kennedy 1970, Chesler 1992). With both organizations having developed out of the Protestant church, it should not be surprising that W.C.T.U. members spilled over into the WKKK. While some members of the W.C.T.U. later joined the WKKK (Gusfield 1963 and Blee 1991), I do not have any historical evidence from primary or secondary sources that Robbie Gill Comer associated with any of the W.C.T.U. Presidents.

Diffusion of master frames

I find that for all three master frames, the substance and the frequency of the frame varies across social movements. I consider the leaders’ use of each master frame as a single frame but focus on its combination with other frames. Because the leaders are promoting different platforms and mobilizing for different aspects of social change, they will inevitably use the frames in a way that is unique to their respective movement. Also, the SMOs are structured very differently and I anticipate that these organizational variations will affect the framing processes of each movement. In this way, I start my analysis from a perspective of similarity, but argue that the
diversity that exists across the movements will provide strong cases for sociological and historical comparison.

There is much overlap in the framing processes used within these movements. All three movements can be recognized as consisting of communities who were engaging in status conflicts with other segments of society (Gusfield 1963) and who promoted a racial hierarchy in society which placed native-born Whites (mainly Protestants of German and English descent) above immigrants (most of whom were Catholic, Jewish, and/or from Southern and Eastern Europe). Sanger advocated for birth control based on a eugenic agenda that cautioned against the overpopulation of the feebleminded and poor: “Any intelligent analyst must admit that today there are too many of the wrong kind of people in our world and too few of the right kind.”

While the WKKK emphasized the importance of solidarity among white Protestants, women in the W.C.T.U. spoke of the differences between “urban and rural, Catholic and Protestant, immigrant and native” in their quest to preserve American culture (Gusfield 1963: 124). The leaders’ descriptions of race and emphasis on the republic, or the nation, indicate their nationalist beliefs, whether based on race or ethnicity. “Historians of ‘race’ and whiteness have touched on nationalism, especially as they have focused on how whiteness was embedded within concepts of citizenship, republicanism, patriotism, and nationality” (Cohen 1996: 710-711).

Writing about the temperance movement, Joseph Gusfield (1963) distinguishes between assimilative and coercive reform. Assimilative reform occurs when the validity of norms is not threatened and coercive reform is characterized by hostile and angry tones and occurs when the validity of norms is threatened. The nativist frame that was incorporated into the rhetoric of all three movements can be understood by the identification of each social movement organization’s

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approach to reform. Across movements, the nativist frame is used by leaders in varying forms—whether it is applied to concerns of race, ethnicity, and immigration or whether it is expressed in patriotic, racist, classist, or eugenic tones.

Gusfield (1963: 111-114) identifies the temperance movement as transitioning from assimilative (including the rhetoric of Frances Willard in the late 1800s) to coercive because the movement, whose members came mainly from the middle class, was threatened by the upper and lower classes, Catholics and urban residents. “The coercive response came to dominate the Temperance movement during the first 30 years of this century. In Prohibition and its enforcement, hostility, hatred, and anger toward the enemy were the major feelings which nurtured the movement. Armed with the response of indignation at their declining social position, the adherents of Temperance sought a symbolic victory through legislation which, even if it failed to regulate drinking, did indicate whose morality was publicly dominant” (Gusfield 1963: 111).

The W.C.T.U. expressed both assimilative and coercive goals. They created and maintained a department whose committee members met immigrants at Ellis Island in order to recruit them for classes and programs that would introduce them to the norms and morals of American society (the most important being temperance) which they assumed were very different from those of their home countries.

“That as a large increase in immigration may be expected at the cessation of hostilities in Europe, we plan with renewed vigilance to protect from evil influences our new Americans and to aid them to wisely use the advantages of our many good institutions; that we give them our literature in their own languages, send temperance items to their newspapers, invite them to become members of the W.C.T.U., and show these strangers in a strange land the neighborly kindness for which their hearts are hungry. Many of these friends are men and women of high culture and education and would decidedly grace and strengthen our organization. I hope many local unions will plan to act upon the suggestion of the commissioner of immigration at Ellis Island and make the Fourth of July a special occasion for welcoming newly naturalized citizens, the day to be known as “Americanization Day.” A reception with patriotic music, the reciting of the pledge of
allegiance, the presentation of small American flags and other exercises would make an enjoyable program” (1915).

At the same time, the organization presented nativist rhetoric along with the rest of the temperance movement. During Prohibition “Temperance materials stressed the ‘un-American’ connotations of Wet opinion and depicted the violator of the Dry law as unpatriotic, a nihilist without respect for the law, and an opponent of constitutional government” (Gusfield 1963: 119). According to Gusfield (1963), the movement became more coercive as repeal seemed more likely. “The victory of the Prohibitionists and the later fight against Repeal only intensified the cultural conflict and further polarized the forces of urban and rural, Catholic and Protestant, immigrant and native. The disposition to assimilate the nonconformer was even further minimized, as anti-Prohibition forces became organized for Repeal. The Temperance movement became an active supporter of legislation to curtail immigration drastically” (Gusfield 1963: 124). Although it was rare, all three W.C.T.U. Presidents invoked eugenic and racist arguments about immigrants throughout the time period from 1899-1933.

The motto of the second wave of the Ku Klux Klan, which began in 1915, was “100 percent Americanism.” The Klan portrayed itself as a patriotic organization dedicated to preservation of the nation’s institutions and ideals and targeted Catholics, Jews, immigrants and blacks. Blee (1991) outlines several reasons to explain the rebirth of the Klan including declining agricultural prices, rapid technological and social change, immigration, international migration of blacks to the North, and rapid urbanization. Klan members feared that their racially homogenous life was threatened. According to Goldberg (1991) Catholics, Jews, and immigrants provoked a nationalist response from Klan members because they did not trust either group’s allegiance to their home countries’ culture.
All of these reasons are related to concerns that the middle class was losing its social status and the Klan’s fear that their racially homogeneous life was threatened. “The Klan’s racism and xenophobia fit particularly well into the culture of white Protestants in the Midwest, a culture of religious and racial homogeneity and distrust of others. Ultimately, however, the Klan did more than simply mirror the bigotry of the majority population. It provided an organizational means to transform fears and resentments into political action” (Blee 1991: 154-155). As all three movements did, the Klan drew its frames from assumptions within the dominant culture—that white native-born Protestants were the “standard of human existence” (Blee 1991: 156).

The diffusion of the nativist master frame

Francis Galton coined the term “eugenics” in 1883 as a method to improve the human race through better breeding and distinguished between positive eugenics (encouraging reproduction of the fit) and negative eugenics (preventing reproduction of the unfit). The eugenics movement in the United States originated during the Progressive Era in the late 1800s and lasted through the 1930s (Rosen 2004). The eugenics movement formally organized with the establishment of the American Breeders Association in 1903 and the Galton Society in 1918. Similarly, there were several organizational conferences during the first two decades of the 20th century: the First National Conference on Race Betterment (1914), the Second National Race Betterment Conference (1915), the Second International Congress on Eugenics (1921), the Third Race Betterment Conference (1928), and the Third International Congress of Eugenics (1932) (Selden 1999).

Direct links existed between Margaret Sanger and the eugenics movement. She was clearly influenced by eugenic rhetoric as is evidenced by her frequent use of the frame in combination with other conservative frames. Some scholars have argued that Sanger allied herself with the
eugenics movement so that she would be deemed more “acceptable” to men in her social class (Bacchi 1988: 47). Ironically, many eugenicists were opposed to birth control for several reasons: 1) birth control would discourage reproduction of the “fit” (like themselves), 2) women’s public roles were already expanding and birth control would allow them to expand even more, and 3) their own scientific credibility would be challenged because of their association with birth control (Chesler 1992: 214-217). Because she promoted negative eugenics, Margaret Sanger differed from most eugenicists who advocated positive eugenics.

More importantly the American Birth Control League sponsored the Sixth International Neo-Malthusian Conference in New York in 1925. This sponsorship can be seen as Margaret Sanger’s attempt to secure her alliance with the eugenics movement or as confirmation of her rising prominence in the birth control movement. “[T]he location of the sixth conference in New York indicated that American money and American organizational talent would in future dominate international Malthusianism. And the revised title of the conference, to include the words ‘birth control,’ which Margaret Sanger had coined, symbolized her growing leadership in the world movement” (Kennedy 1970: 101). Additionally Guy Irving Birch, director of the American Eugenics Society and a leader in the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, both of which were eugenic organizations, served as legislative secretary for Sanger’s National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control for a period of time.

Writing about Prohibition, Andrew Sinclair (1962) asserts that supporters of temperance and the women’s movement were aligned because of their similar position on the issue of sterilization.

“One reform movement illustrated particularly well the common goals of the reform trinity of progressives and drys and feminists. This was the sterilization movement, which was backed by the eugenic and nativist and paternalist cast of mind that belonged to all three groups. The confluence of these attitudes was expressed by Frances Willard
in England. ‘I am first a Christian, then I am a Saxon, than I am an American, and when I get to heaven I expect to register from Evanston.’ To her and other reformers, the reasons for all reform were the duties owed to God and race and nation in that order, while the place of the reformer’s activity gave him his particular opportunities. The Anglo-Saxon race was held to have a divine and national mission to preserve the purity of the old American stock, which would support progressive reforms and abolish the racial degeneracy cause by alcohol’” (Sinclair 1962: 97).

