SOCIAL MOVEMENT CULTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL
IN THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Joanne Eileen Reger, M.A.
*****

The Ohio State University
1997

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Verta Taylor, Adviser
Professor J. Craig Jenkins
Professor Katherine Meyer

Approved by

Verta G. Taylor
Adviser
Department of Sociology
ABSTRACT

Scholars have documented the importance of organizational structure in social movement continuity. Resource mobilization theorists consider movement continuity the result of established and stable social movement organizations. Formal organizations are viewed as necessary for the long-term survival of the movement, since their structure facilitates the coordination of strategy and resource acquisition, and provides stable leadership. However, scholars have recently turned their attention to the influence of cultural processes on social movements. For example, new social movement scholars emphasize the cultural and emotional dimensions of protest. Continuity is achieved, according to this perspective, through the creation of a collective identity, and submerged networks that sustain the movement through periods of movement "abeyance."

I address these two different perspectives by arguing that a synthesis of structural and cultural frameworks is needed to uncover the process of social movement continuity. By analyzing the identity formation and structural changes of two National Organization for Women (NOW) chapters, I extend current theoretical frameworks. By undertaking an intensive qualitative case study of two NOW chapters, I explore the conditions under which these local groups exist and the ways in which they both resemble and vary from each other.
Two main findings emerge from this work. The first finding addresses the proposition that social movement structure and culture are interrelated processes. The case studies demonstrate how organizational structure influences the type of culture expressed in a social movement organization. I find that formalized and centralized organizations create a location for the expression of an instrumental culture, whereas informal or decentralized organizations are the sites of more expressive cultures. I also find that highly differentiated organizations may develop both instrumental and expressive cultures. The formation of a collective identity serves as a form of "cultural good" and indicates the type of culture.

The second finding connects culture and structure to organizational continuity. Participants promote continuity when they create salient collective identities, meaning the shared identity of the group is more important than participants' social identities. The case studies indicate that salient collective identities, combined with enduring organizational structures, provide social movement organizations with stability and vitality.
Dedicated to the feminists of the New York City and Cleveland chapters of the National Organization for Women
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee for their work and support of this project, Verta Taylor, Craig Jenkins, and Kay Meyer. I especially would like to acknowledge my adviser, Verta Taylor, for her guidance and intellectual support throughout my graduate career. It is in Verta’s social movement course that I discovered the wonderful area that has become the focus of my intellectual pursuits. Verta has served as more than an advisor, but a mentor and a friend. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to know her, and the important body of work she has contributed to the fields of social movements and gender.

I am especially grateful to Nancy Whittier for her intellect, patience, help and, in particular, her ability to listen. She was the graceful and gentle recipient of many long monologues on this work. She always responded with interest, wit and intelligence; all abilities that I treasured. I value my relationship with her, both in and outside academia.

I am particularly fortunate to be a participant in two dissertation support groups. I thank Heather Sullivan-Catlin and Dawn McCaffery for offering me friendship and intellectual camaraderie in Albany, New York. They took me in and made me feel welcome in a new town. To the sole member of my Columbus, Ohio dissertation group, Gail McGuire, I can not begin to express my gratitude for the support and calm reassurance offered to me. I consider Gail my sister and look forward to years of being her colleague and friend.
I would also like to thank Kim Davies, Kim Dugan, and all the people who expressed interest in my work. It made the road easier to travel knowing that I was supported by old friends and new. I would particularly like to express thanks to the staff of the reference department at the Upper Arlington Public Library. Thank you Bev, Ellen, Florence, Heather, Jenny, Nancy, Ruth and Mark for your support. I know now that I can always turn to library science as a back-up career.

To family, Mom, Dad, and Jim, Charlotte, George and particularly, my sisters, Beth, Nancy and Amy, I send my love. In a thousand ways, you have supported me in this venture. I hope someday to return your kindness.

I would especially like to thank Kim Dill, Kim Dugan, Melinda Goldner, and Wayne Santoro for helping collect survey data at the 1995 National NOW Conference in Columbus, Ohio. I also wish to thank Susan M. Bader and Patricia Varieur for their support and help with this study. I would also like to acknowledge the Elizabeth D. Gee Fund for Research on Women grant and the Rabbi Morris Silverman Fund for graduate research for supporting this work.

My ability to complete this dissertation, to a large degree, depended on the support, love and “coaching” from my partner Dawn M. Cooley. Her support and unofficial fellowships made it possible for me to finish this work. She edited every word of this manuscript, a feat for which I am forever in her debt. I can not count the times she cheered me on and reminded me why I began this process in the first place. My gratitude, respect, and love belong forever to her.
VITA

October, 9, 1962 .............................................. Born - Geneva, Ohio

1992 .......................................................... M.A., Sociology, Ohio State University.

1990-1996 ..................................................... Graduate Teaching Associate,
The Ohio State University.

PUBLICATIONS

Gendered Experiences of Women Politicians in Britain and the United States," in Feminist

New York City: Garland Publishing Co.

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major field: Sociology

Minor fields: Social Movements, Collective Behavior, and Gender.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Organizational Structure</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1. Organizational Patterns</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2. Federation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. Culture and Social Movements</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. Culture</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2. Collective Identity</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. Explanations of Movement Continuity</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1. Organizations and Continuity</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2. Culture and Continuity</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.3. Theoretical Synthesis</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. Chapter Outline</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Methods</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. The Data</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Data Analysis</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Historical Overview of Structure and Culture in the Women's Movement  
   Women's Movement History ........................................ 50  
   Organizational Structure ....................................... 52  
   Culture and Feminism ........................................... 54  
   National Organization for Women .............................. 55  
   Growth of Structure ............................................. 57  
   Chapter Formation ............................................... 60  
   History of Greater Cleveland NOW ............................ 61  
   History of New York City NOW ................................. 68  

4. Structure and Culture in New York City NOW .................. 79  
   Structural Development of New York City NOW .............. 80  
   Structural Influences ........................................... 85  
   Resource Acquisition ........................................... 87  
   Cultural Development of New York City NOW ............... 90  
   Instrumental Culture ........................................... 91  
   Political Feminism ............................................... 95  
   Expressive Culture .............................................. 102  
   Empowerment Feminism ......................................... 105  
   Conclusion .......................................................... 112  

5. Structure and Culture in Cleveland NOW ........................ 116  
   Structural Development of Cleveland NOW .................... 119  
   Structural Adaptations .......................................... 120  
   Resource Acquisition ........................................... 125  
   Cultural Development of Cleveland NOW ..................... 130  
   Grassroots Culture ............................................... 132  
   Class Distinctions ............................................... 136  
   Activist Feminism ............................................... 142  
   Conclusion .......................................................... 151  

6. Chapter-National Relations and Continuity .................... 155  
   Positioning of the Chapters .................................... 157  
   Cleveland NOW .................................................. 158  
   New York City NOW .............................................. 160  
   Organizational Legitimacy ...................................... 163  
   Cleveland NOW .................................................. 163  
   New York City NOW .............................................. 165  
   National Leadership .............................................. 168  
   Cleveland NOW .................................................. 168  
   New York City NOW .............................................. 169  
   Goal Setting and Articulation .................................. 171
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Approximate memberships in the Cleveland, Ohio and New York City chapters of the National Organization for Women, 1967-1996</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Summary of chapter-national relations for the New York City and Cleveland, Ohio chapters of the National Organization for Women</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Organizational Chart of the National Organization for Women</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Flow Chart of National NOW's Top-to-Bottom Hierarchy of Officers</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Identity Construction in the New York City Chapter of the National Organization for Women</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Organizational Structure and Officer Formation of Cleveland NOW, 1971-1995</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Identity Construction in the Cleveland, Ohio Chapter of the National Organization for Women in the Early 1990s</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Factors Influencing Organizational Culture in a Federated Social Movement Organizations</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Factors Influencing Organizational Structure in a Federated Social Movement Organizations</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Diagram of Factors Influencing the Maintenance of SMOs</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Diagram of Organizational and Cultural Dynamics of SMO Continuity</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1990s, members of a National Organization for Women (NOW) chapter declared war on a local school board for not acting on assault and sexual harassment charges brought by a high school teacher against her principal. After an intense year-long campaign that succeeded in shutting the school board down at least once, the district settled with the teacher. Because of their active presence, chapter members were then asked to help author the district's sexual harassment policy manual. However a few years later, this same organization began to falter. When an active and dynamic leader decided to step down, no one would assume leadership for the chapter and a steering committee structure was devised in an attempt to ease the burden of the presidency. The steering committee structure never worked and the governing body began to debate the goals and ideology of the group. As of 1995, the chapter ceased meeting in spite of continued phone calls from women interested in the organization.

The history of this chapter illustrates two important points about local social movement organizations. First, social movement organizations can be powerful forces in their communities when members unite and act collectively. Grassroots organizations direct the energies of community institutions, and become a political force (Button 1989).
Secondly, this account depicts how organizational vitality can change. Even when organizations attempt to adapt to changing situations and have continued community interest, without a unified sense of the group's purpose, organizations can cease to exist. This short account accentuates the importance of understanding organizational structure, culture and identity in grassroots organizations. To examine NOW chapter continuity, I draw on resource mobilization and new social movement theories. Resource mobilization theory states that social movements are made up of organizational "building blocks" that survive through the creation of a sustained structure. New social movement theory examines social movements in terms of the cultures and identities created within collective action sites. This work explores NOW as a federated social movement organization with both formal and informal structures, and the source of a culture that constructs a shared activist identity. By merging these theories, I enrich our understanding of the interplay between social movement organization structure and culture, and the influence these factors have on movement and organizational continuity.

The study of grassroots organizations is essential in understanding the overall continuity of a movement. Local organizations, especially in the case of a federated organization, serve as indicators to the direction, goals, and overall "health" of social movements. When local social movement organizations, such as NOW chapters, can not maintain their structure and presence, the national group loses some of their ability to mobilize necessary members and resources. When local organizations cease to exist, several questions arise. Did an organization die because it has reached its goals or did
community apathy drive its decline? Did leaders commit strategic errors leading the organization to die due to its own actions? Was the organization primarily working to maintain itself, neglecting movement goals? Were members connected to each other with a sense of solidarity and purpose or did they become disillusioned and disconnected with the goals of the group? Under what circumstances does each of these scenarios occur?

These questions concern students of social movements who are interested in movement continuity. Two theoretical frameworks offer explanations on movement continuity. Resource mobilization theory argues that established, centralized and formal social movement organizations are key to movement longevity (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1987, Minkoff 1993, Staggenborg 1991, Tilly 1978). When a movement is able to centralize its decision making, stabilize its resources and the mobilization of participants, and garner external support, movements continue to impact society and social institutions (Gamson 1975/1990, Gelb 1987, Jenkins and Perrow 1977, McAdam 1982, Tarrow 1989, Tilly 1978.) This perspective argues that organizations are essential to movements in that they bring people and resources together and help sustain a movement (Gamson 1975/1990, Jenkins 1983). In sum, without a strong organizational foundation, social movements will inevitably decline.

New social movement theory, adopting a more cultural analysis, views continuity as the result of group identity connecting participants to the movement. Social movement actors who construct a shared understanding of the world can withstand hostile periods, keeping the goals, ideology and organizations of the movement alive (Rupp and Taylor 1987, Taylor 1989). Organizations are not the foundation of continued activism, according
to this perspective, but instead the basis of collective action comes from the shared political identity fostered in social networks and social movement communities (Melucci 1985, 1989, Taylor and Whittier 1992). This study draws on both theories to examine the interaction between structural and cultural factors involved in movement continuity.

To examine this question, I analyze data from two NOW chapters. I argue that structure and culture are not separate entities in a movement and have a dynamic and reciprocal interaction. Examining only structural forces explains the process of organizational maintenance, however, to explain movement continuity, cultural factors, such as identity, need to be investigated. In this study, I assert that movement continuity is the result of the construction of a salient and shared activist identity. I also argue that in the context of a social movement organization, this identity must be supported by the organizational structure in order to be meaningful to participants and promote continuity.

By emphasizing both the influence of organizational structure, along with the importance of cultural forces, this work offers an explanation of movement continuity. The National Organization for Women is the largest liberal feminist organization in the United States. Considered a major force in continuing the goals of liberal feminism, the organization claims 250,000 members nationwide (National Organization for Women Home Page, 1995). Created in 1966, the organization focuses on achieving equal rights for women through mostly legislative gains. NOW was a major participant in the campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the 1970s and 1980s and, is currently involved in struggles on abortion access and subsequent legislation, lesbian rights, and women's economic equality.
The organization is made up of a series of levels with a national level that oversees regional, state, and local chapter activities. This study examines the New York City and Cleveland, Ohio chapters. These chapters formed early in the organization's history and have experienced both periods of intense mobilization, and movement "doldrums" (Rupp and Taylor 1990). The New York City chapter, founded in 1967, has a long and rich history of activism and is the first and one of the largest chapters in the United States. The Cleveland chapter formed in 1970 and was active in national ERA and abortion rights campaigns. A mid-sized chapter, the group went into a state of decline in the mid 1990s.

In order to explore the connections between structure, culture and organizational vitality, I first discuss how resource mobilization theorists view the role of organizations in social movements. I highlight important concepts in understanding the structure of organizations. Secondly, utilizing new social movement theory, I discuss the concepts of social movement culture and collective identity. I then explore how each perspective views the process of continuity. Next, I extend these perspectives and provide a framework integrating relevant concepts from both theories. I conclude by outlining the chapters that follow.

Organizational Structure

Organizational structure has been the cornerstone of much of the discussion on social movement continuity. NOW is no exception and has mainly been studied in terms of its centralized and hierarchical national level structure. The chapters making up the local level have been largely ignored in terms of their structural flexibility and relationship with the national organization. In order to more thoroughly investigate the complex interaction
between national and local organizations, I focus on the distinction between centralized and
decentralized organizations, and the concept of the federated social movement organization
that bridges these two ideal organization types.

Resource mobilization theorists view the emergence of social movements as the
result of the creation of social movement organizations (SMOs). This perspective
conceptualizes movements as made up primarily of organizational "building blocks"
McCarthy and Zald (1977) define a social movement organization (SMO) as a formal
organization that shares the same broad goals as a movement and works to achieve those
goals. Resource mobilization theory argues that organizations are essential for movement
emergence because of the role they play in bringing people and resources together to help
sustain the movement (McAdam et al. 1988). Organizations emerge when there is an
increase in some type of resources available to an aggrieved population (Jenkins 1983,
McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977, Oberschall 1973). SMOs, such as NOW, obtain those
available resources, use them to sustain the movement and achieve its goals (Knoke 1985,
Knoke and Prensky 1984). Without enduring SMOs and the role they play in accumulating
and allocating resources, a movement can not survive over time (Klandermans 1989,
McAdam 1982).

Freeman (1979) identifies three sources of mobilizable resources available to
SMOs: beneficiary constituency, conscience constituency, and nonconstituency
institutions. In other words, resources can come from those who will benefit from
movement gains, those who are sympathetic to the movement goals, or from institutional
sources. Accessing these types of resources and the institutional environment can shape organizational structure (Zald and Ash 1966). A centralized organization may adopt a structure similar to its funding institutions to appear "trustworthy" and accountable" (Knoke 1989:134). McCarthy and Britt (1989) document how tax regulations can force a collectivity into formalizing their systems of authority, leadership and decision making. The need for stable resources can also pressure an organization to routinize its resource gathering processes. Wilson (1973) notes that in formal organizations, a fund-raising committee is one of the first to be created.

Complicating resource accumulation is the fact that often SMOs compete with each other for resources. Organizations that are too similar or compete with other SMOs may have difficulty surviving and need to adapt their structures to compete for resources (Zald and Ash 1966). SMOs may alter their structure in an attempt to increase their effectiveness and fit within a particular institutional environment (McCarthy and Zald 1977, Zald and Ash 1966). In periods of movement backlash and hostility, organizations may adopt abeyance structures in order to survive (Rupp and Taylor 1987, Taylor 1989).

The political process model argues that much of mobilization of participants and material resources depends on the larger environment (McAdam 1982, Jenkins and Perrow 1977). State actions, if seen as oppositional to movement goals, can bring an influx of new members and resources. When the state accommodates, or appears to accommodate movement goals, participants may claim success and leave the movement making the process of continued mobilization difficult.
While this perspective mainly points to resource acquisitions and the environment as key factors shaping organizations, ideology also plays a role in the development of organizational structure. Organizational ideologies perform a variety of functions such as conveying the fundamental values, needs, and aspirations of participants. Ideologies also provide rationales for joining the organization, suggest appropriate problem analyses, promote group cohesion and guide responses to environmental forces (Beyer 1981, Meyer 1982, Riger 1984). Theorists argue that the ideology of the group can influence the type of SMO structure adopted (Carden 1974, Rothschild-Whitt 1979). Organizations may choose a particular organizational pattern because it reflects their goals and beliefs guiding collective action. For example, women liberationist groups rejected hierarchical structure in favor of more egalitarian and democratic groups, labelling that form of structure as patriarchal and male-identified (Carden 1974). Women's rights groups adopted a more "conventional" organizational structure in order to fit within the political and legal institutional environment. Because of the structural influence of resources, environment and ideology, organizations are characterized in two broad categories.

Organizational patterns. Resource mobilization theorists break organizations into two ideal categories depending on the decision-making process and the level of formalization in the organization. One type of organization is the decentralized, non-differentiated, collectivist organization. The other is the hierarchical, centralized, differentiated organization that has the potential of professionalizing (Freeman 1979, 1973, McCarthy and Zald 1977, Rothschild-Whitt 1979, Zald and Ash 1966).
SMOs are constituted from a variety of participants, including leaders, volunteers, paid staff members, and a cadre of members who devote most or part of their time to organizational matters and are involved in the central decision making processes of the SMO (McCarthy and Zald 1977). These individuals form specific relationships within an organization. These relationships are evident in the type of authority system in place, (indicated by leadership positions), and by the amount of structural differentiation, (the degree of delegation of tasks and responsibilities amongst the membership) (Berne 1966, Blau 1970).

Decentralized organizations have an informal decision-making process and a system of authority determined by tradition, charisma or culture (Freeman 1973). While decentralized organizations have no established hierarchy of participants or formal process of decision-making, Freeman (1973b) warns that characterizing these collectivities as "structureless" is not accurate. All organizations have some sort of structure, whether it is formal or informal, and established through rules and procedures, or through group culture and traditions. Rothschild-Whitt (1979) outlines the central characteristics of collectivist-democratic organizations. In decentralized organizations, authority resides within the collectivity, and not in any particular individual. There is a minimal division of labor and jobs are generalized with no one assuming the role of "expert." There are few rules and no hierarchy of organizational personnel. Members are bound together by homogeneity and relations between participants are personal and social. These relationships are primary in
the group's goal of creating a distinct form of community. Decentralized organizations are often characterized as grassroots because of their emphasis on community-based activism (see Naples 1991, 1991b).

Centralized SMOs, on the other hand, develop a hierarchy of volunteers, staff, cadre and officers in which lines of authority are established and made clear to all participants. In these organizations, systems of leadership are formal, proscribed by a series of procedures and rules governing interaction. Centralized SMOs establish a resource allocation process and members decide who will participate in that process (Knoke 1989). Centralized organizations face four options in deciding resource allocation. Resources can be used to maintain the organizational structure, offer incentive systems to secure the influx of resources, promote public relations, or attempt to influence authorities (Klandermans 1989). Leaders of centralized SMOs have the responsibility of being resource "managers," and are bestowed with the authority to make decisions about resource distribution.

As decision making is centralized, the infrastructure of an SMO becomes more formalized. Formalization and bureaucratization has its benefits. Gamson (1975/1990) asserts bureaucratization helps end factionalism in organizations. A formal organization with a division of labor and elaborated sets of rules, rights and duties, can help ideologically heterogeneous collectivities survive (Wilson 1973). Decentralized informal organizations function most effectively when participants are homogeneous in terms of social backgrounds and beliefs (Freeman 1973, Rothschild-Whitt 1979).
Formalization can result in the development of a professionalized SMO with a full time paid leader and external resources. Professional SMOs attempt to influence policy by claiming to speak for the benefit of the constituency (McCarthy and Zald 1977, McAdam et al 1988). Professionalized SMOs employ paid staff and in some cases, only use their constituents for organizational labor, not including them in decision-making or leadership capacities. Paid staff draw their income from the organization's activities, promoting the need for organizational maintenance. The resources available to the SMO has a direct relationship to whether or not it professionalizes. McCarthy and Zald (1977) predict that the more financial resources a group has, the more likely that the staff and cadre are professionals and the larger the SMO will be.

When movements contain a number of professionalized SMOs, social movement careers are developed (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Depending on the availability of resources in the movement, leaders can move through a sequence of paid staff and cadre positions.

One disadvantage faced by formalized organizations is the increased time spent in administrative tasks (Blau 1970). As administrative tasks increase, leaders can spend more time maintaining the organization, and less time promoting social change. One hypothesis put forward by resource mobilization and classical theorists is that established SMOs succumb to bureaucratization, co-optation and oligarchization (see McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977, Michels 1949, Selznick 1949, Weber 1947, Zald and Ash 1973). Zald and Ash (1966) hypothesize that formalized SMOs, once created, begin to focus on the maintenance of the organization over other movement goals. Building on the Weber-
Michels model of organizational change, theorists propose as organizations age, they become increasingly more conservative and can eventually merge with the status quo. Federated or franchised SMOs may escape this process by balancing their need to find a stable resource flow by developing local units that continue to mobilize participants and promote social change.

**Federation.** The concept of a federated SMO challenges the theoretical dichotomy of centralized versus decentralized, professionalized versus grassroots organizations. This concept also raises questions about the way NOW has been studied. In a federated SMO, such as NOW, the centralized and professionalized national level of the organization is connected to a grassroots and often decentralized base. NOW has primarily studied at the national level, ignoring the grassroots foundation of the organization.

The upper level of a federated SMO is a centralized formal structure that works primarily to influence public policy and opinion. The lower level consists of grassroots activism organized for local social change (McCarthy and Wolfson 1996). Nationally based SMOs that wish to pursue goals or mobilize participants at the local level may develop a federated structure (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Federation allows movement activists at the grassroots level to have face-to-face interactions with other constituents. The centralized and formal structure of the national level serves to stabilize the flow of resources into the SMO (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Young describes a federated SMO as containing:

autonomous local member organizations that share a common purpose, mission, and history and that have joined together under the auspices of a national organization that articulates this mission at the national level and provides leadership for the movement (1989:104).
Federated movements differ from more hierarchical corporate organizational forms in that members retain the right to participate in decision-making and in the selection of officers. A distinguishing characteristic of federated SMOs is that central authorities depend on the resources contributed by members making leaders more vulnerable and responsive to members' needs and desires (McCarthy and Zald 1987).

Local units in a federated structure link constituents to each other through solidarity incentives such as friendship networks, or through purposive incentives that provide participants with goals and projects to be accomplished (Barkan et al 1993, Oliver and Furman 1989). However, federation can lead to increased levels of tension if chapter or unit participants are not connected through some sort of social network. Factions and schisms occur when participants are homogeneous (Zald and Ash 1966). According to McCarthy and Zald, "the more unlike one other workers are, the less likely there is to be organizational unity and the more likely it is separate cliché structures will form (1987:163).

Federated SMOs, to some degree, have the ability to overcome the process of organizational conservatization. Kleidman argues while professionalization has been generally seen as producing a decline in grassroots organizations. In federated structures, volunteers are required to develop new skills that increase the efficacy of activism. (1994). He concludes that the growth in a movement's professionalization does not produce a decline in grassroots activism (1994:269).

Another benefit of federation is when local federated units gain a sense of legitimacy within their environment because of the national organization and its reputation (McCarthy and Wolfson 1996, Young 1989). If the national group is popular with the
public and accepted as a legitimate actor, local units may carry that reputation over into their environment. However, organizations with national and local levels face unique problems.

One problem facing federated organizations is the different tasks it must undertake. Oliver and Furman (1989) argue that national organizations have different tasks than local organizations. National organizations in order to maintain a public presence need to mobilize money and members who financially contribute to the movement. To mobilize at the local level, organizations need members who financially support the organization, but also participate in actions. Members at the national level "vote with their checkbooks" and get symbolic solidarity from the act of joining and contributing to a national organization (Oliver and Furman 1989:167). Local organizations need direct participation, members who participate and take sense of satisfaction out of those activities. Carden argues (1978) that decentralization is inherently a part of this local level. For members to participate in the organization, they need to be included in the decision-making processes of the group. Healthy local organizations operate on a smaller scale than national groups. Whereas a national group may need thousands of members, a local organization can function with a cadre of less than 20 activists (Oliver and Furman 1989).

Oliver and Furman (1989) point out that one problem faced by local units is how to motivate the activist cadre. Local units must constantly replace old goals with new to retain member interest and motivation. In addition, local units need to minimize organizational duties, and concentrate those duties into the hands of those that care about maintenance of the organization (Oliver and Furman 1989). They conclude that while federated SMOs
incur a number of benefits, they are also in precarious situation. While national 
organizations often provide a continuing rationale for sustaining the local level, national 
groups can develop structures that overburden local levels with administrative tasks. Local 
level organizations must recognize that national paper members are different from local 
active members (Oliver and Furman 1989). To survive, local organizations must disregard 
the national paper membership as potential activists to be mobilized and recruit members 
from the participant’s social networks.

In sum, resource mobilization with its concepts of centralization, decentralization
and the federated SMO provides a framework for understanding how organizational
structure is shaped and adapts over time. Organizations arise in social movements when
resources are available. The type of resource acquired and the environment the SMO exists
can shape and alter organizational structure. SMOs can develop a variety of forms, ranging
from the decentralized informal group to the professionalized bureaucracy. SMOs also
exist in different arenas, from the national to the grassroots. Federated movements
incorporate both forms in an attempt to mobilize participants, and resources at different
levels.

Although this perspective adds to our understanding of organizations in movements,
it overlooks several important elements of social movements. First, it overemphasizes the
role of the organization in the emergence and continuity of movement. Overlooked in this
analysis are other forms of collective action, such as networks and social movement
communities. These critiques are not new, Gamson (1987) notes that much of the early
work developing the theory ignored the role of the decentralized affinity group in collective
action. Secondly, the emphasis on decentralized versus centralized organizations overstates the differences between the two. SMOs are often studied for their national centralized structures, or their grassroots decentralized levels. Federated organizations such as NOW have a complex interaction between national and local levels that has not been adequately captured in the literature (for exception see Oliver and Furman 1989). Finally, while resources, the environment and ideology play a large role in determining continuity, cultural factors, such symbols, beliefs, values and identity, are also important. To present a more complete portrayal of movement continuity, I turn to new social movement theory to specifically examine the role played by culture and identity.

Culture and Social Movements

New social movement theory views the rise of current movements as the result of attempts to redefine identities as opposed to changing external structures. As the state encroaches into individual's daily lives, the locations of conflict change. This perspective considers the culture, identity, and values embraced by movement participants (Habermas 1981, Inglehart 1987, Melucci 1989, Touraine 1985). Organizations, then, are not the building "blocks" of movements but instead it is collectivities of individuals who attempts to redefine and reconstruct themselves by politicizing everyday life. The emphasis on identity and culture in the emergence and continuation of movements adds an important dimension to the examination of federated organizations such as NOW. While concepts of centralization and formalization add to our understanding of the national level of NOW, left unexplored is the community-based level and the culture and identity created within the chapters.
In this perspective, culture is an important feature of social movements because of these identity-based attempts at social change. In this section, I first explore how social movement cultures are currently being conceptualized. I then discuss how collective identity can be conceptualized as a cultural good of a movement.

**Culture.** Seen as the symbolic-expressive aspect of social life (Wuthnow 1987), culture is an institution influencing all social behavior. Conceptualized as a "stock of knowledge" individuals need to perform as a member of a society, culture, therefore, serves as a "tool kit" used by actors in order to function (Johnston and Klandermans 1995, Swidler 1986). John Lofland defines social movement culture as a "package of collective ways of approved and fostered member emotions, beliefs and actions" (1995:219). The type of social movement culture developed depends on a variety of factors resulting in cultures that vary in terms of elaboration, expressiveness and compassion (Klandermans 1989).

Different views exist on how social movement culture is formed. Curtis and Zurcher (1974) argue that the type of organizational form in place can determine the type of culture developed. SMOs with formal structures are more likely to develop an instrumental versus an expressive culture. Instrumental cultures are goal-oriented, whereas expressive cultures are more focused on the emotional and symbolic aspects of social change.

Exclusive organizations that restrict membership are more likely to develop an expressive culture than inclusive organizations that are open to any interested participants (Curtis and Zurcher 1974). What this view ignores are inclusive organizations that are both instrumental and emotional culturally. I argue that in federated SMOs, chapters may be affiliated with a
national organization with an instrumental culture, but also develop an expressive culture. This expressive culture manifests itself in organizational emotional infrastructures advanced by the solidarity incentives and friendship networks connecting activists.

Influencing all social movement cultures is the dominant societal culture. This dominant culture serves as an external structural force shaping the movement's culture (Johnston and Klandermans 1995). Movements may react against political institutions by creating unique or distinct cultural practices or they may incorporate elements of the dominant culture. Rothschild-Whitt (1979) documents how collectivist organizations purposively enact structures and organizational practices that are in opposition to dominant societal culture. For example, the rejection of the "expert" within the organization and the privileging of all members ideas, goals and abilities. Organizations such as NOW and the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) incorporate elements of dominant culture in their adoption of organizational patterns that reflect other institutions in society (Freeman 1975, Ferree and Martin 1995). While NOW and WEAL are feminist organizations working for social change, they utilize cultural norms in their organizational practices.

Once created, these movement subcultures are not static (McAdam 1994). As a political environment changes, actors may also adjust ideologies and tactics, or their amount of activism, altering the movement subculture (Fantasia 1988). Meyer and Whittier (1994) illustrate this in their study of the spillover from the women's movement and the peace movement. As the political environment changed, peace activists incorporated aspects of feminist culture into their discourse, organizational practices, tactics and strategies.
The interaction between the dominant culture and a movement is dynamic and movements can affect societal culture (Johnston and Klandermans 1995, McAdam 1994). Movement culture may diffuse into society and change ideas that shape dominant culture. The distribution of feminist thought into the broader society is an example of how movements affect cultural changes. Feminist values, beliefs and ideas from the 1960s and 1970s on subjects such as domestic violence, abortion, and sexual harassment are now a part of societal discourse.

Culture is perpetuated through the creation of cultural products that reflect the purpose and orientation of the group, and promote solidarity and commitment to the organization (Swidler 1995). These cultural artifacts or products relate to the collective action undertaken by the movement (Johnston et al 1995). Cultural "goods" of movements include the stories activists tell, or the texts they produce (see Fine 1995, Loßland 1995). Taylor and Whittier (1995) construct an analytical framework for studying culture that points to norms, identity, rituals and discourse as products created by participants within a movement. In sum, cultural goods are produced by a movement and represent the group's grievances and basis for collective action. Drawing on Taylor and Whittier's framework, I examine the collective identities constructed in the chapters as cultural good representing the group's goals, ideologies and beliefs on feminism and activism.

**Collective identity.** The reason for a group's oppression, its shared characteristics, behaviors and beliefs, can become an important component of a movement's culture. This
emergent identity is not static but changes with the influx of new participants. Individuals with different life experiences, and social situations entering a movement can alter the identity constructed (Whittier 1995).

Collective identity is defined as the "shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences and solidarity" (Taylor 1989:771). Groups articulate and act out their shared interests in the context of social movement communities. These communities represent submerged networks that connect social movement actors, organizations, and cultural institutions (Buechler 1990, Taylor and Whittier 1992). However, this identity, formed in part by a reaction to public beliefs and dominant political discourse, is oppositional in nature. Actors within a social movement define themselves as different from the rest of society. Boundaries are enacted to distinguish between members and non-members (Taylor and Whittier 1992). It is this differentiation from the rest of society that allows members to create a "free space" or social movement community (Buechler 1990) where they can define their movement's ideology.

In order to succeed, actors can not create an impenetrable "wall" between themselves and society. To enact changes in society, members must negotiate boundaries between their movement and the institutions they seek to change. This negotiation process serves to affirm the identity embraced by participants (Taylor and Whittier 1992). The amount of interaction between members and the dominant society varies according to the group's goals and ideology. Inclusive organizations, such as NOW, negotiate and interact more "openly" with targeted institutions. In NOW's case, members work to obtain positions within those institutions (i.e. as legislators, government officials, policy makers) as a result
of the ideology, goals and culture of the group (Reger 1992). Yet, while participating in
these institutions, NOW activists retain an identity of themselves as "outsiders" in the
legislative system, perceiving boundaries between themselves and the other predominantly
male elected officials (Halcli and Reger 1996).

