Qualitative Sociology, Vol. 27, No. 2, Summer 2004 (© 2004)

Organizational "Emotion Work" Through Consciousness-Raising: An Analysis of a Feminist Organization

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In this article I explore how organizational processes link to certain emotional responses, as a way of investigating more fully the role emotions play in social movements. Through the construction of a case study of a feminist group, the New York City chapter of the National Organization for Women (NYC NOW), I analyze how certain emotions, such as anger, alienation, hopelessness and frustration, are redefined within an organizational context. I find that consciousness-raising serves as the organizational process that helps transform personal emotions into a collectively defined sense of injustice. This transformation has the potential of creating actors dedicated to chapter activism.

KEY WORDS: social movements; emotions; organizations; emotion work.

INTRODUCTION

Social movement leaders and participants have long understood the power of emotion in creating collective action. "The mobilization of emotions [is] a necessary and exceedingly important component of any significant instance of collective action" (Aminzade and McAdam 2001, p. 14). However, only recently have scholars turned their attention to organizational and strategic dynamics of emotions and social movements. Within the last decade, scholars have illustrated that emotions draw participants into social movements, influence group interaction, and shape movement strategies (see Groves 1997; Hercus 1999; Taylor 1996; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001a). Still relatively unexplored is the relationship between emotions and organizational processes in social movements. In this article I explore how organizational processes link to certain emotional responses as a

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0162-0436/04/0600-0205/0 © 2004 Human Sciences Press, Inc.

way of investigating more fully the role emotions play in social movements. To do so, I ask the questions: What is the relationship between the individual and organization? What are the outcomes of emotional-organizational dynamics?

Through a case study of a feminist group, the New York City chapter of the National Organization for Women (NYC NOW), I analyze how certain emotions, such as anger, alienation, hopelessness and frustration, are redefined within an organizational context. I find that throughout the chapter's history consciousness-raising serves as the organizational process that helps transform personal emotions into a collectively defined sense of injustice. This transformation has the potential of creating actors dedicated to chapter activism. Before discussing the case study's dynamics, I first discuss how emotions influence social movement protest. After a discussion of data and methods, I present case study data and discuss paths and obstacles to collective action. I conclude by examining how this model contributes to our understandings of emotions and social movement protest and, in particular, the women's movement.

EMOTIONS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT ACTIVISM

Scholars note that emotions are a cornerstone of collective action (Aminzade and McAdam 2001; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001a; Groves 1997; Jasper 1998; Taylor 1996 2000; Taylor and Rupp 2002; Whittier 2001). Gamson (1995) argues that "hot cognition" (i.e., insight coupled with intense emotion) is key to the construction of collective action frames in social protest. However, strong emotions, such as moral outrage, felt within a social movement are not enough to propel social movement activism. Movements and movement organizations must also serve as sites for the transformation of "intuitive visions into explicit ideologies and proposals" (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001b, p. 19).

Scholars have shown how external factors influence emotions, shaping social movements. For example, Gould (2001) argues that repressive Reagan era politics and the rising AIDS epidemic reconfigured emotional responses by gays, lesbians and bisexuals, resulting in changed strategies of protest from accommodationist to direct action tactics. Groves (1997) found that issues of animal experimentation drew activists and scientists into an "emotional microcosm" focused around resolving shame and guilt. When events or situations trigger a strong reaction in individuals, called "moral shocks," they can be propelled to action (Jasper 1998). In the 1990s, a major "moral shock" inspiring women's anger was the televised Clarence Thomas Supreme Court nomination hearings that included Anita Hill, his former law clerk, and her charges of sexual harassment.

Social movement organizations (SMOs) are one of the available places for people to gather to explore emotional responses to personal and political events. SMOs, particularly within the women's movement, provide a "free space" for participants as a place to "explore and challenge psychological forms of oppression"

(Buechler 1990, p. 72). By focusing on the psychological and the structural, free spaces offer places for cognitive dynamics (i.e., educational programs, sharing of information). Within these free spaces, social movement contexts may also provide emotional structures that shape participants' feelings and beliefs. Scholars have called these structures "emotion cultures" (Taylor 1996 2000; Taylor and Rupp 2002; Thoits 1989). Taylor (2000) defines an emotion culture as a unique set of feeling and expression rules organized around a group's background, beliefs, values, goals and grievances that guide interaction within social movement contexts. For example, the nonviolent direct action movement of the late 1970s and 1980s created an emotion culture that emphasized solidarity and values of democracy (Epstein 1991). In an alternative health collective, Kleinman (1996) found that emotion-based rituals were purposively used to obscure organizational inequities. By incorporating an emotion laden cognitive process, such as consciousness-raising within a social movement context, free spaces can become places where emotions are transformed. Therefore, free spaces are cognitively and emotionally important contexts within social movements that can serve as a niche where participants embrace feelings guided by the organization's ideology and goals.