According to Sinclair, sterilization and other eugenic practices were methods by which Temperance activists, suffragists, and other progressive reformers could serve God and their country.

“Eugenics and the sterilization of the defective and the degenerate provided a good common ground for reformers for additional reasons. Sterilization promised to abolish the criminal type in society before he was corrupted further by urban slums or saloons. It also offered a method of controlled breeding which would favor the reproduction of the Anglo-Saxon race and prevent the reproduction of its rivals. The biological necessity, upon which the position of the eugenic reformers rested, also justified the position of the rich and the middle classes of America; for by their very position in society, they had proved that they were the fittest to survive. Moreover, eugenic sterilization promised to reduce taxation on the wealthy by diminishing the number of hereditary criminals in the prisons and poorhouses of the United States. It was not surprising that sterilization, along with progressivism and prohibition and feminism was supported by those who a Wisconsin clergyman called ‘our best people’” (Sinclair 1962: 97-98).

Because of the diffusion of eugenic ideas into the dominant culture and their perceived relevance to the goals of the birth control movement, temperance movement, and white supremacy movement, social movement leaders in these movements either adopted the eugenic frame or adapted it into the movement’s nativist rhetoric.

I create the nativist master frame by combining each leader’s eugenic (Margaret Sanger) or racist (W.C.T.U. and WKKK) frame with her patriotic frame. Both frames are considered as complementary. All three movements are similar in that when you consider the proportion of all frame combinations that includes either a eugenic/racist or patriotic frame it is much higher than the proportion of these frames as single frames (See Table 7.1).
The utility of the eugenic/racist and patriotic frames is as part of a balancing or reinforcing combination (See Table 7.2). While Margaret Sanger rarely used the patriotic frame, even as part of a frame combination, if we consider the eugenic and patriotic frames as Sanger’s nativist rhetoric, either or both frames were part of 31.6%, 53.8%, and 36.9% of Sanger’s total frame combinations in 1914-1920, 1921-1928, and 1929-1936, respectively. In contrast, both the W.C.T.U. and WKKK were more likely to use the patriotic frame rather than the racist frame. Anna Gordon used one or both of the racist and patriotic frames in 55.5% of her total frame combinations, Lillian M.N. Stevens included them in 40.3% of her total frame combinations, and Ella Boole in 30.0% of her total frame combinations. Similarly, Robbie Gill Comer invoked one or both frames in 55.5% of her frame combinations. For each leader the nativist frame was integral to her strategy of frame balancing and reinforcing.

For leaders in these movements patriotic rhetoric was an effective framing strategy, especially when the speaker labeled individuals as patriotic or unpatriotic, American or un-American, a responsible citizen or an irresponsible citizen. In order to motivate its members to aid in the enforcement of Prohibition, the W.C.T.U. labeled them “Made in America” mothers highlighting their non-immigrant background.

“An avenue of approach to unawakened people must be found through press and platform, the church and social centers. The W.C.T.U. invites every woman everywhere to become a law observance publicity agent. Our organization is well equipped with constructive conversationalists, persuasive penwomen, persistent publicists, enthusiastic enforcers, big-brained law-makers, trained teachers and ‘Made in America’ mothers. With dry and dogged zeal women will continue to invoke the magic hand of law” (1922).

Because identity was crucial to members of the Klan, leaders in the organization repeatedly addressed them by referring to their religion and race. “Again, in the swift-moving passage of time, it is my privilege to stand before you and speak of our progress—the progress of the militant Protestant Christian women of America—of the forward movement which aims at the
advancement of religion and patriotism, at respect for law, at building a better and safer America for ourselves, our children and our children’s children.”\textsuperscript{100}

Margaret Sanger used the label of “good citizen” to describe an individual who acted to maintain the quality of the race. “It is the foremost duty of every patriotic American to do everything in his or her power to make possible the creation of a healthy vigorous race of Americans of tomorrow. If the American citizens remain passively indifferent to the obstacles which are now obstructing the road to the fulfillment of our racial destiny, he cannot be called a good citizen.”\textsuperscript{101}

While Margaret Sanger identified the use of contraception as a patriotic duty she was more likely to use a eugenic rather than patriotic frame, although she did use it. “I do not regard childbearing as the end and aim of woman’s existence. Nor do I consider the first duty of the married couple to be the perpetuation of the species. In fact, in many cases I regard it as man’s patriotic duty to refrain from such a crime against posterity.”\textsuperscript{102} Similarly, Sanger affirmed support of the federal legalization of birth control as a patriotic responsibility.

“To join in this national campaign is to align oneself with the forces of intelligence. This is the most profoundly patriotic act now possible for American citizens. It means to play an active part in a great human drama. Here is an opportunity to be embraced joyfully, reverentially, religiously. To present a united front—valiant, indefatigable and undefeatable, against the powers of prejudice, prudence, and stupidity—to gain strength by our very solidity, and to march joyfully into the future! There is an increased sense of living, more thrills in fighting, than the passive critic ever feels. Support the Federal Committee and discover this for you!”\textsuperscript{103}

For women in all three social movements, patriotism was closely connected to their support of feminism and paternalism. For Margaret Sanger, eugenics would promote paternalism and

\textsuperscript{100} Address: Fourth Biennial Klanvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
\textsuperscript{101} Article: “Passport for Babies,” published in Holland’s, February 1926 (#15).
\textsuperscript{102} Article or Speech: “Sexuality,” 1933? (#214).
feminism. For the W.C.T.U. Presidents and Robbie Gill Comer, suffrage would, and did, promote feminism and maternalism.

During the early decades of the twentieth century eugenics became fashionable and popular in mainstream culture as well as academics (Sinclair 1962, Chesler 1992).

“Indeed, as overall birthrates continued to drop during the 1920s, qualitative theories of racial improvement again gained widespread public acceptance. As had happened briefly before World War I, eugenics became a popular craze in this country—promoted in newspapers and magazines as a kind of secular religion...The great majority of American colleges and universities introduced formal courses in the subject, and sociologists who embraced it took on what one historian has called a ‘priestly role’” (Chesler 1992: 215).

While the WKKK promoted the idea of keeping the United States Protestant and white Comer never specifically advocated eugenics although she mentioned the word “race” on more than one occasion and declared that “Our racial purity shall be maintained.”104 Surprisingly, though, in 1905, President Lillian Stevens mentioned the concept of “race suicide” in her annual address and cited research that indicated that alcoholism has an impact on the birth rate.

Both the W.C.T.U. and the WKKK rarely used blatant racist rhetoric. For the Klan and the W.C.T.U. self-identification as a “true” and “loyal” American was integral to the work of each organization. Robbie Gill Comer motivated WKKK members to “[help] Klansmen feed and keep bright the fires of true Americanism.”105 Similar to the Klan’s motto of being one hundred percent true Americans,” W.C.T.U. President Ann Gordon called her organization’s members to be one hundred percent loyal Americans.

The teaching in all the public schools of the scientific facts concerning the effect of alcohol is just as necessary now as before our national prohibition law was secured. Without it the stability of this law is imperiled. A boy or girl of foreign parentage living

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104 Address: Quadrennial Women’s Ku Klux Klan Convention, August 1927.
105 Address: Third Biennial Klönvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, September 1926, published in The Kourier Magazine, November 1926.
in the United States today, even though he or she may have limited resources, has ample opportunity to become an one hundred percent loyal American by enthusiastically enlisting in our Branch organizations” (1923).

Additionally, Robbie Gill Comer reminded women in the WKKK of the organization’s pledge to keep the United States Protestant and white. “We militant Protestant women of America promise you that this land, whose government was established Christian, Protestant and white, is going to remain Christian, Protestant and white. Its fathers decreed that its moral standards should be the standards of the word of God—those standards we have sworn to maintain—and we shall not be false to our trust.”106

Race and immigration was an important issue for all three movements as all three were clearly influenced by the influx of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe between 1880 and 1920. All three movements targeted immigrants as the root of the problem in their movement rhetoric. For the W.C.T.U. it was foreigners or those of alien origin. “The Eighteenth Amendment to the national constitution, to go into effect in January, 1920, will free our twentieth century civilization from its greatest enemy—the un-American liquor traffic. Disclosures of Congressional investigating committees reveal the fact that from the beginning the liquor traffic in this country has been of alien and autocratic origin” (1919). President Ella Boole was surprised that alcohol consumption had decreased despite the increase in immigrants who were assumed to be more likely to drink beer than non-immigrants.

“The consumption of alcoholic drinks is growing less year after year. There is only about one-half as much consumed per capita in the United States as there was a quarter of a century ago. This marks us as the most temperate of all nations. For some years as the use of distilled liquors decreased there was an increase in the use of malt liquors, but during the last four years there has been a steady decrease in the use of the latter, which certainly is most encouraging when we consider the large influx of foreigners with their beer drinking propensities” (1899).

106 Address: Fourth Biennial Klonvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
Both the W.C.T.U. and the WKK identified the individuals who were not native-born and white as a danger to the United States because of their background and inability to follow our laws.