In this analysis, I employ the concept of collective identity as a cultural good in
order to explore how members' shared identity represents the organization's feminist
culture. Johnston and Klandermans argue that for a "cultural good" like collective identity
to be used in analyzing culture, it must relate to changes in collective action (1995). A
salient and viable identity promotes solidarity among actors and provides the foundation for
activism continuity (Staggenborg 1995, Taylor and Whittier 1992). The collective
identities of chapter members guide the actions of the organization. As discussed earlier,
community-based organizations in federated structures have the autonomy to select their
own activist agendas. In this study, I assert that the feminist identities that develop at the
local level direct the collective action undertaken.

One way culture directs collective action is through the creation of a shared activist
discourse. In the course of defining their beliefs, and values, members participate in a
particular discourse which serves as a kind of "internal accountability" (Mansbridge
1995:27). Mansbridge defines the women's movement as a discourse that "is a set of
changing goals, cognitive backing, and emotional support" (1995:27) that keeps members
connected and viable actors in the movement. Fine (1995) sees discourse as a way in which
actors create social cohesion and define cultural traditions. Cultural discourse mobilizes
actors and the existence of a strong set of beliefs, values and everyday practices promotes
solidarity, even in periods of abeyance (Fine 1995, Taylor and Rupp 1993). In this study, I analyze movement discourse to discover the type of identities constructed by participants. In particular, I focus on issues of accountability, that is, the way in which behavior and beliefs are constructed within the chapter. By investigating movement discourse, the chapter’s feminist identities are revealed.

In sum, new social movement theorists turn away from the rational construction of SMOs as a way to understand movements, and instead focus on the creation of movement culture and networks. The construction of a fluid, yet salient collective identity serves as a cultural "good" that represents the type of culture constructed. By creating a social movement community with specified boundaries, actors redefine their identities and construct a politicized life that expresses the goals, tactics and ideology of the movement. Just as these two frameworks differ in their conceptions of what constitutes a movement, they also offer different explanations of movement continuity.

Explanations of Movement Continuity.

Resource mobilization theory focuses on the establishment of SMOs to explain longevity, while new social movement theory relies on the creation of a viable and salient collective identity in sustaining movements. I first discuss resource mobilization conceptions of continuity and then turn to new social movement ideas. After exploring the differences in the two approaches, I develop a synthesis of the theories that incorporates these perspectives and distinguishes the difference between maintenance and continuity.
**Organizations and continuity.** Resource mobilization theory regards organizational structure as highly correlated to movement continuity (McCarthy and Zald 1977, Tilly 1978). As a SMO becomes formalized and professionalized, it increases its ability to access necessary resources and maintain a legitimate position in the public realm (McCarthy and Zald 1977, Tilly 1978, Taylor 1989). Staggenborg (1991) for example, found that the pro-choice movement continues because of its professionalized SMOs and formal structures. She argues that these structural forces help maintain the grassroots level of the movement. While not all SMOs become professionalized, a leader's ability to gather needed resources, the "age" of the organization and the tactics the collectivity adopts are factors that determine the longevity of the organization. The more established and "older" a SMO is, the more likely it will survive growth and decline cycles of a movement (McCarthy and Zald 1987). Small, "adolescent," or organizations undergoing a period of transition have a harder time surviving (Edwards and Marullo 1995, Minkoff 1993). Groups with moderate objectives, that target nonpolitical areas are more secure and able to survive hostile or nonreceptive political periods (Minkoff 1993). The less radical and confrontational an organization is, the more likely it will survive over time.

Movement longevity is attributed to an SMO's ability to adapt to the political environment and successfully interact with policy makers and political elites (Gamson 1975/1990, Gelb 1987, Jenkins and Perrow 1977, McAdam 1982, Tarrow 1989, Tilly 1978). In other words, a movement's or organization's success largely depends upon political opportunities such as access to elites, the stability of political systems, and the ability to form favorable political alliances. Without these political resources, insurgents
will not be able to gain and use political leverage to advance their collective interests (McAdam 1982). An SMO’s perceived legitimacy also affects movement continuity.

Edwards and Marullo (1995) illustrate how external legitimacy, how an SMO is viewed by outsiders, influences the survival of SMOs operating in a national domain.

One way this interaction between the dominant culture and the movement has been characterized is as a political opportunity structure (POS). When the dominant culture shifts, either in terms accepting movement ideas or rejecting them, the type and amount of resources available to the movement also change. Actors may adjust their strategies, goals and tactics to fit with the changing political environment. Correspondingly, the organizational structure may also change as the movement participants accommodate an opened or closed POS. Changes in resources and movement legitimacy influence a movement’s longevity. Changes in the political opportunities available to a movement cause cycles of mobilization and decline in SMO activities (Tarrow 1994). A "closure" in the political opportunity structure can cause movements to go into a state of abeyance. Abeyance is "holding process" where SMOs sustain themselves in nonreceptive political environment and provide continuity from one mobilization stage to the next (Taylor 1989).

In sum, this perspective points to organizational structure and political opportunities as ways to acquire needed resources. Movement continuity is seen as the result of a mature organization with sufficient organizational structure, resources, and political opportunities (McAdam 1982, McCarthy and Zald 1977). Professionalized, centralized and bureaucratic organizations are thought to be the most successful structure of an SMO because they reduce conflict and factionalism and provide stability (Gamson 1975/1990, McCarthy and
Zald 1977, Staggenborg 1988, 1989). While the influence of structural forces have been well documented, students of social movements are now turning to the influence of culture on social movements (see Lofland 1994, McAdam 1994, Taylor and Whittier 1995, Taylor 1996, Whittier 1995).

**Culture and continuity.** According to new social movement theory, continuity is the result of both formal and informal networks that lead to the persistence of SMOs through shared meanings and beliefs of movement members (Johnston et al 1994). Drawing on "interpretative frameworks" (Gamson 1988), SMOs are sustained through their connection to activist networks that create a viable and shifting collective identity, and the politicization of everyday life (Melucci 1989).

The survival of an organization is less important than the creation of a viable collective identity capable of sustaining an oppositional ideology embraced by activists. New social movement theory does not view SMOs from a rational, instrumental viewpoint. Instead, the creation of communities and networks incorporating SMOs are achievements of social movement. According to this perspective, social movement communities are "niches" where social action creates new identities (Cohen 1985, Klandermans 1989). In other words, SMOs are more than instruments to change society, they are parts of networks of groups and individuals sharing and adhering to a conflictual culture and a group identity within a general social identity whose interpretation they contest (Melucci 1985). While the construction and maintenance of collective identity may be a goal of movements (Johnston et al 1994), its political and social significance lies in the submerged network's ability to mobilize and to influence society and the state (Melucci 1994).
Movements not only survive through periods of abeyance by promoting a collective identity, they also influence and affect other movements (Taylor 1989). Examinations of the New Left illustrate how cultural changes brought by one movement affect others, in terms of tactics, goals, ideology, identity and continuity (Isserman 1987, McAdam 1988, Whalen and Flacks 1989). Tracing the impact of feminism on other progressive social movements, Meyer and Whittier (1994) found that community and identity are central not only to a specific movement, but also in understanding how movements influence each other through the "spillover" of tactics, strategies, and ideologies.

These two approaches offer explanations of continuity through different perspectives. One views the formalization of SMOs as key in understanding how movements survive the rise and fall of mobilization and resource acquisition. The more established and formal an organization is, the better chance it has at adapting itself to changes in the environment. The other perspective deemphasizes organizational structure and focuses instead on the culture, networks, and identities created in movements. When individuals are connected through a series of networks and form a social movement community, collective identities are supported and continue to be constructed, even in periods of abeyance. Although the tendency is to view these frameworks as oppositional, both offer concepts that may be synthesized into a new understanding of movement continuity.
Theoretical Synthesis

If we return to the account of the NOW chapter in decline, several questions regarding movement continuity arise. As the chapter struggles to find a leader, it begins to adapt its structure to ease the burden of administrative tasks. However, even with the new structure in place and continued community interest, the chapter continues to decline. Resource mobilization theory would predict that this established SMO with centralized and formal characteristics should be able to adapt and continue. This leads to the question - why did the new structure fail?

One factor in the decline was the dissension among the steering committee members as to what the goals and purpose of the organization should be. New social movement theory would explain the decline of the chapter as the result of a crumbling collective identity and networks of the participants. However, why did the feminist identity of the participants deteriorate? What happened in the few years where the organization went from vibrant and unified, to dissatisfied and divided? To answer these questions I turn to work incorporating elements of both frameworks and suggest a series of propositions.

*Proposition one: Structure and culture are interrelated processes in social movement organizations.*

This proposition is supported by recent scholarship that combines cultural elements with attention to organizational form and structural aspects (Staggenborg 1995). Rupp, for example, (1994) combines an organizational approach with the documentation of an international feminist identity in her study of transnational women's groups in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Rupp and Taylor (1990) in their study of the American
women's rights movement from the 1940s to 1960s found that activists kept the movement alive through a combination of organizational and cultural factors. They argue that continuity is achieved through sustained activist networks, and by everyday organization that encourages solidarity, cohesiveness and commitment. In a state of abeyance SMOs adjust their repertoires of contention, that is their goals and tactics, and continue to promote a viable activist identity. Taylor and Rupp's approach addresses both structural factors (such as sustained networks, and adjusted SMO tactics and goals), along with cultural factors (such as the continuous creation of an activist identity promoting solidarity, commitment and cohesiveness.)

These works highlight the importance of understanding the connection between organizational structure and collective identity. This is significant in regard to the women's movement where culture and consequently, collective identities, have not been perceived as relevant in the study of formalized SMOs. If we adopt the perspective that all social movement organizations clearly form locations where activists come together and redefine the social world in a political way, then it is clear that formal organizations have some sort of culture.

This proposition also draws on the idea that organizational structures are related, in part, to movement ideologies. As discussed earlier, organizations can adopt specific structures for ideological reasons even if it comes at the expense of organization and its effectiveness (Klandermans 1989, Rothschild-Whitt 1979). I extend this idea to propose
that structure then becomes more than the "blueprint" by which social movement "business" is conducted. Structure emerges from and becomes a part of the ideologies and identities embraced by a movement or its organizations.

Social constructionists hint at the ideological ramifications of structure in their discussions of the construction of meaning in movements. This perspective sees one product of an SMO as the construction of meaning. SMOs diffuse specific interpretations of a situation that the movement wants to change through processes such as frames or consensus mobilization (Klandermans 1988, Snow et al. 1986). Through an interactional process, a system of symbols and the meaning of movements develop. I argue that the organizational form adopted can become a part of that symbolic system and construction of meaning.

Proposition two: Organizational structure and culture mediate each other in social movement organizations.

This proposition argues that organizational structure can mediate the formation of collective identities. Josh Gamson (1996) discusses this process in his study of gay and lesbian film festival committees. Gamson sees collective identities as "continually filtered and reproduced through organizational bodies" (1996:235). As organizations respond to the external environment, identity boundaries are shaped by organizational activity. Collective identities, in this view, are shaped by the environment around activists. In other words, "people make collective identities, but not in conditions of their own making" (Gamson, 1996:235). While Gamson explores the confictual nature of multiple collective identities in the formation of structure, this analysis examines established organizational structures. I
propose that participants can have three possible reactions to organizational structure. First, they can accept the structure and incorporate that into their identity construction. Second, participants can reject the structure and develop an identity that is oppositional to the ideological connotations of structure. Third, participants can adapt the structure to correspond with the identities being constructed. In the adaptation of structure, the possibility of multiple collective identities within an organization arise. Highly differentiated organizations with multiple committees and task forces, can create SMO niches where distinct collective identities are constructed. These multiple collective identities can represent different cultures within the organization, i.e. instrumental or expressive.

*Proposition three: A salient collective identity is necessary for social movement continuity.*

*Proposition four: SMO structure must be consistent with the construction of a salient collective identity to promote the continuity of a movement.*

Central to these propositions is the distinction between organizational maintenance and movement continuity. Returning to the Webers-Michels hypothesis on organizational conservatization, I argue that a functioning organizational structure and active leaders serve to maintain the organization but do not necessarily promote the continuity of the movement. As predicted by resource mobilization theorists, structural maintenance can become the sole function of an SMO (Zald and Ash 1966). SMO maintenance does not promote the continuity of a social movement. However, new social movement theorists view the organization as secondary to the creation of an identity that can withstand periods of
abeyance. Consequently, when organizational structure is supported by a viable and cohesive activist identity, movement continuity is promoted. For example, Taylor (1989) argues that cultural and structural dimensions need to be considered when examining social movement continuity. Organizations alone do not promote continuity, also needed is the construction of a collective identity able to withstand periods of abeyance and hostility. Therefore, organizational death does not necessarily affect the continuity of the movement, with a viable collective identity, movement activists are sustained in periods of abeyance in submerged movement networks. However, movement continuity is threatened when participants cease the creation of a collective identity that promotes movement goals. As Zald and Ash note, members leave SMOs when they believe their goals can not be achieved (1966). In other words, the organization can still be functioning, but if the members no longer construct a shared activist identity, the continuity of the movement is threatened.

Culture, represented by collective identity, and structure, represented by organizational patterns, are both necessary for movement continuity. If we accept that all social movements have some type of culture and collective identity, and all organizations, centralized and decentralized, have some sort of structure, then both structure and identity need to be considered in understanding how movements continue over time. Therefore, if the identity(s) being constructed varies from, or is not supported by the organizational structure, the survival of the SMO is threatened.

NOW with its federated structure is an appropriate site in which to test these propositions. One of the longest-lasting women rights organizations, the group contains both a national bureaucracy and active community-based units. This federated structure
offers rich sites to explore the interaction between collective identity and structure. While the ideology of liberal feminism serves as the foundation of organizational structure, chapters are free to create their own organizational patterns and develop feminist identities based in the community context of the chapter. The federated structure also allows chapters to accept, reject, or adapt the structure advocated by the national level and create their own levels of task differentiation and authority systems. Chapters develop formalized or decentralized structures determined by their beliefs and ideology, resources, and levels of mobilization. By examining a chapter in decline and an active chapter, I draw on particularly rich data to examine these propositions.

Chapter Outline

In the following chapters I will explore the connection between identity, organizational form and social movement continuity. Chapter Two details the study's research methods and the process of data analysis. I describe the respondents in the two case study sites, and examine some of the limitations of the study. Chapter Three presents the history of the movement, NOW and the chapters with attention to structural and cultural distinctions. Chapter Four and Five are analysis of the structural and cultural process in each NOW chapter. Chapter Six examines the relationship between the chapters and the national organization in terms of continuity. In Chapter Seven I apply these findings to lay out the theoretical and empirical contributions of this study. In this chapter, I speculate on the future of the chapters in terms of their identity, and organizational structure and further areas for study.
1 Young (1989) differentiates between franchised and federated social movements. Franchised SMOs exert complete and authority over affiliated units, while federated SMOs have a more equalized relationship with affiliate units. See also Zald (1970) for further discussion of the distinction.
CHAPTER 2
METHODS

This study explores theoretical questions concerning the interaction of organization structure and identity construction on social movement continuity. Theoretically, this study aims to extend resource mobilization and new social movement theory explanations of continuity to incorporate both structural and cultural factors. This study also contributes empirically to research on the women's movement, in particular, the often ignored grassroots organizations of the women's rights strand of feminism. Early research on NOW focused mainly on the national level (Carden 1974, Freeman 1975, Ferree and Hess 1985/1995, Ryan 1992). Grassroots NOW chapters and the dynamics of their continuity have gone largely unexamined (see exception Staggenborg 1989). Because NOW is a multi-tiered organization with a large national level that sets policy and determines priorities, chapters are similar in ideological stance on women's rights issues and broad goals. Because the national and grassroots organizations share a similar ideology, local chapters have not been examined in terms of variation within the organization. By undertaking an intensive case study of two chapters, I explore the conditions under which these local groups exist and the ways in which they both resemble and vary from each other. Qualitative methods were the most appropriate means to meet both theoretical and
empirical questions framing this research. I draw primarily on three sources of data. First, are documents, dating from 1966 to 1995, from the Cleveland, Ohio and New York City, New York chapters of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Second, I rely on intensive interviews with participants in both chapters who were active during this period, and interviews with key informants involved in the national, state or regional levels of NOW. Third, I draw on my experiences as a participant observer in NOW during the 1980s and 1990s. A supplementary source of data is a short survey administered at the 1995 National NOW conference in Columbus, Ohio. This survey was administered to 1,000 NOW members attending the conference with a 30 percent return rate and is used primarily to verify the representativeness of the interviewees. The surveys, along with the participant observation, were also used early in the research process to identify emerging themes and potential areas of inquiry.

This study employs a comparative case study design that explores the diversity of the two NOW chapters. Stoecker defines a case study as “those research projects which attempt to explain holistically the dynamics of a certain historical period of a particular social unit.” (1991:97-98). Comparative case studies explore the outcomes in cases which have been defined the “same” but are differentiated by the end of the research process (Ragin 1994:108). By comparing two case sites within the same national organization, commonalities and differences relevant to the examination of movement continuity are revealed. In particular, this work investigates the process of SMO continuity in two movement organizations with different levels of activism and vitality.
Case studies are an appropriate site to explore the questions underlying this study for three reasons. First, the overall longevity of the national and local organizations allows for a thorough examination of the dynamics of continuity. Second, the relatively recent change in the Cleveland chapter's vitality provides a source of data that is "fresh" in terms of participant's recollections. By studying an organization in decline, I am able to examine the dynamics more closely than if I studied the group after its organizational "death." And most importantly, NOW's combined emphasis on structure and the promotion of a organizational culture and identity make the group an particularly unique and rich source of data. This approach also fits squarely within the tradition of social movement research that has a history of case study-based designs (for examples see Jenness 1995, Morris 1984, McAdam 1993, Staggenborg 1991, Taylor and Whittier 1992. Whittier 1995). Qualitative research yields rich data that allows for an accurate and complex portrayal of social movements. Intensive case studies have the potential to reveal key features about a few cases (Ragin 1994). By studying two sites, this project uncovers detailed information about the chapters and the member's ideas on the relationship between organizational structure and conceptions of feminism.

The chapters' different level of activity played a role in the site selection. Cleveland, a large industrial-based city in the Midwest, has a chapter currently in decline. At the time the research was conducted, regular meetings had ceased and chapter activity was almost nonexistent. New York City, a large urban chapter with an extensive history of activism, is still a vital chapter with a number of regularly planned events and a large volunteer base. The accessibility to the participants and documents, and to the chapter's locales also played
a role in site selection. I initially considered chapters in other areas of country, such as Florida and Massachusetts, but found that these sites were not feasible in terms of adequate data sources or in terms of travel costs.

The Data

The data addresses the question, how does social movement culture and organizational structure affect the continuity of an organization? To examine this question, I use primarily documentary sources and intensive interviews with participants.

The major documentary source are the papers of the chapters housed in their offices and in different archival collections. The records for the Cleveland chapter are housed in The Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio and the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus, Ohio. The Western Reserve Historical Society collection consists of papers from two prominent members and details their involvement in NOW and other social movements. One set dates from 1952 to 1988 and the other from 1970 to 1976. The Ohio Historical Society records consist of NOW's state records from 1972 until 1989. These include documents on national, regional, state and chapter activities. Each historical society's collection contains newsletters and documents from the national organization, personal correspondence, minutes of meetings, bylaws of the chapter, and publications from feminist organizations. Cleveland NOW office documents contain information on the chapter, accounts of the chapter's activities, and newsletters from various Cleveland feminist and social movement organizations. These documents date from 1982 to 1994, when newsletters ceased publication and chapter activity began to decline.
The New York City records are housed in the current office and include newsletters dating back to 1972. A second set of chapter documents are housed in the Eugene P. Link Papers, Archives of Public Affairs and Policy, Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries at the University at Albany, State University of New York. These documents, dating from 1966 to 1988, are from the state branch of the organization and include chapter newsletters, personal correspondence, press releases, meeting minutes, issue and subject files, membership lists, and other feminist publications. New York City NOW also has an archive collection donated to the Wagner Archives at the New York University Tannament library. This collection is currently not catalogued and was not a feasible source of data.

The documents provided information on the history of the chapters, organizational activities and events. The documents also contained members' personal reflections on feminism and NOW, and information on organizations and institutions with whom the chapters interacted. In addition, the documents allowed me to identify core activists and key informants in the chapters whom I could interview.

Another document source for both chapters is newspaper articles dating from 1967 to 1996. Newspapers searched were the New York Times, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Cleveland Press and the Euclid News Journal. Also searched were articles in national magazines such as Ladies Home Journal, Newsweek, The Nation and Life Magazine. These articles provided information on the history of the chapters and on the women's movement. Articles were primarily used to verify the dates of historical events provided by the interviewees. In addition, many of the women interviewed referred to specific articles
when addressing important events in the movement, and when discussing ideas about the future of feminism. These articles added to my understanding of participant's experiences and views on feminism.

In addition, another source of data was the National NOW and New York City NOW web sites on the Internet. These home pages provided a variety of information including historical information, upcoming events and activities, and data regarding the leadership and organizational structure. These web sites were monitored periodically to ascertain any changes in organizational policy or leadership.

The second major source of data is 26 in-depth interviews with participants from the chapters. Respondents were identified and recruited through key chapter contacts, snowball procedures, and through blind letters and phone calls to women whose names I obtained from the documents. I selected women who were core activists in the chapters, many of whom were leaders of their chapters. I also sought women who were involved at different periods during the chapter's history. In order to adequately capture the changes and periods of activism in the chapters, I divided the history of the chapter into three time periods. I first sought women who were influential in founding or in the early years of the chapter during the late 1960s and early 1970s. I included in this period women who became active in NOW because of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) campaigns in the 1970s and early 1980s. Secondly, I looked for respondents who were active in NOW from the early to late 1980s. Chapter issues during this time period focused around violence against women, increasing women's political participation and attacks on abortion clinics and reproductive rights. Lastly, I sought women who had become active in the abortion issue during the late
1980s and 1990s. The 1989 Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services decision of Supreme Court serve to mobilize activists and influenced the direction of feminist protest both in and outside of NOW. Although these events and activities overlap, this framework allowed me to construct a historical understanding of the chapter’s levels of activities and feminist identity.

I considered women to be core activists if they were involved in leadership positions within in the chapter, undertook major projects or campaigns, were prominent in the newsletter or in the suggestions of other members. All of the women interviewed were at one time members of NOW, although some had let their membership lapse. My goal was to interview specific individuals who were key to the chapter’s history, therefore, the sample is not random. However, by devising a three-period time frame, I attempted to create a representative portrait of the chapter’s activists and their history.

Interviewees provided information about their own experiences and also served as informants about the state of the chapter. The interviews were open-ended and semi-structured. Sixteen interviews were conducted in women’s homes or offices and ten interviews were conducted with women over the phone due to travel or time constraints. The interviews lasted between thirty minutes and three and one half hours, with most lasting approximately an hour and a half. Questions addressed the nature of the women’s participation in the chapter, the sense of identity and community arising from that participation (including an examination of feminist ideology and other organizational affiliations), the activity level and general state of the chapter (including coalition efforts by the chapter, characterizations of membership), the nature of the community (including the
political and social movement climates, movement institutions and resources) and respondents views on the current state of feminism, nationally and locally. All interviews except one were tape-recorded and transcribed in full. One respondent requested to not be recorded and instead, I took detailed notes of her interview.

As a supplemental source of data, I surveyed members who attended the 1995 National NOW conference held in Columbus, Ohio. The survey gathered information on the history of the chapters, member involvement, organizational affiliations, and member demographics. The surveys were coded and analyzed for member characteristics, chapter longevity, coalition-building efforts, and organizational affiliations. This data is primarily used to verify the representativeness of the interviewees. The survey provided me with an understanding of member's years of involvement, their other organizational affiliations, and how long most chapters had been in existence. This was valuable in the formation of my research questions and in determining site selection.

Overall, the demographics of the interviewees reflects descriptions of the liberal branch of the women's movement by other scholars (Carden 1974, Evans 1979, Freeman 1975, Ryan 1989) and are similar to the demographics of members attending the 1995 national conference. NOW has been described as an organization with white, mostly middle class, educated women as members (Carden 1974, Freeman 1975). Of those interviewed, twenty four (92%) of the women were white with two women preferring not to identify their race. Five of the women identified as Jewish. Both in the interviews and the survey of the 1995 national conference, the majority of the participants were white. Ninety six percent of the members responding to the 1995 survey were white, with two percent
African Americans, and two percent Hispanic, Asian, or Pacific Islanders. The lack of representation of women of color in the chapters was discussed during several of the interviews. Increasing participation by women of color was a goal for many of the leaders interviewed, and the lack of diversity in the chapter was viewed as a personal failure. Other women discussed in detail how they attempted to recruit and work in coalition with women of color organizations. While many of the former leaders were proud of the diversity of age and occupation in the chapter, many of them concluded that NOW was in fact an organization primarily made up of white, middle class women.

Even though men are welcomed as chapter members and do attend national conferences, chapters consist primarily of women. In the study, all of the interviewees were women and identified as feminists. Their involvement in the movement ranged from three to thirty years.

Most of the women in the sample were employed and the majority of women interviewed (69%) were employed in managerial or professional occupations. One woman worked in a non-traditional trade and seven women (27%) were either self employed working as consultants, writers, editors, agents, historians or campaign directors. At the time of the interview, twenty (77%) of the women were employed full time, four (15%) worked part-time, one (3%) was semi-retired, and one woman did not answer the question. Incomes of the interviewees ranged from $20,000 to more than $70,000 a year. Although employment status and income are not absolute indicators of social class, the majority of the women interviewed were living what could be considered a middle class life. The Cleveland chapter had more women from working class background, than did the New
York chapter and class as an issue surfaced more often in the interviews with Cleveland activists. All of the women interviewed reported having at least attended college and thirteen (50%) had post-graduate degrees.

The majority of the women were middle aged at the time of the interview with the average age of 46 years old. The Cleveland and New York chapter did not vary significantly. However, I did interview a range of different aged women, from 23 to 78 years old at the time of the interview.

Eighteen women (69%) identified as heterosexual, four (15%) as lesbian, two (8%) as bisexual, one (3%) as celibate and one (3%) did not disclose her sexual orientation. Thirteen (50%) of the women reported being either married or in a committed relationship. Two women chose not to answer the question, and eleven (42%) reported not being in a relationship.

Twenty one (81%) were members of a political party, and twenty (95%) belonged to the Democratic Party. One woman identified as a member of the Socialist Party and five women (19%) were not members of any political party.

The women from the New York City and Cleveland chapters were similar with a few noted exceptions. More women in the New York city chapter identified as Jewish when asked about their race or ethnic background. One explanation is that New York City has a considerably larger Jewish population than Cleveland. The other difference between the groups was in political party affiliation. Cleveland women were more likely to identify as independents, while all of the New York City members identified as members of the
Democratic Party. One New York City member explained that in Manhattan, affiliating with the Democratic Party was a "given" for feminists, because of the strong party presence and its attention to women's issues.

To gain a broader understanding of the community environment and political context of the chapters, I interviewed key informants in NOW at the national and state levels. I conducted formal and informal interviews with women involved in the national level, both national board members and staff workers, and members of the state organizations during key times in the chapters' histories. These women provided information on the activities of NOW, the perceptions of the chapters and overall vitality of the national, state, and local levels during different periods. In all, six interviews were conducted. These interviews were also open-ended and semi-structured. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. I also transcribed and analyzed a speech by NOW president Patricia Ireland and a workshop on the future of feminism at the Ohio State NOW conference held in October 1994. In the initial stages of my research I conducted two interviews with members of chapters in Massachusetts and Florida, and informally interviewed members from New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Ohio. These interviews were used to pursue and verify certain emerging themes from the two case study chapters.

Further data is drawn from my participation in NOW since 1985. Up until 1993, my role in movement activities were primarily as a participant rather than an observer. However, I was able to use that experience as a source to locate potential interviewees. My experience also provided me with an understanding of the sometimes complex relations between the different organizations in NOW and allowed the interviewee and myself to
share a "common vocabulary" when talking about NOW (Erlandson et al 1993:87).

Stoecker (1991) asserts that a test of the validity of case study research can emerge from personal experience. "The less we know of a situation, the less we are able to tell if our explanation works" (Stoecker 1991:106). My experiences in NOW also served to "credential" me as a serious feminist researcher with some of the women I interviewed. Women who had extensive, and sometimes hostile, interactions with the media during their leadership were hesitant to discuss chapter business with a stranger. My on-going NOW membership gave me an "insider" status and allowed me to interview women who would have refused a non-member. In the course of an interview, women often asked me about my own experiences in the Columbus, Ohio chapter and then used those experiences to further explain the dynamics of their own chapters. In 1993, 1994, and 1995, I kept field notes of the national conferences which I referred to in constructing the history of the national organization and its issues and debates. While at national conferences, I also spoke informally with many women and men. These conversations guided my research questions and served as an invaluable source of feedback for this study. While I have not relied on my experiences in NOW or participant observation at conferences as a primary source of data, it does provide supplementary data through field notes and document collection.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis was primarily qualitative and used a combination of inductive and deductive methods. The analysis was guided by an initial theoretical framework and the identification of sensitizing concepts that allowed me to elaborate on analytic frames in a deductive manner (Ragin 1994). Data analysis proceed inductively in order to allow new
information, categories, and theoretical concepts to emerge from the data. The goal of the analysis was to extend current social movement theory by examining the features of a social situation and then finding concepts to explain "anomalies" (Buroway 1991:9). In particular, by applying different theoretical explanations of continuity to the case studies, I was able to identify "anomalies" that were not adequately explained by either framework. Qualitative analysis aided this goal because of the open-ended and emergent aspects of the research method. This method confirmed the initial theoretical framework and brought to light unanticipated findings. Interview transcripts, documents, and notes on documents were first coded into categories such as events, issues, personal reflections, and organizational coalitions. Using the NUD.IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing) program, the data were coded into the more specific and theoretically focused categories that are the focus of my analysis: collective identity, recruitment and identity frames, reactions to organizational structure, and social movement community interaction. These categories were sorted to identify themes and to draw conclusions about the topic or theoretical category.

The interviewees were promised anonymity and confidentiality. To protect their identities, some information about them has not been provided. I tried to balance preserving the richness and detail of their comments and protecting their identities as promised. This task was made more difficult by the social networks between activists in a chapter. In order to preserve their anonymity, details on some activists have been purposively omitted and in some cases, their names have been removed when citing documentary sources.
Limitations of the Study

The documents, interviews, and participant observation yield rich data that provides a detailed portrait of identities embraced by chapter members, the influence of organizational structure, and the changes the organization has undergone. However, there are some limitations in the data. Because of the declining nature of the Cleveland chapter, member's networks deteriorated making it difficult to locate some of the more prominent members and leaders from different time periods. The more active New York City chapter has maintained a network connecting past and present members and therefore, made locating potential interviewees easier. I was unable to locate or interview some of the founding or prominent members of the Cleveland chapter because of a lack of information on their whereabouts. Also due to ill health and family problems, I was unable to interview some of the older, influential members of the Cleveland chapter.

The documents collected and analyzed had two limitations. As stated earlier, the New York City chapter archives are not catalogued and consist of several unsorted boxes of material. Because of the large amount of unorganized information deposited in the New York University Tamiment Library archives, I decided not to use this document source. In addition, the Eugene P. Link Papers at the University at Albany were being reorganized which led to some confusion on how to cite material. However, by working with library staff, I was able to resolve this problem. Another limitation arising from the archival documents for both chapters was that much of the material was donated by individual members. These collections were not always chronologically complete and were missing information on some time periods. The absence of a complete organizational history is a
common problem in many NOW chapters. Often, organizational documents are moved from house to house as the leadership changes and are given in segments to a variety of historical societies and archives. However, by accessing the chapter's own files and searching out a variety of archives I was able to find sufficient information on both chapters.

While this study's focuses on two chapters and provides rich and in-depth information on these sites, the use of case studies does not lend itself to generalizable statements applicable to entire populations. The cites selected for this study do address some regional differences, but do not include west coast or southern NOW chapter variations. This study concentrates on large and medium sized urban chapters. Not included in this study are smaller metropolitan chapters or rural chapters. In order to examine the variation between chapters in different regional locales and of different sizes a broader study needs to be done. What this study does produce are theoretical insights that can be tested on other cases. My goal here is to present information to advance and extend theoretical arguments about continuity, organizational structure, and the role of culture, not to present generalizeable statements applying to all NOW chapters. What this study does establish is that NOW chapters, as I will further discuss, are culturally and organizationally distinct from one another and that by studying these differences, I am able to contribute to the theoretical and empirical literature on social movements. I next provide a history of NOW and the women's movement with attention to structural and cultural factors in Chapter 3.
ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1 The Cleveland NOW chapter did not have a web site as of October 1997. The New York City chapter home page was created in 1997. National NOW has maintained a web site for at least the last three years.