Movements not only draw on pre-existing emotions but can serve as spaces in which emotions are transformed or generated. Within free spaces, people can come to "actively and collectively re-frame and re-think their beliefs and passions" (Jasper 1998, p. 421). One way of transforming emotions is through adherence to "feeling rules" (Hochschild 1979), which shape participants' emotions to fit the social context. These feeling rules include expectations about how members should feel about themselves, as well as how they should manage and express the feelings evoked by their day-to-day encounters with dominant groups. Hochschild (1979, 1983) labeled this process of meeting (or challenging) emotional expectations and managing feelings "emotion work."

While often discussed in a micro sense, emotion work can also be influenced by organizational, or meso, level factors. A movement's strategies, goals and ideologies can shape the emotion work done within an SMO. For example, Taylor (1996) illustrates how postpartum depression groups transform depression, shame and fear into anger as a way to mobilize collective action. Hercus (1999) shows how women emotionally negotiate a feminist identity while moving in and out of women's movement organizational contexts. Indeed, the shaping of emotions within a social movement context can be intentional and strategic. In her study of the child sexual abuse movement, Whittier (2001) argues that within the movement, emotional labor can become a part of an organization's strategy, such as the telling of a rape or abuse story as a means of social change.

Jasper (1998) characterizes the emotions in social movements, strategically created or not, as shared or reciprocal in nature. Shared emotions are those common to the participants but not directed to each other, such as feminist anger at restrictive abortion policies, or discrimination experienced in their lives. The foundation of shared emotions may come from emotional states experienced outside of the

movement, such as a reaction to a moral shock. Reciprocal emotions, on the other hand, are directed to other participants and give rise to feelings such as friendship, love and loyalty among activists. Reciprocal emotions can maintain movement mobilization and organizational involvement (see Epstein 1991; Kleinman 1996). Both reciprocal and shared emotions are made common to the group through interaction and emotion work. Therefore, free spaces can facilitate the creation of shared and reciprocal emotions, establish feeling rules and prompt participants' emotion work.

Missing from the literature is *how* organizational processes facilitate emotion work. Building upon existing literature, I argue that the transformation of individual emotions to collective action occurs in stages: finding space in which to respond to moral shocks related to anger and alienation; engaging in organizationally focused emotion work to create shared emotions that eliminate feelings of hopelessness or frustration; and, if reciprocal emotions are fostered and everyday life obstacles are overcome, moving into collection action. Before illustrating how these stages play out in NYC NOW, I first discuss the study's methods and data.

DATA AND METHODS

To construct a case study of the emotional-organizational dynamics of NYC NOW, I draw on two sources of data: intensive interviews and chapter documents. I conducted intensive interviews with thirteen members. Six respondents were active at different periods of time in the chapter's consciousness-raising (C-R) committee. Seven members were not involved in the committee, but provided a sense of the chapter's goals and perceptions of the committee and C-R as a process. Members' periods of involvement ranged from the late 1960s with some still active in 2002.[1] In the course of the interviews, I came to understand how C-R was instrumental in transforming some members' emotions into a collective emotional definition that embraced the organization's ideology of making social change.[2] It is important to note that not all of the women in the NYC NOW chapter entered feminist activism through C-R. [3] However, the committee, and its groups, did serve as the chapter's "emotional infrastructure," as one respondent called it, and C-R did serve as a route to activism for some women.

Respondents were identified and recruited through key chapter contacts, snowball procedures and names found in chapter documents. All interviews were

[1]Of the six C-R members interviewed, two started soon after the committee began in 1972. Two joined in the 1980s, and two in the early 1990s. Three were still active in the chapter in the late 1990s.

[2]Despite three different cohorts of activists in the sample (early members from the 1970s, "doldrums" members from the 1980s, and later members in the 1990s) and chapter material from 1967 until 2001, there was no visible cohort effect in emotions expressed or in the process of consciousness-raising.

[3]I discuss the tension between feminists based in the C-R committee versus feminists in the rest of the chapter in other studies (see Reger 2002a, 2002b).

open-ended and semi-structured and lasted between thirty minutes and three and one-half hours. Interview questions addressed the nature of the women's participation in the chapter and the committee, their views on consciousness-raising as a political and personal strategy, and their personal stories and experiences. Interviewees were promised anonymity and confidentiality. To protect their identities, some information about them has been withheld and those quoted have been assigned pseudonyms.