W.C.T.U. President Ella Boole made the assumption that immigrants would not follow Prohibition laws.

“We appeal to native-born Americans to set foreigners, whether their stay here be long or short, such an example that they will know they are not welcome to our country unless they accept our laws and obey them. They should not take advantage of our better wages and better standards of living unless they are willing to accept our laws. Let us urge all organizations and religious bodies which have passed resolutions for law enforcement to recognize obedience to the Eighteenth Amendment as an integral part of law enforcement” (1928).

The W.C.T.U. was at least hopeful that their members could teach immigrants to be “American” and temperate.

The WKKK was more ambiguous about what the “hostile and alien influences” would do except to say that they would “undermine our institutions” and somehow overthrow the government.

“We know that there is a racial and national spirit in America and would keep it pure and undefiled—but hostile and alien influences would contradict us, and strain Americanism from our blood, and undermine our institutions, and by subtlety and guile conquer us, a people who never have been conquered by fore of arms.”

The WKKK perceived Roman Catholics as a threat because they believed that Catholics were not patriotic and could not be real Americans because of loyalty to their native country. The organization assumed that Catholics would never pledge allegiance to the United States.

“The Women of the Ku Klux Klan have for five years since their organization, been teaching sobriety of conduct, urging a stricter adherence to the Prohibition laws, demanding a more thorough and honest enforcement of our statutes, counseling against

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107 Address: Third Biennial Klolvocation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, September 1926, published in The Kourier Magazine, November 1926.
nullification of law and refusing to make fair weather with those agencies that stand for a breaking down of moral forces, for political expediency and partisan politics. They have been ardent supporters of the Constitution of the United States and especially of Article Six, which guarantees to every person full and complete religious liberty. They have endeavored to implant in the minds of Protestants the fact that the Roman Catholic Church has utterly failed to teach Americanism to the youth of the nation, or to provide in their living an example of patriotism to the men and women of the country. They have failed to teach that full faith and credit should be given to all laws and statutes of the American government.”

This Catholic threat was also an immigrant threat. These descriptions are exemplary stereotypes of individuals who were not native-born (immigrant), not White (many immigrant groups such as Eastern and Southern Europeans were not considered white for at least the first few decades of the twentieth century), and not Protestant (Catholic).

The “fitness” of the race and the quality, rather than the quantity, of the population is a central tenet of eugenic ideology. According to Sanger, “The control of the great overpowering human energy, the instinct of reproduction is what we mean by Birth Control. We, who are carrying on the battle for the great human right of Birth Control, are fighting for better, healthier children, for a race of strong men and beautiful women here in America. We place quality above quantity. We want each child to have proper food, warmth, sunlight and fresh air, devotion, and love.”

In addition to the eugenic concern of quality rather than quantity, Sanger asserted that:

“As an advocate of Birth Control, I wish to take advantage of the present opportunity to point out that the unbalance between the birth rate of the ‘unfit’ and the ‘fit,’ admittedly the greatest present menace to civilization, can never be rectified by the inauguration of a cradle competition between these two classes. In this matter, the example of the inferior classes, the fertility of the feebleminded, the mentally defective, the poverty-stricken classes, should not be held up for emulation to the mentally and physically fit though less fertile parents of the educated and well-to-do classes. On the contrary, the most urgent problem today is how to limit and discourage the over-fertility of the mentally and For Sanger, then, the use of birth control would have positive long-term effects. “There are many conditions in which Birth Control should be advocated as part of an emergency

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relief program, not only for the woman’s health and the economic security of the family, but also to protect the race against transmission to offspring of ailments that are detrimental to the future of the race.”

The future of the race concerned not only those in the birth control and eugenics movements, but those in the temperance movement as well. While Sanger was less ambiguous in her use of the term “race,” it was more difficult to determine to whom W.C.T.U. Presidents referred and what exactly they recommended. For instance, Ella Boole declared that “It is patriotic to increase the numbers of our citizens who contribute to the general good of the nation. It is patriotic to promote the observance of law” (1928). Was Boole making a case for positive eugenics, immigration restriction, or the enforcement of the Prohibition amendment?

While Gordon at least mentioned the word “race,” she does not specify how it could be improved. “A million members of the W.C.T.U. are vitally needed to meet the colossal appeal of the Social Morality department with its potentialities for the betterment of the human race” (1921). Will this betterment be achieved through morality or some kind of control over the population? Are these even distinct? Similarly, Lillian M.N. Stevens discusses the impact of public health on children. “Twenty-five states at least have food laws. We should circulate literature giving food values and showing the relation of insufficient and unhealthy food to intemperance. We can cooperate with state boards of health. Those who wish to prevent race decadence must see that children in the home and the school have pure air and pure food in all respects, a sanitary environment” (1907). Six years later, President Stevens reiterated her interest in Eugenics. “We declare for a single standard of Purity for men and women and hail as hopeful omens the new science of Eugenics and the tendency for a better safeguarding of the marriage relation through compulsory health certificates on the part of both contracting parties. We condemn as false and

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pernicious the doctrine that the social evil is a necessity” (1913). It is fascinating that a W.C.T.U. President was publicly discussing eugenics before Margaret Sanger had even officially begun her campaign for birth control.

For the W.C.T.U., being mothers meant being protectors of the race and the home. Anna Gordon reminded women of their prominent role.

“The World’s W.C.T.U. was organized in 1883 and held its first convention in 1891 in Boston. Our international program preceded, by nearly forty years, the world temperance movement in which today we are gladly cooperating. We anticipate the opportunity we shall enjoy of sharing in the proceedings of the first convention of the World League Against Alcoholism, soon to meet in the queenly city of Toronto. God, in His gracious providence, placed W.C.T.U. women, mothers of the race and protectors of the home, in the vanguard of nineteenth century temperance educators, organizers and legislators. Now we march side by side with our brothers and with the militant hosts of the churches of all denominations in notable campaigns in many lands for total abstinence and prohibition” (1922).

With its origins in the Protestant Church, this role for W.C.T.U. women was very much dictated by their duty to God.

“As the patriotic mothers of Colonial times rallied to the defense of their country, and as the womanhood of America contributed sacrificially to the maintenance of our nation’s flag, so must the women of today be found valiantly defending our free institutions. The Home, the School, the Church, the State-in all of these she is vitally concerned. When anyone of these four fundamentals fails, our civilization falls and our cherished institutions are shattered. Now is the testing time. The loyal women of America are being called upon to rally again to the call of country and of fireside. Will they respond? We believe they will. There is already in evidence a great awakening. We cannot, we must not, WE WILL NOT FAIL.”

This combination of maternalist and racist rhetoric is almost identical to Sanger’s maternalist and eugenic combination.

111 Article: “Commander’s Message,” The Torch, April 1931.
Chesler (1992) affirms that many supporters of eugenics resisted the stereotyping of immigrants and “foreigners.” “In favoring white, northern Europeans, immigration restriction promoted a popular view that one nationality or stock can be distinguished from another on the basis of hereditary characteristics. Many supporters of eugenics, including Margaret, objected to this racial stereotyping, claiming that intelligence and other inherited traits vary by individual, not by group. But these distinctions grew more and more difficult to enforce” (Chesler 1992: 215). Based on my analysis of Margaret Sanger’s speeches and articles, I completely disagree that she refrain from stereotyping those groups who were having a detrimental impact on society. While she never specifically identified Southern and Eastern Europeans as the cause of racial decline, she implies that they are her target by identifying them as individuals who refuse to use contraception because of their religious beliefs. We can infer that she is referring to Eastern and Southern European immigrants who comprised the majority of immigrants from 1880-1920, many of whom were Catholic.

Margaret Sanger was more blunt and direct in her diagnostic and prognostic framing than leaders in the W.C.T.U. or WKKK. “As I have said, and as everyone will agree, the bulk of the wealthy, educated and intelligent classes—practically all the college bred and business bred representatives of the rising generation—are now using contraceptive methods to control the size of their families and to ensure for their children a proper start in life. Nevertheless the poor, irresponsible, more improvident classes are adding to the financial burden of every American citizen and taxpayer, by flooding society with increasing numbers of defective children.”112 Catholics were also a similar threat.

“If a religion believes that continence is the only method justifiable to God they have a perfect right, as far as I am concerned to use continence as a method but I do maintain as a citizen that they have no right to bring children into a world for me to maintain and take

\[112\text{ Speech or Article: “This Business of Bearing Babies,” 1925? (#180).}\]
care of. There is where I have a right to object and I also claim that while there is no law against any individual having as many children as the individual desires they have no right to keep us from having laws in which we have the same right not to have more children than we desire to have.”

Sanger’s use of metaphors was particularly harsh. “The efforts of American society to deal with the defective and delinquent classes, through charity and institutional care are absolutely futile in curing the running racial sore which is a national disgrace.”

Margaret Sanger promoted sterilization as a more extreme, but sometimes necessary, measure of negative eugenics. While she was usually direct in her recommendations, she once used a weed analogy to explain her goals and solutions for society.