2 This decision gave states the power to limit access to abortion and was perceived by pro-choice groups as further erosion to the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision that legalized abortion.

3 The data from the 1995 National conference survey confirm that the chapters studied do not deviate demographically from a more nationally oriented sample. Women vastly outnumbered men at the conference, making up 95 percent of the participants. The majority of the members surveyed at the conference are between the ages of 30-49 (49%). Sixty nine percent of the participants were heterosexual, twenty percent were lesbian or gay. Nine percent identified as bisexual and two percent had either no chosen identity or multiple sexual identities. Sixty four percent of those surveyed were either married or in a committed relationship. The majority of NOW members responding to the survey were college graduates (31%) and most have an advanced degree or post-graduate work (45%). Eighteen percent of the respondents had at least some college education. Over three-fourths of the survey respondents were employed. Eighty percent were employed full-time. The most common occupations were clerical work, nurses, social workers and teachers.
CHAPTER 3
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF STRUCTURE AND CULTURE IN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Scholarship on the current wave of the women's movement divides the movement into two dichotomous branches, the women's rights branch, of which NOW is central, and the women's liberationist branch. Because of this distinction, characterizations of organizational structure and culture in the movement have also been dichotomous. By some accounts, the women's rights strand is composed of highly structured organizations, whereas the women's liberation strand is seen as structureless and richly cultured. I argue that this dichotomy is an oversimplification and has lead to the characterization of NOW as an organization that resembles a special interest group (Boles 1991) rather than a source of feminist culture and activism. I first present a brief history of the movement and then examine how the movement has been characterized in terms of structure and culture. I next discuss NOW's emergence, activism and structure and conclude with a short history of each of the chapters studied.

Women's Movement History

The women's movement resurged in the 1960s with the founding of women's rights organizations such as NOW, and the National Women's Political Caucus. The same period also saw the rise of women's liberation groups such as the Redstockings and the New York Radical Feminists (Carden 1974, Ferree and Hess 1985/1995, Freeman 1975, Taylor and
Whittier 1993). The difference between the women’s liberation groups and the organized women's rights was immediately apparent. One of NOW's first actions was to petition the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) to ban the sexual categorizing of employment ads (Tobias 1997). A few years later, the New York Radical Women begin sharing personal stories in meetings, a process that was to become consciousness raising. Increased publicity on the movement after 1969 brought increase in membership, particularly in women's rights groups after the Women's Strike in 1970 (Carden 1974). As movement groups from both strands continued to grow and expand, the tension between gay and straight women in the movement led to two "purges" of lesbians from NOW, and the formation of groups focused on lesbian feminist rights (Tobias 1997).

The heyday of the movement came between the years of 1972 and 1982 (Taylor and Whittier 1993). This period was a time of heavy mobilization for the women's rights groups. As collectivist groups began to dissolve, activists from both sides came together (Carden 1974). One issue that drew together the strands of the movement and mobilized thousands of women was the struggle to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) (Mansbridge 1986). During this period of mass mobilization, women's studies programs developed and feminist organizations proliferated. The movement entered the political arena and encountered active opposition such as Phyllis Schafly's STOP ERA group and other anti-feminist organizations (Costain 1992, Ferree and Hess 1985/1995, Mathews and DeHart 1990, Mansbridge 1986, Ryan 1992, Whittier 1995).
Despite this opposition, feminism is one of the few movements of the 1960s that continued to flourish in the 1970s and 1980s and maintained momentum in the 1990s. However, the pace of feminist activism began to decline in 1983 and the movement entered a period of abeyance (Taylor and Whittier 1993). At this time, the movement faced a conservative backlash against feminism, an erosion of the movement's gains and the rise of what the media labeled the "postfeminist era," a time when women realized they no longer "needed" feminist activism (Faludi 1991). The movement also suffered setbacks, such as the increasing state restrictions on abortion following the Supreme Court's 1989 decision in Webster v. Reproductive Services. The late 1980s to early 1990s brought an increase in anti-abortion activism. Abortion clinics were bombed. Doctors who performed abortions and clinic workers were attacked, and abortion opponents began to barricade the entrances to clinics (Staggenborg 1991). However, increased opposition to abortion, brought new members into the movement. National organizations such as NOW and the National Abortion Rights Action League reported membership increases, women's studies programs continue to grow, and women's movement community and feminist organizations and institutions continue to flourish (Buechler 1990, Martin 1990, Staggenborg 1991, Taylor and Rupp 1993, Whittier 1995).

**Organizational structure.** The two strands that arose during the movement's emergence shared many of the same goals but drew on different resource bases, and developed distinct organizational styles (Carden 1974, Cassell 1977). The liberal feminist strand, classified as the "older" or bureaucratic strand had participants who were mostly professional women who extended communication networks developed from organizations such as the
President's Commission on the Status of Women, similar state commissions, and groups such as Business and Professional Women and trade unions. Experienced with formal organizations, these women had access to the political process and formed organizations that paralleled, in many ways, the institutions they sought to change (Freeman 1975, 1979). This strand of the movement developed into "women's rights" organizations that focused on legislation as a means for achieving gender equality. The ideology of liberal feminism reflected these legislative goals by subscribing to the belief that gender inequality exists because of women's lack of access to power. By changing the system and removing gendered barriers, women and men would be equals.

The "younger or "collectivist" strand consisted of college students who drew on networks and organizing skills acquired in civil rights and New Left movements. This strand established smaller collectivist groups who focused on consciousness-raising and direct action (Carden 1974, Cassell 1977, Evans 1979, Feree and Hess 1985/1995, Freeman 1975). Emerging from male-dominated movements where women became dissatisfied with their treatment by male activists, these groups and networks embraced a more radical philosophy (Echols 1989, Evans 1989). Conceptualizing women as a sex class, radical feminism endorses the belief that male superiority relies on women's subordination. In order to achieve gender equality, society needs to undergo a complete transformation and vestiges of male dominance need to be eradicated. The emphasis on social networks in recruiting and the ideology of radical feminism lead to the development of collectivist organizations that eschewed displays of power or the privileging of one's experience over another's (Carden 1974, Freeman 1979, Rothschild-Whitt 1979).
Because two strands originated from separate networks, drew on distinct resources and developed divergent organizational structures, they have been considered distinct (Reger et al. 1995). However, several scholars have challenged that characterization. Freeman asserts that the organizational structures are matters of structure and style, not issues of goals, ideology and activities developing from the differences in participants life experiences, political access, and available communication networks and resources (1975). Freeman adopts the term "strand" to illustrate how the two groups intertwine with each other. Carden (1974) argues that the difference in the strands were not as distinct as portrayed. The women's rights strand focused on the goal of immediate change and formally organized around statements to which a national dues paying membership subscribed. She asserts that in practice, many of the formal organizations operated very informally and flexibly, making them similar to the women's liberation groups. Ferree and Hess (1985/1995) argue that the different strands actually strengthened the movement by moderating and informing each other's tactics. The bureaucratic strand was able to raise funds and influence institutions while the collectivists strand was able to empower women by developing alternative tactics and strategies.

**Culture and feminism.** Along with this dichotomy of ideology and structure in the movement came a characterization of women's movement culture that saw liberal feminism as devoid of a rich culture, and cultural feminism as a retreat from the goals of the movement. That is to say that the culture of feminism has mostly been discussed in terms of cultural feminism overcoming radical feminism and turning the focus of activism away from social protest (Echols 1989). According to Echols, cultural feminists were essentialists interested only in celebrating their femaleness (1989). Women's culture therefore became a refuge from
the battles of the movement. Scholars have argued that this portrayal of cultural feminism is inaccurate in two regards. First, radical feminism has not disappeared, but continues to be a force in contemporary feminism (Whittier 1995). Secondly, scholars assert that this argument misses the political and mobilization potential of women's community and culture (Taylor and Rupp 1993).

Carden (1974) argues that the difference in the strands were not as distinct as portrayed. The women's rights strand focused on the goal of immediate change and formally organized around statements to which a national dues paying membership subscribed. She asserts that in practice, many of the formal organizations operated very informally and flexibly, making them similar to the women's liberation groups. She argues that by adopting interest group tactics, NOW along with other women's organizations, are provided an "insider status" in the political and policy making arena. This membership in the policy network and the insider status helps NOW continue over time. Missing from her conception however, is an account of the role of culture and grassroots organizing in the group. Taylor (1988, 1989) argues that a stable organizational base can aid movement continuity, but organizations also need a distinctive culture and collective identity to survive hostile political periods. NOW's history and longevity lends itself to the argument that the organization has a distinct culture and identity that has enabled it to survive.

National Organization for Women.

Since its inception in 1966, NOW continues to be one of the most visible women's movement organization in the United States despite growing documentation that women are rejecting a feminist identity (Miller-Bernal 1992, Renzetti 1987, Stacey 1987). NOW has
sustained activity not only at the national level, but also at regional, state and chapter levels. Carden (1974) attributes NOW's longevity, in part, to its general objectives that drew women with a variety of interests into the organization. A multi-focused organization, NOW has been able to adapt to changes in the political opportunity structure and redirect its tactics and strategies when necessary (Carden 1974).

Scholars of the women's movement depict NOW as a liberal feminist organization that eschews radical politics in favor of more mainstream tactics and embraces an ideology that favors inclusion in societal systems of power as the major vehicle of change (Freeman 1975, Ferree and Hess 1985/1995, Echols 1989). NOW's founding statement reflects this ideology. In the "Invitation to Join" leaders wrote that the goal of NOW was:

To take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society NOW, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.¹

NOW initially developed as a formal SMO but faced increasing conflict as the membership continued to grow and become more diverse (Freeman 1975). Differences over the ERA and reproductive rights led to the more conservative members departing and forming organizations such as WEAL, and the more radical activists leaving over issues of structure. In the early 1970s, NOW began to building a grassroots federated structure. As women from the collectivist strand came into the organization, the membership became younger and issues became broader and more radical (Freeman 1979, Ferree and Hess 1985/1995).

NOW's continuity has been attributed to its successful strategy of combining local activism with a strong national organization (Carden 1978, Ferree and Hess 1985/1995, Oliver and Furman 1989). Chapters continue to function because of the organization's loose ideology
that tolerates diversity, organizational decentralization at the chapter level and a task force model that allows member interest to guide actions. The national level survives because of its high visibility, especially the political arena. NOW's "paper memberships" allow women and men to join the organization to express their support for feminism (Oliver and Furman 1989). Members who join the national level support the organization financially and symbolically, while members at the chapter level work on feminist goals and keep the organization visible.

Resource mobilization theorists offer tools to measure the level of centralization and formalization of NOW. In order for organizational maintenance, theorists predict that SMOs need a series of hierarchical levels and a full-time paid leader (Knoke 1989, McCarthy and Zald 1977, Tilly 1978). In addition, the organization needs a level of centralization in order to sustain itself and provide consistent direction to members. Decentralized organizations, one of the least stable forms of structure in terms of longevity, give members equal decision making power (Freeman 1975, McAdam et al 1988, McCarthy and Zald 1977, Rothschild-Whitt 1979). Highly centralized organizations have a board that is three or four levels above the membership in terms of authority (Knoke 1989). Using these measures, I analyze the structure of National NOW.

**Growth of Structure.** Developed from the top down, NOW was first established at the national level. Realizing that the organization would be more effective and stable if it could mobilize participants on a local level, leaders began to organize chapters (Carden 1974, Freeman 1975). Within a year of NOW's founding, fourteen chapters were formed. By 1973, there were 365 chapters established throughout the country (Carden 1974). However, with the growth of chapters came communication problems (Freeman 1975). Looking to other
institutionalized voluntary organizations solutions, leaders instituted a system of regional
directors to help facilitate chapter-national communications. In 1973, statewide organizations
were developed to further improve communications (Carden 1974).

Figure 3.1. Organizational chart of the National Organization for Women. (National
Organization for Women Home Page 1997).

The development of NOW's structure resulted in a system where members join local
chapters or remain "at-large" or unaffiliated. All chapters belong to a state organization that
coordinates local activities. State organizations are grouped into nine regions that coordinate
regional activity. From the regional level, members are selected to sit on the national board.
The national level consists of a paid staff and four elected officers. National officers include the
president, executive vice president, action vice president, and secretary. The national board is composed of members who represent regional areas, the national officers, and the president of the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, the non-profit arm of the organization. The national board is the highest level of the organization and is in charge of the day to day administrative duties of the organization. The board is also responsible for the development of nationwide actions and responds to concerns of chapters, states and regions.

NOW with its multiple levels and presence of paid officers at the state, regional and national level is bureaucratic in form. However as a federated organization, decision-making power still rests with the membership. According the organization's bylaws, officers at the national, regional and state levels are elected by the membership and serve limited terms.

![Flow chart of National NOW's top-to-bottom hierarchy of officers.](chart.png)
Yearly national conferences are the main governing body of NOW. Hosted each year by different regions, members meet to decide policy, elect officers, and amend the bylaws. To ensure a democratic process, all organizational levels including the national conference are run by parliamentary procedures, as determined by Robert's Rules of Order. However, even with set procedures for conducting business, national conferences are often controversial and volatile. Members from different chapters prepare resolutions to be presented to the membership and members spend much of their time at conference lobbying and arguing over issues. Adding to the intensity of the conferences are the elections of national officers every four years. The elections are often contested and lobbying can become intense and acrimonious.

**Chapter formation.** Because of members' input on organizational policy and the election of leaders, chapters are considered the "building blocks of NOW." Chapters can be developed in any area if there is sufficient community interest. To be chartered by the national organization, chapters must have at least ten members, formulate bylaws, and meet at least eight times a year, and elect officers. Since 1970, chapters are free to create their own structure, policies, and procedures as long as they do not contradict the national bylaws. The only requirements for officers are that someone must be designated a contact person for the national office and one member must be elected as a "responsible" officer. This organizational flexibility allows chapters to pursue their own areas of interest and to adapt their structure to changes in the social climate (Carden 1974).
NOW has played a central role in the second wave of the movement, yet, its grassroots organizations and their structure, identity and culture have gone unexamined. By continuing to characterize the women's movement as two separate branches, one with developed organizational structures and the other as a cultural rich and now defunct branch, the role that culture and organizational structure play in the continuity of feminism goes unexamined. I now discuss the history of the Cleveland and New York City NOW chapters.

**History of Greater Cleveland NOW**

Cleveland is Ohio's second largest city situated on Lake Erie and the mouth of the Cuyahoga River. Chartered in 1836, Cleveland enjoyed several decades of prosperity from its shipping ports, railroads and manufacturing plants. The growth of the city brought on the development of surrounding suburbs and Cleveland was soon surrounded by a number of large, and often affluent suburbs. In the case of neighborhoods such as Shaker Heights, developers in the 1900s sought to limit their communities to the elite and the well-to-do. In addition to these developments, the influx of European immigrants also added to the diversity of neighborhoods. Brought by economic hard times in their homelands, European immigrants migrated in ethnic waves and settled close together forming neighborhoods characterized by particular nationalities. The immigrant influence was so great that in 1966 it was estimated that one out of every three Clevelanders was born abroad or was a first generation American.

The social and ethnic divisions in the area were magnified by the fact that each surrounding suburb had its own mayor and in many cases, its own transportation system. By allowing the suburbs access to Cleveland's sewer and water system without annexation, the city lost much of its political power over the surrounding areas. During the economic hard times of
the 1970s hit the city, the process of "white flight" began leaving the central city mostly black and mainly impoverished. By early 1970s, 20,000 people a year were leaving the city, however, the county outside of Cleveland continued to grow. The feeling of fragmentation was so strong that a journalist in the 1970s was moved to call the city a "community on a roller coaster ... [with] a suicidal yen toward disunity." (Porter 1976:16)

This community history of ethnic and class divisions carries over into the development of social activism. Cleveland NOW members often speak of "getting out their passports" to attend meetings on the other side of the city. While there is a geographic division, a river running through the city, the distinction between the east and west sides is more of a socioeconomic division between the affluent white suburbs and the working class ethnic enclaves or primarily African American neighborhoods. However, this "division" did not become an issue for NOW activists until a few years after the chapter's formation.

The emergence of the Cleveland chapter came as a result of the growing media attention on the women's movement in the late 1960s. After a failed attempt in 1968, Cleveland NOW formally became a chapter in 1970, after an area woman saw a television program on the feminism and contacted National NOW. The chapter's first actions paralleled what was happening on the national level in the Women's Rights strand of the movement. Chapter members protested the sex-segregated want ads at a local newspaper and a "gentlemen-only" policy at a local restaurant and gathering place. Textbook selection in the schools and the school district's pregnancy leave protest also came under attack. The chapter also immediately became involved political and legislative issues. In 1971 for example, a chapter member ran for mayor, the first Cleveland Women's Political Caucus was sponsored,
and efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment in Ohio began. Taking advantage of the media's interest in feminism, chapter members participated in local television programs, wrote editorials for newspapers and were invited to speak on radio broadcasts.  

As the chapter continued to grow, it began meeting twice a month.  

Feminist organizing, in general, flourished in Cleveland in the early years of the movement. Carden (1974) notes that in 1969 only one Cleveland women's liberation group existed, a year later, the number had climbed to between ten and twelve groups. Borrowing from the growing women's liberation strand, in 1972, the chapter began organizing consciousness raising rap sessions. Over the next several years, the chapter became involved in a variety of issues. In 1973 two issues, in particular, emerged that would remain important to activists throughout the chapter's history. First, that year lobbying for the ERA became the top priority of the chapter and Cleveland NOW joined with other organizations to form the Cuyahoga Coalition for Ratification of the ERA. Secondly, in the same year, members participated in legislative hearings on the state of abortion clinics. The chapter also continued to work on political campaigns and other community issues, such as founding a rape crisis center. 

In the mid-1970s, during the heyday of the chapter, a new member attempted to start another chapter in the area, modeled after the successful Pittsburgh suburban chapter system. Leaders of the Cleveland chapter disliked the idea, stating that they needed to increase, not fragment, their membership. In a letter to the state coordinator, one chapter member complained that the suburban system was unnecessary and that "... perhaps she [the activist] should be told that Cleveland already has a chapter and a pretty good one at that!" NOW's
Midwest Regional director responded by refusing the request for another chapter. Citing the need for harmony and support amongst chapters in the same area, she pointed out that "small chapters have their strong and weak points."

By 1974, the chapter was the ninth largest chapter in the country, and Ohio had seventeen chapters with a total of 1,291 members. With the growth of the chapter came increased complaints about the lack of locally-focused actions and the need for more communication between chapter members. The chapter system resurfaced as a suggestion. In an article examining the proposal, members concluded that starting the suburban system would increase membership, make meetings more accessible, contribute more leader development, and could address specific community problems. Arguments against the proposal stated that the system would further divide chapters into east versus west side mentality, promote chapter competition, and would inhibit any kind of diversity in the chapters. After much debate members voted to allow the formation of additional chapters.

By 1976, there were six suburban chapters in existence and a coordinating council of presidents and board members was formed to coordinate actions and facilitate chapter communications.

The chapters continued to be active on a variety of fronts, joining national actions, such as the Sears and Roebucks labor protest and ratifying the ERA. While each suburban chapter pursued its own agenda, some issues brought unified city-wide protests. For example, members from suburban chapters participated in a protest after an area department store began selling socks that read "Stomp Out Rape, Just Say Yes." Chapter members stormed the store and "took over" the sock counter, throwing socks and chanting anti-rape slogans. The store pulled the merchandise in all its stores and publicly apologized.
While women did join the suburban chapters, the Cleveland and Cleveland East chapters remained the largest and most active. Many of the small chapters never had more than ten to twenty members.\textsuperscript{11} By the beginning of the 1980s, the suburban chapters began to merge with the large chapters, leaving only the Cleveland and Cleveland East chapters.\textsuperscript{19} The membership of the two chapters, to a large degree, drew from different socioeconomic bases. Members of the Cleveland East chapter were predominantly affluent middle class suburban women, many of them homemakers. The Cleveland chapter also had members from middle class neighborhoods, but was primarily made up of working class women. Just as predicted in the 1974 meeting, the chapters did compete with each other. That history of competition moved one Cleveland president to write in a newsletter article:

\begin{quote}
I extend my hand in friendship and co-operation \[sic\] to the members of Cleveland East. I'm hoping ... that we can forget the past and join together; after all, we're all work for the same goals.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

However, one year later, Cleveland East filed a complaint with the Ohio NOW president protesting the Cleveland proposal that would change the name of the chapter to "Greater Cleveland NOW." Cleveland East argued that the name change was misleading and made it sound like Cleveland served a "territory" larger than the name implied.\textsuperscript{21}

The strain between the two chapters did not decrease until the mid-1980s, when the growing anti-abortion movement drew the chapter together. The chapters became involved in a series of local and national marches for abortion rights and began to work in coalition with each other and community organizations. In 1989, Operation Rescue, a campaign by anti-abortion activist Terry Randall to physically block women's access to clinics, targeted Cleveland. The threat to the clinics cemented the attitude of cooperation between the two
chapters. As a result of the coalition building, leaders from both chapters began to investigate merging into one chapter. By 1990, leaders had written new bylaws and the Cleveland East and Cleveland chapters merged to become Greater Cleveland NOW. A co-president system was enacted and leaders were selected from each chapter to facilitate the merger.

For the next two years, the chapter remained active addressing both national and local issues. By August of 1990, the chapter was the largest in the state and reported an increase of one hundred new members joining to primarily work on reproductive rights. The chapter continued to focus nationally on abortion rights, reintroducing the ERA and with the advent of the Gulf War, joined with other area groups to protest United States involvement. Locally, members became involved in a sexual harassment case brought by a local teacher and succeeded in getting the school board to settle her case. Members also held weekly demonstrations outside the office of an Ohio legislator and engaged in tactics such as street theater and spontaneous zap actions on a variety of issues. The chapter was able to move into its first office, located in a west side women's center. One member began to hold consciousness raising sessions for the chapter, and members formed a feminist reading group that continued to meet for a few years.

However, the east/west divisions continued to plague the chapter. Meetings rotated from one side of the city to the other, and finally settled on a downtown, more central location. Members from the east suburbs found the location too distant and were not comfortable with the safety of the meeting location. Many members also were concerned with the location of the office, which was situated in one of Cleveland's poorer neighborhoods. By 1994, the chapter was struggling to stay alive. When an active and dynamic leader decided to step down,
no one would assume leadership for the chapter. To reduce the president's duties, the chapter devised a steering committee structure that would rotate leadership every two months. The steering committee met a few times and finally ceased scheduling meetings. By 1995, the chapter had completely stopped meeting and planning activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Cleveland NOW</th>
<th>New York City NOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967-1972</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-1978</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1993</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Figures not available(^{24})</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1. Approximate memberships in the Cleveland, Ohio and New York City chapters of the National Organization for Women, 1967-1996.
History of New York City NOW

New York City is one of the world's leading commercial, financial and cultural centers. With more than seven million residents, it is the most populous city in the United States. Founded around its New York Bay harbor in 1624 by the Dutch, the city quickly became a center of business, manufacturing and transportation in the United States. The harbor has continued to shape the city in two ways. First and foremost, because of its access and transportation capabilities the city became an economic business power in the United States. Despite financial problems in the 1970s and 1980s, the city is now one of the world's most influential trading places and is a media center for the East Coast. This reputation has led some critics to label the city's general attitude as "insolent and overbearing" (Allen 1990). Secondly, the philosophy that New York offered "economic opportunity for all" drew people from around the world (Allen 1990). New York has also been a major port of entry for immigrants, adding to the ethnicity and racial diversity of the city. The city developed into five boroughs, each with its own ethnic and racially defined neighborhoods. However with the development of road system in Manhattan, this borough became the financial and cultural center of the city (Oliver 1990).

While the city has historically drawn diverse groups of people seeking economic prosperity, in the 1960s, the city became the site for social movement activism. Central Park became a home to anti-war activists and the growing counterculture (Longstreet 1975). Activists from a variety of movements, including the women's, gay and lesbian, and black power movements and the New Left intermingled in the city, influencing each other. New
York also was the site of a growing urban population of gays and lesbians and the 1969 Stonewall Inn riots in New York City helped give rise to the contemporary gay and lesbian movement (Adam 1995, D'Emilio 1983).

The stance of the city as a major metropolitan power and as a site of social movement activism carries over into the history of the New York City NOW chapter. Founded in 1967, one year after the creation of the national organization, chapter activists were immersed in the flourishing of contemporary feminism. The strength of the chapter lead Jo Freeman to conclude that in the late 1960s "to many the New York chapter was NOW" (1975:81). The chapter's presence in the movement was enhanced by its location in one of the national major media centers of the country. The activist's easy access to the national media and their ability to use it effectively helped New York City NOW maintain a visible presence in the movement (Freeman 1975). In fact, the media's concentration on New York feminism led one women's movement historian to complain that there was more information on New York City than anywhere else in the country (Altback 1974). The location of National NOW's public relations office in New York also contributed to the media attention on chapter activities. When the national decided to relocate the public relations office to Washington in 1975, chapter members protested its loss.26

Even after interest in feminism began to fade, the chapter continued to successfully use the media. The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, NBC, CBS, and Good Morning America covered the chapter's ten-year anniversary banquet in 1977.27 However, media
attention was not always welcome. One chapter president commented that getting phone calls to appear on the sensationalistic Morton Downey or Geraldo Rivera's talk shows was one of her least favorite parts of the job.28

Because of the amount of feminist protest in the city, the chapter sometimes benefited from other organization's actions. After one hundred feminists held a sit-in at Ladies Home Journal to protest the editorial content, the magazine published a special insert in August 1970 describing the women's movement and listing groups to contact (Freeman 1975). After insert's publication, chapters saw an increase in members even though NOW was not listed as contact group.29 Being in one of the centers of feminist organizing helped the chapter grow, but it also made the chapter susceptible to debates, controversies and schisms. One of the first schisms affecting the chapter occurred in 1968, when more radically-oriented feminists began to voice their discontent with the structure and hierarchy of national NOW (Carden 1974). At the time, the chapter held half of the national NOW membership and was the most active and best known of the chapters (Freeman 1975).30 Desiring a less "elitist" structure, radical women, mostly from New York City, proposed a new form of organization that was less centralized and formal (Freeman 1975). Despite fears that their membership would drastically decrease if the measure did not pass, the chapter voted to keep the current structure.

Proponents of the changes left in protest in October 1968 and Ti-Grace Atkinson, then president of New York NOW, resigned from the group and organized The Feminists, a radical women liberationist group (Freeman 1975, Friedan 1977). The second schism came in the form of two "purges" of lesbians from the organization in 1969, and again in 1970. Betty Friedan, founder and then president, worried that lesbians constituted a "lavender menace" and
were trying to take over NOW (Carden 1974, Freeman 1975, Friedan 1977). Many of the women who left NOW to form lesbian liberation groups were New York City members.

Along with these schisms, the chapter experienced several internal disputes with the National and state level organizations over the years. Politically, the chapter clashed with other NOW organizations through its support of candidates for the national NOW presidency. The 1974 national conference in Houston, Texas, saw a hotly contested power struggle between a New York candidate, Karen DeCrow, and a Chicago candidate, Mary Jean Collins-Robson. When the New York candidate won the presidency, she found herself in a power struggle with the other officers (Freeman 1975, Ryan 1992). The chapter established an ad hoc committee "to study the national NOW scene" and published a detailed report of the president's difficulties. In 1985, the New York City chapter became embroiled in another controversy when members supported incumbent NOW president Judy Goldsmith over former president Eleanor Smeal. When Smeal won, relations with the national level were strained. (See Chapter 6). Once again, in 1987, the chapter came up against other NOW leaders when it supported a New York City member's unsuccessful bid for the presidency against the powerful Smeal.

Another issue centered around member's dues and what level got a percentage of those dues. In 1976, fearing that their treasury would be depleted, members debated on whether or not to join the state level of NOW. The issue of dues resurfaced in 1980, when New York City and Nassau NOW published a list of criticisms of the state organization. Along with complaints about member dues and financial management, members of the two chapters noted that the state was divided between big and small chapters. The authors concluded that state NOW officers needed to learn how to play "political hardball."
Not only did the chapter have conflicts on the state and national level, New York City also had skirmishes with other NOW chapters. During the emergence of the movement, other large chapters to worried that New York would eventually take over all of NOW (Freeman 1975). These concerns did not dissipate over time. In a particularly bitter debate in 1980, the chapter fought off attempts by another NOW member to start a chapter based in Manhattan.

Again in 1986, the president of the Bronx NOW chapter voiced her concerns about New York City in a letter to the state NOW president:

New York City NOW has so many people that belong, that it does not give the smaller chapters a chance, not unless it is ok [sic] with NYC. It is not written that NYC is right all the time. We all have ideas which also must be considered....

One factor contributing to the position of the chapter has been the constant location of its office in Manhattan, the "heart" of the city. Even after three moves prompted by rising rents and financial difficulties, the chapter continued to maintain an office in the Manhattan area, a location accessible to women throughout the city. The existence of paid staff also added to the chapter's accessibility. Although currently, only the president or executive director is paid, in the past, the chapter had a variety of paid staff. The chapter also maintains a "Women's Helpline," a phone line dedicated to providing information and referrals to the community. During periods of heavy mobilization the chapter was able to increase paid staff and services.

In 1985, the helpline expanded to eight incoming phone lines, and in 1988, the chapter hired a full-time staff member to coordinate volunteers answering the phones.

Because of its location and media connections, the chapter has been able to mobilize large numbers of activists. One of the first large events was the Strike for Women's Equality held in 1970. The march brought an influx of members into the organization (Carden 1974,
Freeman 1975). New York NOW, along with other chapters, grew dramatically as a result with some groups seeing an increase in membership between 50 to 70 percent (Carden 1974, Freeman 1975). By 1987, the chapter was estimated to have 3,000 members and in 1993, after a flurry of pro-choice organizing resulting from the Webster v. Reproductive Health Services decision, membership rose to 4,000.\textsuperscript{39}

The chapter has continued to focus on national issues such as the ERA, presidential political campaigns, and abortion rights. Actions such as the fourteenth anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, drew large numbers of participants and well-known women's movement speakers, such as Gloria Steinem. When Operation Rescue targeted New York City abortion clinics in the spring and fall of 1988, NOW joined with other groups to form Project Defend and defended clinics from anti-choice forces.\textsuperscript{40} The chapter also maintained a presence nationally, sending 165 busses of New York City activists to the NOW-sponsored 1989 March of Women's Equality, Women's Lives, a demonstration for passing the ERA and keeping abortion legal.\textsuperscript{41} Even the locally focused "zap" actions of the chapter were cast in terms of national attention. In one such action, activists handed out brochures at an area jewelers on "How to be a legally informed bride" protesting the store's advertisements entitled "How to be a Registered Bride." The protest drew national attention to the chapter.\textsuperscript{42}

Currently, the chapter maintains a variety of committees where most of the work is done. Committees sponsor actions, workshops and educational programs. Several of the former presidents interviewed noted that the work of the organization was really done in the committees and not in the general business or membership meetings. One longtime committee,
consciousness raising (CR), was adapted from the radical strand of the movement and began at the chapter in 1972.\textsuperscript{43} Twenty-five years later, consciousness-raising continues to be a mainstay of the organization and serves to recruit women into the chapter.

However, a large base of approximately 2,000 members, and activist core has not kept the chapter out of financial difficulties. In 1992, the chapter began a donor campaign to help the chapter pull out its "a constant money crisis." Drawing on its reputation, the call for donors reminded members that "NOW-NYC is the largest chapter of the most important women's organization in the world."\textsuperscript{44} A year later, the chapter relocated its offices in an effort to cut back on rising expenses that put the chapter "in a large financial bind."\textsuperscript{45} The chapter continues to deal with financial problems and once again moved its offices to a less expensive location in 1995. As of 1996, the chapter continued to struggle with finances, including not being able to publish the newsletter on a regular basis.\textsuperscript{40}

Despite these problems, committees continue to meet regularly, and volunteers still answer the helpline. Proud of its history, the chapter continues to promote itself as "NYC, the founding chapter of NOW" on all its stationary and in its newsletter mastheads\textsuperscript{47} and sponsors on-going groups on divorce and separation support and legal clinics, consciousness raising, and special workshops on issues such as surviving rape. The infrastructure of committees, officers and the board of directors is still in place and the chapter currently has a core activist group ranging from twenty to forty activists.\textsuperscript{48} In the next chapter, I examine the interaction between structure and culture in the New York City chapter.
ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 3


3 This observation is based on statements of interviewees and my own observations of the 1989, 1991, 1993, and 1995 national conferences.