To explore the organizational view of consciousness-raising, I examined chapter documents housed in two archival collections. [4] The archival collections contain information on national, regional, state and chapter activities. Each collection contains newsletters and documents from the national organization, personal correspondence, minutes of meetings, bylaws of the chapter, and publications from feminist organizations. The documents provide information on chapter history, on the way in which consciousness-raising is perceived and "marketed" to potential recruits, and articles written by individuals on the process of consciousness-raising.

While the members interviewed do typify NOW's general membership patterns, they do not represent the diversity of women (and their personal and emotional experiences) involved in feminism. Freeman (1975) notes that the "older" branch of the movement, including groups such as NOW, originally recruited from professional and white-collar networks, resulting in organizations that were (and have remained) largely white. Of the thirteen respondents, twelve (92 percent) were of European American descent.[5] More than one-half had incomes over $40,000 and all had attended college. Although C-R emerged in the "younger" women's branch of the movement, women in NOW who did C-R were not demographically different from the rest of the chapter. Within this relatively homogeneous group of women, members of the C-R committee engage in an institutionalized process of emotion work that connects the personal and the political. I first provide an overview of C-R in NYC NOW, before discussing how women experienced this process.

CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING IN NYC NOW

Early in the second wave, the movement divided into two branches, a women's rights branch that focused on gaining equality though legislative and political means, and a women's liberation branch that directed its attention to more cultural and personal forms of empowerment (Ferree and Hess 2000). C-R was originally a method of creating sisterhood employed by women's liberation "rap" groups.

[4]One collection of documents is housed in the chapter office in Manhattan. The other collection is at the Archives of Public Affairs and Policy, Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York. In addition, since 1997, chapter newsletters are available on the Internet.

[5]One respondent chose not to identify her race.

C-R is a process by which women gather together on a regular basis to discuss their personal lives and experiences in an egalitarian, leaderless group setting. C-R groups address a variety of topics such as sex, menstruation, marriage and housework (Piercy and Freeman 1972; Sarachild 1978) with the purpose of creating "alternative patterns for living" (Katz 1981, p. 140). In other words, C-R is what Hochschild (1979, p. 562) called a "cognitive technique" of emotion work with the goal of changing ideas (i.e., gender inequality is the result of individual failings) by attending to the emotions associated with the thoughts (i.e., anger, rage, hopelessness, shame).

As originally conceived in the women's liberation branch, C-R was unstructured with each group deciding on the form of their sessions and how long the group would continue to meet. "What really counts in consciousness-raising are not methods, but results" (Sarachild 1978, p. 6). In addition, minimal interaction between participants outside of group was stressed as a way to promote confidentiality and "truth finding" (Women's Collective 2003). Political action was not necessarily the goal of the C-R group (ibid.). According to one guide, "The call for 'action' can sometimes be a way of preventing understanding—and preventing radical action" (Sarachild 1978, p. 7). Instead, C-R focused on finding commonalities among women and promoting the more "radical action" of a changed consciousness.

NOW, a large women's rights organization with national, regional, state and chapter levels, co-opted C-R as an educational tool to deal with an influx of new members and as a way of stabilizing the organization in the early years[6] (Barasko 2001). NOW added more structure to the process with group leaders, a list of discussion questions, and a booklet detailing the process. As Katz notes, "From many spontaneous, unaffiliated, and non-ideological local groups in the late 1960s, women's consciousness-raising groups evolved first into a loose national federation, then into their present state, tightly controlled by the National Organization for Women (NOW). In this stage, the political/social objectives of NOW are paramount" (1981, pp. 142–143). National NOW, therefore, viewed consciousness-raising as a political tool for recruiting members and creating activists committed to changing the political system.

In the late 1960s, the New York City chapter also experienced an influx of members and, in response to member demands, instituted a C-R committee in 1972. A 1972 newsletter article described the process of C-R as a series of "deep talks" and concluded that the most "obvious result" was sisterhood (*NOW York Woman* 1972). Despite this description, chapter leaders followed the national model and viewed the committee as more than a place for "deep talks." Instead, from its inception the committee was seen by many in the chapter as a recruitment tool and a place for political mobilization. It should be noted that the push for mobilizing C-R participants to political action grew stronger over time and was particularly

[6]Many women became aware of C-R after the sit-in at *Ladies Home Journal*, which resulted in the publication of an insert on women's liberation. For more on this event, see Jay (1999).

strong during periods of political upheaval such as the Thomas-Hill hearings in the 1980s and Operation Rescue, a series of national anti-abortion campaigns, in the 1990s.