“Birth control is not contraception indiscriminately and thoughtlessly practiced. It means the release and cultivation of the better racial elements in our society, and the gradual suppression, elimination and eventual extirpation of defective stocks—those human weeds which threaten the blooming of the finest flowers of American civilization. In our efforts to affect the repeal of the existing laws which declare the use of contraceptive methods indecent and obscene, Birth Control advocates have been forced to battle every inch of the way. To get the matter before the Legislature of New York my path has led completely around the earth. Our effort has been to enlist the support of the best minds of every country, an object we have achieved even beyond our fondest expectations.”

In the cases in which individuals were not capable of properly using contraception, Sanger recommended sterilization. “To me this need of checking the defective increase of our population is so imperative that immediate action is necessary and sterilization is the answer. This is one of the methods of birth control, but a permanent method advised only when voluntary and temporary methods of contraception will not be applied.”

113 Untitled Speech: delivered at Birth Control Conference, February 27, 1929 (#21).
114 Speech or Article: “This Business of Bearing Babies,” 1925? (#180).
The diffusion of feminism and maternalism as master frames

Feminism and maternalism were central frames used by movement leaders in all three movements. As I mentioned in Chapter 5, Willard adopted the home protection frame from a Canadian temperance activist and first used it in public speech in 1876 (Gifford and Slagell 2007). According to Gusfield (1963) many members of the WKKK had been members of the W.C.T.U., in part because both organizations originated in the Protestant Church. The idea of separate sexual spheres grew out of the distinction between the public and private sphere that was conceptualized in the early nineteenth century as the social organization of society became less centralized in the family. According to this conceptualization women’s domain was the home, or private sphere, while men’s domain was the public sphere. Suffragists argued that women’s roles should encompass both the private and public spheres. “Although suffragists accepted the peculiarly feminine character of the private sphere, their demand for the vote challenged the male monopoly of the public arena. This is what gave suffragism much of its feminist meaning…Even though they did not develop a critical analysis of domestic life, the dialectical relationship between public and private spheres transformed their demands for admission to the public sphere into a basic challenge to the entire sexual structure” (Dubois 1998: 32-34). Hewitt and McCammon (2004) identify what is clearly a maternalist frame as the “home protection” frame in state suffrage organizations from 1892-1919. Did the maternalist frame develop out of the home protection frame made popular by Frances Willard or from the suffrage movement’s adaptation of the popular idea of separate sexual spheres? Regardless of its origins leaders in all three movements relied on the maternalist frame and often used it in conjunction with the feminist frame.

The combination of feminist, maternalist, and moral assertions seems paradoxical because the frames simultaneously challenge and reify American cultural notions of women as protectors of
the family and bearers of the nation. For example, Frances Willard, President of the W.C.T.U. from 1879-1898, used a “Home Protection” argument which appears to have both maternalist and feminist tones in the way that it attempted to draw women into the political arena as both caretakers and protectors of the home and family (Slagell 2001). In addition to their demand for the vote as an individual right, women in the WKKK made numerous feminist claims and complaints concerning their roles as wife and mother. “Klanswomen described the home as a place of labor for women…It also pictured marriage as a double-edge sword for women—at once women’s crowning glory and the burden they bore…Even motherhood—whether the mothering of children or the nurturance of a nation—the WKKK described as women’s work” (Blee 1991: 51). Using the strategy of frame balancing, leaders in these movements may have provided a solution for women experiencing role conflict by combining somewhat incompatible frames.

The diffusion of the feminist master frame

If we only look at the feminist frame as a proportion of all frames, it does not appear to be as prominent as it really is once we consider its proportion in all frame combinations (See Tables 7.1 and 7.3). The feminist frame occurred in 43.9% of Stevens’ frame combinations, the highest proportion of any of the leaders, followed by 42.4% of Comer’s combinations and 40.0% of Boole’s combinations. Sanger invoked the feminist frame in 32.8% of all frame combinations in 1914-1920, 18.2% in 1921-1928, and 32.2% in 1929-1936. Although Sanger’s use of the feminist frame in combination with other frames declines drastically in the middle period, its proportion in Sanger’s first and third organizational periods is higher than its proportion in Gordon’s frame combinations—31.8%. The decline of the popularity of the feminist frame between 1921 and 1928 correlates with the decline of balancing (39.6%) and liberal reinforcing (11.8%) in the same time period. While it may be surprising that W.C.T.U. and WKKK leaders used the feminist frame in a greater proportion of their frame combinations than Margaret Sanger,
it also demonstrates the frame’s importance in their framing strategies. At the same time, the feminist frame was the only liberal frame in both the W.C.T.U.’s and WKKK’s framing repertoire while Margaret Sanger had five other liberal frames from which to draw upon. And she did draw upon one or more of her six liberal frames, either in balancing or reinforcing combinations, in 76.3% of the total frame combinations in 1914-1920, 51.4% of frame combinations in 1921-1928, and 70.2% of frame combinations in 1929-1936.

Understanding the diffusion process in the development of the feminist frame is fairly straightforward. The W.C.T.U. as an organization was very much influenced by the suffrage movement because of Frances Willard’s support of suffrage. The W.C.T.U. advocated suffrage before the passage of the 19th Amendment and both the W.C.T.U. and WKKK highlighted the power of suffrage for that women and their duty to use it to serve God, their family, and their country. Although the W.C.T.U. and WKKK unquestionably used feminist rhetoric and espoused the importance of suffrage they did not have the feminist goal of equality.

“For feminism, women’s equality was the central goal; women’s evangelism and women’s temperance took as their central goal the moral reformation of American life, a goal that by the last quarter of the century had focused, within the temperance movement, upon the slogan of ‘Home Protection.’ During the last quarter of the century feminism and popular women’s culture converged in that many women believed that female suffrage and female equality in defense of the home would be achieved. But where the interests of women and the defense of the nineteenth century middle-class family (and the morality that was associated with it) diverged, the women’s temperance movement chose the latter” (Epstein 1981: 4).

Women would benefit from the reforms that both the W.C.T.U. and the WKKK emphasized but only indirectly.

At the beginning of the movement leaders framed suffrage as an individual right. Once women were not included in the 14th Amendment, the movement defined suffrage as women’s right
because of their sex. What the movement was promoting was difference feminism—that women should have the right to vote because they were different from men and would bring their unique perspective as women and mothers to the realm of politics (DuBois 1998: 94-95). The most common thread in the both the W.C.T.U.’s and WKKK’s feminist frame is suffrage rhetoric. Lillian Stevens, president from 1898-1914, reiterates the connection between suffrage and temperance:

“Unmistakably it has been a great year for the cause of woman suffrage as well as for the temperance cause. In fact these causes are closely intertwined, and we expect similar triumphs are to rapidly follow. Old time prejudices are fading away and if the woman suffragists of our country continue to conduct their campaign with the dignity, consistency, courtesy and intelligence thus far displayed, and they will, we are sure to keep on the winning side” (1913).

Stevens mentioned that prejudices were fading away and that as attitudes changed, so would behavior. But women could only change attitudes as long as they acted with “dignity, consistency, courtesy and intelligence.” Anna Gordon made a similar argument a few years later.

Your direct influence, your womanly persuasiveness, your unswerving loyalty to high ideals, are now mightily feared by the whisky trust, the brewery combine and the vice interests. Over against the home and the children stand these relentless, degrading, law-defying forces and for this reason the majority of our members welcome the opportunity to express their convictions at the ballot box. No longer do we need to pass with bowed heads the law-protected breweries, distilleries and saloons. Rather let us sing the Doxology because to so many of us has come the power to vote them out. Do women need more courage and men more tenderness? So it has been said. Will not each sex be benefited and the morale and spirit of politics be elevated by the participation of women in governmental affairs? The people of twelve suffrage states answer this question in the glad affirmative (1916).

According to Gordon, what made women different from men was their “womanly persuasiveness” and unswerving loyalty.” Although she does not answer her own question of whether or not women should be more courageous and men should be more “tender” she nevertheless portrayed them as having dichotomous qualities.
Although all three W.C.T.U. Presidents believed that women could save the country from the evils associated with alcohol, it is clear that women who supported suffrage and temperance should “act like a woman” when they participated in movement activities. It seems contradictory that women should use their intelligence, but in a “feminine” way.

“On voting day the women [in Maine] were early at their booths or headquarters near the polling places, or in the prayer meetings which were held all over the state, the church bells ringing every hour from six in the morning until the polls were closed. I will not undertake to describe the activities of the day. Everything that women could do in womanly, dignified ways was done” (1911).

The implication is that although many women were activists in more than one movement they were able to achieve the political and social change that men could not because they were dignified. So is dignified activism the path to achievement, or only for women?

Although Robbie Gill Comer’s support for women’s right to vote had an essentialist tone, she nevertheless highlighted the fact that women demanded and deserved recognition of their rights and potential contribution to society.