5 "Notes On Cleveland NOW History." Undated. Files of the Cleveland NOW chapter.

6 "Notes On Cleveland NOW History." Undated. Files of the Cleveland NOW chapter.

7 NOW, Newsletter of the Cleveland Chapter of the National Organization for Women. Untitled. March 1972, National Organization for Women archives. Jean Tussey Papers, Box 1, Folder 2. Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio [Hereafter referred to as WRHS]

8 "Notes On Cleveland NOW History." Undated. Files of the Cleveland NOW chapter.

9 "Notes On Cleveland NOW History." Undated. Files of the Cleveland NOW chapter.


Correspondence between Lana Moretsky and the National NOW records coordinator. November, 13, 1975. National Organization for Women archives. Lana Moretsky Papers, Box 1, Folder 8. WRHS.


Untitled history of Cleveland NOW. 1976. Files of Cleveland NOW chapter.

 Activists offer different estimates of the size of the suburban chapters. One member claimed that the chapters never had more than ten members with an active core of one or two. Other members remember the chapters as having up to thirty members with an active core of ten. I have provided a range that seems most likely. Because of the record keeping by the chapters and the state, and the fact that membership figures for the area were, at times, combined, I was not able to verify the size of many of the suburban chapters.


Correspondence to Joan Roarke, President Ohio NOW from Jill Lange, Cleveland East chapter. August 4, 1982. Files of the Cleveland NOW chapter.

Correspondence between Ohio NOW treasurer and Cleveland East NOW president. May 17, 1989. Ohio National Organization for Women archives. Box 6, Ohio NOW files. OHS.


*Cleveland NOW* continues to be listed as a functioning chapter on the National NOW Home Page. However, the chapter has no contact phone number or e-mail address. Chapter must contain at least ten members to continue to function within NOW.


30 It is difficult to get accurate numbers of memberships for the New York City chapter in the early years. Part of the problem is that the chapter was referred to as the New York County, New York, and New York City chapters in state NOW records until 1977. The most accurate estimate of the chapter's size in the late sixties would be approximately 600 members in 1967. The next membership figure recorded is 606 members in 1977 which made the chapter the largest in New York State. Series 2, Box 3, New York State NOW Records 1977-1978, Lists - Chapters, Delegates, Etc. 1976-1978, "List of State Chapters," Feb. 16, 1977. Link Papers.


36 Correspondence between State President and Bronx NOW President. May 10, 1986. National Organization for Women - New York State Records 1966-88, Series 2, Box 7, President's Subject Files. Link Papers.


47 This statement appears on all newsletters mastheads and chapter stationary.

48 Personal communication with New York City NOW President, July 1996.
CHAPTER 4

STRUCTURE AND CULTURE IN NEW YORK CITY NOW

In this chapter, I examine the interaction between organizational structure and culture in grassroots SMOs to reveal the dynamics of social movement continuity. Two theoretical perspectives offer different positions on the continuity of SMOs. According to resource mobilization theorists, strong organizational structure is key to the maintenance of SMOs and consequently, social movements (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1987, Minkoff 1993, Staggenborg 1991, Tilly 1978). This perspective indicates that the New York City chapter has developed a formal and centralized organizational structure in order to survive for thirty years. However, new social movement theorists believe a salient group identity and culture are essential to the continuity of social movements over time (Rupp and Taylor 1990, Taylor and Whittier 1992). This perspective asserts that the chapter has developed an organizational identity and culture that continues to give meaning to member’s collective action and consequently, sustains the organization through periods of backlash and abeyance. Drawing on these theories, I examine the reciprocal and dynamic nature of structure and culture in the New York City chapter of NOW. Specifically, I discuss how the chapter’s highly developed organizational structure creates an environment for the construction of two different collective identities. I
conceptualize these distinct identities as cultural goods representing the cultures that coexist within the chapter. This chapter explores the interrelated processes of structure and culture in social movements. In this study, I assert that organizational structure and culture shape each other in a reciprocal process. To investigate this proposition, I begin by describing the structural organization of the New York City chapter and the forces influencing the adoption of its particular structure. By exploring the cultural processes of the chapter, I examine how organizational structure plays a role in member’s construction of the meaning of activism. Through this examination, I find that the chapter is not a monolithic structure, but instead, fosters multiple cultures and identities supported by NOW’s federated organizational structure. One culture is instrumental in nature, represented by a goal-oriented feminist identity that I label political feminism. Political feminism incorporates the ideology that a developed infrastructure assists the chapter in achieving political and legislative gains. The other oppositional identity is expressive in nature, represented by a more emotionally-based feminist identity. I label this identity empowerment feminism. Taylor (1996) documents the importance examining emotional ties in the study of social movement culture. Constructed within the boundaries of an autonomous consciousness raising committee, empowerment feminism focuses on the personal empowerment and emotional expression of women as they explore everyday experience of gender oppression.

**Structural Development of New York City NOW**

Soon after its formation in 1967, the New York City chapter developed into a centralized and formal structure, modeled after National NOW’s infrastructure. The leadership system of the chapter has a clear chain of authority established through a hierarchy of officers.
Officers in the chapter consist of the president, multiple vice presidents, a secretary, a treasurer, and a board of directors. New York City NOW differed from other chapters because it was able to professionalize its leadership and pay either the president or an executive director a full-time wage.¹ In addition to a paid leader, the chapter also hired part-time chapter administrators to answer phones and coordinate volunteers and other staff members to perform duties.

Although the chapter has added and revised officer positions during its history, the overall leadership system has remained essentially the same throughout its history. As the chapter membership grew, the positions of newsletter editor, public relations, and fundraising director were added. The hierarchy of officers facilitates communication between other institutions such as funding organizations, political bodies and the media, by clearly establishing a chain of leadership and authority within the chapter. For example, members of the press can readily identify the chapter spokesperson by either contacting the publicity committee or the president. Therefore, the structure adopted facilitates productive communication and interactions between the chapter and other institutions in society. Chapter business and activities are formalized through a series of bylaws approved by the membership. For example, the bylaws specifically state the procedure for elections including specifying the time and date of elections, voter eligibility, and balloting procedures.²

An important feature of the chapter’s infrastructure is the existence of a chapter office in Manhattan. The office serves several important functions for the chapter. It is a site to conduct the daily operations and a place for members to gather and plan activities. In New York City, the office is the site of committee meetings, in addition to monthly member action and board meetings.³ On-going workshops offered at the office range in topics from workplace
discrimination, growing older, divorce legal clinic, to assertiveness training. In addition to providing a location for members to meet, the office gives the chapter a sense of permanence. Unlike many NOW chapters, New York City has retained an office throughout its history. Most chapters move their telephone and files from house to house as members elect new officers. By maintaining an office and a paid leader, the New York City chapter more closely resembles national NOW and large non-profit organizations as opposed to other NOW chapters.

The chapter has a system of on-going and active committees and subcommittees. Regular chapter committees include family relations, consciousness raising, lesbian rights, media reform, psychology, fundraising, and reproductive rights. While committees tend to focus on issues, subcommittees concentrate on sustaining the infrastructure. Topics of subcommittees include working on communication and media, producing leaflets, tabling at different locations in the city, and coordinating volunteers. Several members noted that much of the chapter’s work is done in committees. Periodically, this departmentalizing of activism has concerned leaders. For example, in the late 1970s one president called for members to remember the goals of the entire organization. She wrote in a newsletter article:

We can get so absorbed with committee work and projects that we lose sight of our goals, the motivating force behind our day-to-day work for the chapter. At this time, when NOW and the women’s movement as a whole is undergoing rapid transformation, we need to examine the direction we are taking very critically and self-consciously.

One of the oldest committees in the chapter is the consciousness raising (CR) committee. The chapter institutionalized CR in 1972 when it began to hold sessions in the NOW office. At this time in the women’s movement, liberal feminist groups began to bring
CR into their organizations in an attempt to help women rethink their lives and understand the importance of feminist organizing (Carden 1974). Consciousness raising is a process where women meet and discuss their experiences in a confidential situation. The goal of CR is to illuminate how women's personal experiences are linked to systematic systems of sexism and discrimination. The committee continues to be one of the largest and most active in the chapter.  

The introduction of CR into the formally structured women's rights groups posed a dilemma in terms of structure and ideology for the chapter. CR developed in the women's liberation strand of the movement that emphasized decentralized groups with no formal process of decision making. CR groups formed around principles that no one person was an authority or expert, and leaders were not needed. The chapter, based on National NOW's structure, built a hierarchy of authority and encouraged women to see themselves as leaders. To be true to the process, committee members adopted a more decentralized style with no official leader of the committee and appointed co-leaders for all CR sessions. Despite these efforts, the process of CR in NOW is more formal than in women's rap groups. In the women's liberation strand of the movement, CR groups were often held in women's homes and other informal settings. Instead of meeting in homes, sessions conducted by New York City NOW were held in the chapter office. However, committee leaders tried to create the same feeling of an intimate setting. One member, who had done CR outside of the chapter, laughing noted that "NOW met in an office and they tried to make it look homey with some throw cushions."
Because of the decentralized nature of the committee and its focus on emotional empowerment over legislation gains, the CR committee became separated from the rest of the chapter. One member described the interaction between the committee and the rest of the chapter. She said, "It's the biggest committee of the chapter. It is the backbone of the chapter. However it is still not the goal of the chapter. Legislation still is." Another member of the CR committee characterized the relationship with the chapter as an "us versus them" situation. One committee member bitterly described how members of the CR committee were perceived:

The CR group was a fringe group of touchy feely people who didn't really understand what the issues were and that you really had to do all this marching and organizing and whatever. They didn't have a legislative analysis. They, the CR group, weren't doing real work and there was a very clear feeling about that.

Members involved in CR were not the only ones who felt that the committee was separated from the rest of the chapter. One former president confided that she never knew what "they," referring to the committee, were doing. She added however, that the committee did come through when the chapter needed help.

In sum, the New York City chapter developed a hierarchy of officers modeled on National NOW. Leadership in the chapter was professionalized through employment of a full-time leader and support staff. The chapter also developed a system of committees and subcommittees with consciousness raising being one of the largest and most active chapters. The CR committee deviated from the chapter's formal structure by developing a more decentralized and informal structure. This decentralized structure was the result of committee
member’s attempt to adhere to women’s liberation principles of consciousness raising. This structural and ideological difference resulted in the committee becoming separated from the rest of the chapter.

**Structural Influences.** One factor influencing the chapter’s developed infrastructure is the organizational environment surrounding the chapter. New York City has a multitude of non-profit organizations that compete for resources. In particular, the chapter competed with other SMOs and non-profit organizations. One activist recalled how this competition began in the early years of the movement and compelled New York City NOW to carve its own niche to appeal to potential members. She said:

I think it is so much clearer in New York because you have got to realize ... there are lots of different women’s groups. ... You have upper crust ladies’ clubs with all the trappings of feminism. You have the National Women’s Political Caucus. So even from day one ... NOW in this town competed with a variety of other women’s groups and so it was always differentiated.

Along with competition from other groups, the "big city" culture surrounding the chapter also influenced structural development. Based in a large city, chapter leaders felt a need to provide an office and phone lines to facilitate contact with the community. Activists in the chapter report that a formal structure with a paid staff is necessary for the chapter to appear legitimate within this organizational environment and the New York City culture. One leader explained, "New Yorkers are a very sophisticated bunch and they have very high expectations of things." To facilitate large membership meetings, chapter members strategically rent a large office centrally located in the city. When the office relocated in 1993, leaders touted the new location as more convenient for the "almost 4,000 members in NYC, and 11,000 at large
members in Manhattan." One ex-president explained that an office is "almost a necessity for the big city. It is certainly an expectation of members." She added that "sometimes our meetings are just so large that you couldn't impose on someone's home."

Another force behind the structural development of the chapter is its relationship with National NOW. The national level of a federated movement can facilitate the development of chapters (Oliver and Furman 1989). However, in New York City, the issue of dues caused conflict within the organization. The chapter relies on member's dues as a major resource and this dependence has become a source of antagonism between National NOW and chapter. National, state, and chapter levels divide NOW membership dues between themselves. The chapter receives a rebate check each month from National NOW for its share of the dues. Chapters need an adequate system of record-keeping to assure they receive their portion of the dues. In New York City, the size of the dues rebate is a contested issue with National NOW.

As one president explained, the chapter feels entitled to a larger portion of dues than the smaller chapters:

There were a handful of chapters, like a single handful of chapters, that had an office in the country. Almost all of the [other] NOW chapters were volunteer organizations and they didn't have rent to pay every month. ... But you know, we had a full scale office in New York with phone lines, with staff, with New York rents and we would get a little cut of renewal dues from National NOW like every other chapter got but it was really not in any way enough to sustain us. So there was always this effort to get more money from National NOW ... [for] financial support we felt big city chapter really needed.

In addition to the administrative demands and struggle over the portion of dues, chapter members perceived National NOW as a fund-raising competitor. Because New York City is a large metropolitan area, it is a prime location to conduct fund raising. Both the chapter and the national level target the city as a fund-raising site. One president in the late 1980s remembered
the antagonism between the chapter and national. She said, "So instead of supporting us, they were fighting us for fundraising dollars. I mean they were coming into New York and not telling us."

In sum, several factors influenced the structural development of the chapter. First, the chapter’s environment is made up of a multitude of SMOs and non-profit organizations. These organizations compete for members and other resources. Adding to this sense of competition are the expectations of city dwellers. As noted by chapter members, New Yorkers expect a certain sophistication in their organizations. Also influencing the structural development of the chapter is its relationship with National NOW. A level of formalization is needed in the chapter to meet administrative requirements of the national level. Chapters that do not have adequate accounting procedures have difficulty documenting their portion of members' dues. New York City NOW faces an additional challenge with National. The two groups compete within the same arena for fundraising dollars. A developed and formal structure helps the chapter compete with National NOW for fund-raiser dollars.

**Resource acquisition.** In New York City, obtaining adequate resources has been a constant struggle. The largest problem facing the chapter is the large amount of money needed to pay the president, staff and office rent. The office has moved three times in the history of the chapter, twice for financial reasons and once as a result of both cramped quarters and increasing rents. After the first move in 1985, the chapter finances stabilized. However, the president did not want members to forget finances. She wrote, "Grassroots advocacy
organizations live pretty much from hand to hand, and we are no exception."9 The second move, in 1993, was also the result of lack of finances. The chapter relocated to a smaller office again in 1995 for financial reasons.10

One way an organization can maintain itself and continue to mobilize participants is through the development of an administrative cadre devoted to the operations of the organization (McCarthy and Zald 1977, Oliver and Furman 1989). In the case of New York City NOW, the president and executive director serve as this cadre, taking care of the financial concerns of the chapter. Several presidents commented on how they spent large amounts of time "chasing away bill collectors." One president recalled during her presidency, how the chapter struggled for resources.

It was really a hand-to-mouth kind of thing and I think that I always felt that there was financial support to be had out there in the world and that as a chapter we were failing to get our hands on it.

One president noted how the constant need for resources affected the amount of activism she accomplished. She said of her term, "I was not nearly as political as I would have like to have been as president and I had some very strong notions of what I would want to do but the chapter was in such terrible, terrible [financial] shape." Another former president commented on the relationship between activism, resources, and building the chapter’s infrastructure. She said:

They [the leaders] don't know how to do fund-raising. It is a big problem. They are always in debt. ... It hinders their work. They just go on and put out fires and deal with issues because that is where they are coming from and they don't put any energy into the infrastructure of the chapter.
The chapter also experienced a constant need for volunteers to help with administrative duties. In periods of heavy mobilization and activity, leaders reported that the office had a sufficient amount of volunteers. However, in slower periods, it became difficult to find members who had time to work in the office. Members were not always aware of some of the "invisible" administrative tasks created by the chapter's developed infrastructure. For example, a 1985 newsletter article addressed the need for volunteers to staff eight incoming phone lines, do membership processing, and work on a direct mail marketing project. The article read:

As daytime workers in the NOW-New York City Chapter office, we have an overview of the nuts and bolts operations of the organization. As in any office, there is a whole range of work that needs to be done that is not initially apparent.

In sum, the external environment of the chapter influenced its development of a complex and formalized structure. The competition for resources among SMOs, the need to fit within a "sophisticated" big city culture and the struggle with National NOW about dues drove chapter members to continually work to maintain an organizational structure that resembled National NOW. Along with developing a hierarchy of authority and leadership through a series of formal bylaws, the chapter also instituted a series of committees, subcommittees, workshops and programs. One of the oldest committees is the consciousness raising committee that employs a more decentralized structure and is consequently seen as separate from the rest of the chapter. The demands from this infrastructure place the chapter in constant need of resources. However, despite years of fighting with National NOW about the division of dues, and struggling to gather resources to pay rent and salaries, chapter members have not considered changing the infrastructure. Former presidents interviewed accepted the
struggle for resources as part of the job and continued to work to maintain the organization’s professionalized leadership and office. I now turn to an examination of the culture in the chapter, and the development of multiple collective identities.

**Cultural Development of New York City NOW**

The existence of two distinct ideologies in the chapter indicates that an instrumental and expressive culture co-exist within the chapter. One ideology is based in the belief that a formalized organizational structure is a tool aiding the accomplishment of political goals. The chapter’s expressive culture evolves from the principles of consciousness raising and an ideology that privileges women’s experiences over legislation action. To analyze and understand these cultures, I describe the multiple feminist identities constructed within the chapter. Collective identities are cultural goods reflecting the purpose and orientation of the group. These feminist identities represent the culture in New York City NOW and direct the collective action undertaken by members.

Examining the “internal accountability” discourse of chapter activists reveals participants’ behaviors and beliefs (Mansbridge 1995:27). These behaviors and beliefs are an expression of the identities embraced by chapter members. Three processes define a group’s collective identity (Taylor and Whittier 1992). First, a group expresses a shared consciousness, revealed in the behavior and belief norms in the chapter. Second, group members define boundaries between themselves and others in society. The creation of boundaries allows for the definition and creation of ideology in a “free space” (Buechler 1990). Depending on the exclusivity of group membership, participants need to negotiate between the dominant society and the group or social movement community. To explore the culture of the chapter, I first
Figure 4.1 Identity construction in the New York City chapter of the National Organization for Women.

turn to the development of an instrumental culture represented by a political feminist identity. I then examine the creation of an expressive culture represented by an empowerment feminist identity. I then discuss whether these identities fit theoretical assumptions of federated SMOs.

**Instrumental Culture.** The instrumental culture of the chapter is represented by the ideology embraced by members. All organizations have ideologies that convey the fundamental values and beliefs of chapter members (Beyer 1981, Meyer 1982, Riger 1984). This ideology supports the organizational structure adopted by group members. The chapter’s centralized, formal structure with set authority systems and differentiated tasks and responsibilities is supported by an ideology that equates structural development with goal accomplishment. Therefore, efforts to increase the infrastructure were not solely the result of the chapter’s need to compete within a certain culture and organizational environment.
Instead, members view a developed infrastructure as a way to accomplish chapter goals. A central belief of the chapter's instrumental culture is that structure contributes to organizational efficacy and continuity. Members see organizations devoid of formalized structures and procedures as short-lived and ineffective.

Many of the interviewees recounted stories of decentralized women's groups that quickly disappeared from the New York scene. These stories took the tone of "cautionary tales" that emphasized the transitory nature of informal and consensus-based groups. One member's story of joining NOW reflects these tales. Originally a member of a decentralized group, she joined after working in an abortion rights coalition with New York City NOW members. She recalled how she made the decision to join:

We were all in this coalition and I realized that [this decentralized women's group with] its structurelessness was not going to be able to do anything to save legalized abortion and I could see in my contacts with NOW that they were going to. They had an organization and with structure ... So that's when I started getting involved in NOW.

The activist moved from a decentralized organization in which no one held leadership positions and everyone got two minutes to speak, to an organization with officers, committees and meetings run by parliamentary procedure. In her view, formal structure was necessary for action. She continued:

If you don't have any structure, you spend more time. No one is designated to pinpoint [a] vision ... and then there is so much in-fighting. There is even more in-fighting than when you have structure.

The subject of another cautionary tale was the Women’s Action Collective formed in New York City during the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings in 1992. The decentralized group drew hundreds of women to its first few meetings, but soon ceased meeting because of in-
fighting and disagreements about the group's goals. One NOW member described the group as "imploding because they hadn't thought through their feminism." These tales reconfirmed New York City member's pride in their chapter's structure. One member described how a formalized structure kept the chapter going:

    We are very structured. We have a president. We have a board. It is not [a] free floating equal chaos and that really does a lot to keep us in line. ... That kind of structure -- people with roles, people with elections -- that really keeps us going.

According to this ideology, a developed organizational structure also aided in the recruitment of members. A president during the late 1980s and early 1990s recalls the state of the chapter during a period of intense pro-choice mobilization. She said:

    We had stuff going on so that when people came to the chapter and wanted to be involved, it was kind of a bustling place. There were people around. There were a few different committees active and that was always a good thing.

In this view, structural development is positive for the chapter and the rest of the organization. Member's belief in structure was not limited to the confines of the chapter and in New York City, members also turned their attention to the development of National NOW. A particular concern of chapter members was National NOW's ability to support chapter efforts. In 1979, the chapter prepared a resolution for the national conference urging National NOW to set up a loan fund for local chapters, and to hire three full-time staff members to "assist in the development and implementation of local chapter membership." Authors of the resolution warned:

    Unless grassroots action increases, NOW's leadership may become entirely national in focus. Do we want an organization with local units that only replicate national directives on a few major issues? Or do we want to continue to be the grassroots organization that constantly creates social change by developing new issues on the local level, building local campaigns, and then national campaigns?13
Members also perceive formalized structure as an important element in leadership development. In New York City NOW, the structure of the chapter provides a "training ground" for women to become leaders. This view is based in liberal feminist ideology that society constructs barriers that keep women from achieving equality. Consequently, NOW members see the hierarchical structure of the organization as offering women a place to acquire important leadership skills that allow them to work for equal rights (see Reger 1992). According to one member, society offers women few opportunities to learn how to lead. However, NOW, with its complex infrastructure, is a training group for women to acquire leadership and political skills. She said:

You do get self-confidence and I see really an enormous blooming of women in NOW where they come in sort of mice, and they leave like tigers. ... It's a tremendous change that I've seen in some women. [It is] just unbelievable what happens. I mean it is very positive for a lot of women. ... It's the structure and always the leadership. You do something and then something happens. It really does change their lives.

Hierarchy and structure then facilitate women's leadership in the New York City chapter. Chapter presidents have gone on to hold a variety of legal and political positions including political office and working the federal government. One member called the presidency of New York City NOW a career steppingstone to "something high profile."

In sum, chapter members embrace an ideology that equates a developed structural organization with an effective and efficient means for accomplishing political and legislative goals. This ideology is part of an instrumental culture that believes political change is necessary for women to achieve equality. Structure is valued for its ability to develop women's leadership abilities. Instrumental culture privileges formalized structure as an efficient means to conduct chapter business, recruit members and accomplish the political goals of the
organization. This culture is represented by a feminist identity that focuses on action, spurns the development of a women’s community or culture and avoids emotional interactions between members.

**Political feminism.** The political feminist identity in the chapter endorses the belief that structure is instrumental to the goals of the group. This identity is illustrated in a 1971 national resolution that distinguished between volunteer service work and feminist action. The resolution directed members to engage in change-directed activities rather than volunteer work as a way of empowering women. The resolution argued that volunteer work maintains women’s secondary status and dependence by keeping them from directing their energies toward necessary political change. The identity of political feminists in the New York City chapter reflects this belief of working for the movement rather than volunteering. Members construct a shared consciousness which views change as necessary and directs women’s efforts toward the political arena. To succeed, women must develop coherent and dedicated groups which eschew women’s culture involvement. Political feminists believe that building a women’s community detracts from efforts to change society.

According to one political feminist, NOW members have a “strong sense that women need some fundamental empowerment that we don't have.” However, acknowledging discrimination is not enough. Members must believe that change is possible and that NOW is the key to effecting change. Members acknowledged that efforts for change were not always popular or understood. One woman noted that in her experience, "NOW women are not afraid to make waves.” A longtime member noted that in her experience NOW members believe in “a cause.” That cause is challenging patriarchy and inequality in society. One
member described what she saw as the chapter’s goals. She said, “I think what NOW does when it does the right things, it challenges male authority, male laws with the idea that you can make a difference. You can bring about change.”

Women who enter into the construction of a political feminist identity come to NOW to work as part of a group and to find women with similar political beliefs. For example, one member described the chapter as "a place where you know that you're not going to make best friends with someone and then have someone say 'Oh yeah, I think abortion is wrong.'" In addition to being a location for women to find those with similar beliefs, the chapter also serves as a site for women to learn how to be a part of a group. Members described themselves as a group of women brought together by "desire to bring about change" and as a "fighting bunch."

According to one woman, participating in the chapter shows women they are not alone and that there are ways to fight together. She described this feeling of being a part of a group:

Once you’ve learned how to fight as part of a group, and you know that they are out there, it's a whole different feeling than feeling like you don't know people. You don't know where to go. You don't know what to do.

For many members, this group feeling cemented their loyalty to NOW and made the chapter the primary focus of their activities. While several officers served on boards for other organizations, most noted that their primary group was NOW. One former president described the board of directors similarly. She said, “NOW is their main thing. I’d be surprised if a number of our board members were members of anything else.”

Although the chapter’s instrumental culture focused on goal-oriented behavior, emotions play a role in coming to the chapter. One former president noted that "angry, angry women come to NOW" after bad life experiences. Another member described New York
City NOW members as "just ordinary women who are pissed off about whatever." Even though anger may bring women to NOW, they are expected to direct that energy to make political change. Political feminism stresses the idea that the chapter is a workplace where emotion is secondary to chapter dedication and the cause. One former president described the relationship between chapter members as "kind of like an extended workplace relationship with love. It's collegial. We are women's colleagues."

Therefore, political feminists in the chapter are encouraged to put aside their emotions and pursue gender equality as workers and colleagues. To create an identity focused on goals, not emotions, members draw boundaries between themselves and others in society. In New York City NOW, political feminism distinguishes between itself and cultural feminists. Cultural feminism is described as privileging separatism, building alternative communities and valuing women's essential differences from men (Taylor and Rupp 1993). For political feminists to effect change, they must negotiate with societal institutions. Strong boundaries between activists and targeted institutions, such as the political arena, contradicts their view of making change. To "credential" themselves as legitimate actors in the political arena, political feminists distance themselves from other forms of feminism. In particular, cultural feminism is perceived by political feminists as focused on creating a separate women's community and not affecting change for all women.

One way political feminists accomplish this credentialing is by screening out women who do not accept the chapter’s structure. In this perspective, understanding the chapter’s structure indicates that new members understand the type of change sought by the group. Several of interviewees noted that new members uncomfortable with the complexity and form
of the chapter's organization eventually left. When asked what NOW members had in
common, one former president replied:

[Laughing] I do think it has something to do with being comfortable with a kind of
hierarchy, I think ours is a useful hierarchy. I mean I think it should be required reading
for every feminist at least coming into NOW to read Jo Freeman's *Tyranny of
Structurelessness*. ... I think you don't necessarily need to know the NOW history but
there is a bit of hierarchy which I think gives us enough structure to have lasted for 30
years.

She added that in her experience she could tell who got it and who did not.

I can tell, pretty close now, people who have somehow gotten NOW at the gut and
maybe that's because they ... don't mind the bit of hierarchy that we have. They don't
mind the democratic procedure kinds of things [and] that doesn't work for everybody.
I really don't mean to be judgmental about that.

Another member echoed this statement when she described how she viewed the typical New
York City NOW member:

[She is] someone who really is not going to be bothered by the hierarchy, who
in fact will see that hierarchy is a tool to go where they want to go without it
being just a personal aggrandizement.

Understanding the reason for the chapter's structure fit with a second criteria members
used to screen out those who did not get the kind of feminism being constructed in the chapter.

To participate in the chapter's instrumental culture and identity, women needed to understand
that the chapter defines itself primarily as a political organization. One leader explained:

I think all women in NOW share a vision. I think they all know that something is not
right out here [laughed] and that something is sexism. ... The difference is people who
really get the political stuff versus those who don't. Some people just don't get it.

Understanding the political nature of the chapter included understanding the need for strategy
and impression management. The same leader continued:
People who do not get NOW do not "understand how NOW plays out on the political field. People who do get NOW understand that whenever NOW is doing - sometimes the question has to be asked - how is this going to make NOW look? What's in this for us?"

This approach to feminism was called "realistic" by one leader. This realistic approach to collective action led members to compare themselves to other feminist groups. One former president discussed how the chapter was more active and goal-oriented than other women's social movement organizations. She said, "I think we have perceived ourselves as more activist than many of those groups."

Political feminists' emphasis on political and legislation change is not just a strategy, in the chapter it becomes an essential component of the constructed identity. Women interested in socializing or experiencing women's culture do not participate in the chapter very long. One longtime member described who becomes political feminists and what they need to believe. She said:

I think anyone who stays around in NOW, in the New York City chapter, is someone who, as I said before, is somewhat optimistic about social change, more issue oriented, not needing a women's culture to be created.

Another leader noted the difference between NOW and other forms of feminism. She said:

I think the difference is we are a political organization. We are a political grassroots organization and we have political strategies and we make political decisions. We are not crystal, new age women... We're not [an] essentialist, menstrual blood... group. We're a political organization.

Avoiding women's culture was a common theme among the political feminists interviewed. Women's culture is viewed by members as a place where women nurture and love each other but do not create social change. Taylor and Rupp (1993) identify three characteristics of women's culture: a belief in the essential differences between women and
men, a need to live separated from patriarchal institutions, and an emphasis on building a community of women. Therefore, political feminists in the chapter view socializing and caretaking among the members with suspicion. According to activists, women in leadership positions are particularly susceptible to demands they "mother" other members. One leader with experience at the state and national levels of NOW explained:

I think any woman in a leader position finds that there are a lot of demands for you to be [a] mother, because that is the role model we have. Men have authority. Men are fathers. They give directions. Mothers give comfort. You can be comforted to death.

She noted that in her experience, other NOW chapters who spent time socializing and "making people happy" were not achieving any political goal.

They [chapters who socialized] weren't putting any pressure on the mayor. Nothing. They were having great Christmas parties and great birthday parties and they were loving to each other and there is a lot of tendency toward that in women, you know? They felt their chapter was very strong and it sure was as a social club. [she laughed] ... So I always say the tension in NOW is to be a ladies club or change agent. ... You can have a women's community; it doesn't have to be embedded in NOW.

Socializing with others is perceived as apolitical behavior and members of the chapter commented on how they avoid it. Another member with a long history in the chapter remarked:

Our chapter I think was particularly unsocial. I mean people made friends in the chapter there is no question about it but we were very work oriented ... We wanted to get the work done. The rest was sort of incidental.

As a result, in the New York City chapter, women's external social lives do not enter into the chapter, and consequently the feminist identity created focuses on the creation of a political actor. One leader, the mother of a teenage boy, described NOW like this:
I've used words like family and community [to describe NOW]. But sometimes it is not. Sometimes it is a very comfortable place to have a relationship with people. [A place] where I don't have to know everything about them in order to talk to this woman. I [can] have a very lovely conversation. I don't have to talk about her kids or my kids, all that kind of stuff. We can drop our personal lives and talk about the issues.

New York City NOW members view women who socialize too much as apolitical, and chapters that participate in women's culture are seen as enmeshed in "a nice comfy womb." Women's culture has been characterized as an apolitical retreat created by cultural feminists who effectively "killed" off radical feminist activism (Echols 1989). Instead, the chapter creates an identity which sees activism separate from relationships, and emphasizes being a political "worker." One member offered this explanation for the connection between women's culture and apolitical identity:

I think they [radical feminists who joined NOW] brought in cultural feminism - that baggage to become sensitive, to try to recreate a woman's culture. I'm not too terribly sympathetic towards that because ... it doesn't radicalize. It deradicalizes. It doesn't mobilize. It demobilizes.

One reason cultural feminism is seen as opposite of the political feminist identity created in the chapter, is members' perception that cultural feminists engage in spiritual rituals versus political tactics such as lobbying and demonstrations. One young woman in the chapter explained how she saw political feminism as making a change whereas cultural feminism did not.