The NYC NOW C-R committee has consistently organized groups throughout its history, merging the participatory ethos of women's liberation with the political change agenda of NOW. Providing a space to nurture and transform women is the core of the committee's work, done through the organization of monthly C-R groups. The committee organizes a series of small groups (sometimes breaking into two or more groups depending on the size) that meet for a predetermined period of time and discuss a variety of "hot" topics, such as relationships to men, motherhood, class and race. Participants also engage in some role play about issues like lesbianism. The questions and role play, although framed to deal with cognitive issues, also serve as "feeling rules" stimulating emotional responses.

A primary goal of the groups is to have women recognize gender inequality. In a 1994 article, a committee member wrote:

> C-R meetings are designed as the time and place where women from all backgrounds could express themselves freely, listen to each other and discover common bonds. By sharing our experiences and perceptions, we come to feel the "click"—the dramatic realization of how we have been affected by a society based on gender inequities (Eskenazi 1994).

The key to this realization is having women speak of their own experiences, a process called taking the "I" perspective. Ruth, who had led many C-R groups, explained:

> Well, the key to consciousness-raising is to say "I." "It is my experience and my feelings that the consciousness comes from, not yours, not my mother's, not my sister's, not my best friend, but mine" . . . It raises your consciousness. Because you hear me, I'm not saying you should do that. I'm saying I did this. That is a big difference and that's the key to consciousness-raising.

While taking the "I" perspective means cognitively examining your life, it can lead to emotional exploration. Underlying C-R is the assumption that "woman" is a status that shares emotional commonalties even if women have been socialized to think about their lives as different from each other. Ruth, a longtime C-R committee member, said,

> Women are basically women. We relate in the same way. We feel the same way about certain things. We are the same, in a very basic kind of way. Classism is the socialization that gets superimposed upon us so we say we have no connections and that's bullshit. We [can] connect in a very basic way and what hasn't happened is we haven't connected that way [because of patriarchal socialization].

Discovering the commonality in women's experiences was the "result" for many women's liberation groups. However, C-R under NOW has different goals. In NYC NOW's C-R groups, women are also expected to become active politically. A newsletter article from the 1980s read, "The ultimate aim of consciousness-raising is the empowerment of women to lead the lives they want to lead, unfettered by

conventions, prejudices and unjust laws. Our goals must be strengthened. Action must be taken" (Doundoulakis 1989).

In sum, in NYC NOW, C-R began as a way to address the demands of incoming members, strengthen the chapter, and create feminist activists interested in pursuing NOW's goals. C-R has become institutionalized in the chapter through the creation of a committee that promotes cognitive and emotional exploration in structured groups with the goal of identifying gender inequality in society. Here women are encouraged to explore their common bonds and take action. I now turn to how this process draws on the emotions of anger and alienation.

CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING: THE INTERSECTION OF THE PERSONAL AND THE POLITICAL

Social change organizations may draw upon or challenge cultural emotion norms in the formulation of their collective actions. Feminist groups often intentionally create free spaces infused with feminized emotion cultures fostering emotional expressiveness and caring, nurturing and personal relationships (Ferree and Martin 1995; Taylor and Rupp 1993 2002; Taylor 1996). These free spaces often serve as sites for exploring "outlaw emotions" (Jaggar 1989), those emotional responses that challenge existing feeling rules or norms. Participation in feminist events or organizations allows for the expression of this emotional deviance (Hercus 1999). Women entering NYC NOW often come because of gendered outlaw emotions and seek a place to make sense of their feelings. Throughout its 30-year history, women have been able to turn to NYC NOW's C-R groups for emotional exploration and consequentially engage in the collective redefinition of their emotions.

ENTERING AN EMOTIONAL "FREE SPACE"

In the interviews, two primary emotions emerged as the most likely to bring women into C-R and NOW. The first is anger, or rage, resulting from a moral shock. Anger is the result of "interaction outcomes in which expected, customary, or deserved status has been denied or withdrawn" (Kemper 1987). Scholars argue that the expression of anger and rage is a form of gendered emotional deviance for women (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001b; Hercus 1999; Hochschild 1983; Taylor 1996). The second is a sense of alienation, or loneliness, because of their life situations (i.e., newcomer to town, new baby, or new job) or their feminist beliefs. The longing for connection can draw women into organizations as a way of creating community (see Kleinman 1996). Hercus (1999) argues that embracing a feminist identity can lead to a sense of alienation when women feel that that they must defend their ideas to family, friends or co-workers. These two emotions—feeling

a sense of anger and a need to connect with other women—intertwined in most of the women's stories.