“I see arising in the future an even better and greater and freer America, under the direction not alone of men, not alone of women, but of men and women, consecrated to the service of Almighty God. They will work together in a friendly partnership which shall utilize the special experience and wisdom of both sexes. They will cooperate to make our beloved country the happiest and best in all the world—a footstool upon earth for our Father, which is in heaven.” 117

While Comer posited that women’s and men’s differences were based on sex, she still believed that these differences gave women power. “Women in American love the men of America. We believe in the things that are high and good and holy. Our homes will be kept as sanctuaries for them. Our lives will never be marred by lack of virtue. We will mother their children, share their

117 Address: Fourth Biennial Klonvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
sorrow, multiply their jogs and assist them to prosper in the way of this world’s goods. In return, we expect the men to recognize our power for good over their lives, and in the nation.” 118

For Comer, it did not matter that women and men had different responsibilities and roles. What was important was that men recognized women’s influence and treated them as their partners.

Overall, I argue that the W.C.T.U. and WKKK used difference feminism rhetoric in order to emphasize women’s difference from men in terms of morality and the positive impact this purity could have on politics. I also recognize, though, that leaders in both organizations apply equality feminism when promoting suffrage and temperance. Stevens declared that “True manliness and true womanliness will be permanently maintained, not through the supremacy of either sex, but by equality and justice to all, irrespective of sex. This is the keynote today of the woman’s suffrage movement” (1910). Comer even goes so far as to say that it had become more acceptable for women not to marry.

“With all this has come an economic and social freedom—woman does not now have to accept the first man who asks her hand in marriage or take the chance of being that unhappy person who, in years easily remembered by us who are not yet aged, was referred to, reproachfully, as an ‘old maid.’ She may choose her time for marriage, or, if she wishes, she may choose not to marry at all and endure no reproach from the world—it is no more disgraceful to be an unmarried woman than to be a bachelor man.” 119

This is not an argument that we would expect from a leader in the Women’s Ku Klux Klan, and challenges the idea that the women’s organization was simply an auxiliary to the main KKK organization. Comer also declared that “Woman is not a toy of man. She is not his creature, his slave, but his companion and helpmeet.” 120 Even post-suffrage, this is a radical claim to make.

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119 Address: Fourth Biennial Klondvocation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
120 Address: Fourth Biennial Klondvocation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
While the feminist frame was integral to Margaret Sanger’s framing strategy, she did not incorporate specific suffrage rhetoric into the feminist frame. In contrast to the W.C.T.U. and WKKK Sanger’s goal would improve women’s equality. Suffrage clearly gave, though, a significant proportion of her audience new political power. “First, and most important to her, was the large population of women oriented to activism and looking for new challenges in the wake of the women’s suffrage victory.” Chesler (1992) argues that this newly enfranchised group would be difficult to mobilize and explains the lack of coalition between the birth control and women’s movement as a result of the women’s movement’s debate over the equal rights amendment which began after suffrage was achieved. “With this as its focus, the part removed itself altogether from the birth control debate, causing Margaret considerable consternation when she spoke before its national convention…This fragmentation of interests and efforts meant that women did not exert a collective influence on the politics of the new decade, but instead tended to express and to vote their differences, just like men” (Chesler 1992: 205). Sanger’s feminist frame, then, can be characterized as more individualistic than the feminist frame in either the W.C.T.U. or the WKKK, including an emphasis on women’s sexual autonomy.

All three movements strove to develop women’s sense of political efficacy. While the W.C.T.U.’s and WKKK’s use of the feminist frame was dominated by the importance of suffrage and women’s political participation, Sanger focused more on women’s more informal power as a collectivity. The W.C.T.U. Presidents were more likely to remind women that their political participation should still retain its feminine quality. Robbie Gill Comer identified women’s most important role as being her husband’s partner. Sanger’s rhetoric is probably the most individualistic as she incorporated the concept of sexual autonomy into her feminist frame.
In order to promote social change Sanger needed to mobilize women to act collectively as part of the movement. She accomplished this goal by providing women with concrete ways that they could change society.

“The governments have been shortsighted in dealing with this problem and their measures have been pitifully inadequate. They have failed. It is time for the women of the world—for each individual woman to accept her share of this problem. In this hour of crisis and peril, women alone can save the world. They can save it by refusing for five years to bring a child into being. And there is no other way. For the next five years no woman who understands the present situation should bear a child. Not only should she refuse to bring another human being into a starving and disordered world, but she should see to it that she enlightens as many of her sisters as possible as to their duties under the existing circumstances. Each woman who is awake to the true situation should make it her first task to encourage and to assist her sisters in avoiding childbearing until the world has had an opportunity to readjust itself.”

An important way to mobilize activists is to point out that they have personal and political efficacy. In this way it is first important for women to realize political and social change is possible and that they are not alone in the movement.

“Today, however, woman is rising in fundamental revolt. Even her efforts at mere reform are, as we shall see later, steps in that direction. Underneath each of them is the feminine urge to complete freedom. Millions of women are asserting their right to voluntary motherhood. They are determined to decide for themselves whether they shall become mothers, under what conditions and when. This is the fundamental revolt referred to. It is for woman the key to the temple of liberty.”

Second to the recognition of political efficacy is the recognition of personal efficacy. Sanger underscored the fact that women as individuals were integral to the success of the movement and that their personal activism could have a meaningful impact on the movement.

“Against the State, against the Church, against the silence of the medical profession, against the whole machinery of dead institutions of the past, the woman today arises. She no longer pleads. She no longer implores. She no longer petitions. She is here to assert herself, to take back those rights which were formerly hers and hers alone. If she must

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break the law to establish her right to voluntary motherhood, then the law shall be broken.”

The American birth control movement must be understood as a part of the rise of bohemianism and the sexual revolution, which were occurring during the early part of this century. According to Linda Gordon, feminism and sex liberation theory have developed as issues within the class struggle of many revolutions (the French Revolution, the European Revolutions of 1848, and the Russian Revolution). But the sexual revolution that occurred in the United States was “attacking the family system that was a material prop of capitalism” (Gordon 1990: 199). What made this revolution so integral to the history of America was the fear of moral decline. Part of this was linked to women’s change in attitudes and behavior regarding the expression of their newfound freedom within the institutions of labor, medicine/health, the family, and daily culture.

As part of Sanger’s combination of the feminist and maternalist frames with a democratic frame, Sanger argued that women should be able to have control over their own body. Sanger affirmed: “We claim that woman should have the right over her own body and to say if she shall or if she shall not be a mother, as she sees fit.” As an extension of this right, Sanger was also a significant proponent of women’s sexual autonomy. These rights related to sexuality were also tied to religious and moral conventions that governed women’s relationships with men.

“Christianity preached the suppression and sublimation of the sex instinct. People were and still are as ignorant and confused about sex as they are about God. We must cast the light of science upon the former in order to understand the latter. For while the mental attitude and religious teachings on the basic function of life confuse it with shame and sin, mankind cannot rise to its highest possibilities. Our ecclesiastical fathers decreed that there were only two states of respectable womanhood open to women—virginity or motherhood. Sex in any of its manifestations was akin to sin and, for the woman, only the bearing of a child sanctioned in its expression. Thus we find that woman’s bondage

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123 Article: “Shall We Break This Law?” published in The Birth Control Review, February 1917 (#104).
124 Address: “The Social and Individual Need of Birth Control” delivered at the Park Theatre, November 18, 1921 (#7).
in the past as well as today is based solely on the biological task of childbearing. Consequently, until that function is under her complete control woman can never hope to rise to the heights of her own spiritual destiny."\textsuperscript{125}

Even for Sanger it is radical that she presented singlehood as a better alternative for women than marriage. As a leader of a social movement, Sanger was obviously trying to promote social change, but was this recommendation realistic?

“To which I replied that my object in telling you girls the truth is for the definite purpose of preventing them from entering into sexual relations whether in marriage or out of it, without thinking and knowing. Better a thousand times to live alone and unloved than to be tied to a man who has robbed her of health or of the joy of motherhood, or welcoming the pains of motherhood, live in anxiety lest her sickly offspring be taken out of her life, or grow up a chronic individual.”\textsuperscript{126}

Sanger asserted that women would do what they had to do to prevent the birth of a child whom she knew she could not take care of, whether because of health, disease, or economics. Sanger was emphatic in her clarification that contraception was not abortion and that widespread availability of contraception would avoid the need for abortion.

“The history of abortion shows that it was opposed by law, by religious canons, by public opinion—and the penalties range all the way from ostracism to imprisonment, yet neither threats of hell nor the infliction of physical punishment has availed. The two million abortions annually in this benighted country testify to that. Women will deceive and dare. They will resist and defy the power of church and state. They will march to the gates of death to gain that freedom from unending childbearing which the awakened woman demands.”\textsuperscript{127}

Sanger, in fact, removed the blame from women who had abortions and placed it on the medical profession, who had not disseminated knowledge of birth control.

“For moral turpitude and human indifferences it shall remain a dark chapter in the annals of the American medical profession that physicians have not availed themselves of knowledge to give relief to these poor women that they may be saved from too frequent


\textsuperscript{126} Pamphlet: “What Every Girl Should Know,” published 1920 (#59).

\textsuperscript{127} Article: “Woman of the Future,” published in Unity, November 27, 1933 (#212).

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childbearing and saved from the horrors of frequent abortions...When we view it as an institution, I feel it has done more than any other single body to prolong the misery and degradation of womankind.”