We need to effect change and we are going to get it by doing our rituals in the woods. It may be part of it. I'm not saying it is irrelevant but we need to think about real women and real women's lives and what is happening."
She continued:

I don't like [the term] womanist because I feel it brings up a lot of the stereotypes about women like we're all earth mothers, well, mothers for one thing. I don't know it just has that connotation to me. It's not political at all. It is just kind of cousin of humanist. Let's just all be friends and humanists and why do you need to be a feminist? Well, you need to be a feminist because women are paid 72 cents an hour [for every dollar a man makes].

By drawing clear boundaries between themselves as political feminists and other forms of cultural or spiritually based feminism, members participate in an instrumental culture that promotes goal-oriented political action over personal empowerment. Women’s equality, in this view, stems from women seeing a need for change and directing their energy in a group-based effort. Political feminists distinguish between themselves and cultural feminists and work to become legitimate actors in the political arena. Because political feminism involves engaging with societal institutions, members embrace hierarchy and structure as a way to credential themselves as legitimate participants in the political process. By focusing on action and the need for formal structure, political feminists draw clear boundaries between themselves and feminists who do not see political change as a way to end sexism and inequality.

However, an expressive culture also exists within the chapter, centered in the consciousness raising committee. This culture promotes an expressive culture represented by an transformative identity that emphasizes women's emotional experiences over the pursuit of legislation. It is here that women interested in building community and transforming women's lives through the exploration of personal experience enter the chapter.

Expressive Culture. The expressive culture of the New York City chapter emerges from the “niche” of the autonomous consciousness raising committee. The committee’s decentralized structure is modeled upon the structure adopted by women’s liberation groups.
The decentralized, informal structure of women's liberation groups, or rap groups, emerged from an ideology that is different from the chapter's instrumental culture. Rap groups formed around the idea that women need to develop to their fullest potential. To achieve this goal, rap groups were anti-elitist, meaning that no one person would dominate the group and hinder the personal growth of other participants. By establishing the bonds of sisterhood, all participants could learn to value women's experience. Therefore, personal experience was privileged over the role of the expert. In other words, what women felt was more important that what experts "knew." Personal experience, then, became a source of new ideas on how women could reach their fullest potentials (Carden 1974).

For many rap groups, consciousness raising was the primary activity. Through the process of consciousness raising women rethought and reconceptualized their lives in a politicized manner. The goal was to redefine women's identities as they participated in CR, making them productive participants in the struggle for equal rights. Women's rights groups, such as New York City NOW, began incorporating CR into their organizations when it became clear that women needed to sort through their individual experiences before they could engage in feminist activism (Carden 1974). When New York City NOW members created a CR committee in the early 1970s, a segment of the chapter's focus changed from seeking political gain to pursuing personal empowerment. Consequently, this change introduced a new set of values, beliefs and behavior norms into the chapter and the expressive culture of the chapter began. Because committee member's adhered to CR principles in the women's liberation groups, the structure of the committee diverged from the rest of the chapter. Women in the committee are equally valued and no one heads the committee or the CR.
sessions. However, one structural change made by committee members is that only women who have participated in a CR session can "lead" other session. To avoid a hierarchy developing of experienced versus inexperienced participants, women usually facilitate sessions in pairs. In addition, members of the committee understand that CR is an on-going process in which no one ever finishes.

The expressive culture of the chapter then is based on building a community of women who embrace a politicized and transformative view of the world through the process of consciousness raising. Members structure the committee in a nonhierarchical manner and no leaders or "experts" emerge to direct the sessions or the committee. This contrasts with the instrumental culture created within the chapter. Whereas political feminists shun culture and community building efforts, CR committee members adopt cultural beliefs which encourage members to create a new world through women bonding with each other and regaining the power taken away by patriarchy and alienation.

The principles of CR created a "tool kit" by which CR committee members shape and construct a shared identity. The expressive culture of the chapter is represented by an empowerment feminist identity. Empowerment feminists believe the personal and political are connected and sharing life experiences and emotions is key in transforming women's visions of the world. This emphasis on the personal led one woman to call the committee the "emotional infrastructure" of the chapter. Another woman who entered NOW through the CR committee describes it as one of the most "memorable and transforming experiences in my life." A former committee member offered this description of consciousness raising:
I think CR allows women to understand the commonality of their experience and ... to get in touch with, and create an analysis and critique that then comes out of your own experience. It grounds it [personal experience] and makes it more powerful. It is not analytical.

**Empowerment feminism.** A central belief of empowerment feminism is that the personal is political. New politicized understandings of the world emerge from reflecting upon and sharing of life stories. By sharing these experiences, women bond through expressing their common sisterhood. This sisterhood is the foundation to build a community free from the constraints of patriarchy and discrimination. Whereas political feminists dedicate themselves to organization in pursuit of the cause, empowerment feminists devote their efforts to building a women-centered community as a goal in itself.

Many of the women in the committee talked about the transformative effect CR had on their lives. A younger woman in the committee said, “I think CR has been important to me in helping to realize the different ways in which our rights and assumptions operate.” However, CR is not used as therapy for women. Instead its goal is to create political actors who understand their own lives in the context of a sexist and discriminatory world. A woman who first joined the committee before getting involved in the rest of the chapter described her experience.

I had been in therapy for some time at that point and therapy is really about fixing yourself and there were a lot of things that came to me in the course of the CR group that weren't me. They were about the world outside of me.

Empowerment feminists view consciousness raising as essential to the chapter and to NOW’s goals. One longtime organizer in the committee responded to the question of how she saw CR fitting with the rest of the chapter:
I think it has got to be key. The personal is political and getting people to see that [is important] because it [sexism] is very subtle these days. ... CR makes people feel much clearer focused and centered in their beliefs ... and makes them stronger.

Women seeking community and a sense of connection entered NOW through the CR committee and participated in the constructing of an empowerment feminist identity. Several women recounted stories of seeking a community of women when social events enraged or disturbed them. One woman remembered why she came to the committee:

When the Anita Hill incident took place in this country, I was watching it on television. I felt ... rage. It was so blatant and powerful that I needed to be, to partake in a larger experience with it and I called NOW. ... I attended [a meeting] and it was tiny room filled with at least 200 hundred women who felt exactly like I had. ... There was this new community for me - ready to bond with, to share and to become an activist with.

She said the experience of watching Anita Hill testify about sexual harassment made her want to be with other women and do something constructive with her rage. She continued, “I felt a need personally to connect and do more and feel like I wasn't just sort of out there as an individual dealing with this stuff.” Another woman, who had begun doing CR before joining the chapter, interpreted her involvement as an on-going, if not conscious, search for community and sisterhood among women. She said, “I had begun to understand and see that I needed women but it wasn't still something I could tell consciously.” By bringing women together, the committee becomes a place where women felt free to explore their lives. One member stated that through the committee "NOW has given me the environment to transform myself." This environment is based on the belief that members have the potential to create new communities.

Empowerment feminists believed the only way to achieve liberation in society is to first undergo consciousness raising. One young woman described the process:
I think it is essential. I believe that the only way for women to heal, to try to give birth to a new self, and to bond and create a community that bonds differently ... can only take place with consciousness raising. ... Consciousness raising is a tool to create new communities with new dynamics.

She added that when National NOW stopped encouraging chapters to do CR, the organization lost a necessary "rite of passage." In her opinion, without CR, the movement could not thrive and be productive. She said:

And without CR sort of grounding you and your own experience, it becomes incredibly intellectual and incredibly analytical and I think that is unbelievably destructive of the movement.

Once women begin CR, they participate in building a empowerment feminist identity that one member described as sharing in a new “vision of a new human ecology.” To her that vision means "No violence, women sharing the planet ... with absolute humanity."

Empowerment feminists draw boundaries between those who understand the process of consciousness raising and those who do not. This boundary is primarily enacted between the committee and the rest of the chapter. Political feminists participate in this boundary construction by viewing consciousness raising as childish and non-political. One political feminist who had done CR outside the chapter, explained why she did not join the committee. She said, “I guess maybe I was far too past it. I think there's a lot of good in it but I think some of it's a little [she paused] touchy feely kind of stuff." Many of the political feminists interviewed saw consciousness raising as an initial step to understanding feminism, but not as a solution to women’s inequality. In response, empowerment feminists tend to view the rest of the chapter as misguided for emphasizing political gain. One long time committee member said bluntly, “We are so fucking busy with the legislation that we lose sight of the woman.” In her
view, CR helped women "connect in a very basic way" necessary for women’s liberation. She added, “That is why I say with all the legislation in the world [women’s equality] is not going to happen. It is not going to help."

The reason women need to connect, according to one committee member, is because men have separated women from each other and reduced their power. Women’s traditional socialization and resulting roles are seen as needing transformation. One woman elaborated on how patriarchy and women’s socialization kept women apart and therefore, apolitical.

A woman steps into a relationship and automatically she’s very leery of her mother-in-law. She can be the most wonderful woman in the world, but she is already set up that way. How can she become friends with her mother because then the man knows they will become allies against him. He sets it up so they are enemies.

Women who understood the power of socialization and patriarchy “got” empowerment feminism. One committee member when asked if NOW members share characteristics or beliefs answered:

Yes absolutely. It's what I call - you don't have to do Feminism 101. And sometimes, depending upon my day, I feel very tired doing Feminism 101. You know, you start from scratch. With NOW members you don't have to do that.

Understanding Feminism 101 in the committee means engaging in an expressive culture that privileges women’s personal transformation over political gain. Empowerment feminists construct an identity that values community building among women and is based in a critique of authority and power. Women in the committee draw boundaries between their beliefs and those of the political feminists in the chapter. However, empowerment feminists negotiate these boundaries and interact and participate in chapter activities.
Despite the fact that their identity was different from others in the chapter, empowerment feminists saw themselves as important chapter members and participated in maintaining the chapter. One member reflected on what she saw as the purpose of the committee.

We have different goals. We have the goals of bringing women into the chapter. We have the goals of giving them the opportunity to relate the personal and the political in their lives that is, of course, the major goal. But also the goal of ... leadership development.

To many of the women, consciousness raising not only transforms women into political actors, it recruits members for the chapter. One woman said:

Since I have been involved we've attracted quite a number of women to other things in NOW through consciousness raising. We kind of sold them on the other activities in NOW and they got involved. So we have been fairly successful as a recruiting vehicle for the chapter.

A member active in the 1990s noted about one-third to one-fourth of the women continue to do some sort of NOW-related activity after participating in a CR group. Another member's comments illustrated how the committee, although culturally different from the chapter, assists the chapter's overall efforts. She said, "After my first consciousness raising group, I was really ready to throw myself into sort of the pragmatic of strengthening NOW." She continued by discussing the different tasks she had worked on, including helping the chapter to relocate.

One reason for empowerment feminists' willingness to negotiate cultural boundaries and interact with the rest of the chapter emerges from their understanding of NOW. Several women from the CR committee discussed different types of feminism existing within NOW and within the chapter. One woman noted:
I think that for a lot of people what being a feminist, being a NOW member, meant making a financial contribution and ... going to a meeting every once in a while. ... Then there were women who felt that being part of NOW meant demonstrating, being part of demonstrations and going to Washington to march and doing the clinic vigils and that kind of stuff. ... And then there was a group that thought it was about CR.

Another woman echoed her statements calling NOW an "umbrella organization" including feminists with a range of beliefs and ideas. This openness to other types of feminism does not weaken the identity of empowerment feminists. Instead, women immersed in the expressive culture of the chapter acknowledge that different forms of feminism need to co-exist.

However, empowerment feminists believe that consciousness raising is essential in creating real social change. Therefore, empowerment feminists interact with the rest of the chapter, at the same time drawing boundaries between themselves and political feminists. This willingness to negotiate boundaries has not gone unnoticed by others in the chapter. One former president acknowledged the importance of the committee to the rest of the chapter.

   It is important. We get activists out of it. ... If you sit and look at the board there are any number of board positions, at any one time, that are being filled by women who come out of the CR committee and they are doing stuff.

However, as a political feminist, the same leader saw the committee as removed from the chapter. To her, the committee was unpredictable, meaning it sometimes helped the chapter and other times retreated from chapter business. She recalled a particular event:

   The CR committee bought an entire table at an event we were doing. No other committee came even close. ... On the other hand, the CR people do go off and into their own fucking world. [I] can not tell you how many times they have been totally out of touch with what's going on in the rest of the chapter.

One factor influencing the creation and maintenance of an expressive culture in New York City NOW is recruitment. Women who enter the CR committee are mobilized through solidarity incentives and friendship networks. By creating an accessible emotionally-based
community, the committee offers a sense of solidarity to women. Another primary source of recruitment is through social networks. Several women involved in the committee entered through social networks such as attending the same religion classes or places of worship. These networks are evident by the number of Jewish women who participate in the committee. Women who go through CR, tell their friends, colleagues and co-workers about the experience. One member explained how women come to CR and why political feminists do not value the process:

Women talk to each other about consciousness raising. If you are involved in consciousness raising, you talk about it. ... [Women] tell each other things like "Be sure to try it." It's great. ... But it is very slow and that is another thing that makes it not a priority [in the chapter] because it takes a lot of nurturing.

In sum, the expressive culture of the chapter, as indicated by the construction of an empowerment feminist identity, develops out of an autonomous and decentralized consciousness raising committee. The committee serves as the chapter's emotional infrastructure and values the expression of women's personal experiences as a way to political liberation. Empowerment feminists believe the consciousness raising process is essential for women to achieve equality and therefore, see themselves as distinct from political feminists in the chapter. However, empowerment feminists interact with the chapter, encouraged by the belief that multiple feminisms exist within NOW. Interestingly, only empowerment feminists cross over into the instrumental culture of the rest of the chapter. Political feminists do not enter into the CR committee's expressive culture because of their belief that building women's community is apolitical. Only one woman interviewed had continued to lead CR sessions after serving as a leader for the chapter. Most political feminists stated that CR was a beginning step of feminism and not a long range tactic for political change. Therefore, few women in the
chapter participate in both feminist identities. Instead, each identity is polarized with empowerment feminists more willing to cross over into political feminist “territory.”

Conclusion

To members involved in CR and non-CR activities, structure correlates with the type of feminist identity constructed. For non-CR members, the chapter’s structural characteristics increase its ability to effect social change. Ideologically, members must understand structure as instrumental and useful. The chapter’s formalized structure serves as a “screening” device for members whose feminism does not fit with the rest of the group. While the rest of the chapter attends to the organization’s political goals and maintenance, the CR committee tends to the emotional infrastructure of the chapter and provides a location for women to explore their lives in a politicized manner.

Structural and cultural processes are clearly intertwined in the New York City chapter and shape each other in a reciprocal process. The organizational structure is determined by resources, political opportunities, and external environment. Resource mobilization theory predicts for organization survival, SMOs must create a strong infrastructure. The construction of a political feminist identity creates a group of women who struggle to maintain the chapter’s complex and formal structure while continuing to focus on political change. New social movement theory views the construction of a salient collective identity as essential to keep the organization alive in times of backlash and abeyance. The empowerment feminist identity focuses on ways in which women’s lives are affected by sexism and discrimination and serves as a vehicle to recruit new members. The emotional ties expressed in the chapter indicate the
presence of an expressive culture which serve as a source of motivation to participants and can "articulate links between individual protest and larger structural and cultural processes" (Taylor 1995:233).

By drawing on these two perspectives, I show how movement ideology influences structural organization and how structural organization facilitates multiple culture and collective identity development within a chapter. In the New York City chapter, I document how a decentralized committee emerges within a formalized grassroots organization and brings about the existence of two chapter cultures. One culture is manifested in a political feminist identity, the other in a transformative identity. Scholars have documented how collective identities change in collectivities over time (Whittier 1990). This analysis illustrates how structure can accommodate the existence of multiple collective identities. The existence of these identities documents the complexity of federated SMOs and their grassroots organizations. The chapters affiliated with National NOW do not simply mimic National NOW structure and culture but instead, create unique and distinct organizational forms, cultures and identities. In the next chapter, I analyze the interaction of structural and cultural process in the history of the Greater Cleveland NOW chapter.
ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1 According to chapter procedure, if the president refuses the salary, the board of directors selects a full-time paid executive director. Historically, only a few presidents have refused to draw a salary for their work. These women were primarily financially well off and able to support themselves without the president's salary. Most presidents have accepted the salary.


7 In 1996, the committee had nineteen members and conducted two on-going CR sessions throughout the year. NOW News, January/February 1996, Files of the New York City NOW chapter.


10 Throughout its history the chapter has kept the office centrally located in Manhattan instead of seeking lower rents in other areas of the city. By staying in Manhattan, even when the chapter struggles to pay the rent, keeps New York City NOW positioned in the high status "heart" of the city along with other non-profit organizations.

This distinction builds on Bernstein’s (1997) division of collective identities into two categories. Identities for empowerment focus on the creation of a shared understanding that political action is feasible. The site of struggle for an empowerment identity is society. The second type, identity as goal, sees the creation of a shared identity as the goal of the group. In this type, the expression of a collective identity is the goal of collective action and makes the individual the site of conflict. In my analysis, I rename the identities to better reflect the process of identity construction occurring within the chapter.


Scholars debate this view of women’s culture as apolitical. See Taylor and Rupp (1993) for the political and mobilizing potential of lesbian feminism and women’s culture.
CHAPTER 5

STRUCTURE AND CULTURE IN CLEVELAND NOW

In this chapter, I trace the structural and cultural processes that led to the eventual decline of Cleveland NOW. This dissertation begins describing a successful action taken by the Greater Cleveland NOW chapter against a local school board in a case of sexual harassment. However, within a few years the chapter went from being able to mobilize its members, to a defunct organization. Two theoretical perspectives frame this analysis. According to resource mobilization theorists, an SMO can survive by altering its structure to adapt to new political climates, changing resources, or a shifting organizational environment (McAdam 1982, McCarthy and Zald 1977, Rupp and Taylor 1990, Taylor 1989, Zald and Ash 1966). In Cleveland NOW’s case, the chapter members expanded the organization during periods when the movement flourished and resources, such as members, were plentiful. However, when political opportunities contracted and the movement moved into a period of abeyance, the infrastructure condensed. In this analysis, I discuss how this organizational adaptation indicates the chapter’s reliance on issues as the primary resource mobilization vehicle. SMOs mobilize resources from three sources: the beneficiary constituents, conscience constituents, or nonconstituent institutions (Freeman 1979). Cleveland NOW’s reliance on a beneficiary constituency for resources ultimately produced an organization that lacked complexity, and
was not centralized, or highly formalized. According to new social movement theorists, an SMO must develop a salient identity for members to sustain the organization through periods of abeyance and backlash (Rupp and Taylor 1990, Taylor and Whittier 1992). I define a salient collective identity as one which draws members together in a shared understanding of the social world and is more meaningful than participants’ social identities. In Cleveland NOW’s case, social class identities remained meaningful to members throughout most of the chapter’s history. Cleveland is a city where social classes are geographically divided. The city’s east side suburbs are predominately upper class professionals. The west side of the city, marked by the “dividing line” of the Cuyahoga River, is predominately working class. Thus, members’ class identities served as a barrier to the construction of a salient feminist identity capable of withstanding a period of social movement abeyance.

Despite identity formation barriers caused by class identities, a collective identity emerged when the chapter experienced a resurgence in the late 1980s.¹ This resurgence was experienced throughout the women’s movement when the anti-abortion movement began to gain momentum (Staggenborg 1991). Cleveland was selected by anti-abortion activists in a campaign called Operation Rescue that attempted to close abortion clinics. As a result, chapter members came together and a single salient feminist identity emerged. I label this identity activist feminism because of members’ shared emphasis on community action. Reminiscent of radical feminist ideology, activist feminists were “structurally ambivalent” and focused on issues rather than centralizing or formalizing the chapter’s structure. This activist feminist
identity represented the Cleveland NOW's grassroots culture. The chapter's grassroots culture contained both expressive and instrumental characteristics, and privileged autonomous grassroots action more than institutionalized political channels.

Therefore, Cleveland NOW's story is one of a grassroots SMO that grows when the movement flourishes and declines when the movement faces a period of abeyance and backlash. Based in a city where social classes are divided by geographic boundaries and supported by a culture privileging grassroots action, members' social class identities remain relevant until the Cleveland women's community faces a crisis that draws members together. The result was the construction of a salient activist feminist identity which overrode divisions based on social class and encouraged members to focus their energy on community issues.

To document the dynamic and reciprocal interaction of culture and structure in Cleveland NOW, I begin by discussing the organization's structural adaptations. I examine the reason for these structural expansions and contractions, and link these changes to the organization's dependence on issues as its main resource. Then I describe the organization's grassroots culture by focusing on two important periods. First, I examine the division of the organization into a multiple chapter system in the 1970s. This period highlights the role social class played inhibiting the construction of a salient collective feminist identity. Secondly, I focus on the creation of a single chapter in the late 1980s. Here I examine the construction of an activist feminist identity. I conclude by discussing how structural development, social class distinctions, resource acquisition, and culture contributed to Cleveland NOW's adoption of a structural form that eventually failed.
Structural Development in Cleveland NOW

Whereas the New York City chapter consistently worked to develop its infrastructure, the history of Cleveland NOW was a series of large-scale organizational adaptations. In the beginning, the chapter experienced a period of growth and structural formalization. In the early years of the feminist movement, Cleveland was a site of feminist activism, and both strands of the women's movement flourished in the mid-1970s (Carden 1974). By 1971, one year after its founding, the chapter had committees on legislation, abortion, media, programming, day care, public relations, membership, union organizing, and religion. In 1972, influenced by movement issues, the chapter added committees on employment and consciousness raising. As the membership grew, the chapter also created a speakers' bureau, and committees to address meeting programs, newsletters and bulletins, public relations and publicity, and fund raising.

Members also began to investigate funding a staff position to run the daily business of chapter. In a 1973, newsletter article, the founding president wrote:

We have come to the stage in our growth that a full-time paid staff person is a necessity so that [the current president] can do the real job of leading. So any suggestion or help to make this a reality would benefit us all. 2

Where New York City NOW professionalized its leadership through a paid full-time leader or executive director, the Cleveland chapter sought to develop a non-leader administrative cadre. The president attempted to remove herself from those duties and employ someone to focus on the daily affairs, while she concentrated on leading the chapter. Unable to procure the resources, members did not hire a staff person and presidents continued to perform the chapter's administrative tasks.
Structural Adaptations. The first major structural change to the chapter was its expansion into a series of suburban-based chapters in the mid 1970s. (See Cleveland history in Chapter 3.) Modeled after the Pittsburgh suburban system, the suburban chapters were created to meet the needs of a growing membership which wanted improved communications and increased efficiency. An activist during this period explained the rationale for the system:

You find that in big organizations there are only so many that really are active. ... That was the other theory behind multiple chapters. Larger chapters only had small core that worked anyway. If you had a lot of small cores, you were having a lot more activism.

By 1976, six chapters existed in different communities around the city. Members during this period estimated that the smaller chapters had between ten to thirty members. Cleveland, the original chapter, had approximately two hundred members, with an active twenty five member core. The suburban-based chapters were small autonomous groups that focused on community issues such as day care, finding a babysitter, and school lunch programs. A leader during the suburban chapter system remarked how these chapters developed their own unique characters. She said:

They [suburban chapters] look on different complexions too because they were different chapters depending on where they lived. ... Maybe one chapter would take on a complexion of women mostly who were married or homemakers. Now maybe another chapter ... was compatible to women who were working. Some [of the members] might be more working class, some of them who lived in the neighborhoods. ... We still had the Cleveland chapter for people who wanted a more cosmopolitan kind of thing. Some of the chapters would get people who were afraid to go downtown at night. [she laughed] But at least you got people active and working on women's issues.
To facilitate the multiple chapter system, a coordinating council, made up of chapter presidents and delegates, was formed. The council served as an information clearinghouse and coordinated speaking engagements and publicity. One activist recalled how the chapters worked together:

There was no rivalry between any of these chapters. That was what was also so beautiful about it. There really wasn't. Essentially we felt that wherever people join NOW [is okay], just so they join NOW. That was important. So it wasn't the competition where you got a member or I got a member…

Although the chapters did not compete for new members, members of the different chapters did not choose to interact with each other, often preferring to work on their own projects and issues. One activist noted that during that period “it was hard to get people to come to the coordinating council. They were more into their own chapters.”

The small suburban-based chapters stayed decentralized even though they adopted NOW’s model of leadership and procedure. Presidents and a small cadre of officers formed chapter cores and performed most of the work. None of the suburban chapters, with the exception of the original Cleveland chapter, formed a complex infrastructure of committees or task forces. In fact, the National NOW procedural guidelines were confusing to many suburban leaders. In particular, parliamentary procedure was puzzling to many activists. A suburban chapter focused one of its first meetings on parliamentary procedure with a meeting announcement entitled, "Are you intimidated by Robert's Rules of Order?" The program promised to clarify the procedures and included role play and a mock election.5

After the failure of the national ERA campaign, the women’s movement moved into a state of abeyance and suburban chapters lost membership and eventually dissolved or merged. One activist reflected on the suburban system and concluded that it had not worked. She said:
In my opinion the division was a disaster. ... I mean there was a certain rationale to dividing in half and I think the people who feel it was a disaster are basically people who were from [the east side of Cleveland]. Basically this was one area where there were enough to constitute a real effective on-going chapter. But as far as the other chapters, they became so small ... you would have one or two people in a suburb trying to have a chapter going and it wasn't like there was a separate political life to that suburb itself, separate and a part from Cleveland. ... People found it demoralizing and drifted away.

She continued:

And I know, most of our feeling initially was ... that we had lost a lot when we started coming together. If we had split in half at the beginning or stayed as one at the beginning we'd have kept a lot more women than we did. We'd lost a lot of people that way. It wasn't just a natural attrition.

The second major organizational adaptation was the suburban system merging into two chapters, Cleveland West and Cleveland East, during the early 1980s. Historically, these two chapters had a stormy relationship and, for the most part, did not cooperate. Much of the antagonism between the chapters resulted from a series of "turf" wars. One particularly bitter interaction came as a result of the Cleveland West chapter calling themselves "Greater Cleveland NOW." The Cleveland East membership viewed the name change as Cleveland West's attempt to represent the entire city. (See Cleveland NOW history Chapter 3).

Affected by a decreased interest in the movement, neither chapter was able to expand their infrastructure and leaders struggled to find members willing to maintain the chapters. For example, in 1981, Cleveland West advertised for volunteers to fill the positions of publicist and a membership chair. The president wrote in the newsletter:

If Cleveland doesn't know we exist (Publicist's job) or if they don't care (Membership's job), or if they aren't aware of the particulars (Newsletter Editor's job), what the hell are we all working so hard for?
Later that same year, Cleveland West continued its plea for volunteers. In another letter to the chapter, the president wrote:

What I am trying to say in my own way is that it takes many to make a chapter successful. This is your movement; it's time to become involved today. This is your chapter; take part in it — we need each other.\(^9\)

With few issues capturing the public's attention and a constant volunteer need, activists in both chapters began to burnout. One activist recalled what it felt like to organize at that time:

The reality always came down to [the fact] that you are small group of people doing this work with the backing of some invisible force that is the membership. Whatever in the world that is. Sometimes you feel real isolated and you wonder, 'Is anybody out there?'

As the battle between pro-choice and pro-life forces intensified, the organization entered into its third structural adaptation with the two remaining chapters merging. The Webster decision and the targeting of Cleveland clinics by anti-abortion forces brought increased activities, resources and cooperation between the two chapters. During this time, National NOW sponsored two marches for reproductive rights in Washington, D.C. The chapters worked in coalition to send members to the marches and antagonism between the two decreased. The successful coalition built between the two chapters encouraged members to consider merging. By 1990, Greater Cleveland NOW was created. The unified chapter was run by a co-president system that selected leaders from both the east and west sides of the city.

The chapter was able to rent an office space, providing the chapter with a place to house the NOW telephone line and chapter's materials. Until that time, whoever was the leader was in charge of answering the phone and housing all of the NOW material. Not having a separate phone line for the chapter restricted members' and the community's access to leaders.
and made the job of leading the chapter more difficult. The previous division into multiple
chapters made communication between the public and the members even more complicated.

One activist remembered:

[Phone numbers] were always a problem because we had to get a business phone
listed in the phone book. It was more money. So you [presidents] used your house phone. So people would have their own ... phone that they would list for NOW.
People would just call their house whenever they wanted to look for a NOW chapter.
It was still hard to find a NOW chapter. People had to really want to find it.

Before the institution of an office, one president remarked that having the NOW line in her
home was not "a good way to keep your sanity." The office's significance was that it provided
leaders with a place to house the phone and NOW materials and provided the public with a
permanent chapter location.

However, the addition of an office did not resolve some of the organization's original
problems, namely, finding a place to meet. In 1991, the chapter still struggled to find a
location convenient for members from both sides of the city. Leaders continued to search for a
meeting place that appealed to all the members. A plea to members was issued:

Greater Cleveland NOW is still seeking a good location to hold your chapter meetings.
During the last two years we have tried a downtown location and our present location
near I-480. Both have met with criticism from our members. We need your input (sic)
and suggestions. 10

The west side office location added to the dilemma of where to meet. According to one west
side member, the office was an even "more intimidating" location than the downtown meeting
site because of the surrounding impoverished neighborhood and few members would attend
nighttime meetings.
The chapter entered a time of crisis in 1994 when a dynamic president, who had served several terms in the co-president system, decided to step down. When the chapter could not find a new president, the members adapted the structure one last time in an attempt to ease the burden of leaders. The new structure was a five-member steering committee with no leadership positions. Steering committee members were to rotate leading the meetings, lightening the burdens of officers. In addition, the departing president gathered information on chapter operations in a series of notebooks to help the steering committee function. However, instead of reinvigorating the chapter, members did not respond to the new structure. Steering committee members failed to regularly attend meetings and in 1995, meetings ceased. One member described the decline this way:

We had a core group of about 20 to 25. We had a large board and everyone was still around but nobody was willing to be that person in charge, and since May [of 1995] our chapter has been a non-functioning chapter. Nonfunctioning in the sense that the bills are being paid but there is no activity. No one doing anything but paying the bills.

Structurally, Cleveland NOW went through three large-scale adaptations that moved the organization from a single chapter, to a multi-chapter system, back eventually, to a single chapter. While these adaptations at times expanded the organization's membership, the changes did not result in a more formalized or complex infrastructure. Instead, the chapter eventually instituted a decentralized form that failed to revive the organization. To explain these adaptations, I now examine the flow of resources to the organization.

**Resource Acquisition.** Throughout its history, Cleveland NOW primarily relied on beneficiary constituency mobilized through issues as a way to obtain resources. Even though the organization instituted a fundraising committee at different times in its history, chapters
were not successful locating conscience constituency or institutional sources to provide resources on a consistent basis. As one longtime member noted, "It has constantly been [issues] where a sense of outrage, or a need to change things[that] gets people involved."

Figure 5.1. Organizational structure and officer formation of Cleveland NOW, 1970-1995.
Instead the organization relied on beneficiary constituency to provide resources through dues collection and members' efforts. This reliance on issues for resources left the organization vulnerable to changes in the political opportunity structure. In periods of abeyance, the chapter membership dropped and consequently, so did the chapter's income. When issues were "hot" and mobilization was high, the chapter had more members and more money from dues.

However, money and member's time were not the only resources the chapter obtained during periods of growth. Along with the influx of members came an increase in resources from women's workplaces. One president reminisced, "It's amazing what corporate structures support and don't even know it." She gave as an example the fact that members used company copying machines to duplicate flyers and press releases saving the chapter money.

Three periods in particular brought an abundance of resources to the chapter: the initial growth of the movement, the struggle to pass the state and the national ERA, and the abortion issues of the 1980s. This dependence on members for resources meant that issues had to resonate with the women in the community, or the chapter suffered. One member described the organization's reliance on issues to mobilize the chapter:

There really needs to be a big action I think to pull people in. People aren't dying to give away hours of their free time to organize unless they see that there is some point and something to work on.

In the early years, when the movement attracted media attention, women sought out NOW and the chapter flourished. According to an activist during this period, Cleveland NOW flourished because of the influx of members with flexible schedules. These members brought the organization income, in the form of dues, but also the valuable resource of their time. Because many women coming to NOW in the 1970s were homemakers, the organization had
a profusion of members who could dedicate large amounts of time to the movement.

According to one member active in the 1970s, these women were important in the chapter's success. She recalled the experience of organizing in the early years:

It was exciting because everything was new and we were able to mobilize people. ... A lot of us were not working full time. ... This was our pastime, instead of work we did this. I did it full time. I was able to run around with a press release. We used to have a system where there were always two people. One would drive and one would run in and out and deliver the press release. So we were right on top of things as soon as it would happen.