One common moral shock among the interviewees was the Hill-Thomas hearings. For Naomi, a C-R committee member, the injustice she saw while watching the Hill-Thomas hearings brought on rage spurred by a sense of isolation. She said,

> 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 need[ed] to be . . . to partake in a larger experience with it.

For others, the emotions brought on by the hearings were not as potent as rage but still compelled them to seek a space where they could explore what they were feeling and thinking. Even Emma, who had strong friendships with women, still needed to find a place to examine her feelings. She said,

> I would say a real watershed was . . . the Thomas-Hill hearings. And it is really a matter of coincidence. It [sexual harassment] is something that I feel real strongly about and had been talking to a lot of my friends about and although I may not have been part of NOW, I would say feminist topics [and] themes were always part of my friendships and discussion.

Moral shocks triggering feelings of anger and alienation were caused not only by external events but also by the situations brought on by socioeconomic statuses (i.e., class, race/ethnicity, age and sexuality). For Ruth, recognizing the patriarchy of her traditional Jewish upbringing served as a sort of moral shock that led her to join NOW. Emma noted that the status of being a woman affected many who joined. She said, "The one thing I will say that they have in common is that they've come up against some sort of personal experience where they've felt . . . in a disadvantage because they're women or the way in which the assumptions that society makes about women." Rose, a C-R co-leader for more than twenty years, described how age was often a factor for many of the women who came to the groups:

> [I] have some very young women . . . Some of them are very angry. Some are already very political . . . You get some older women, probably like me, who were involved in the movement early on and just want to see what's happening now. You have a lot of younger women who . . . it [sexism] hits them when they get out and go out into the work world . . . Young women who come into consciousness-raising are seeing it and hurting a lot and not knowing how to behave. Some of them have had experiences like rapes, you know, and there is a lot of that—people coming after rapes. There are people coming after terrible abuse of one kind or another, and I think consciousness-raising is very helpful for that. They get a societal perspective on what happened to them.

Acquiring new statuses also brought women into C-R. Julia remembered how her rage and anger had roots in her frustrating and lonely experiences as a new mother:

> I actually joined NOW 1976–78, something like that, while I was living in Boston and you know, sent my check every year for my membership but was what I call an armchair feminist. [It] wasn't until I had my son in '81 and not only did I feel isolated, because we had moved to New York and I didn't have my group of friends here . . . I also felt people

> talked to me like I was stupider because I was heavier, because I had a baby in my arms. It was very frustrating. I was very angry.

In sum, the anger and alienation that draw women into feminist activism emerge from women's personal experiences as they intersect with larger social structures and events. However, underlying their stories are two other emotions: a sense of hopelessness seldom openly expressed in their stories yet present in the idea that the situation (e.g., sexual harassment, denigration of mothers, rape) is oppressive and constant, and a sense of frustration with the current events. Transforming the anger and alienation cemented by hopelessness and frustration is the emotion work undertaken in the C-R groups. However, coming to C-R is not entering a "safe emotional harbor" for the women but is instead the site of emotional labor facilitating a transformation for many participants. I now discuss how that work gets done.

ENGAGING IN THE EMOTION WORK OF C-R

The goal of C-R's emotion work is to provide larger societal explanations for women's experiences; the chapter often advertised the C-R groups as a place for women to make the connection between the personal and the political. This is not a new practice—women's clubs in the nineteenth century as well as 1970s "rap" groups created a homosocial environment to give women the space to "formulate alternatives to male-dominated worldviews and belief systems" (Buechler 1990, p. 72).

In C-R, shared emotions are created through cognitive processes. In effect, C-R adopted the position that emotions are constructed and that "emotions involve beliefs and assumptions open to cognitive persuasion" (Jasper 1998, p. 401). With its focus on structural, not individual, explanations of inequality, C-R transforms women's anger, alienation, frustration and hopelessness by illustrating the similarities in their experiences. The goal is for participants to have a "click" experience as the result of a series of discussion questions that address issues ranging from housework to sexual relationships. In NYC NOW's C-R, a "click" is the moment of an individual's realization of societal inequities prompted by a group interaction through an organizational process. An anonymous columnist in the chapter newsletter defined a "click" as "the moment when women realize the links between their own lives and social patterns based on sexual discrimination" (*NOW NYC News* 1986.) Self-help groups, such as C-R, often use "click" experiences that draw members to examine the commonality of their experiences, share information, create new perceptions, and articulate a common sense of validation (Levy 1976 as cited in Katz 1981). Naomi, a former chair of the C-R committee, described one commonality discovered in women's handling of anger. She said,

> Because what you find in all of us women is . . . we carry the experience of "woman" inside of us. It has crystallized inside of us, the lack of safety, the lack of confidence, the feeling

> hurt and not knowing how to voice it—the anger that is not channeled well because we are not in touch with it in real terms. We didn't even have a name for what we felt because it was so taboo for women to be angry.