**The diffusion of the maternalist master frame**

In every time period but one, Sanger used the maternalist frame in a higher proportion of her frame combinations than the W.C.T.U. Presidents and Comer (See Table 7.4). Sanger incorporated the maternalist frame into 48.0% of frame combinations between during the first time period which was higher than Stevens’ proportion (36.4%). The proportion of maternalist frames in Sanger’s framing strategy during the third time period (45.2%) was again higher than that of Boole (35.0%) or Comer (31.3%). But Gordon’s use of the maternalist frame (40.0%) was higher than Sanger’s (34.3%) in the complementary time period. While overall the W.C.T.U. Presidents and Comer were more likely than Sanger to incorporate the feminist frame into their frame combinations, Sanger was more likely than leaders in the two organizations to integrate the maternalist frame into her framing strategy. Sanger needed to more personally and directly appeal to mothers to accomplish her goal.

In many cases, the maternalist frame centered on the joys and duties of motherhood as well as the assumption that everything women did was for their home. According to Ella Boole “The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in America must give the truth about prohibition to the women of the world. It must be on the watch to detect weakening of public sentiment, loopholes in the law, efforts to repeal provisions in the laws and must train women to use their ballots to protect the home” (1928). The idea of women having to be trained to use the ballot is quite

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paternalistic. Similarly, Robbie Gill Comer asserted that women’s only interest in the ballot was as a means of further protecting her children.

“It is the right of woman that the world in which she lives shall be so constituted and ordered as to make for an ever-increasing protection for the children she bears. Not every woman is a mother, but all women have the instincts of motherhood. Hers is the care of the coming generation when it is very young, and what a man or woman will be is very largely determined by the training he or she receives before the age of seven. To impose upon woman the pains of motherhood and the responsibilities of rearing children in their formative years and yet, when they leave her immediate control, to give her no adequate means of protecting her offspring from mental and moral injury was manifestly unfair. I think this, almost as much as his recognition of the inherent mental equality of woman, was that in the mind of man when he gave us the ballot—that our possession of suffrage is not so much the result of the chivalry of American manhood as of his sense of fairness and justice.”\textsuperscript{129}

Even more paternalistic than Boole’s idea that women have to be trained to use the ballot was Comer’s explanation of why men gave women the ballot and the implication that women had no part in achieving the right to vote. In what can be described as a mobilizing frame meant to motivate her audience to action, Comer stated: “Again, the swift-moving passage of time, it is my privilege to stand before you and speak of our progress—the progress of the militant Protestant Christian women of America—of the forward movement which aims at the advancement of religion and patriotism, at respect for law, at building a better and safer America for ourselves, our children, and our children’s children.”\textsuperscript{130}

Both Stevens and Comer affirmed the importance of women’s responsibility to the home and their family, despite the roles they might have outside of the family.

“We militant Protestant women of America promise you that we will be active in all good works—that our participation in business and in the professions shall be honorable—that our influence in the home shall be such as shall make the children in it better men and women than many of the men and women of this generation—that by precept and example we will advance the sanctity of the home—that we will support the continued

\textsuperscript{129} Address: Fourth Biennial Klonvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
\textsuperscript{130} Address: Fourth Biennial Klonvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
freedom of the public schools—that in the problems of economics and of politics we will decide only for the right, as God gave us to see the right—that we will prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.”

Comer pledged women’s dedication to all of the institutions related to the family. Stevens reinforced women’s fulfillment in performing this sacred duty. “What a significant acknowledgment, that amid all the bustle and bewilderment of public life, public duties and public places, nothing is so all-pervading with Divine influence, as the home—the home of the mother and child” (1907). It is likely that Stevens was reminding activist women that while their participation in suffrage and temperance reform was vital, their first priority was in the home.

Sanger agreed that mothers are dedicated to their home and family, but expanded the ways that women might express this dedication. Sanger called on women “[t]o become creative instruments for bringing a new race into being.” Mothers were seen as the new activists who would take their private role and make it public by promoting societal reform from within the family. “The women of America, because of their love for children, want safe and reliable birth control information. They have a right to this knowledge. They have a right to bring into the world children joyfully conceived and happily awaited, children whom they can rear with love and some measure of economic security.” Also prioritizing women’s role as mothers, Sanger asserted that “Women, who bear the children, have a right to knowledge of their own bodies, they have a right to conscious decision in undertaking the most important and inspiring career in the world—motherhood.”

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131 Address: Fourth Biennial Klonvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928.
133 Article: “Does the Public Want Birth Control?” published in True Confessions, April 1936 (#41).
Responding to critics of Sanger’s feminist-maternalist rhetoric Chesler (1992: 207) explains how Sanger balanced the two frames. “Margaret’s message was intended to be pro-woman, not antifamily, with an emphasis on the new style of feminism she espoused, which accommodated and indeed encouraged sex and marriage. Once again, she advanced birth control as bridging the discontinuities of a feminist agenda that offered women a public role at the expense of their private lives. Only with universal availability of contraception could women hope to realize their full potential.” While Sanger presented women’s responsibility as a burden, she also glorified women’s societal role as mothers and implied that women wanted this responsibility.

“Woman’s tragedy in the past—and with few exceptions it remains a tragedy today—is that she has been relegated to a secondary position. She must be restored to the central primary place to which she is entitled by nature and by her biological importance to the race and to civilization. We have seen that the steps thus far taken toward emancipation are important, but not of primary importance. Her biological freedom must be assured. Maternity may indeed be the central function of the majority of women. But in order to fill this function intelligently and valuably, it must be self-directive and free. Quality is more important than quantity.”\textsuperscript{135}

She wanted women to be given more credit for their role. “[W]e are convinced that racial regeneration, individual regeneration, must come ‘from within.’ That is, it must be autonomous, self-directive, and not imposed from without. In other words, every potential parent, and especially every potential mother, must be brought to an acute realization of the primary and central importance of bringing children into this world.”\textsuperscript{136}

Sanger radically argued that being a housewife was not always fulfilling and that this responsibility should be shared between husband and wife. “Even after marriage many young women nowadays are continuing their professional or business careers because they wish to share the burden of homemaking with their husbands and because they are no longer content to be mere household drudges in a two-by-four flat. They are ambitious. They want to welcome their

\textsuperscript{136} Article: “Eugenic Value of Birth Control Propaganda,” refused by Eugenic Congress, 1921 (#8).
children into a real home with real advantages, with the proper attention and care both before as well as after the advent of the newcomer.” Sanger highlighted alternative ways that women could be “good mothers,” in this case by economically providing for their children. But she was clearly describing only middle to upper class women who have the opportunity to have a career rather than a job.

**Frame balancing and frame reinforcing**

Margaret Sanger was more likely to balance frames than either of the three W.C.T.U. Presidents or Robbie Gill Comer (See Table 7.5). Sanger used twenty balancing combinations and nineteen reinforcing combinations—ten liberal reinforcing combinations and nine conservative reinforcing combinations—which excludes the sixteen frame combinations that did not meet the threshold I set at five mentions total from 1914-1936 (ten balancing and six reinforcing). I calculated a total of 152 frame combinations from 1914-1920, 255 frame combinations from 1921-1928, and 319 frame combinations from 1929-1936. During the periods 1914-1920 and 1929-1936, the highest proportion of Sanger’s frame combinations was balancing combinations—55.9% in the first time period and 56.7% in the third time period. During these two time periods, the proportion of balancing combinations was even larger than the total percentage of both liberal reinforcing combinations and conservative reinforcing combinations. During the period 1914-1920 Sanger used reinforcing combinations 44.1% of the time—23.7% were conservative combinations and 20.4% were liberal combinations. During the period 1929-1936 the combination of conservative combinations (29.8%) and liberal combinations (13.5%) only totaled 43.3% of all combinations. From 1921-1928 Sanger most often used conservative reinforcing combinations (48.6%), compared to balancing (39.6%) and liberal reinforcing (11.8%).

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137 Article: “Mobilizing for Motherhood (Through Birth Control),” published in *Physical Culture*, January 5, 1921 (#6).
Although the W.C.T.U. Presidents used only one liberal frame, the feminist frame, there were four balancing combinations and ten reinforcing combinations, all of which were conservative combinations. Excluding only one balancing combination that neither Stevens, Gordon, nor Boole ever used, I counted 80 frame combinations total for Lillian M.N. Stevens, 85 frame combinations for Anna Gordon, and 20 frame combinations for Ella Boole. While I included each President’s entire term in the analysis, there were certain years when the annual convention was not held. This resulted in fifteen Presidential addresses by Lillian M.N. Stevens, nine Presidential addresses for Anna Gordon, and six Presidential addresses by Ella Boole. The number of Presidential addresses undoubtedly had an impact on the number of frame combinations that I counted, particularly on my description of Ella Boole’s framing strategy.

All three Presidents were more likely to invoke conservative reinforcing combinations as opposed to balancing combinations. Out of her total frame combinations Stevens balanced frames (43.9%) less than she reinforced conservative frames (56.6%). Gordon was much more likely to use reinforcing combinations (68.4%) than balancing combinations (31.8%). Boole was also more likely to reinforce frames (60.0%) rather than balance frames (40.0%). This difference in Boole’s framing may not be less meaningful than the differences in the framing of Stevens and Gordon because I only documented a total of 20 frame combinations during her Presidency.