After the initial "flush" of the movement passed, the ERA became a significant resource mobilizer. The ERA helped bring about the heyday of the women's movement and brought thousands of women into different feminist organizations (Ferree and Hess 1985/1995, Mansbridge 1986, Ryan 1992, Taylor and Whittier 1993). From the mid-1970s until the mid-1980s, Cleveland NOW members worked on a variety of state and national campaigns. Even after the ERA was passed in Ohio in 1974, members continued to work on the national campaign. The ERA contributed resources to the Cleveland organization in three ways. First, it increased the number of members and the amount of dues the chapter received. Second, in an effort to pass the amendment, national and state NOW organizations established funds that chapter members could draw on for their lobbying efforts. For example, in Ohio, the state NOW organization founded an ERA Emergency Fund to send Cleveland NOW members to lobby for the amendment. This provided resources for the chapters to draw upon and helped to mobilize members. The chapter found the ERA-related fund raisers profitable because of the interest in the issue. For example, Cleveland NOW held Bloody Mary Parties to raise funds for the effort. In these fund raising efforts, chapters kept half of the funds raised and sent the rest to the national or state to fund other ERA efforts.
After the media attention slowed down and the ERA failed, the chapter began to lose some of its resources. The abortion issues of the late 1980s, including the Webster decision and the targeting of Cleveland by Operation Rescue, brought a resurgence in resources to the chapter. One member described the abortion issue as bringing women "out of the woodwork" and back into activism. Abortion did become the focus of the unified chapter and in the spring of 1990, the co-presidents reflected on Cleveland NOW's accomplishments:

We also had the overwhelming task of protecting our reproductive rights by providing leadership for three marches, Cleveland Pro Choice Action Day and participating in a variety of Pro Choice coalitions and events."14

In the midst of this mobilization, the chapter grew in members, finances, and other tangible resources. By August of 1990, the chapter was the largest in Ohio with approximately six hundred members. Abortion rights mobilization brought one hundred new members into the organization in 1990.15 The author of a newsletter article noted that "activism at Greater Cleveland NOW is on an increase. You can find our board members literally 'all over the city' working on feminist issues."16

However, just as the ERA lost its mobilizing potential, so did abortion rights and the chapter began to lose members and resources in the early 1990s. Members continued to rely on as the chapter's "natural recruitment vehicle" and did not formalize any processes to sustain membership. In addition, the organization's structural adaptations had not developed an administrative cadre to focus on chapter maintenance and the chapter eventually ceased meeting. Therefore, without a developed infrastructure and a cadre devoted to administrative duties, the chapter became dependent on the issues and dues of members to sustain the
organization. Even as the chapter began to fail, members continued to wait for an issue to help save the chapter. A member of the steering committee explained this rationale:

I think it [the chapter] really needs a major issue. There has got to be a reason to pull new people in, other than just for the sake of keeping the NOW chapter going.

In sum, the Cleveland chapter flourished in the movement's early years and encouraged by this growth, leaders instituted a multiple chapter system to increase activism in the area. The suburban chapters remained relatively small with the largest being the original chapter. Dependent on issues for resources, the organization's size and structural complexity fluctuated. After the ERA's failure, the smaller chapters merged and in the early to mid-1980s only the Cleveland East and West chapters remained. After struggling to survive, the chapters were bolstered by heavy mobilization in the late 1980s and merged in the late 1980s. However, once mobilization began to slow down in the early 1990s, members struggled to find a leader and members dedicated to maintaining the organization. The organization's large-scale structural adaptations hindered the development of a complex infrastructure and the development of a member cadre devoted to maintaining the organization. In an attempt to lighten the burden of the officers, members adopted a decentralized steering committee structure. This organizational structure failed and meetings ceased in 1995. To understand why members focused on issues for resources and did not work to establish a formal or complex infrastructure, I now describe the cultural processes influencing the chapter.

Cultural Development of Cleveland NOW

New York City NOW's instrumental culture revolved around the ideology that formalized organizational structure equates to political efficacy. In Cleveland NOW,
organizational structure was interpreted differently. Cleveland NOW members shared an ideology that action, emerging from the community, was more important than infrastructure development. Two beliefs intertwined to create the organization’s grassroots culture. First, members’ valued grassroots action more than nationally coordinated protest. While Cleveland NOW did engage in national protests, for example the ERA, historically, the chapter continued to locate protests in the community. Secondly, members’ shared a belief in the chapter’s autonomy. Autonomous action was free from the dictates of NOW’s national and state levels and was rose spontaneously from the community. These two ideologies shaped a culture which contained both expressive and instrumental aspects. Chapter members’ worked for social change but also created an environment that valued personal and emotional experiences. The result was an organization that acted independently, spontaneously and created unique instrumental and expressive protests.

Although there is evidence that this grassroots culture is consistent throughout the organization’s history, a single feminist identity did not emerge until the early 1990s. Structural and cultural forces played a role in fragmenting feminist identities for most of Cleveland NOW’s history. When the organization divided into a multiple chapter system, members focused on their own chapters and did not interact in a meaningful way on a city-wide level. This system encouraged members to focus on their own lives and communities. As a result, in a city divided socioeconomically, social class identities remained relevant. These class identities blocked the construction of a cohesive feminist identity until Cleveland’s abortion clinics were threatened and activists came together. As members worked on abortion rights, an activist feminist identity was constructed. The overall goal of this identity was to emotionally
empower women to fight for women's rights. By incorporating expressive and instrumental goals, activist feminism resembled the ideology of informal women's liberation groups structured to "do meaningful work - work that encouraged self growth and at the same time was relevant to other people's needs" (Allen, 1970:5).

**Grassroots Culture.** Key to the chapter's culture was distinction between grassroots and more institutionalized types of activism. According to members, grassroots activism was spontaneous and unplanned, whereas institutional activism works within political channels and concentrates primarily on organizational maintenance. A leader who interacted with formalized SMOs on a regular basis described the difference between grassroots and professional organizing.

... What I consider grassroots activism swells up from people's gut on what's important to them and why they make their stand. It is people that do it for the issue and aren't exactly doing it because they get paid for it. I have trouble with ... foundations and organizations [helping] women or whoever, whose sole existence is to raise money to pay themselves, and if there is any left [over] do something good.

Members viewed "foundation" activism as emerging from organizations with a "corporate" hierarchical structure. In contrast, one leader characterized grassroots activism as "adrenaline stuff" and described it as "... flying by the seat of your pants. It's new. Nothing's wrong and nothing is right. You know, it is whatever works." In this view, grassroots activism is spontaneous and flexible. From the chapter's inception, members privileged grassroots, spontaneous action, over other types of more "institutionalized" protests. For example, one event mentioned several times in the chapter's documents was a protest against a department store that began carrying men's socks with the message "Help Stamp Out Rape - Say Yes."

When members became aware of the socks, they met at the department store and staged a
spontaneous demonstration that consisted of standing on department store counters and throwing socks around the store. The company immediately withdrew the socks from all its affiliated stores.\textsuperscript{17}

The distinction between Cleveland NOW and other more formalized SMOs drew women to the organization. Influenced by the grassroots culture, Cleveland NOW leaders viewed the chapter as a place where all women could be involved in social change efforts. Members embraced this belief and viewed the chapter as a place to become immersed in feminist activism. A young woman who joined in the early 1990s contrasted NOW with other organizations she had joined.

\begin{quote}
I like the fact, at least at the grassroots level ... if you were getting involved, you had say in how the organization was being run. Whereas with the NARAL chapter, you sent them a donation and maybe you thought you were a member but you weren't really a member. The most you could really do was be a volunteer.
\end{quote}

Combined with the belief that grassroots, spontaneous action is best was the ideology that the membership should control the organization, not the national or state levels. This need for autonomy is a constant theme throughout Cleveland NOW’s history. The chapter’s founding bylaws stated that "Ultimate authority for chapter action shall reside in the membership." This phrase established members autonomy early on, and was repeatedly used in the newsletter throughout the years.\textsuperscript{18} By the late 1980s, members viewed themselves as true NOW activists. This belief led the chapter to see National and Ohio NOW as "mainstream" in their actions, whereas the chapter was radical and spontaneous. One member recalled the chapter’s attitude:
The thing was -- we had autonomy. We did pick and choose what we want[ed]. Yeah, we are going to follow this rule if we want to, if [National did not like it] too bad. Because that was what being feminist was all about. ... We never did anything unethical or anything and we did our little record keeping and all that but I mean there were times when we were told what we could and could not do. ... I think at one point we were even told that we were a little too activist sometimes. That made the folks [at the state level] uncomfortable.

However, not all members saw National NOW in a negative light. One former president discussed how National NOW’s policy on chapter autonomy allowed Cleveland to experience the freedom to pick and choose issues. She said:

I think part of it was the national organization, the fact that you could key in. You could be in Cleveland and do your own issues that were relevant to you and then be a part of a national movement at the same time.

In sum, members viewed NOW as a flexible, spontaneous, autonomous organization that women had to join to truly comprehend. A president from the 1980s explained how NOW chapters worked:

I think that unless someone is involved in NOW, they would have no idea what NOW is. It’s very, very diverse and it’s very dynamic and flexible. It is never the same -- never the same issues or the same focus or the same way of doing anything.

Influenced by a culture that privileged spontaneity, flexibility and autonomy, members viewed themselves as equals bonded together in a fight for women’s equality. Women joined Cleveland NOW to experience what it was like to fight with like-minded women. The chapter was also a place to learn from other women. One longtime member remembered that sharing environment, and the effect NOW had on her:

I learned to listen to women in NOW because I learned that women had something to say and I was interested in what they were thinking, not just what spokespersons were saying. I think that is how we really built NOW and gave it strength. We listened to each other. ... We weren’t trying to lead. We were trying to build a collective. We were trying to build on our strengths as in numbers of women with common objectives and goals. Listening to each other in order to identify the things we held in common.
Throughout its history, the chapter provided an outlet for women who needed to both explore their lives and collectively work for social change. One activist described how those dual goals were met:

I think it was bringing women together and empowering them or letting them feel their own power. Some women had never been outside there home before, had never gone to a meeting without their husband. ... Some women were recently widowed [or] recently divorced ... and this provided a forum for them - a forum to perhaps meet some of their political needs and their emotional needs.

She continued describing the chapter as meeting an "age-old need" of women to meet and talk about their lives. She said, "It might even be like the old sewing circles or you know, when women used to get together and have tea. ... women have a need to get together and yak and talk and share stuff."

One feature that drew women into NOW was the idea that they would be among like-minded people. An activist from the 1980s recalled "finding some other like minded people was something that drew [me] to those meetings. I mean it was more than just all focused on do, do, do - act, act, act. " She continued describing the atmosphere of the chapter:

I needed somewhere to be where people would sit and nod when I said things ... instead of going "I don't understand. Why were you mad? What's the problem?" ... There was a sense of community, ... shared values.

Another member, active in Cleveland East NOW, recalled her experience in a similar way. She said, "NOW was really a very easy mechanism for staying in touch with other women. ... For me it was being with other women on a weekly basis." She continued:

... It was a support group. ... Somebody that you knew was going to be your cheerleader because not all women were on the same page. No, all women won't be on the same page ever. You know? So it was good to know that you go there and have like minded people [around you].
As a result, many of the women interviewed discussed how important their chapters became in their lives. One woman, also involved with reproduction rights groups, summed up her involvement in NOW. She said, “I worked with pro-choice organizations but NOW was my [life]. I lived NOW.”

In a culture that valued emotional and personal exploration in the fight for women’s equality, members created protest actions that were both instrumental and expressive. For example, in the attempt to have the school board review a sexual harassment case, members lobbied for a hearing using both goal-oriented and symbolic actions. They began a post card campaign, met with council members, and, when denied a chance to speak at meetings, bound their mouths with white cloths in protest. Among other actions, the chapter engaged in street theater during the Gulf War, and once staged a dramatic presentation in downtown Cleveland to alert women to daytime rapes.

In sum, Cleveland NOW’s grassroots culture privileged grassroots autonomous action and created a space where women could explore personal and emotion issues. This expressive element drew women to the chapter. Here, expressive and instrumental goals intertwined and the members engaged in actions where were, at times, spontaneous, goal-oriented, and symbolic.

**Class Distinctions.** Although women came to the organization in search of personal and political empowerment, they worked in groups divided by social class. Other scholars have examined the influence of class on social movement organizing (see Johnston 1994, Naples 1991, 1991b, Ryan 1992). Ryan (1992) notes that class became a complicated issue for women’s movement activists. The popular press has long characterized the women movement
as a movement of white, middle class women. Working class women in the movement "do not tend to think of themselves as privileged women in the same way as they see women in the middle and upper class" (Ryan 1992:129). The experience of class identity in the Cleveland chapter confirms this distinction between "privileged" and working class women in the women's movement. The chapter's grassroots culture promoted class distinctions that barred the formation of a salient and single feminist identity. As a result, the organization developed fragmented feminist identities that were divided by the members' social class. Social class distinction was especially apparent during the multiple chapter system when groups were based in socially and economically distinct neighborhoods.

Members were aware of these class distinctions and divided the city into working class and professional areas. According to one member, "Cleveland is divided with this big geographic boundary, the river and bridges and we have these passports to get back and forth from the east to the west side." One member described how different areas of the city were characterized as politically, socially and economically different:

The city is pretty spread out geographically and the politics of the city are very different from east side to west side. The west side is very Republican and the east side is very democrat. ... You know, people going to a meeting on the east side of town ... are going to assume "Oh no, these people aren't going to be anything like me." And if you are an east sider and you are going to a meeting [on the west side] you going to think "Oh geez, it is going to be a bunch of suburban housewives and me." You know? ... I think that that is intimidating for people.

The idea of "needing passports" to travel across town symbolizes the extent of these divisions. A west side woman explained how these class differences signified different types of activism.

She said:
People are really landlocked into geographic boundaries and I think … it came down to a lot of class issues. … There was a more working class kind of group on the west side and a much more upper middle class group on the east side that really didn't want to necessarily merge. The west side group was a lot more activist oriented which was intimidating, a lot less status quo, “in the system” kind of group.

For this activist, the division was not only about social class but also about racism. She said:

It's a state of mind - it is not a geographic boundary. … It's also embedded in racism and classism. … The west side was the poorer, predominantly white. The east side is viewed as predominantly African American and then you get out into the suburbs [which was predominately affluent whites].

A member since the beginning of the chapter reflected on how division of the city into an east versus west side played a role in the failure of the suburban system:

After a certain period people sort of came to recognize that this [the suburban system] wasn't working. These chapters didn't exist and the two chapters that had continued to exist were the Cleveland [East] chapter which served as a magnet for some of the other eastern suburban people who wanted to be involved since they realize that nothing was happening in their area and the chapter that was originally known as Cleveland West which served as a magnet for the rest.

The chapter’s grassroots culture fostered the belief that members should look into their own neighborhoods as the site of collective action. In a city where neighborhoods are divided socioeconomically and the membership was racially and ethnically homogeneous, social class became a primary mechanism for distinguishing between the multiple chapters. This class division intensified when the chapters merged in the early 1980s into Cleveland East and Cleveland West chapters.

The majority of women interviewed commented on the class division of the city into an affluent east side and a working class west side. Women from the west side of town, predominantly working class, characterized east side members as women who joined NOW as a stepping stone to a political career. Several of the west side members called east side women
"resume writers" or referred to them as individualistic, meaning that they sought to benefit
themselves and not women as a whole. One woman, a resident of the west side described how
she saw this division:

The division then between Cleveland West and Cleveland East wasn't so much just
geographic it was almost philosophical. I would say the ... Cleveland West people
viewed themselves as more ordinary working people - not the resume writers, not
looking at this as a step in terms of building a career. It was a chapter that had a lot of
blue-collar workers. It had a lot of office workers. It had people that weren't expecting
to put this as one more line on their resume when they ran for political office.

She continued, "We viewed the leadership of the Cleveland East chapter as more professional
people who did look at it as something to put on their resume the next time they applied for a
new job or ran for office." Other members labeled east side professional women terms such as
"personal careerists" and women with an "individualistic approach" to feminism. The political
arena was one area where "personal careerists" were perceived as using NOW as a stepping
stone to a political position in the Democratic party. One woman dropped her membership in
NOW after twenty years because of Greater Cleveland NOW's emphasis on political
candidates and the Democratic Party. To her, the alignment of NOW and the Democratic Party
signified a move toward a "personal involvement idea rather than collective action and the
interests of a mass of the people."

 Whereas the west side members classified themselves as "non-resume writers" and
activists representing working class women, women on the east side did not a specific label for
west side members. Instead, east side members talked about how the west side was
"different." One woman's story of joining NOW illustrates this dynamic. Although a resident
of the west side, she joined Cleveland East.
I was familiar with people on the west side, but I sort of, [pause] I did not find myself being comfortable. So I just attended the east side. The east side chapter was mostly suburban. It was the Shaker Heights, Cleveland Heights people. They were professionals, even if they were temporarily stay at home mothers. They were professionals. And the west side chapter I felt ... they were members from the [pause] maybe not professional groups. They were frequently working women.

Another way the class differences manifested in the chapter was the interaction between the east and west side feminists. A Cleveland East President acknowledged that her chapter developed an inner circle that did not include women from other areas. She said:

We got cliché. You know it was the same group of women. We could call each other, we could really rely on one another. ... I think it got cliché instead of you know, as expansive as it could have.

The most significant way that the east versus west division affected the chapter was distance members were willing travel to attend meetings. Women from both sides of town noted that east side women simply refused to come to meetings on the west side. One activist from the east side simply summed up this dynamic. She said, "The west siders will go to the east side, but the east siders will not go to the west side. That's it."

The incorporation of class distinction into the chapter's culture had multiple results. First, the distinction between east and west sides severely affected the organization's ability to mobilize and organize members. Organizing became especially difficult whenever the chapters needed to work together in a unified manner. In the words of an activist from the 1990s, "I've never really understood the whole east/west Cleveland thing. ... It makes it difficult organizing things like meetings." The unified Greater Cleveland chapter spent considerable energy trying to locate a meeting space convenient to women from both sides of town. The chapter's office also became an issue in the east versus west division. After years of working out of the president's home, in the early 1990s the chapter obtained an office where members could meet.
However, the office was on the west side of town. The west side activist who helped find the office space noted, “Our office is right smack in Cleveland's near west side which had its problems because there were some people who were afraid to come into inner Cleveland.” The office’s west side location made it ineffective as a site to draw members together. Many women would not travel to a predominantly impoverished neighborhood making the office ineffective as a way of bringing members together and fostering a sense of organizational permanence.

Figure 5.2. Identity construction in the Cleveland, Ohio chapter of the National Organization for Women in the early 1990s.
Although the grassroots culture of Cleveland NOW did not create the social class distinction between the east and west sides, the culture’s values of autonomy, and the privileging of grassroots action, exacerbated class distinctions. The chapter’s culture did not lessen members’ reluctance to use their “passports” to interact with women from different social classes and neighborhoods. The geographic and class distinction was compounded by the original chapter’s fragmentation, which encouraged women to focus on their lives and neighborhoods as the site of collective action. The expressive aspects of the culture also encouraged members to create “support group” atmospheres within their chapter. This resulted in east and west side women seeing each other as “different” and creating exclusive clichés within their groups. In sum, participant’s social identities remained a barrier to salient feminist identity construction. A cohesive feminist identity did not emerge until the late 1980s when the east and west chapters merged.

**Activist Feminism.** From 1989 to 1993, Cleveland’s feminist community underwent a period of heavy mobilization that resulted from pro-life forces targeting the community’s abortion clinics. (See Cleveland NOW history Chapter 3). The members from both chapters began to work in coalition to defend the clinics from closing. The targeting of abortion clinics provided chapter members with a common “community” to defend and brought members together in a cohesive manner. In addition to the community action, National NOW held a series of marches in Washington which drew the chapters together. It was in this atmosphere, the chapters decided to merge in 1989 to coordinate efforts and increase their efficiency. Although east versus west distinctions remained important, a salient feminist identity emerged that represented the grassroots culture of Cleveland NOW.
The activist feminist identity constructed in the Cleveland chapter centered around the idea that caring for others is political. Generated from an organizational culture that valued expressive and instrumental grassroots action, activist feminists drew on life experiences in the construction of social protest. For example, one member recalled how her experience with an illegal abortion became a political tool to fight for women’s reproductive rights:

I was the one who spoke up first on what it is like to have an illegal abortion and how it compares to having a legal one. And I felt totally confident and willing to share this experience because I honestly think this is meaningful. Because they think that having abortion is promiscuous. I was a mother of three and I am the only one who knows how much love I have to give, how much finances my family has. What politician has the right to tell me how to run my life? Or the life of my family?

Therefore, an important theme in activist feminism was the idea of family. Concern about their children’s future rights motivated many women’s activism. One mother remembered attending the 1989 March on Washington for Reproductive Rights for her daughter.

I wasn’t even a member but from that march I became a member. At that point, I was interested in and starting doing things, or wanted to do things, because I had this great fear that my daughter ... was having rights taken away from her.

She said she became a chapter leader because she was compelled by the idea that "We could change these things. We could make a difference and it would impact everyone's lives, women's lives and their families, and my daughter." The same woman later wrote a newsletter article reviewing the chapter's accomplishments. In it, she urged members, "Do not give up the struggle, do not give up your dreams, do not allow those who preach hate and ignorance and oppression to dictate their limits on us and our families."

However, activist feminists did not only focus on their own families, instead the chapter became a place where women worked to improve conditions for the “human family.” One woman recalled her feelings when she joined the chapter:
I recognized early on that the women that I met through NOW [National Organization for Women] were extremely family oriented and that kind of blew my stereotype. ... What I found was this group of women who were very concerned about the human family.

By viewing women's personal lives through a political lens, members created a space for personal transformation. A leader after the unification of the chapters described activist feminists:

I think they tend to be more assertive, a little more aware of discrimination, probably much less likely to let themselves be pushed around. Maybe a bit more assertive. Most NOW members I've known even if they don't start out that way, by the time they've had some involvement [they] usually aren't afraid to challenge people on issues and things like that.

Part of this transformation process was becoming involved in chapter activities immediately upon joining. One member described Cleveland NOW as a place where "People ... could immediately get involved. They could do something that was productive and was a contribution to the community here."

Making a community contribution involved engaging in both mainstream political tactics and radical actions. Activist feminists believed that exclusively focusing on legislation was not an effective way to make social change. Instead, change came from a combination of tactics including street theater and demonstrations. A president during this period recalled conversations she had with older NOW members who wanted the chapter to stop focusing on legislative lobbying. She said, "These women, who are in their seventies, are saying that the only way we can really make things change is to go out, be in the streets and be in people's faces. That is what we need to do."
The construction of an activist feminist identity, helped the chapter flourish and make a
“name” for itself in the community. According to an Ohio NOW state officer, Cleveland
NOW leaders effectively targeted local issues and brought new people into the organization.
She remarked:

They were getting a lot of publicity and they were just an excellent chapter. ... It
seemed like they were getting a big group - 50 to 100 people when they were doing
events.

Part of that success resulted from activist feminists’ belief in community building and
members worked to connect with other Cleveland SMOs. One activist recalled how the
chapter organized with other groups. She said, “We worked with all kinds of groups. Groups
that would never have really worked together before.” These efforts at coalition building were
a part of the chapter’s feminist identity, according to one activist:

We stopped doing any one thing that was just NOW. We used our energy to either
come up with ideas to draw in lots of other people or to join what was going on. We
stopped recreating the wheel every time an issue came up. We got very good at
tapping into everything else that was going on.

Community building became so important, that one leader remarked that the group did not
care if it received credit for organizing. Instead, working in a community context was
important. As chapter members became more active, the organization became a political actor.

One activist remembers the chapter being asked by a city council member to hold a
demonstration to pressure the mayor into signing a sexual assault education bill. Another Ohio
NOW officer noted that Cleveland is a big political powerhouse in the state of Ohio. ... They
[the chapter] were a part of that.”
However, the chapter divided its attention between community-building grassroots activism and members’ personal needs. After the unification, the chapter began consciousness raising as part of the regularly scheduled meetings. During this time, members also started a feminist reading circle that one member remarked was totally social in nature. Thus, the community created by activist feminists focused on personal transformation along with local political empowerment. This community was inclusive and members did not distinguish between themselves and other feminists engaged in the same battles. However, activist feminists did draw boundaries between themselves and formalized SMOs who did not meet their criteria for grassroots dedicated action.

This boundary is evident by the feeling of structural ambivalence among members. Members viewed developed and formalized organizations as patriarchal and ineffective, while at the same time acknowledging the need for some kind of organizational structure. This ambivalence manifested in a boundary drawn between the chapter and National NOW. Members varied in their reactions from viewing NOW’s reputation as aiding their protest efforts to seeing the organization as patriarchal and ineffective.

In the Cleveland chapter, formalized organizational structure symbolized patriarchy and the status quo. Members responded by privileging of grassroots autonomy over structural development. According to Cleveland activists, highly structured organizations move too slowly and accomplish too little. Chapter members viewed their activism as very different from these organizations. National NOW’s organizational structure became a philosophical issue for many members. In particular, the hierarchical and professionalized arrangements of the
national level were troublesome to chapter members. One woman recalled her first experience with the national structure:

I remember the first national conference I went to, and I was like OK, I understand that they are trying to teach a process so you understand the process. But these folks actually like live it, breathe it and it's patriarchal. It's totally hierarchical. I mean I really believe there would have been another way to set up a women's feminist organization than the patriarchal structure of president, vice president, secretary, Roberts Rules of Order .... I mean I was shocked. I was like "You have got to be kidding me. This is the only way we can do this?" ... I was real disappointed.

Attending a series of national board meetings upset another chapter leader. She viewed the hierarchical structure as detrimental to feminist activism, calling it "the same old bullshit hierarchy, boy stuff that we try to not do. Well, we are doing it and I am sick of it."

By positioning themselves as activist feminists, the members perceived National NOW as ineffective, excessively developed and only concerned with maintaining the organization.

One former member reflected how the chapter differed from the other levels of NOW.

I got involved with NOW because to me it was a vehicle for being an activist for social change for women. And what I found on the local level I believe that to be true because we framed our activities. We framed what it meant to NOW. We did street theater in the square and had a presence.... But on the state or national level what I saw was the most important thing was raising funds to continue to support their structure which is doing what? People have some highly paid administrative jobs? ... Is it to maintain the organization which does what? It was very frustrating to me and continues to be.

However, activist feminists could not erect impenetrable boundaries between themselves and National NOW. The chapter benefited from National NOW's reputation. One member acknowledged how National NOW helped the chapter with its grassroots efforts:

But then on the other side if you didn't have that voice in Washington, we wouldn't have the credibility we have on a local level to be able to call up a Cleveland public school system and say "Hey you need to talk to us or we are going public with this."
Unable to completely discard their relationship with National and their “inherited” organizational structure, activist feminists became ambivalent about how to structure their chapter. One outspoken opponent of National NOW’s structure, concluded that some type formalized structure was necessary in the chapter. She said:

We do have a structure and I think structure is good. I can’t believe I say that now, but you need structure. You need some sense of structure that keeps an organization running. Is NOW the best structure? Probably not. Doesn’t have a bad structure though. I think it works in spite of itself.

Several women who went on to become leaders agreed that some type of formalized structure was needed. Several leaders reported that, at first exposure, they found the meetings confusing and unorganized. One woman, attending her first meeting, remembers sitting alone and hearing an “alphabet soup” of organizational acronyms recited. Another woman, based on her earlier experiences, began to provide written agendas at meetings to make them more businesslike when she became president. She says, “My observation was that part of that had been done kind of loosely and I felt that we needed something, as I said, just a little bit more organized.” Another member noted that the chapter was quick to react to a crisis but had a difficult time maintaining any type of programming and membership meeting on a consistent level. A young woman who had attended meetings of Chicago NOW had this impression of the Cleveland chapter.

It was -- I don’t mean this in a negative way -- it [Cleveland NOW] was a more amateur. The Chicago chapter had, you know, glossy brochures and at the time I joined [Cleveland] NOW there was no office. They had a nice office in Chicago. They had must have had some paid staff. It was just a lot more professional organization and things were much more organized.
The struggle to balance organization with activism plagued many of the leaders and indicates how the chapter's culture and collective identity did not support the need for organizational structure. Adding hierarchy and adopting procedures such as agendas and appointing members to greet new members made daily business run more smoothly, but many women feared the group would lose its sense of purpose. One activist outlined the connection between an established structure and organization and legitimacy. She wondered:

How do you maintain that [grassroots activism] at the same time be legitimate and establish legitimacy? [How do you] access funding that’s available without turning into something that you are not in order to make the people who have the money and resources give it up? ... It’s an incredible tightrope.

By the early 1990s, many members came to view structural development with ambivalence, acknowledging the need for structure to support the group, but wary of what a developed infrastructure would do to the group's autonomy. One belief was that the chapter clearly needed some kind of structure and organization in place to function efficiently. A competing view was that structure symbolized the type of activism being conducted and that a highly differentiated and complex infrastructure would mean that the chapter was no longer grassroots. These opposing views did not divide the chapter into ideological camps. Instead, many of the members endorsed both views and struggled with how to build an organizational structure that would not take precedence over activism. The members eventually designed a steering committee format with a rotating leadership. When that format failed, the woman behind reorganization blamed herself and the structure of the steering committee. She said:
... Maybe I tried to make this more corporate or something than grassroots, or tried to move us in a direction that might not have been the right direction for a grassroots organization to go. And I think that moving so quickly kind of threw people off. ... We were a very active group and now we have a telephone that goes unanswered. Maybe we are not good at functioning out of those hierarchical kind of structures but I don't know how else to do it. Somebody has to be responsible for the overall structure.

One activist reflected on the failure of the informally structured steering committee:

Basically what we tried to do is make it less intimidating, less threatening. ... What are the key things that a NOW chapter has to do to keep living? Let's forget about any of the fluff stuff. Let's eliminate anything we can and make it an easy streamlined job so it is not quite as intimidating for somebody to take on and we came up with an idea of rotating responsibilities. ... But it just didn't get followed through on. Part of the problem I think is finding people who are comfortable leading and giving other people direction as to what to do.

Therefore, the structural ambivalence of activist feminists led to the development of the steering committee structure. The goal of the structure was to decentralize decision making and leadership while at the same time providing the chapter with an organizational form that allowed it to function. The adoption of the steering committee emerged from the chapter's culture which valued grassroots activism, and the activist feminist identity which viewed differentiated and complex organizations as too "corporate" and ineffective. This structural adaptation was aided by the chapter's tenuous and fluctuating supply of resources. Subject to periods of abeyance and backlash, the organization never accumulated sufficient resources to professionalize any aspect of chapter leadership. This reliance on volunteers to run the chapter, combined with the lack of office space and a sense of structural ambivalence led to the failure of the new format.
Conclusion

Cleveland NOW’s history is an intricate weaving of organizational structure and culture in the continuity of a SMO. The organization did not formalize a way to accumulate resources and instead depended on a beneficiary constituency to fund and staff the organization. This reliance on members for resources meant that when the movement flourished and people joined NOW, the organization expanded. Cleveland NOW attempted to capture this growth by instituting a multiple chapter system with the goal of increasing activism in the city. However, when the ERA failed, the organization contracted structurally. Members in the two remaining chapters, Cleveland East and West, were not able to accumulate enough resources to stabilize their organizations. Instead, the two chapters developed an antagonistic relationship rooted in the city’s class divisions. These class divisions were emphasized by the organization’s grassroots culture which promoted member’s community interests and autonomy. It is not until a crisis brought an intense mobilization on the issue of abortion that class distinctions fade, and a salient activist feminist identity was created. However, this identity was structurally ambivalent, and combined with the chapter’s culture and the structural history, members instituted a new organizational form that did not mobilize members.

This case study illustrates the importance of both structural and cultural forces in an examination of SMO continuity. To only examine the organization from a resource mobilization perspective is to ignore the role of grassroots culture, class divisions among members, and the emergence of an activist feminist identity. These factors illuminate the degree to which social class identities fragmented the chapter and the extent to which structure became an ideological issues for the members. However, viewing the chapter through the
cultural lens of new social movement theory misses the role that resources and a changing political opportunity structure played in the organization's history. This case study illustrates the necessity of examining both culture and organizational structure to create a complete and intricate portrait of grassroots organizations.

In addition to the dynamic and reciprocal relationship of structure and culture in federated SMOs, another important factor is the connection between the national organization and its grassroots affiliates. In Chapter 6, I examine the relationship of the New York City and Cleveland NOW chapters with National NOW.
ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 5


3 The membership figures on the suburban chapters are conflicting. The numbers presented here are an approximate range based on interviews and state NOW records.


7 To avoid confusion I will refer to the Cleveland chapter as Cleveland West. I realize that this was a source of controversy between the two groups. However, for my purposes it is much clearer to call the chapters Cleveland East and West.