In addition, sharing information and life stories within a C-R group could lead to new perceptions and a sense of validation of one's life. Julia said,

> It was like a light bulb turning on. 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 C-R group that weren't me, they were the world outside of me. And the C-R group was about fixing the world outside of me, which is sort of flipping it on its head.

Although cognitively she "flipped" her sense of what was wrong, it did not automatically result in the reduction of anger and rage. Instead she needed to engage in emotion work through repeated exposure to the group. Julia recalled her early times in C-R groups and working with the committee:

> I had terrible fights on the committee. I felt very excluded by the experienced people, and I look back now and I realize that I was very much caught in the grip of an emotional whirlwind in a lot of ways. I made good friends. The person I argued most with was S—. She is my friend to this day and how she ever put up with me through all of that is beyond me. I can't tell you how many meetings I left in tears. What was different for me, why I felt empowered, is I always came back. In the olden days I would have curled up in tears and never come back. But this was my place and I felt it even though I was angry about the ways I was feeling. I think I was so eager to have that community.

It is through emotion work leading to the "click" that shared emotions are created within the organization. In C-R, the "click" brought about validation and focus to the women's anger, different from the sense of anger, mixed with hopelessness and frustration, prompted by the moral shocks. The women I interviewed talked about how C-R channeled their emotions and created a new perception of their experiences. As Rose explained:

> It [C-R] makes people feel much clearer, focused and centered in their beliefs and, curiously, less ineffectively angry. [They are] more angry in a very focused [way] . . . It makes people realize what they can change and what they need to hold onto their energy for. And also it makes you clear about how to say things to people. So you don't make them think you're a fool or "she's a feminist."

This new perception led women to criticize their current behavior and their understanding of interactions. Naomi said,

> It [C-R] was also learning a new way of handling power. At least for me, I found myself . . . I found myself many, many times imitating patriarchal power. I say I am, therefore . . . [laughs] you know? And not knowing how to transform it ultimately because the other women also had crystallized inside of them the archetype of patriarchy.

By providing women with a space to discuss their lives, the committee facilitates the emotion work that allows women to explore commonalities, share information, create new perceptions and validate their emotions. Although the process often leaves women angry, there is a fundamental shift in this shared

emotion when it is validated. As a social change agent, NOW works to direct this anger into political activism.

THE POTENTIAL FOR CREATING COLLECTIVE ACTORS

In NYC NOW, C-R's collective redefinition from the personal to the political includes encouraging women to make social change through organizational involvement. A 1999 newsletter article reads, "Through C-R we can draw conclusions about the similarities and contradictions in women's experiences and use this data as theory about our oppression and ideas for action" (*NOW NYC News* 1999). The C-R group sessions purposefully incorporated this need to make change. According to Lisa:

> Part of what C-R does is at the end of each session you are supposed to ask, "What can we do before our next meeting? What is a small act?" . . . You know, even if it is as one woman said to Gloria [Steinem] something about nailing her husband's socks to the floor or something or not picking up his socks. Even if it is a small act in your life, you know, those things can build and I think that in C-R those are the kinds of things that were asked of people. "Can you in your life now speak to someone, name something, do something that is an intervention?"

This direction reaffirmed the process to C-R committee members, reinforcing their belief that C-R was essential to women's equality. Members reject the notion that equality has been reached and C-R is no longer necessary. According to Rose:

> I think it [C-R] has got to be key. The personal is political and getting people to see that [is difficult] because it is very subtle these days. You can walk around in big corporations and wherever you go people will say, "Well, there isn't much for feminists to do." And so it is very important in getting people to understand how this society is still very, very patriarchal and the things that need to be changed.