Lillian M.N. Stevens balanced the feminist and maternalist frames most often—this combination totaled 16.3% of all frame combinations during her Presidency. Even though the feminist frame was the only liberal frame that could be combined with a conservative frame, its use by Stevens indicates its importance in her framing strategy. Gordon most often combined the patriotic and religious frames for a total of 22.4% of all of her frame combinations. Boole used three combinations equally, two of which were balancing combinations—the feminist-maternalist and feminist-religious—and the third a reinforcing combination of the patriotic and morality frames.
Each accounted for 15.0% of Boole’s total frame combinations although each frame combination only occurred three times during her Presidency.

Similar to the W.C.T.U., Robbie Gill Comer, as the Imperial Commander of the WKKK, used only one liberal frame—the feminist frame. Comer used six balancing combinations, all with the feminist frame, and eleven reinforcing combinations, all conservative combinations. Three reinforcing combinations were not included in the analysis because Comer never used them in her framing strategy. I counted a total of 99 frame combinations—42.4% were balancing combinations and 57.5% were conservative combinations. The frame combination Comer most often used was the patriotic-Protestant combination which accounted for 18.2% of all frame combinations. The next most common combination was the balancing of the feminist and patriotic frames which Comer used in 12.1% of her frame combinations. The common frame in both combinations is the patriotic frame which was used both to reinforce another conservative frame and to balance the feminist frame. Additionally, the feminist frame was used in 42.4% of all frame combinations which demonstrates its prominence in Comer’s framing strategy.

Only Margaret Sanger was more likely to balance frames rather than reinforce frames, including both conservative and liberal reinforcing combinations. In fact, in 1914-1920 55.9% of Sanger’s frame combinations were balancing while 44.0% were reinforcing and in 1929-1936 56.7% of her frame combinations were balancing while 43.2% were reinforcing. Part of this can be explained by the fact that the W.C.T.U. and the WKKK only used one liberal frame—the feminist frame. In contrast, Sanger used six liberal frames—feminist, democratic, sexuality, abortion, religious, and social class. Although the feminist frame was the most prominent liberal frame in Sanger’s framing strategy—it was part of 32.8% of all frame combinations between 1914 and 1920, 28.2% between 1921 and 1928, and 32.2% of all combinations between 1929 and 1936—it was
somewhat more prominent in the framing strategies of the other two organizations. As the only liberal frame in both the W.C.T.U. and the WKKK, the feminist frame occurred in 43.9% of Lillian M.N. Stevens’ combinations, 31.8% of Anna Gordon’s combinations, 40.0% of Ella Boole’s combinations, and 42.4% of Robbie Gill Comer’s combinations.

**Conclusions**

While I do not have strong evidence to support direct diffusion links across all three movements, there is evidence that social movement leaders were influenced by ideas promoted by other movements, in particular the eugenic and suffrage movements, and sampled from the cultural atmosphere. How diffusion processes influenced the W.C.T.U. and WKKK is easier to determine while Margaret Sanger’s framing strategy is more complicated by her need to engage in more cultural sampling than the other SMOs.

More so than leaders in the W.C.T.U. and WKKK, Sanger’s constituency was more diverse and her membership less organized and consistent. Through her organization between 1921 and 1928, the American Birth Control League (ABCL), Sanger recruited membership from local chapters of the National Birth Control League (NBCL) in New York City. The NBCL was associated with the Voluntary Parenthood League and Mary Ware Dennett who was in some ways Sanger’s rival as a leader of another SMO within the birth control movement. The ABCL also used fieldworkers “who canvassed the country organizing affiliated local leagues and soliciting support of such women’s groups as women’s clubs and social work organizations” (Kennedy 1970: 100-101). During the early 1920s individual league members provided most of the ABCL’s funding.
Sanger’s organizational tactics and strategies support the resource mobilization perspective as she recognized the importance of elite resources. One of these financial resources was her second husband, J. Noah Slee. “Between 1921 and 1926, Slee gave the [ABCL] league over $56,000, a considerable amount for an organization whose largest budget, in 1926, was $38,000” (Kennedy 1970: 99). Sanger also intentionally broadened her constituency in order to gain more resources, in the form of both funding and prestige. “As Americans turned their attention abroad, Margaret had no choice but to broaden her constituency. Yet she did not abandon her dedication to civil disobedience as a means of direct action for social change, nor lose her disdain for progressive do-gooders and ‘pink-tea ladies,’ as she often privately described the new audiences she began to court” (Chesler 1992: 143). She also created a “National Council” and sought the cooperation of individuals whose names could provide “prestige and respectability to the cause” (Kennedy 1970: 100). Sanger sometimes found these upper class women annoying but recognized that her organizations could not survive without their financial support.

Sanger’s framing strategy and her organization may also have been influenced by the characteristics of her increasingly diverse audiences and membership. At the First American Birth Control Conference at the Plaza Hotel in New York City, organized by Sanger and the ABCL, there was “[a]n assortment of prominent social scientists, physicians, and reformers participated beside the former suffragists and society women who had long rallied to her support. Even a handful of her old Socialist sympathizers attended, though none of their names was included on an official list of sponsors” (Chesler 1992: 200). At the same time the birth control movement attracted women who had participated in other reform movements, specifically the temperance and suffrage movements, who brought their “techniques of organization and propaganda” (Kennedy 1970: 106). As a result the ABCL became a more formal and centralized
organization. Therefore, Kennedy (1970: 106) concludes that “Margaret Sanger did not make the New Woman possible; it was the other way around.”

In Chapter 5, I describe Frances Willard’s connections to the suffrage movement. McCammon and Campbell (2002) also document local coalitions that the W.C.T.U. initiated with suffrage organizations. Local W.C.T.U. chapters were likely to form a coalition with a suffrage organization when a prohibition law did not pass or was repealed. In this way, the W.C.T.U. was mobilized to create a coalition when they experienced a “challenging political environment” or “threats to movement goals” (McCammon and Campbell 2002: 232) which could also explain Sanger’s motivation to ally her organizations with the eugenics movement. Although there was an overlap in membership and women joined both W.C.T.U. and suffrage organizations, the authors argue that because the W.C.T.U. sought the alliances with the suffrage organizations, as a result the suffrage movement more often changed temperance women’s views rather than the other way around.

At the same time, Dubois (1998) credits the W.C.T.U. as influencing all other contemporary movements which attracted women. According to Dubois (1998: 162), “[O]ne of the major avenues for the growth of both revivalism and feminism in the late nineteenth century was the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. The success of the W.C.T.U. can be attributed to its balancing of feminism and paternalism. “The W.C.T.U. spoke to women in the language of their domestic realities, and they joined in the 1870s and 1880s in enormous numbers. Anchored in the private realm, the W.C.T.U. became the mass movement that nineteenth-century suffragism could not” (Dubois 1998: 38-39). It is likely then that direct and indirect diffusion occurred between the W.C.T.U. and suffrage movement in both directions.
As for the WKKK, the organization was influenced by both the temperance and suffrage movements. Elements of the W.C.T.U. including frames and membership both directly and indirectly diffused into the WKKK (Blee 1991, Gusfield 1963). “Involvement in temperance, religious evangelism, electoral politics, or women’s suffrage were common routes into the 1920s women’s Klan in Indiana. But we do not know whether they were the routes only for women who achieved prominence and leadership positions within the WKKK” (Blee 1991: 118). Because there is little substantial evidence of direct diffusion between the suffrage movement and WKKK it is more likely that Comer sampled feminist ideas from the cultural atmosphere. McVeigh (2009: 37) also makes a logical and convincing argument of indirect diffusion that can be applied not only to the WKKK but to the other movements as well. “Of course, Klan members and leaders were racists and religious bigots, but it is important to keep in mind that the bigoted views articulated by Klan members and leaders were broadly held by native-born, white Protestant Americans in the early 1920s. During this time period, even some of the nation’s most renowned scientists were involved in the study of eugenics and claimed to have evidence of the inherent superiority of Anglo-Saxons. Similar themes were also pursued in the popular press…The Klan members’ nativist views and their views on race and religion are certainly relevant in any attempt to explain the movement’s appeal. However, it is important to recognize that these beliefs, to a great extent, mirrored mainstream beliefs and values in society at large.”
Table 7.1 Percentage of nativist, feminist, and maternalist frame mentions out of all frame mentions, by social movement organization (SMO) and time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMO</th>
<th>1914-1920 (Sanger) 1899-1913 (Stevens)</th>
<th>1921-1928 (Sanger) 1914-1925 (Gordon)</th>
<th>1929-1936 (Sanger) 1926-1933 (Boole) 1923-1931 (Comer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Sanger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenics</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.C.T.U.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WKKK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.2 Nativist master frame (eugenic or racist + patriotic): Percentage of frame combinations out of total frame combinations, by SMO and time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nativist frame combinations</th>
<th>1914-1920 (Sanger) 1899-1913 (Stevens)</th>
<th>1921-1928 (Sanger) 1914-1925 (Gordon)</th>
<th>1929-1936 (Sanger) 1926-1933 (Boole) 1923-1931 (Comer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Sanger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenic balancing</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenic reinforcing</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic balancing</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic reinforcing</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total % of all frame</strong></td>
<td><strong>31.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>53.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>36.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>combinations (not counting eugenic</strong>&lt;br&gt;patriotic** combination twice)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.C.T.U.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist balancing</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist reinforcing</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic balancing</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic reinforcing</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total % of all frame</strong></td>
<td><strong>40.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>55.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>combinations (not counting patriotic</strong>&lt;br&gt;racist** combination twice)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WKKK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist balancing</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist reinforcing</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic balancing</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic reinforcing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total % of all frame</strong></td>
<td><strong>55.5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>combinations (not counting patriotic</strong>&lt;br&gt;racist** combination twice)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.3 Feminist master frame: Percentage of frame combinations out of total frame combinations, by SMO and time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1914-1920 (Sanger) 1899-1913 (Stevens)</th>
<th>1921-1928 (Sanger) 1914-1925 (Gordon)</th>
<th>1929-1936 (Sanger) 1926-1933 (Boole) 1923-1931 (Comer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Sanger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist balancing</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist reinforcing</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % of all frame combinations</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.C.T.U.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist balancing</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % of all frame combinations</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WKKK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist balancing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % of all frame combinations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.4 Maternalist master frame: Percentage of frame combinations out of total frame combinations, by SMO and time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1914-1920 (Sanger) 1899-1913 (Stevens)</th>
<th>1921-1928 (Sanger) 1914-1925 (Gordon)</th>
<th>1929-1936 (Sanger) 1926-1933 (Boole) 1923-1931 (Comer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Margaret Sanger</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist balancing</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist reinforcing</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total % of all frame combinations</strong></td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W.C.T.U.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist balancing</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist reinforcing</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total % of all frame combinations</strong></td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WKKK</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist balancing</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternalist reinforcing</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total % of all frame combinations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.5  Comparison of balancing, liberal reinforcing, and conservative reinforcing frame combinations out of total frame combinations, by SMO and time period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanger W.C.T.U. (Stevens) WKKK Sanger W.C.T.U. (Gordon) WKKK Sanger W.C.T.U. (Boole) WKKK (Comer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing</td>
<td>55.9% 43.9% 40.0% 31.8% 56.7% 40.0% 42.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal reinforcing</td>
<td>20.3% 0.0% 11.9% 0.0% 13.4% 0.0% 0.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative reinforcing</td>
<td>23.7% 56.6% 48.8% 68.4% 29.8% 60.0% 57.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total reinforcing</td>
<td>44.0% 56.6% 60.7% 68.4% 43.2% 60.0% 57.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(liberal + conservative)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total frame combinations</td>
<td>99.9% 100.5% 100.7% 100.2% 99.9% 100.0% 100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:

Percentages in the preceding five tables may not equal exactly 100% because of rounding.
Chapter 8: Conclusions

Social movement theory emphasizes the central importance of framing but pays little attention to framing as a process. Responding to inadequacies and debates within the literature, I have addressed the questions of how leaders use a multi-framing strategy that balances and reinforces conservative and liberal frames and whether diffusion leads to the development of master frames that ideologically link social movements. This thesis has contributed to both the theory and methodology of social movement scholarship.

I created a database of speeches and articles written by leaders in all three movements and used methods of hand coding and computer-assisted coding. I conducted a content analysis of text in order to identify patterns and themes in the leaders’ framing strategies. Atlas ti, a software program designed for qualitative analysis, is an invaluable tool for qualitative research. With computer-assisted research, data management is more efficient, coding is more structured, and identification of frame combinations and patterns is simplified because the software program allows the analyst to run co-occurrences which are, in essence, frame combinations. With Ferree’s (2003) definition of an “utterance” as my guide I segmented the text into one or more continuous paragraphs or uninterrupted quotes. In this way the utterance was the unit of observation and the frame mention was the unit of analysis so that a single utterance could potentially contain multiple frame mentions. Textual analysis, computer-assisted coding, and more precise text segmentation of utterances makes qualitative analysis more systematic and lends credibility to theoretical generalizations.
This analysis has shown that frames are not meant to stand alone, but to convey a message in combination with another frame. While leaders in all three movements used balancing combinations their reasons for doing so were varied. Although they were primarily already constituents, Margaret Sanger attempted to appeal to broader audiences, including feminists, eugenicists, typical members who were more conservative, “pink tea ladies” or elite women who donated their money and name to the organization, and activists who had spilled over from the suffrage movement. The W.C.T.U. combined the feminist frame with conservative frames as a result of the influence of leadership, organizational characteristics, and outcomes. Frances Willard was an active suffragist, incorporated feminist rhetoric, and influenced the organization to support the women’s movement. The organization recognized that women needed the power of the vote in order to legally implement prohibition on a national level. Comer’s encouragement of women to vote and the rhetoric of women as men’s partners was an important way for the organization to influence politics through their support of Klan-sympathetic politicians. It may also have been a veiled attempt by Comer to argue that the WKKK was an autonomous and independent organization and not an auxiliary to the KKK.

Through direct and indirect diffusion, the multi-framing strategy of these movement leaders was similar in that leaders balanced and reinforced conservative and liberal frames and shared master frames—the nativist, feminist, and maternalist frames. There is historical evidence that the W.C.T.U. was at least indirectly influenced by the suffrage movement and even had direct ties in local coalitions (McCammon and Campbell 2002). More directly, many women who had been members of the W.C.T.U. and possibly even suffragists later joined the WKKK (Gusfield 1963, Blee 1991). All three movements were at least indirectly influenced by the eugenics movement and the fear of immigrants and “race suicide” that was popular in public opinion at the time. Margaret Sanger fostered direct ties with the eugenics movement, in part to form an alliance with
a movement that would lend more credibility to her own organizations. More so than the other leaders, Margaret Sanger attempted to mobilize varied constituents with each public communication. Sanger’s audiences and membership included feminists, former suffragists, as well as more conservative, elite, upper-class women (Kennedy 1970, Chesler 1992). Using McAdam’s (1995) terminology, the suffrage movement can be considered the “initiator” movement, the W.C.T.U. an “early riser” movement, and the birth control movement and WKKK “spin-off” movements, or later movements in the protest cycle of the Progressive era.

Although similarities among the leaders’ multi-framing strategies existed, there were important differences in their patterns of frame balancing and reinforcing. Margaret Sanger balanced frames the most out of all the movement leaders. For most of her career leading up to the federal legalization of birth control, Sanger was more likely to balance rather than reinforce frames even if we combine the two types of reinforcing combinations. Sanger also used liberal reinforcing combinations, although not very much, because she had multiple frames to choose from while W.C.T.U. and WKKK leaders only had the feminist frame as a liberal frame option. Some, but not all, of the feminist rhetoric used by W.C.T.U. Presidents and Comer can be characterized as difference feminism. While Sanger’s feminist frame was more equality-based, she can be viewed as promoting difference feminism when she balanced the feminist and maternalist frames.

Leaders in all three movements used nativist rhetoric which combined racist and patriotic frames, but Sanger was more likely to use the eugenic frame, while Comer and the W.C.T.U. Presidents used the patriotic frame more often. Although W.C.T.U. Presidents and Comer balanced liberal and conservative frames even with just the feminist frame, their multi-framing strategy was still dominated by conservative reinforcing combinations. With their origins in the Protestant church, both organizations could not afford to alienate their more conservative members who responded to maternalist, patriotic and religious framing.
This dissertation highlights the agency of Margaret Sanger, Lillian M.N. Stevens, Anna Gordon, Ella Boole, and Robbie Gill Comer as social movement leaders. While framing has often been discussed in the literature as an occurrence unrelated to the individual who produces and maintains it, my research has attempted to bring the leaders, who are actively influencing this process, into the light. This research has attempted to contribute to social movement scholarship by examining the strategy of multi-framing on a micro-level, underlining the leader as an integral part of this process.

Although framing has been conceptualized as a process, there has been little empirical research investigating this process, particularly using the methods of textual analysis and computer-assisted coding. From this dissertation it is apparent that the process of movement framing is more complex than simply the multiplicity of frames and is characterized by multi-framing strategies. These strategies evolve within and across social movements either by direct or indirect diffusion and can benefit mobilization by attracting broader audiences and the sometimes contradictory nature of public opinion. Leaders are involved in this evolution as a result of organizational goals, through direct ties with other movements, or indirectly by sampling the cultural atmosphere which contains ideas from other movements. I have demonstrated that the use of computer-assisted coding and analysis, in this case with Atlas ti, can make qualitative analysis more systematic and lend credibility to conclusions. Although there were differences in each movement’s goals, the content of their frames, and leaders’ use of those frames, the leaders’ multi-framing strategies were more similar than we would expect. My analysis highlights the similarities and differences in leaders’ balancing and reinforcing frame combinations as well as the incorporation of shared master frames. I have also attempted to extend and refine framing theory by adapting Hewitt and McCammon’s (2004) strategy of frame balancing, conceptualizing the strategy of frame reinforcing, and expanding the way we think about the process of diffusion.
It is imperative that future sociological and historical research on social movements further examines the processes and interactions among agency, strategy, and diffusion in framing theory.
References


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