153
13 Despite the failure of the ERA and the decline in resources, the Cleveland NOW continued to be interested in the issue and continued to lobby National NOW to reintroduce the issue up until the 1990s.


17 Untitled history of 1976. Files of the Cleveland NOW chapter.


19 Of the women interviewed, five identified as west side activists and five identified as east side activists. The remaining interviewees did not identify with either side of the city.


CHAPTER 6

CHAPTER-NATIONAL RELATIONS AND CONTINUITY

This chapter examines the effect of chapter-national relations on continuity through investigating Cleveland and New York City NOW members' perceptions of National NOW. In previous chapters, I demonstrate how SMOs' structural and cultural processes are dynamic and reciprocal manifesting in unique chapter formations. I now explore how chapter-national relations emerge from these processes, and influence organizational survival and continuity. According to resource mobilization theorists, movement survival is the result of SMOs adopting more enduring structures. This organizational adaptation involves centralizing decision making, negotiating the larger organizational environment, and providing a continuous flow of resources (McAdam et al. 1988). One avenue of structural adaptation is the federated SMO with two or more distinct organizational units. SMOs federate to procure a stable resource base and maintain face-to-face interactions with constituents that sustains participant commitment (McCarthy and Zald 1987).

The upper level of a federated SMO is centralized and formalized, and attempts to influence public policy and opinion (McCarthy and Wolfson 1996, Oliver and Furman 1989). The lower level functions as a grassroots unit representing a specific community context.
(Oliver and Furman 1989, McCarthy and Wolfson 1996). Thus, a federated SMO's upper level focuses on the external political and social environment, while the grassroots level maintains member commitment through personal and community interaction.

Oliver and Furman (1989) view the two level's relationship as operating independently, each lacking the ability to control the other. While the two levels lack power over one another, I argue that local and national levels are interdependent. Federated structures are more stable because of local affiliate ties (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Organizational survival depends on a SMO's ability to shape the external environment and also meet the demands of recruitment, mobilization and commitment maintenance (McAdam et al. 1988). In federated movements, national and local levels bear a reciprocal set of duties.

The relationship between the two is one of mutual dependence. National level organizations must be visible in a national arena to aid in local affiliate's grassroots recruitment (Oliver and Furman 1989). Thus, national organizations must establish a sense of legitimacy to assist local affiliates in their social change efforts (McCarthy and Wolfson 1996, Young 1989). Federated SMOs, like all SMOs, must articulate obtainable goals that provide incentives for grassroots members to continue their participation (Zald and Ash 1966). When grassroots affiliates act on organizational goals, they bring increased visibility to the federated SMO that promotes member recruitment and resource mobilization.

Therefore, federated SMOs need harmonious relations between national and local levels to promote organizational continuity. If local affiliates become discouraged or disillusioned with the national level, the organizational loses both momentum and members. If national level leaders become complacent or controlling, they jeopardize the organization's
vitality (Zald and Ash 1966). A phrase borrowed from American history sums up the importance of chapter-national relations. "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

To analyze chapter members' views of National NOW, I discuss four emergent themes: the positioning of the chapter in relation to National NOW, the use of legitimacy and reputation, leadership appraisals, and perceptions of goal setting and articulation. I argue that these members' perceptions emerge from the chapter's organizational structure and culture. I begin by exploring the four themes emerging from the data and contrast the chapters.

Although each chapter has a unique relationship with the national level, Cleveland and New York City members share a common critique of National NOW's goal setting and articulation. I conclude by discussing how these reactions reflect chapter's unique interaction of cultural and structural processes and how these perceptions may affect NOW's continuity.

**Positioning of the Chapters**

One indicator of chapter-national relations is the construction hierarchy and authority systems between the local and national level. Cleveland members concur with the view of a national level that works to control the external social and political environment, and consequently, influences the grassroots. Despite this top-down perspective, Cleveland members continue to view the grassroots level as the most essential aspect of NOW. Consequently, to Cleveland members, National NOW has control over day-to-day operations, but the organization's power emerges from an active grassroots base. Thus, Cleveland members criticized National NOW for not promoting and supporting the work of grassroots activists.
In New York City NOW, members do not grant National NOW any authority or control over their chapter. Instead, National NOW is viewed as the chapter’s competitor. This competitive relationship is the result of a stormy political history with national officers and an on-going battle over member dues and fund raising efforts. Where Cleveland members acknowledged the differentiation in power and authority, New York City members ignore the organizational hierarchy and view the chapter as equal to National NOW.

**Cleveland NOW.** Cleveland NOW members privileged grassroots activism over more structurally complex SMOs efforts. Members distinguished between “corporate” activism issuing from foundations and non-profit SMOs and their spontaneous, community-based actions. Members included National NOW in their categorization of “corporate” institutionalized activism, finding the national level ineffective and excessively developed. Promoting grassroots activism, in Cleveland NOW’s perspective, was the most important aspect in the federated relationship. Cleveland members viewed their organization as the “true” NOW and the national level as distant, unresponsive and not involved in the “nuts and bolts” issues. The positioning of the chapter as the authentic grassroots manifestation of NOW represents the group’s grassroots culture and activist feminist identity. Consequently, most members criticized National NOW for its lack of attention to the grassroots level. According to one former president, National NOW has not provided leadership encouraging spontaneous, grassroots actions. She said:

I think that we [NOW] are not doing enough in those kind of actions that we really need to do to be in their face, to be out on the streets, to have a march of a thousand people show up just on two days notice.
Another former president, who eventually dropped her NOW membership, said she believed National NOW was intentionally out of touch with grassroots members and was not a social change agent for women. She said:

And the other thing is that many times that entity [National NOW] speaks for me. They didn't ask me. [She laughed] ... The only time that happens is when it is a request for money and that's the other piece, I got involved with NOW because to me it was a vehicle for being an activist for social change for women. And what I found was on a local level, I believe that to be true because we framed our activities. We framed what it meant to be NOW. We did street theater in the square and had a presence.

Cleveland members equated organizational vitality with a strong grassroots base encouraged by the national level. When the chapter began to decline in 1990s, members placed some of the blame on National NOW for losing momentum and not communicating issues in a way that resonated with grassroots activists. A leader from the 1990s described the chapter’s “doldrums” as the result of National NOW. She said:

I think that's been one of the discrepancies between national and local chapters recently is that there has not been a big focus mobilizing effort, that the chapters can get real [sic] involved with.

Another member reflected on the state of the entire organization and commented, “I think we are losing our momentum and our grassroots people. I think that we are out of touch.” She described how she viewed the reciprocal relationship between chapters, state organizations and the national level:

I think that if you are going to have a grassroots organization, you have to be in touch with the grassroots. When you lose touch with those people you are losing touch with the most essential core of people you can have. I mean you’ve got an organization of 300,000 women’s rights supporters obviously they don't all attend the conferences the national conferences, but I think that it’s the chapter’s or even the states’ responsibility to let National NOW know about what's going on in their states.
Other members commented on National NOW's lack of involvement in chapter operations. One member, who became involved devising the steering committee structure, wanted the national level's help on issues such as member retention. She said:

I would have liked to have seen a more active role by National, for example, we were having trouble keeping members interested. Our membership was declining and I think that it would have been helpful if somebody from National would have taken the initiative to say here "Let's have a workshop" or talk to your leadership about how, you know, how to keep your chapter vibrant. And that never came.

These perceptions of National NOW as uninvolved and unresponsive are the result of Cleveland members' shared belief that the grassroots level of NOW is the most vital aspect and should receive National's NOW's attention. While the majority of members were structurally ambivalent towards National NOW, they expected that its formalized structure would support the chapter in times of abeyance. When National NOW did not respond as they desired, members characterized the national level as indifferent and removed.

New York City NOW. New York City members adopted a different view. New York City members view National NOW as a rival. Whereas Cleveland members looked to National NOW for guidance, New York City members view themselves as competing with National NOW for resources, power within the organization, and media attention. Two reasons frame this perception. First, New York City NOW is among the largest chapters in the organization and has more power than smaller chapters. Second, the chapter has a history of conflicts with National NOW leadership. One event in particular, the re-election of Eleanor Smeal over incumbent president Judy Goldsmith in 1985 affected chapter-national relations. The 1985 national officer election polarized NOW into Eleanor Smeal versus Judy Goldsmith.
camps. When New York City supported Goldsmith, relations with the national leadership were damaged. One former New York City NOW president explained:

Our chapter historically had had rather rocky relationships with National NOW. Some of the reason for that was ... Ellie [Eleanor Smeal], in particular, National, in general. ... I think the perception in our chapter had been that Ellie and her administration ... saw the chapters as conduits for what National wanted and what National usually wanted was a march on Washington for something or other. So there was not a lot of support for organizing locally, for chapter initiatives on issues of local importance, or chapter initiatives at all.

Another former president described the lasting effects of the New York City NOW’s support for Judy Goldsmith. She said:

The Northeast, New York in particular, were big Judy Goldsmith supporters. We have that sort of rogue area reputation and that will never be erased either. There are a lot of people with long memories in political movements and they don’t forget shit.

The antagonistic relations with National NOW were not limited to leadership power struggles. One member explained that because of New York City NOW’s size, friction was inevitable. New York City members viewed themselves as a large and powerful segment of the organization and resented the small portion of member’s dues the chapter received, and National NOW’s fundraising attempts in the New York City area. Compounding this already hostile relationship, the media and the public did not always distinguish between the chapter and the national organization. According to one member, people often thought that if they called the New York City phone number, they were talking to the national office. A misconception New York City members did not attempt to correct because it fit with member’s conceptions of the chapter’s status.
Thus, the combination of size, history and financial conflicts created a competitive relationship between New York City and National NOW. One member described the chapter as “the knuckleball that National is always on the lookout for.” As a result of this competition, New York City members believed that National NOW ignored the chapter. One member said she believed National NOW intentionally excluded the chapter. She said because of the chapter’s size, “We ought to get a little more respect and be included in a little bit more of than what we are -- just as a democratic thing.” New York City members blamed National for not communicating more effectively and cooperating with the chapter efforts. One former leader described her relations with National NOW during her presidency:

Well, I never got that kind of direction from National. Actually, I think National by that time was totally fucked up ... and rather than supporting their chapters and giving them advice on what to do and helping them. They were and they still are in this ongoing fight about who is more important -- the National or the chapters.

She continued:

They are more interested in being NOW and the rest of the membership could go jump in the lake as far as they're concerned. I mean that was definitely how I felt. ... I felt like I had to beg them for anything I did get. I felt like I was treated as a bad second cousin. ... They just didn't give any support.

Whereas the Cleveland members believed that National NOW was indifferent and removed from the grassroots level, New York City members viewed the national level as a competitor and attributed their antagonistic relationship to a history of conflict and a series of power struggles. Members believed that this antagonism led to a deliberate avoidance of the chapter by National NOW. Members portray the chapter and the national level as caught in a
struggle over resources, including member dues, fundraising efforts, and authority in the organization. Complicating the positioning of the chapter was the way members viewed National NOW’s reputation.

Organizational Legitimacy

One benefit of a federated SMO is the legitimacy the national level provides chapter-based activism (Oliver and Furman 1989, Young 1989). SMOs experience two kinds of legitimacy, external and internal (Edwards and Marullo 1995). External legitimacy emerges from outsiders’ perceptions of a SMO’s effectiveness. Internal legitimacy depends on members’ solidarity and commitment to the SMO (Edwards and Marullo, 1995:913). Because of NOW’s longevity and high visibility, the organization is characterized by high external legitimacy and is often called upon to speak for the women’s movement. As valuable as external legitimacy is at achieving a favorable impression for a large domain or national SMO, Edwards and Marullo find that internal legitimacy is crucial for the survival of small domain organizations, such as NOW chapters (1995).

Cleveland NOW acknowledged and credited National NOW with providing an external legitimacy that aided their local activism and recruitment. New York City NOW members did not recognize National NOW’s external legitimacy and instead, either credit NOW as a whole, or the chapter in particular, for creating a powerful reputation as a women’s rights organization.

**Cleveland NOW.** Despite criticisms that the national level ignored the grassroots, Cleveland NOW members appreciated the external legitimacy National NOW provided. National NOW’s high visibility contributed to the chapter’s local efforts and aided in
recruitment. One longtime activist in the chapter admitted the National NOW was in a “slump” but that its reputation still attracted new members. She said:

It is because it [National NOW] still plays that role as the preeminent national feminist activist group that whenever something does happen, it reemerges from its coma. … It is a vehicle through which action is possible, and the vehicle that attracts new people.

Another member acknowledged although she was disillusioned with NOW, she recognized the importance of NOW’s name recognition in recruiting members. She said, “To be very honest, there are lots of women’s organizations in the country and in Ohio, but the NOW logo and the name recognition attracts members.” She continued:

There is such a visibility of NOW. Everyone knows who NOW is, believe it or not. … and they think that well, this is the largest women’s organization in the country they’ve been around for many years they must know how to connect with other issues and organizations.

Another member who traveled to Beijing for the 1995 Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women acknowledged NOW’s global reputation. She recounted how she took a thousand “Stop Violence” stickers with NOW’s logo to the conference. Once there she began handing them out to women:

I started giving them out to these women and God, there were like thirty women instantly practically knocking me over to get one of these things. People are starved for information. They know NOW. They know the name. That’s the name recognition thing.

Cleveland members used National NOW’s reputation to create an image that the chapter was composed of a large and powerful group of activists. A leader during the chapter’s actions against a local school system credited National NOW’s reputation as helping members be effective. She recalled how several black women in the community gathered together to approach the school board but could not get the attention of the school board or
the media. Once Cleveland NOW became involved, the media began to cover the issue and the school board eventually agreed to review the case. One activist summarized how National NOW's reputation aided the chapter's local activism. She said: "Sometimes it [National's reputation] is a good thing and works toward our advantage, we appear a lot more powerful and a lot more organized than [the chapter actually is]."

However, NOW's image as a powerful political organization placed a burden on the chapter. Several members recounted how the public turned to the chapter as an automatic source of protest and activism. One former presidentironically remembered how successful NOW's external legitimacy was:

People would also call us if they wanted a group. They thought they had the connection to the hot line of angry women who would come with picket signs [and] would just picket anything.

In sum, Cleveland NOW members acknowledged the chapter benefited from the reputation and external legitimacy established by the national level's visibility and political history. This reputation helped the chapter accomplish local actions and continued to serve as a recruitment source.

**New York City.** New York City members did not credit National NOW for bringing visibility or legitimacy to the chapter. Instead, members viewed NOW's reputation as emerging from all organizational levels. When members specifically addressed the role of legitimacy, they referred to the chapter's reputation, not National NOW's. One situation that encouraged members to view the chapter as equally important was the fact that the public did not always differentiate between organizational levels. For example, political endorsements were one example of how it was the NOW name that was important, not the endorsing
organizational level. One member remarked that most people were unaware of the
distinction between chapters and the national organization when it came to endorsing. She
added that many politicians wanted a NOW endorsement as a signal that they cared about
women's rights. Another member viewed the importance of the chapter's endorsements as
emerging from its status in the city:

New York City has sort of entrenched itself in the community at this stage and because
we have a political action committee, it is considered very important because they all
want a NOW endorsement.

One member recounted the story of a politician who had polled voters on influential
organizations as part of his campaign. According to the member, the New York City chapter's
approval rating was near the top of his list at approximately 85 percent. A former chapter
president noted that location played a role in establishing the chapter's reputation:

I think the big city chapters are so crucial and it's not just the large population of NOW
members. It is also being a media center. We set an impression and a tone for the rest
of the state. The other chapters rely on that. ... And it is just a geographical thing.

However, chapter members found that a powerful reputation in a women's rights
organization could be draining. One leader discussed how high visibility as a women's rights
organization was not always positive:

Well, that's [NOW's reputation] a good and bad thing too. I mean because it
sometimes gets really frustrating when you pick up the phone and somebody is saying
"Is this NOW?" "Yes, this is NOW." Well, I need help with my landlord and my
boyfriend is beating me up and my kid doesn't have enough to eat" and they think that
you can help them because you are NOW and in a way that is really great that they
think so highly of you that and you are so much in their consciousness. It shows how
important NOW is but on the other hand sometimes you just want to say, "I don't
fucking care. I can't do anything about that right now. I'm really tired. I don't know
what you should do. Goodbye." [She laughed.]
In sum, New York City members view their chapter as a powerful force within their community and do not rely upon or credit National NOW’s external legitimacy. By positioning the chapter as National NOW’s competitor, members view the chapter as strong and independent with its own sense of legitimacy.

Structural and cultural forces shape the views of Cleveland and New York City NOW members. Structurally, Cleveland NOW depended on issues to mobilize necessary resources. This dependence transferred, in part, to the national level. Chapter members needed the national level to be visible and active on issues, for the chapter to maintain a sense of external legitimacy and momentum. Therefore, chapter members acknowledged the value of National NOW’s reputation. Yet, Cleveland NOW strongly criticized the national level, claiming it ignores the needs of the grassroots. That is, Cleveland members credited National NOW for external legitimacy, but did not experience a sense of internal legitimacy. The chapter’s culture and activist feminist identity accentuated this critique.

Since New York City NOW’s organizational structure is modeled on the national level, and a history of competition exists between the two, the chapter does not rely on National NOW for visibility or legitimacy. Instead, members position the chapter as equal to National NOW, both within their community and the NOW organization. The chapter’s instrumental culture and political feminist identity guide this sense of independence. Political feminists view a strong infrastructure as a means to accomplish goals. These cultural values encourage political feminists to create a strong chapter, not dependent on other NOW levels for survival.
National Leadership

The two chapters also diverge on their opinions of the national leadership. While both chapters are critical, Cleveland NOW finds the leadership too controlling and conservative. Cleveland member’s views fit with the hypothesis that in “becalmed” organizations, leaders may focus on preserving their own positions and avoid radical actions (Zald and Ash 1966). New York City members interpret the situation differently and find the national leadership passive and without direction. In other words, Cleveland members viewed the national leadership as “hoarding” resources to maintain their own power, while New York City members perceive the national officers as powerless and adrift. Both chapters address a lack of charisma in the current leadership and see NOW in a state of “doldrums” as a result.

Cleveland NOW. Cleveland NOW members view the national leadership as conservative, controlling, concerned with preserving their own position in the organization, and out of touch with the membership. These views align with the member’s general impression that national leaders are pushing the organization to become more conservative, and consequently, are less in touch with the grassroots members. Several women commented that they believed national officers manipulated national conferences to control the issues discussed. Because of this, members found national conferences frustrating and unproductive. One member recalled the last few conferences she attended:

The last couple of national meetings have been real frustrating for me. Really kind of very negative experiences, I don’t know that I’m real happy with National right now [laughed ironically] and part of it is I think there seems to be efforts to limit discussion on controversial issues like the whole ERA and things like that and that’s been real frustrating.
Another member who had attended several conferences and national board meetings agreed:

I think that there are lots of things that grassroots really wouldn't approve of or even want to see as a real function or issue. And I think that [National] NOW at our conferences manipulates certain issues that they -- they being the people in power there now -- see as a priority issue.

Some members specifically commented on current president Patricia Ireland and her performance. One longtime member called her a "disappointment" and was angry that Ireland authored a biography during her presidential term. She explained:

I am very disappointed in her and I am angry at what she is doing to this organization, what she has done to this organization. I think she is arrogant. I think she is very self centered. I think she is in it for herself and not the organization. I mean when you are running the national women's movement, I mean NOW is really it, you don't go do a book in the middle of your presidency. I mean do it when you're finished. You have too much to do. And everything is 1 - 1 - 1, you know? She just likes the limelight.

Other members were not as harsh in their judgments but agreed that national leadership was lacking in charisma. A former leader noted:

I like the fact that they [national officers] are sometimes visible speaking up for certain thoughts and certain ideas but we don't have the kind of wonderful spirit that Molly Yard could create. We don't have the dignity that Judy Goldsmith carried. No -- we are not what we used to be. I should almost say they are not what they used to be because now I am not happy with what I see.

One former president concluded, "The whole strata of national NOW officers and leadership are out of touch with each other about what the goals should be."

**New York City NOW.** Where Cleveland members found leaders controlling, New York City members view the leadership as listless and without direction. One longtime member reflected on the state of National NOW and described its passivity as spreading to other levels of the organization. One member blamed the passivity on the retention of leaders in the organization. She said the same people had been in leadership positions for too long, and
were simply exchanging places. Another member described national leaders as cliché that
damaged the organization. She said:

I'm angry at National. As far as I am concerned Patricia [Ireland] has not done very
good. [She's] not out there. We are not doing anything. We have no direction, no
leadership. I think we are foundering around. It's become a really tight organization. I
don't like it.

Part of New York City members' perceptions derive from an antagonistic history with
the national leadership. Members clashed with national officers several times throughout their
history including supporting presidential candidates in 1985, 1987 who lost elections. (See
New York City history in Chapter 3.) These clashes placed the chapter on the outs with the
national leadership and influenced members' views of national leadership. 7

In sum, New York City members view the leadership as adrift and passive. National
leadership is a cliché that has lost its momentum. Cleveland members do not accuse the
leadership of losing momentum but misdirecting it. In their view, leaders control all aspects of
the organization, including the issues discussed at national conferences. McCarthy and
Wolfson (1996) note that little research has investigated the influence of leadership style on
SMO survival and continuity. While this analysis rests on members' perceptions and not an
examination of National NOW leadership, it is clear that the leadership style perceived by
members affects the chapter's confidence in national leadership.

By examining the positioning of the chapters, the concepts of legitimacy, and
evaluations of national leadership, clearly New York City and Cleveland have different
relationships with National NOW. Both of these relationships are interpretations of the power
existing between National and the chapters. New York City NOW constructs an image of
itself as an equal to National NOW and negates any power differences. Instead, New York City members view the national leadership as powerless and passive. Cleveland NOW acknowledged a power differentiation between the chapter and the national level. Cleveland was dependent on National NOW and consequently, regarded the leadership as controlling and powerful. Despite divergent power relationships, both chapters shared a common critique of National NOW's ability to set and articulate goals.

Goal Setting and Articulation

To achieve organizational stability, SMOs must articulate goals members find rewarding and obtainable (McAdam et al. 1988, Zald and Ash 1966). This responsibility is accentuated in federated SMOs where ties to local activists is a means to organizational stability (McCarthy and Zald 1987). According to members from both chapters, National NOW has failed to articulate and create achievable goals.

Members spoke of waiting for National NOW to take action and identify issues for the chapters to pursue. A longtime Cleveland member described the national level as "basically stagnant. There is not really that much happening." Another Cleveland member said, "I don't think things happen quick enough. And many people have said no - no - no. You have to wait you have to wait, you have to wait. I'm tired of waiting." Planning to start her own women's rights organization, she described herself as "one of those women who want to get out of NOW because they see that there is not that much happening."
New York City members view the lack of goals as an ongoing problem in NOW. A longtime New York City activist explained her views on the situation. She said, “National NOW seems to be having a problem fully explaining [its issues] and allowing it on the local level so people can go out and make a good case.” She continued:

I really do think that there is a vacuum at the national level at this time and that the chapters, the local chapters have been so primed to do everything that national wants them to do and they have not focused on their own local people. It’s a very bad situation out there.

A former New York City president viewed the lack of goal articulation as a longtime problem plaguing the organization. She said:

I really fault National because if they gave us more direction, more ideas and more support I think we’d be in better shape, at least during in my years. I thought we would be in much better shape. But they really didn’t help much.

Along with faulting National NOW for a lack of goals articulated to the membership, specifically to chapters, members also believed that the national leadership had difficulty providing goals that were obtainable. One of the major problems, according to activists, was the broad range of issues NOW addressed. A Cleveland member commented:

I’m very disappointed. I’m disgusted. I’m upset with the leadership of NOW in the Washington office. I think, like I said before, they always react to too many things. [They respond] to too many fires - rather than being proactive.

One Cleveland member remembered the response she received when she suggested the organization was taking on too many issues:

At my one of the very first regional meetings that I attended, and yes, we were discussing this issue, that issue and I said aren’t we spreading ourselves thin? The reaction was “Wow, We can’t say that.” … So the way I see it is if we have enough staff power and energy to do the work? Let’s go for it. But if it takes away from what we really represent because we get into too many things and we’re low on staff power then it has to be reconsidered.
In sum, members from both chapters believed that National NOW had difficulty identifying issues for activists. Once issues were identified, members were also concerned with National NOW’s ability to articulate those issues in a way that resonated with the membership. Some members blamed a broad range of goals for the lack of direction they perceived in the entire organization; others viewed it as a symptom of an established and complacent leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Positioning of Chapters</th>
<th>Use of National Legitimacy</th>
<th>Leadership Appraisals</th>
<th>Goal Setting and Articulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York City NOW</td>
<td>View chapter as equal and competitor with National NOW</td>
<td>Reject idea that National NOW contributes to legitimacy</td>
<td>National leadership passive and directionless</td>
<td>Lack of goal articulation and setting on-going problem for both chapters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland NOW</td>
<td>Power from the grassroots base, National NOW needed for states of abeyance</td>
<td>Members use National NOW’s external legitimacy</td>
<td>National leadership controlling and working to maintain own power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1. Summary of chapter-national relations for the New York City and Cleveland, Ohio chapters of the National Organization for Women.

Conclusion

An analysis of chapter-national relations reveals the importance of chapter-national relations in promoting SMO continuity. Although this chapter-national relations analysis only examines chapter members' perceptions of national and not vice versa, several conclusions about federated SMO continuity are suggested. At the time of the interviews, the women’s movement was in a period of abeyance and many feminist SMOs and collectivities had lost
momentum (Taylor and Whittier 1993). According to resource mobilization theorists, "becalmed" SMOs need to motivate members and confirm their commitment to the movement (Zald and Ash 1966). In particular, local members of federated SMOs need to be involved in projects with meaning to keep the group alive (Carden 1978, Oliver and Furman 1989). SMO continuity is affected when members believe the national level is unresponsive and removed from their concerns. Members who do not receive some sort of "payoff," either in terms of solidarity or successful outcomes, may choose to leave the organization discouraged (McAdam et al 1988, McCarthy and Zald 1987, Zald and Ash 1966). One "payoff" can be the construction of a collective identity that can allow the organization to withstand hostile periods, keeping the goals and ideology alive (Rupp and Taylor 1987, Taylor 1989). When national level organizations do not support members, relations can become negative and antagonistic, and internal legitimacy decreases. This can lead to factionalism endangering the entire organization. I assert grassroots organizations need a strong organizational and cultural foundation to survive a period of negative or antagonistic relations with the national level. I suggest that because of their mutual dependence, negative relations between national and local levels can not be sustained for long periods of time without damaging opportunities for organizational continuity.

The New York City chapter has a developed infrastructure, and expressive and instrumental cultures that sustain the organization. The idea that National NOW is a competitor with New York City encourages members to view themselves as autonomous and independent from national directives. In addition, members view the chapter as equally important as the national level. This results in members working to create an infrastructure that
was enduring and independent of National NOW. Cleveland, on the other hand, relied on issues and a grassroots culture to sustain the chapter. This reliance on issues meant the chapter was dependent on National NOW for direction and guidance. Complicating this relationship was an activist feminist identity that expressed structural ambivalence towards National NOW. Activist feminists recognized the benefits of National NOW’s external legitimacy but resented its hierarchical structure and leaders’ controlling manners. Cleveland NOW, with a fluctuating infrastructure and a culture which privileged grassroots over national action, became both dependent and disillusioned with National NOW. As members grew more disillusioned, they left the chapter and joined other organizations. Ironically, Cleveland NOW members’ constructed a culture valuing autonomy and freedom, yet, were unable to achieve enough independence from National NOW to survive an abeyance period in the 1990s.

In the final chapter, I extensively analyze the interplay of culture, and organizational structure in SMO continuity. I discuss both the empirical and theoretical contributions of this study and raise questions for other scholars concerned with movement and organizational continuity.
ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1 Quote taken from Abraham Lincoln’s speech at the Republican State Convention. Springfield Illinois, June 16, 1858.

2 The size of the chapter determines the number of delegates at the national conference where delegates decide policy and vote on national officers. The larger the chapter, the more power it has in determining organizational policies and electing officers.

3 The 1985 national officer election in New Orleans was contentious, according to participant accounts. Goldsmith and Smeal differed on views of the ERA and chapter development and autonomy. Both of these issues were hotly debated amongst chapters. For further discussion of the 1985 NOW presidential election and the issues see Ryan, 1992.

4 This observation is the result of my own observations and comments from feminists both in and outside of NOW.

5 This conference drew women’s rights groups from all over the world. The National Organization for Women was one group participating in the workshops and policy setting sessions.

6 Most NOW chapters and the national level have formed political action committees to be able to endorse political candidates.

7 This impression was verified in a discussion with a former National NOW staff member. She reported that the national office viewed the New York City chapter as “independent” and acknowledged that the Judy Goldsmith-Eleanor Smeal election had damaged relations between National NOW and the chapter.
CHAPTER 7

CONTINUITY IN THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

In a survey administered at the 1995 National NOW conference in Columbus, Ohio, seventy two percent of the attendees reported that their chapter had been in existence for twenty years or more. While this survey sampled only conference attendees, it indicates the longevity of NOW chapters across the United States. The two chapters in this study have each survived for more than two decades. Different theoretical perspectives offer explanations for organizational longevity. Resource mobilization theorists regard organizational structure as the key, whereas new social movement theorists consider the influence of culture and identity on continuity. In this study, I argue that both structure and culture need to be considered to create a complex and accurate portrayal of SMO continuity. I began this work with the theoretical aim of merging social movement frameworks to enrich our understanding of the interplay between organizational structure and culture. The necessity of merging theoretical frameworks became apparent during the inductive process of data collection and analysis. I found that both structural and cultural theories were necessary to explain the chapters' histories.
Using only structural explanations, the Cleveland chapter’s longevity puzzled me. Cleveland NOW, with its series of structural adaptations, seemed to have survived twenty-five years by chance. According to resource mobilization theory, Cleveland NOW, dependent on volunteers, with no office or consistently developed infrastructure, did not have the structural foundation in place to survive. Organizations without an established path of resource acquisition, and developed infrastructures are less likely to survive than formalized and centralized SMOs (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1987, McAdam 1982, Minkoff 1983, Zald and Ash 1966).

Conversely, the New York City chapter seemed less of a mystery. A structural analysis of the chapter created a clear picture of the benefits of a formalized, and centralized organizational structure. Equipped with professional leadership and developed infrastructure, New York City NOW’s continuity fit predictions of resource mobilization theorists. Matured beyond organizational “adolescence,” the chapter developed an administrative cadre devoted to the organizational maintenance, increasing the group’s ability to survive (Edwards and Marullo 1995, Minkoff 1993, Oliver and Furman 1989).

An examination of the chapter’s cultural processes lessened the mystery of Cleveland NOW, but posed new questions for New York City NOW. Cleveland NOW developed a grassroots culture that kept chapter activists involved throughout its history of structural adaptations. By focusing on community issues and drawing resources from members, the chapter was able to mobilize in the movement’s early years. However, the chapter’s fragmentation due to social class distinctions, and members’ structural ambivalence left the
chapter in a precarious position in the 1980s. The group acted in times of intense movement mobilization, but not could not survive a state of abeyance in the 1990s when a strong organizational structure was needed.

In contrast, culture did not appear to play a significant role in my initial analysis of New York City NOW's continuity. However, as I continued to interview members, the consciousness raising committee’s importance emerged along with an understanding of the chapter’s two co-existing cultures. I began to perceive how the development of an expressive culture created a space for women to enter NOW and explore personal experiences in a feminist context. The instrumental culture of the chapter promoted structural development and goal-oriented action. These rather different two cultures met two important needs for continuity. First, the instrumental culture promoted a strong infrastructure for survival. Second, the expressive culture provided a recruitment vehicle and a site for political and emotional exploration. These two cultures were mediated by the chapter's differentiated infrastructure, and became important elements in its continuity.

The process of researching SMO continuity underscores the need for employing both structural and cultural frameworks. It is in the merging of resource mobilization and new social movement theory that the main contribution of this dissertation rests. In the following section I return to the propositions framing this dissertation and the outline the factors and processes influencing social movement continuity.
Figure 7.1 Factors influencing organizational culture in a federated social movement organization.
Figure 7.2. Factors influencing organizational structure in a federated social movement organization.
Dynamics of Structure and Culture in Social Movement Organizations

This study centers on a series of propositions about the process of organizational continuity. The first two propositions address the relationship between structure and culture in SMOs.