The process of C-R also aided the chapter's very real need for members. In addition to creating a new community of empowered women, C-R leaders also sought to recruit new members into the chapter, insuring its continuity. Rose said of her experience, "Since I've been involved we've attracted quite a number of women to other things in NOW through C-R. You know, 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." Emma's experience confirmed that idea. She said, "I would say fairly quickly, within a matter of a couple years, maybe less than a year from taking my first C-R group . . . I was really ready to throw myself into the pragmatic of strengthening NOW." Women not only worked for the chapter, they also ran for chapter offices. For example, in a March 1993 newsletter story on the candidates for chapter elections, several women noted their involvement with C-R and how it brought them into the chapter (*NOW NYC News* 1993). Therefore, keeping women involved in the chapter and activism became a top priority of some of the C-R leaders.

To some degree, organizers were successful in this goal. Of the six C-R members interviewed, only two kept their activism limited to the committee. The other four engaged in activism to maintain the chapter (e.g., working to maintain the organization, running for office) and make social change (e.g., attending demonstrations and protests, staffing information tables). However, the transformation to activist did not always happen. One member estimated that between one-third and one-fourth of the women who began C-R groups became activists associated with the chapter. This was something members saw as a failure of the process. According to Ruth:

> It is always interesting to me that . . . very often women come to NOW, go into a C-R committee, a C-R group, go through the entire group, think it is wonderful and political, don't join NOW, do not become active and never show up again and never consider themselves feminists . . . That is a failure. That's a big failure. How are we going to do the revolution without any feminists and if we don't push for C-R?

To explore the difference in mobilization, I next examine why the women interviewed maintained their involvement in NOW and speculate on why others did not.

Mobilization

Two main factors influenced the women who became political activists as a result of their involvement in C-R. First, the process of C-R provided them with an understanding of gender inequality that focused and energized their activism. According to Emma, "I think C-R has been important to me in helping to realize the different ways in which our rights and assumptions operate." For many of the women, C-R became the foundation of their daily lives and consequently influenced their activism. Lisa, who works in the field of education, said, "It [NOW] grounded me and I think particularly through C-R. It grounded me with a critique that has enabled me to do the kind of work that I've been doing and it enables me to do the kind of work that I'm doing on girls' development." Julia noted that she went from angry, lonely and frustrated to focused and active in the chapter. She said, "Well, first of all it has in many, many ways made me who I am today for better or for worse. I am much more outspoken and compelled to take action on things than I ever would have been if I had never touched NOW."

Second, the creation of reciprocal emotions within the groups and the committee created strong friendship networks that kept women involved with NOW. After the moral shock of the Hill-Thomas hearings, the visible potential of those networks drew Naomi into NOW. She said,

> And I called NOW and they told me there was a membership meeting. I [came and hoped] that maybe something would be done that evening. I attended [the meeting] and it was a tiny room filled at least with two hundred women who felt exactly like I had. It was terribly disorganized, because they didn't expect any of that. Nevertheless there was a new

> community for me, ready to bond with, to share and to become an activist with. And that is how it all started.

As women engaged in the emotion work, the meaning of those networks became very important to them. Julia reflected on her experience. She said,

> It [NOW] has and still always will have a very large social component for me. But it's the kind of social component in a way, and this is ironic coming from a militant atheist, but it sort of performs the function that I think church does in a lot of people's lives. It's a community and there is a mission to that community. So it is not just social in that sense but it is also broader than just work colleagues, you know? It's a sisterhood. It's a place I can go and not have to translate. It's a place I can go where people put up with me and all my faults whatever they say about me behind my back, they still do put up with me and want me to be there.

In sum, because of its focus on mobilization, NYC NOW stressed the importance of interaction, particularly in involvement on committees, facilitating the development of reciprocal emotions. These friendship networks, along with a sense of directed anger, helped them maintain their involvement in NOW.

Non-Mobilization

However, in sheer numbers, most of the women who came to C-R groups did not work on the committee or become active in the chapter. Although my sample included only women active in NOW, the interviewees and literature on C-R offer several clues as to why.

One reason for women not becoming activists could be due to the nature of the process itself. C-R in the women's liberation was not meant to create the type of political activist that NOW leaders envisioned. Buechler (1990) notes that early in the women's movement the transformation from C-R participant to political activist was not easily accomplished. Some women were not interested in larger societal change, while others worked to maintain an alternative culture. In addition, women's liberation C-R groups often provided no clear strategy for transforming society. This lack of strategy is still present, to some degree, within NYC NOW as evidenced by the idea that societal transformation comes from the creation of new communities. As Naomi described:

> I think it [C-R] 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 [sic] bonds differently. It can only take place with C-R. I believe that C-R is an essential tool to create communities with new dynamics, interactions.

While forging a new community can be essential in creating free space in the movement, it does not provide a social change strategy fitting with NOW's overall political and legislative focus. In addition, the process of doing emotion work did not always produce directed anger. As Lisa noted:

> The role NOW played, and I think it plays for a lot of women, is that it gives one a constructive context in which to feel rage. It helps you say, "Yes, what [I] see is real" . . . It is like it says,

> "Yes, this is legitimate and there are things that [I] can do about it." I think that most women need to go through a period of actively grappling with their rage at what's happened. And yes, *you can get stuck there* [emphasis added].

A second factor could be women's lack of time or opportunity to become involved in NOW. As many of the interviewees noted, both in C-R and in the chapter, New York City is a place to make a career. For many women, career success demands considerable amounts of time on the job. Indeed some of the former presidents interviewed noted that as their job demands increased, their commitment to the chapter and its activities lessened. Family obligations made activism even more difficult. As Rose observed:

> There are a lot of women out there. It is a peculiar thing. There are some women who will just go with it [C-R] and just realize this is wonderful and we can change the world with this [laughs] . . . Then there are other women who see it as wonderful and they would like to do it but then they've got a million other . . . they've got kids. They've got in-laws. They've got jobs. Usually in New York the big thing is just jobs take every minute of your time.

Finally, the transformation to activist can be seen as happening in a matter of degrees. Some of the women who were not visible chapter activists appear to be transformed into what social movement scholars call a "submerged network" (Melucci 1989) that could be mobilized when needed. Emma said,

> I would say a much larger group, because I am sort of marginally in touch with some of these people, would like to be able to do something. We talked about phone trees and we've done that to a certain degree. Like if there is a legislative issue, one person will call another person, [who] will call another person. When there was a demonstration down by City Hall, I called people who had been in the last couple of groups and quite a number showed up. So they're there, you know, even if they're not active in the chapter, I wouldn't count them as inactive either or disaffected.

In sum, when women entered C-R because of moral shock that brought on a sense of anger, alienation, hopelessness and frustration, NOW provided a free space with an emotion culture that directed their cognitive and emotional processes. Despite this direction, not all women emerged activists as desired. Sometimes the process failed to adequately create a shared emotion that focused their anger, or provide them with clear tactics to make change. When the process did create the "click," women's families and jobs could serve as obstacles to their full (and recognized) feminist activism.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this model I identify two primary emotions, anger and alienation, intertwined with a sense of hopelessness and frustration that draws women into activism. Women's movement scholars have long noted the connections between experiencing sexism, finding feminism and dealing with issues of anger and isolation (Hercus 1999; Jaggar 1989). However, it is interesting to note what emotions

do not show up in the women's stories. For example, Taylor (1996) identifies depression, shame and guilt as key to bringing women into self-help organizations. The difference between the anger of NOW and the depression of self-help could lie in an organization's "public face." NOW as a social change organization may draw the more action oriented emotion of anger, whereas self-help groups may draw more passive emotions such as guilt, shame and depression. This study supports the idea that social change organizations draw participants with more action directed emotions.[7]

Organizational processes use cognitive techniques and emotion work to create emotional states that can promote collective action. However, not all organizational processes produce the results desired by members. NYC NOW's C-R benefits the organization in several ways. However, members estimate 30 to 40 percent of the women who enter into groups do not become chapter activists. More work needs to be done on how organizational processes draw on emotions and why these processes sometimes fail. Scholars also need to examine participants who are not mobilized. In other words, it is time to talk to the "fish that got away." However, organizational processes, such as C-R, link the individual to the collective, a process crucial in social movement mobilization.

We also see, through this case study, the importance of an external-internal dynamic in social movements. Political events and social structures pull women into the organizational spaces, while internal organizational strategies and processes work to transform them in collective actors. This dynamic answers one of the key questions in social movements: What are the factors that bring about social movement emergence and mobilization? While emotions may run strong at particular times in history, without organizations, networks or communities to channel and transform individuals' emotional states, movements do not arise or experience high rates of mobilization. This dynamic has particular importance for the women's movement and its current state of mobilization. Without emotionally receptive settings and strategic attempts at transformation, the women's movement cannot capitalize on contemporary political events and public policies that enrage, alienate and frustrate women and threaten gains in gender inequality.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dawn Cooley for her support, my colleagues at Oakland University, Peter Bertocci, Abdi Kusow, David Maines and Terri Orbuch, and the anonymous reviewers and the editor of *Qualitative Sociology* for their comments on earlier drafts of this work. This study was partially funded by an Elizabeth D. Gee Fund for Research on Women grant at the Ohio State University.

[7]This supports Jasper's (1998) conceptual assertion that different emotions propel different types of organizational interaction.

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