*Proposition One: Structure and culture are interrelated processes in social movement organizations.*

The case studies reveal a series of interrelated factors shaping both SMO culture and structure. Through this analysis, I find that organizational culture and structure are influenced by movement ideology, participants' beliefs and social backgrounds, and community context. The data also suggests that SMO leaders provide an important structural and cultural legacy. In addition, I argue an investigation of local-national level relations is particular essential when examining federated SMOs. (See Figures 7.1 and Table 7.2). Using data from the case studies, I now examine each of these factors and their influence on social movement culture and structure.

**Movement Ideology**

Scholars view ideology as an essential component shaping culture (See Lofland 1995). Considering the case studies, I contend that ideology is a powerful influence on both organizational culture and structure. The women's movement and the ideologies of liberal and radical feminism provide a rich site to explore the effect of movement ideology on organizational culture and structure.
NOW is characterized as a member of the liberal feminist strand of the women's movement. This strand of the movement focuses on legislation as a means for achieving gender equality. The ideology of liberal feminism reflects these political goals by subscribing to the belief that gender inequality exists because of women's lack of access to power. Liberal feminists work to change the system and remove gendered barriers, making women and men equals (Carden 1974, Cassell 1977, Evans 1979, Feree and Hess 1985/1995, Freeman 1975).

Radical feminism, on the other hand, conceptualizes women as a sex class, and endorses the belief that male superiority relies on women's subordination. In order to achieve gender equality, society needs to undergo a complete transformation and vestiges of male dominance need to be eradicated (Echols 1989, Evans 1979).

Scholars have documented how these different feminist ideologies shaped feminist organizations (Carden 1974, Feree and Hess 1985/1995, Freeman 1975, Rothschild-Whitt 1989). Radical feminists view organizational hierarchy as a representation of patriarchy in a group context and instead formed smaller collectivist groups, focusing on consciousness-raising and direct action (Carden 1974, Cassell 1977, Evans 1979, Feree and Hess 1985/1995, Freeman 1975). The liberal feminist strand was shaped by participants who were mostly professional women with extensive political communication networks. Experienced with formal organizations, these women had access to the political process and formed organizations that paralleled, in many ways, the institutions they sought to change (Freeman 1975, 1979). My dissertation illustrates how these two movement ideologies influenced the structure and culture of Cleveland and New York City NOW.
New York City NOW. The ideology of liberal feminism shapes the "core" of the New York City chapter. The chapter, in many aspects, fits the description of a liberal feminist organization (Freeman 1975, 1979). The chapter's formalized and hierarchical structure parallels the institutions New York City political feminists work to change. The chapter's political feminists seek equality through the legislative removal of gendered barriers, while consciously avoiding involvement in women's culture. The existence of an expressive culture and empowerment feminist identity in the chapter emerges from a radical feminist consciousness raising tradition (Carden 1974, Cassell 1977, Evens 1978, Ferree and Hess 1985/1995, Freeman 1975, Taylor and Rupp 1993). Empowerment feminists use the consciousness raising committee as a site for women's transformation and liberation from the psychological bonds of patriarchy.

Consciousness raising began in the radical feminist strand of the movement and was conducted in decentralized groups. In decentralized organizations, authority resides within the collectivity, and not in any particular individual. There are few rules and no organizational hierarchy. Members are bound together by homogeneity of age, sexuality, race, and social class, and relations between participants are personal and social (Rothschild-Whitt 1979). Drawing on this radical feminist tradition, the decentralized and informal consciousness raising committee provides women with a location valuing emotional ties and personal expression. Participants are recruited through social networks creating a largely homogeneous group.

In sum, both liberal and radical feminist ideologies influence the chapter's organizational structure. The chapter adheres to liberal feminist beliefs and constructs an
organization dedicated to making social change through legislative means through a formalized and centralized structure. However, the incorporation of radical feminist consciousness raising created an informal and decentralized niche in the chapter’s structure.

**Cleveland NOW.** The Cleveland chapter incorporates radical and liberal ideologies into its culture and structure, but in a different manner. The chapter’s grassroots culture and activist feminist identity value direct community-based action over more “mainstream” liberal feminist tactics such as lobbying. Chapter members privilege spontaneous, grassroots actions such as street theater, and unpremeditated “adrenaline” based actions. The chapter’s adoption of an informal organizational style culminated in the creation of a steering committee form modeled, to some degree, on the radical feminist small group (Allen 1975 Rothschild-Whitt 1979). Yet, the Cleveland chapter did not reject liberal feminist goals and beliefs. Chapter members acknowledged the value of National NOW’s liberal feminist presence emerging from a large formalized structure, but struggled to define a non-hierarchical organizational style that incorporated their views of autonomous, grassroots change.

In addition to illustrating how movement ideology influences organizational structure and culture, this analysis of Cleveland and New York City NOW documents how SMOs create unique cultures and structures based, in part, on members’ interpretation of movement ideologies. In the case of the women’s movement, we would expect that different strands of feminism should create distinct organizational structures and cultures. For example, liberal feminism with its formalized and centralized structures should create instrumentally-focused cultures. Radical feminism with its informal and decentralized structures should create more expressive and emotion-based cultures. The case studies illustrate how radical and liberal
feminist ideologies intertwine and manifest differently in feminist SMOs. The cases of Cleveland and New York City NOW confirm scholars’ views of the movement as intertwining strands influencing each other (see Carden 1974, Freeman 1975).

Social Movement Participants

SMO participants have the ability to influence and shape both culture and structure. Resource mobilization theorists point out that members themselves are a valuable resource in the creation of SMOs (Freeman 1975). Participants contribute time, money, and through social networks recruit new members (Freeman 1979, McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1987). Organizations able to develop an administrative cadre are more enduring structures and survive longer than those who do not (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1987, Zald and Ash 1966). In other words, structure is shaped by what participants contribute to the SMO in terms of resources, mainly in terms of their time, financial support, and social networks.

I also argue that who participants are also influences SMO culture. Their individual belief systems, social identities, and the surrounding community culture and context influence the expression of the group’s culture. One manifestation of participants’ beliefs, social identities, and community context is in the construction of a collective identity, which is an emergent shared understanding of the social world (Taylor and Whittier 1992). These collective identities serve as cultural goods, and indicators of social movement culture (Swidler 1995).

New York City NOW. New York City NOW members provide valuable resources that directly shape the structure of the chapter. Because of NOW’s dues rebate system, the large chapters have more financial resources. When membership numbers are high, the
chapter had more financial resources and increased the number of paid staff and services offered. In periods of high mobilization, the chapter was able to enlarge and differentiate its structure. When membership numbers decreased, the chapter "downsized," relocating its offices and reducing the number of paid staff.

Participants also shaped the chapter's cultural dimensions. Women who view social change as the result of legislative and political lobbying promoted the instrumental nature of the chapter's culture by working in various politically-oriented committees. Women who came to New York City NOW seeking a site for emotional exploration and empowerment became a part of the consciousness raising committee, promoting the chapter's expressive culture. Members' social networks drew participants into one culture or the other, emphasizing cultural differences. These cultures were distinguished by their perspectives on women's empowerment and were further set apart by the development of an "us" versus "them" mentality among members.

In addition, the community context of New York City shaped both the chapter's culture and structure. Members drew on the status of New York City as a major metropolitan city and media center as a way to position chapter within NOW and the women's movement. Members often remarked that their chapter was "different" and important because they were based in New York City. This combined with the need to compete with other New York City SMOs for resources amongst SMOs. Political feminists worked to create an organizational structure that made the chapter appear legitimate and enduring. Therefore, the community
context resulted in the adoption of a formalized and professionalized organization, similar to other SMOs, and a culture that viewed the chapter as influential and important in the women movement.

**Cleveland NOW.** In Cleveland NOW, the number of members also directly affected the chapter's structure. The chapter historically relied upon issues, and consequently members' dues, as a way to support and develop the chapter's infrastructure. Therefore, the level of participation in the chapter affected the group's ability to formalize organizational structure and professionalize the leadership. Fluctuating periods of mobilization, and consequently, resources, affected the chapter's ability to rent an office, and employ administrative staff.

Cleveland's socioeconomic and geographical divisions influenced members' ability to construct a salient feminist identity. Participants' social class divisions were emphasized by the instituting of the multi-chapter system that kept activists focused on their own lives and neighborhoods. Members often spoke of using "passports" to travel across town and interact with other feminists. This focus resulted in a culture that did not emphasize the creation of a unified feminist identity.

In sum, who participants are and what they bring to a SMO are important factors shaping culture and organizational structure. I suggest that micro level analyses of participants in terms of resources and identity reveal the interrelated processes of culture and structure in SMOs. SMOs are not simply numbers of participants but instead are complex systems drawing on resources, community contexts, participant belief systems, and social identities.
SMQ Leaders

McCarthy and Wolfson (1996) note that the role of leaders in the continuity and operations of SMOs has not been adequately addressed in social movement literature. While this study does not systematically investigate the influence of leaders on organizational culture and structure, data from the case studies suggest that leaders do influence organizational culture and structure and, consequently, SMO continuity.

Both Cleveland and New York City NOW have had dynamic and influential leaders whose views provide a structural and cultural legacy. Many of the New York City members mentioned a longtime leader who was a vocal proponent of the chapter developing a formalized and professionalized structure as a way to survive. The same woman took an active role in dissuading members from participating in women's culture based on her experiences in the women's movement. I suggest that her continued presence and stature in the chapter influences the view of members and sustains the groups formalized structure and instrumental culture. In Cleveland NOW, the chapter went into decline after the resignation of a dynamic and influential leader. This woman held strong beliefs about the need for the chapter to focus on grassroots issues. In addition, she was a vocal critic of National NOW's structure and policies. The data suggests that her leadership, and social networks, were factors in the creation of an activist feminist identity, valuing grassroots action and rejecting organizational formalization. When she stepped down from leading the group, the chapter began to founder, unclear of its goals and purpose.
In sum, the influence of social movement leaders on the structure, culture and continuity of movements is an area that needs further research and investigation. I suggest that leaders who remain involved for a long period of time, or are particularly dynamic or charismatic have the ability to dramatically influence the course of SMOs. This is a particularly rich area for scholars to investigate in terms of culture, structure and continuity.

Chapter - National Relations

Although federated SMOs have been characterized as having detached relations between organizational levels (Oliver and Furman 1989), my study that the relationship between levels influences cultural and structural development. Chapter members’ reactions to National NOW shape their culture and structure. (See chapter 6). Cleveland NOW, fitting with its grassroots culture, rejects National NOW’s organizational structure and cultural archetype. New York City NOW, in a highly competitive SMO environment, accepts National NOW’s structural and cultural configurations, and incorporates much of the national model.

New York City NOW. New York City NOW models its organization after the national level’s structure and adopts an instrumental culture that fits with National NOW’s overall philosophy of making change. New York City NOW’s instrumental culture views structural development as means to accomplish social and political change. This structural and cultural response to National NOW aids the chapter in a competition for resources in the crowded SMO environment of New York City by providing the chapter with a bureaucratic model to increase their efficiency and legitimacy (Gamson 1988). However, the incorporation of national structure and culture did not bring harmony between the two levels, instead an antagonistic relationship developed through continued competition for resources and power.
Cleveland NOW. Cleveland NOW members reject much of National NOW's structure and philosophy, narrowing the organization's nationwide scope to a more grassroots focus. The decentralized steering committee structure adopted by the chapter, although ultimately unsuccessful, is evidence of members' rejection of a formalized hierarchy of leadership modeled by National NOW. The chapter's grassroots culture, forged from values of autonomy and community action, rejects a nationwide focus. Instead members value grassroots, "adrenaline" based actions as a form of "true" feminism. Cleveland NOW activists view the chapter level as the most meaningful form of feminism. By adopting this stance, members use the national level's reputation and legitimacy to accomplish their goals, but regard National NOW as bureaucratic and out of touch.

In sum, structure and culture are complex processes emerging from a variety of overlapping factors. Movement ideology, resources, participants' beliefs and social identities, SMO leadership and the relations between the local and national levels of federated organizations make up the components which shape SMO culture and structure. This study documents the degree to which the same factors influence and shape the emergence of SMO culture and structure. As these factors change over time, so does the SMO and its vitality and chances for continuity. I now discuss proposition two that addresses how organizational structure and culture influence each other within a SMO.

Proposition Two: Organizational structure and culture mediate each other in SMOs.

Josh Gamson (1996) argues that organizational structure mediates the construction of collective identities in his study of gay and lesbian film festivals. This perspective asserts that collective identities (i.e. culture) are shaped by the organizational environment surrounding
activists. Building on Gamson’s argument, I assert that organizational structure and culture mediate each other. That is, structure mediates culture, as in the case of New York City NOW where a highly differentiated SMOs can be the site of more than one culture. I also argue that culture, in the form of collective identity, can mediate organizational structure, as illustrated by Cleveland NOW’s history of structural adaptations and fragmented feminist identities. This argument extends the idea that culture and structure are interrelated processes and illustrates how, in different contexts, they influence and shape each other.

In New York City NOW, the development and differentiation of organizational structure mediate the creation of two co-existing cultures. The chapter has developed a complex infrastructure in the past twenty-five years that includes professionalized leadership, a centralized authority system, a permanent office, and a series of on-going and semi-autonomous committees. The introduction of consciousness raising in the early 1970s brought a decentralized organizational format into the chapter.

The chapter’s “core” structure serves as a location for the development of an instrumental cultural which in turn incorporates values promoting structural development. This culture is represented by a political feminist identity. Political feminists value organizational development as a means to achieve political goals. However, the introduction of consciousness raising into the chapter’s committee structure mediated the rise of an expressive culture. This culture is represented by an empowerment feminist identity valuing emotional ties and personal experiences as a means to political transformation. The consciousness raising committee, then serves as a structural niche that fosters the development of a distinct organizational culture.
New York City political feminists accept the organizational structure modeled by National NOW. However, women uncomfortable with the formalized chapter structure can participate in the decentralized consciousness raising committee adapted from radical feminist rap groups. In sum, this highly differentiated organizational structure mediates the development of two feminist identities within the New York City chapter. Members react to the chapter's organizational structure by aligning themselves with structurally-oriented political feminists, or emotionally-oriented empowerment feminists.

In Cleveland, culture mediated the chapter's structure in two ways; its division into a multi-chapter system, and the adoption of the steering committee format. The fragmentation of feminist identities by social class contributed to the adoption of a multi-chapter system. When the chapter experiences growth in the early years of the movement, leaders divided the original chapter into a suburban-based system that located activism in members' neighborhoods and consequently, social class. Each of the suburban chapters developed around a particular class identity and forms of feminist activism focused on community-based issues important to the women. This system drew upon the city's geographic and socioeconomic distinctions and resulted in relatively isolated "pockets" of feminist activism. It was not until the late 1980s when, motivated by a city-wide crisis, a unified feminist identity was constructed. This identity associated formalized, hierarchical structure with organizational maintenance versus effective grassroots action. Activists feminists rejected a formalized structure, viewing it as a representation of patriarchy. Members attempted to adapt the organizational structure to more
closely resemble the group's grassroots culture. This came in the form of steering committee
with rotating leadership and a decentralized process of decision making. When this adaptation
failed, members commitment to the group waned and the chapter declined.

These case histories illustrate how structure and culture mediate one another in SMOs.
Organizational structures provide a location for the development of social movement cultures.
In New York City NOW, organizational structure accommodated a diversity of organizational
styles and consequently, organizational cultures. Conversely, the cultural beliefs of members
can be a factor shaping the organizational structure. In Cleveland NOW, culture mediated
organizational structure. Examined independently, structure and culture offer one dimensional
explanations on SMO dynamics. However, taken together, a reciprocal and dynamic process
emerges. These findings indicate that cultural and structural examinations of social movements
need to be undertaken together with attention paid to their dynamic and changing nature. I
next discuss how these case studies address the difference between organizational continuity
and maintenance, and how structure and culture interact affecting SMO continuity.

**Linking Structure and Culture in SMO Continuity**

In this work, I have shown how structure and culture are reciprocal processes shaping
SMO structure and member actions. Before I discuss how those processes influence
organizational continuity, I address the difference between organizational continuity and
maintenance. Professionalized, centralized and bureaucratic organizations are regarded as the
most successful structure of an SMO because they reduce conflict and factionalism and provide

One hypothesis put forward by resource mobilization and classical theorists states that although
established SMOs have a better chance at continuity, they run the risk of succumbing to oligarchy, co-optation and bureaucratization (McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977, Michels 1949, Selznick 1949, Weber 1947, Zald and Ash 1973). Established SMOs may begin to focus on the maintenance of the organizational over other movement goals (Zald and Ash 1966).

Therefore, organizational maintenance is the result of SMO leadership focusing only on structural development. (See Figure 7.3). Organizational continuity emerges from an SMO that maintains a viable structure and means of resource acquisition, along with the construction of a salient and cohesive collective identity that sustains participant commitment. (See Figure 7.4). SMO maintenance does not necessarily lead to organizational continuity. Taylor (1989) argues that organizations alone do not promote continuity, but that the construction of a collective identity able to withstand a state of abeyance is required. The distinction between maintenance and continuity leads to a discussion of propositions three and four.

![Diagram](image)

Figure 7.3. Diagram of factors influencing the maintenance of SMOs.
Figure 7.4. Diagram of organizational and cultural dynamics of SMO continuity.

*Proposition Three: A salient collective identity is necessary for social movement continuity.*

Collective identity is defined as the "shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences and solidarity" (Taylor 1989:771). I define a salient collective identity as one that draws members together and is more meaningful than participants' social identities. That is, collective identities must "override" members' social identities to create a cohesive group membership. This is not to argue that individual identities have no influence over the construction of collective identities. Johnston et al. (1994) argue that implicit in a social constructionist view of collective identity is the continued relevancy of individual identities. However, I argue that social identities can serve as barriers to the creation...
of a shared understanding of the group’s goals and beliefs. I contend that these chapter case studies illustrate the importance of salient collective identity in promoting SMO continuity. SMOs with weak, diffuse or fragmented identities have a more difficult time surviving than organizations with strong and cohesive identities. A salient collective identity promotes the intergroup commitment necessary for organizational survival (Zald and Ash 1966).

**New York City NOW.** The New York City chapter has two salient feminist identities; political and empowerment feminists. These salient identities each address specific needs in the chapter. Political feminists support the structural development, whereas empowerment feminists promote emotional exploration. Political feminists endorse the development of the chapter’s infrastructure to achieve efficient social change. Empowerment feminists work to emotionally empower women within the context of personal transformation. Each feminist identity is salient, meaning neither identity is fragmented by members’ social identities. Although New York City is a city divided by class, race and ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic distinctions were not raised by New York City members.

**Cleveland NOW.** I argue that Cleveland NOW’s vitality and continuity was threatened by the late development of a salient collective identity. While the suburban-based system increased activism opportunities for women in different areas of the city, the fragmented system did not allow chapter activists to build a unified foundation to carry the group through periods of low resources and mobilization. In the early years of the movement, what Taylor and Whittier (1993) label “the heyday”, the chapter grew and was able to function effectively because of high mobilization and access to resources. However, as the movement entered a
state of abeyance, the lack of a salient collective identity and organizational foundation threatened the chapter's vitality. Although the chapter eventually developed a unified feminist identity, it was not enough to sustain the chapter through the doldrums of the 1990s.

In sum, a salient collective identity is necessary for SMO continuity. New York City NOW members construct two feminist identities that work to sustain the organization through movement highs and lows. Cleveland NOW did not develop a salient collective identity until the community was in state of crisis. At that point, the unified identity was not enough to sustain the organization. Proposition four addresses the link between a salient collective identity and structure in the promotion of continued SMO longevity and activist vitality.

*Proposition Four: SMO structure must be consistent with a salient collective identity to promote the continuity of a movement.*

This proposition contends that if the organization's culture and the structure are not consistent with one another, continuity is threatened. I define structural-cultural consistency as a state of mutual support. In other words, there must be an alignment between the meanings associated with organizational structure, (i.e. belief in formalization, centralization or professionalization), and the group's culture (i.e. views on hierarchy, authority and power). Organizational structures and culture that do not align with or support each other threaten a SMO's continuity.

**New York City NOW.** In New York City NOW, the two enduring identities, political and empowerment feminism, address different aspects of activism, endorsing either instrumental or expressive modes of political action. The chapter's continuity is promoted by these two feminist identities which create vehicles of recruitment, organizational maintenance
and the affirmation of members’ commitment. The consciousness raising committee serves as a site for women to enter NOW and engage in personal exploration. The committee also tends to the chapter’s emotional infrastructure, preventing the organization from becoming too instrumentally focused. The rest of the chapter serves a gathering place for women interested in outward manifestations of social change. The existence of both identities creates an environment where women can find the style of feminist activism they need at a particular time in their life. As women’s needs change, the chapter can often accommodate them. Many New York City members used the consciousness raising committee as an entry point into the chapter. In sum, the chapter’s two cultures meet different needs of members. The expressive culture maintains member commitment, while the instrumental culture promotes organizational continuity. Although these two identities are oppositional in nature, political feminists find a structural home in the core of the chapter, while empowerment feminists locate themselves in a niche in the consciousness raising committee. Therefore, I contend that in New York City NOW, collective identity and organizational structure are consistent within the chapter and thus, continuity is promoted.

**Cleveland NOW.** As discussed earlier, a single salient identity was created when the Cleveland chapter underwent a time of crisis that drew members together. However, the activist identity was structurally ambivalent and worked against the development of an organizational structure that would have aided the group’s continuity. This left members unclear how to devise an organizational structure that would support the activist identity and promote the group’s continuity. The members decided on an informal and decentralized form that reflected the beliefs of activist feminists. However, as the movement entered a period of
doldrums, members began to lose their sense of commitment and the new organizational structure failed. I assert that Cleveland NOW members' feminist identity was not consistent with the organizational structure, until the creation of the steering committee. Unfortunately, this structural adaptation came at a time in the chapter's history when movement mobilization was low, and a dynamic and motivational leader resigned. These two factors, combined with a new organizational structure pushed the chapter into a state of decline.

Theoretical Synthesis

I argue that these case studies illustrate how resource mobilization and new social movement theories contain implicit features in a theoretical synthesis enriching our understanding of social movement continuity. Resource mobilization theorists acknowledge that without member commitment, enduring organizational structures maintain the SMO, but do not promote movement goals (McCarthy and Zald 1987, Zald and Ash 1966). This statement points to the importance of members' belief systems in sustaining movement activity. New social movement theorists view movement continuity as the result of the creations of communities and networks that sustain members' collective identity construction (Cohens 1985, Gamson 1988, Johnston et al. 1994, Klandermans 1989, Melucci 1985, 1994). In this perspective, the organization is not essential to continuity, but instead survival depends on a shared activist identity. I contend these two frameworks can be unified by viewing SMOs as one type of participant in social movement communities and networks. SMOs do not exist in isolation but instead draw on communities that include formal and informal activist groups.
Combined, these two perspectives illustrate how culture and structure play integral and intertwined roles in the longevity and continued vitality of movements. SMO members create organizational structures shaped by resource acquisition and the external environment. However, organizational structure is also shaped by movement ideology, views of SMO leaders, and relations with other organizations. Culture is also influenced by the same factors, including participants’ beliefs, social identities and community contexts surrounding activists. I also argue that since culture and structure are influenced by the same set of factors, they must be consistent, or in alignment, in order for SMO to survive and continue to be meaningful social change agents. Organizational continuity then draws on both enduring forms of organizational structure, and salient and cohesive collective identities. Movement collectivities that lack enduring structures and salient identities are more at risk of working to maintain the organization or simply ceasing to exist.

This study indicates the need for social movement scholars to integrate cultural and structural investigations in social movement studies. Frameworks bridging structural and cultural explanations need to continue to be constructed and investigated. An over reliance on a structural or cultural perspective does not contribute to a more complete understanding of all social movement dynamics. Scholars also need to reexamine SMOs and movements cast in either structural or cultural perspectives. Freeman (1973b) argues that all social movement collectivities have some type of inherent structure. Conversely, I contend that all social movements have culture. Social movement cultures may vary in expression or richness (Lofland 1995), but cultural examinations are relevant and essential in the study of social
movements. In the next section, I discuss the substantive contributions of this work to the study of federated social movements and to the larger literature on the women's movement, specifically work addressing NOW.

The Case of Federated Social Movements

The federated structure of NOW is more complex than a centralized national level and decentralized local affiliates (Carden 1974, Oliver and Furman 1989). Carden (1974) asserts that the local level of federated SMOs, such as NOW, have decentralized and informal organizational structures in order to affect community change. I assert that federated SMO organizational structure is more complex. A federated SMO contains both centralized and decentralized systems and formal and informal structures within its organizational units. The chapters studied contain elements of each structural form. SMOs' organizational configurations are influenced by cultural processes (i.e. the incorporation of radical feminist ideologies) and structural factors (i.e. resource acquisition and SMO environment).

New York City NOW combines both formal and informal structures in its various committees. In particular, the consciousness raising committee adopts a decentralized structure shaped by CR principles and guidelines. However, the remainder of the chapter resembles the national level's formalized and centralized structure. Cleveland NOW members worked to formalize its structure in the early years of the chapter. However, unable to accumulate enough resources, members eventually devised a decentralized steering committee form. Whereas New York City NOW incorporates both decentralized and formal organizational styles with minimal difficulty, organizational structure became an issue for Cleveland members. Members acknowledged the need for a developed infrastructure to aid
chapter business, but were critical of National NOW’s hierarchical model. Despite years of struggle, Cleveland NOW members were not able to find an agreeable “mix” of formalization and decentralization.

I suggest that the local levels of federated SMOs contain a mixture of organizational styles that shift with political and cultural opportunities. The Cleveland chapter expanded with the women’s movement growth and contracted when the movement experienced periods of backlash and abeyance. I also suggest that SMOs are influenced by cultural opportunities. The New York City chapter developed an informal and decentralized niche by incorporating consciousness raising.

Federated SMOs have interdependent relations between chapter and national levels. Oliver and Furman (1989) view the national and local levels of federated SMOs as autonomous, and unable to exert control over each other. I argue that that while these levels can not rigidly control one another, chapters attempt to influence national level policies and in turn, are shaped by national leadership, goal setting and articulation. Chapters and National NOW have a relationship of interdependence that manifests differently in each chapter context.

Cleveland NOW members were dependent on the national level for policy setting and issue mobilization. Without an activist agenda presented by the national level, Cleveland members find themselves “adrift” and waiting for the reemergence of National NOW for its “coma.” Cleveland NOW accepted National NOW’s authority and used the national level’s external legitimacy to achieve its goals. However, the relationship was an uneasy one, with Cleveland activists both using and critiquing National NOW’s legitimacy and power. New

203
York City NOW members view themselves as an autonomous equal to National NOW. Yet members believe that a history of conflict with the national level has damaged their ability to participate in goal setting for the organization.

National NOW provides visibility and external legitimacy to chapters. Cleveland NOW members acknowledge this visibility and use it to achieve their goals. New York City NOW does not acknowledge National NOW's reputation but expects the national level to set a policy and issue agenda for the entire organization. NOW's history demonstrates how the national level's visibility benefits chapter recruitment. Political and social crises such as the Webster decision and the Anita Hill sexual harassment incident brought members to NOW, largely as a result of the organization's visibility as a women's movement representative. Conversely, chapters form an important foundation for the national level making chapters' survival essential to National NOW's efficacy. I assert that when chapters cease, the national level is affected. The chapters' disappearance effects the entire organization's ability to make change and to claim the ability to "speak" for all women.

In sum, chapters continue to function because of NOW's flexible ideology that tolerates organizational diversity encompassing both decentralization and formalization at the chapter level. The relationships between the national level and chapters are influenced by the structural and cultural processes shaping each chapter. The national level and chapters are mutually dependent with chapters contributing a grassroots foundation for National NOW claims of representation, and the national level providing legitimacy and reputation aiding grassroots actions. I now address how this study contributes to literature on NOW, in particular the diversity of chapters.
NOW and the Women’s Movement

This work arose from my need to conduct an in-depth case study of NOW chapters. The importance of the National Organization for Women is well documented in women’s movement literature (Buechler 1990, Carden 1974, 1978, Ferree and Hess 1985/1995, Freeman 1975, Ryan 1992, Taylor and Whittier 1993). However, these works, while focusing on NOW’s influence on the national movement, do not systematically examine the grassroots chapters. I argue that this work creates a complex and rich portrait of NOW chapter activism. Chapters affiliated with National NOW are dynamic and vary considerably from each other. This study documents the diverse relationships NOW chapters have with the national level and within their community environments. As the saying goes “No two snowflakes are alike.” The same could be said for NOW chapters.

Chapter Diversity. The communities surrounding NOW chapters create a unique environment shaping activists’ visions and goals. These community contexts influence the construction of chapter culture and a shared feminist identity. The location of New York City NOW in a major metropolitan area with a large SMO environment and national media center influenced instrumental culture development and a political feminist identity that draws national attention. Members construct a shared belief that the chapter is an important and high status organization within the New York City women’s community and the NOW hierarchy. This led the chapter to position itself as an equal to National NOW and not a subordinate chapter dependent on the national level for policy and issue development.
Cleveland NOW was affected differently by its community context. Cleveland's history of class, racial and ethnic divisions magnified activists' own social class identities. These social class distinctions encouraged members to focus on community-based organizing valuing grassroots action over the creation of a cohesive and singularly powerful SMO in the city. Cleveland members' goal was to make local change, not to become a powerful "player" within NOW. Although the unified chapter developed the ability to direct community policy, for most of its history, the chapter focused on local actions such as the development of school lunch programs and protesting area businesses. Cleveland NOW members sought to be the voice of the community. Cleveland feminists worked to create a coalition of groups that would empower the working class and the oppressed. Political power, consequently came through coordinated efforts of a unified community, not the work of a single powerful organization.

National NOW has been characterized as a member of a special interest policy network using interest group tactics and an "insider" status to make change (Boles 1991). These case studies demonstrate that NOW, on the chapter level, has remained an influential grassroots organization engaged in a variety of tactics. Both the New York City and Cleveland chapters are affiliated under the same organization and ideology, but differ in tactics, strategies and goals. I assert that NOW chapters do not simply carry out the "business" of the national level, but instead, construct activism within particular community contexts. Chapter members pursue issues of their own making and interests, a strategic flexibility that influences National NOW policy and creates community-centered change. In sum, chapters vary in community contexts, positions within NOW, and their overall views of initiating social change.
Next, I speculate on the future of the two chapters based on the theoretical synthesis presented and conclude by giving voice to the women of New York City and Cleveland NOW, and their thoughts on chapter continuity.

Cleveland and New York City NOW Continuity

By applying this synthesized theoretical framework, I offer some ideas on the future of the two chapters studied. I believe that New York City NOW will continue as long as the national organizations survives. New York City NOW has developed vehicles for both maintaining the organization, and recruiting and sustaining member commitment. The relationship with National NOW fulfills the needs of both organizational levels. National NOW continues to gain visibility and members from the active chapter. The chapter continues to be able to recruit members by National NOW's continued legitimacy. I suggest that improved chapter-national relations would aid both levels by creating a more unified organization.

Cleveland NOW has the potential to resurface again if an issue serves to mobilize past members and bring in new members. The feminist community continues to exist in Cleveland, despite the lack of a functioning NOW chapter. However, without an enduring feminist identity and functioning organizational structure, the chapter will continue to be subject to changing political opportunity structures.

In this study, I argue that New York City NOW constructs two feminist identities that represent either an instrumental or expressive culture. Both political and empowerment feminists view the New York City chapter as one that will continue to make a difference.
However, these identities vary in their explanations of why. Political feminists point to the chapter’s structural endurance as key to chapter continuity. One political feminist simply stated:

There will always be a New York City NOW somehow. We might go through horrible financial things. We might go through big upsets on the board ... but it will be here. It will stay.

Empowerment feminists view continuity as emerging from the transformative “niche” the chapter offers in the form of the consciousness raising committee. According to an empowerment feminist, the chapter provides a place of “feminist retreat” that women still need and seek. She said, “I think because women want a place to go. They want and need a place to go that is, that feels a little outside, that feels safe.”

Cleveland members, although meetings have ceased, still believe in the continuity of their chapter. They acknowledge that all they need is an issue and a leader to remobilize the community. One former president summed up the chapter’s future.

Chapters are just like relationships. I mean you really have to work at them every single day. I mean there is no walking away from them and thinking that it is going to go on. It is hard in an all-volunteer grassroots organization. ... Volunteers come in in some kind of crisis situation, meaning something happened that is what activated them. For others, it is an issue that activated them, and when the issue is resolved or the crisis is resolved, they are ready to move on, and there better be people left to keep the chapter going or it just closes .... [All I know is] this NOW chapter was here long before me, and I am sure it will be here long after me.
LIST OF REFERENCES


220