

Mobilizing and Sustaining Grassroots Activism
in the National Organization for Women, 1966-2000

by

Maryann Barakso

B.A. Urban Affairs, Political Science
Barnard College, 1990

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
AT THE
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

SEPTEMBER 2001

©2001 Maryann Barakso. All rights reserved.

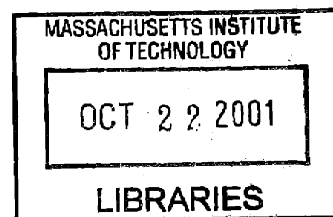
The author hereby grants to MIT permission to reproduce and to distribute
publicly paper and electronic copies of this thesis document in whole or in part.

Signature of Author: _____
Department of Political Science
July 11, 2001

Certified by: _____
Stephen Ansolabehere
Professor of Political Science

Accepted by: _____
Barry R. Posen
Professor of Political Science
Chairman, Graduate Program Committee

ARCHIVES



Mobilizing and Sustaining Grassroots Activism
in the National Organization for Women, 1966-2000

by

Maryann Barakso

Submitted to the Department of Political Science
on July 11, 2001 in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Political Science

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how the National Organization for Women (NOW) survived the vagaries of both the political environment and its intraorganizational problems and controversies over its thirty-five year history. It considers the role that patrons, the state, mobilizing structures, leaders, organizational structure, strategic flexibility, and collective identity played in NOW's creation and maintenance. Little support is found for the role of patrons or of the state in NOW's origination and sustenance. Mobilizing structures, in the form of social networks, however, proved crucial factors supporting NOW between 1966 and 1971, its founding period. NOW's organizational structure, particularly its (limited) professionalization and its federalization both assisted NOW in overcoming potentially crippling information gaps between members and leaders. However, federalization has not had an entirely benign effect. In addition to allowing a great deal of autonomy, NOW's federal structure also permitted the development of strong intraorganizational factions. Leaders positively influenced organizational stability by enhancing NOW's collective identity and by stewarding the group towards new strategies. However, NOW's strong identity acts as a constraint upon leaders' ability to change the organization's goals or tactical approach.

NOW's longevity and institutionalization over time suggests a second set of issues which are examined in this study. How has NOW's aging affected the organization's attention to its founding principles? How is NOW different from interest group organizations who rely mainly on checks, rather than member involvement, for their sustenance? The ways in which NOW is different from the average "interest group" are outlined, as is its continuing commitment to radical politics and to its founding principles.

Thesis Supervisor: Stephen Ansolabehere
Title: Associate Professor of Political Science

Acknowledgements

A first generation American born of working class Hungarian parents, I never dreamed I would earn a doctorate. I managed to attend Barnard College without a penny to my name; to that institution I will forever be grateful. At the end of my tenure at Barnard, my adviser and very first political science professor, Esther Fuchs, insisted I apply to MIT. Her inspiration and confidence in me are largely why I chose to become an academic.

My early years at MIT were of course greatly influenced by both my professors and my peers. I thank Charles Stewart, Rick Valley and Elizabeth Wood in particular for providing the early and very enjoyable foundation for my studies. Richard Locke proved especially helpful as I prepared for my qualifying exams. Members of our Chick Dissertation Group (CDG), including Jocelyn Crowley, Beth Rosenson, Miriam Murase, Judy Layzer, Eva Thorne and others, lent support and critical guidance. I greatly appreciate the friendship and assistance of Jocelyn Crowley and Kira Sanbonmatsu. More recently, I have benefited from conversations with Rachael Cobb, Heidi Swarts and Alana Jeydel.

In finishing the dissertation, I would like to acknowledge my Committee. I am especially grateful to my dissertation chair, Stephen Ansolabehere, for supporting my topic choice enthusiastically and for his guidance. Kay Lehman Schlozman's research and advice encouraged me to address this study to interest group scholars, and I am very glad I did. Dan Kryder always provided me with excellent professional advice along with careful and insightful comments on my drafts.

A number of very busy scholars lent crucial encouragement, practical advice and comments - sometimes pages' worth - on drafts along the way. They helped me realize how much I longed to be a colleague. Among these are Jeffrey Berry, Mary Katzenstein, Mary Hawkesworth, John Green, David Meyer, Karen Beckwith, Lee Ann Banaszak, Eileen McDonagh and Barbara Burrell.

My sister Elizabeth is actually the first in my family to have earned an advanced degree. I am incredibly proud of her accomplishments, and am extremely grateful for her friendship, which gave me acute relief especially in the final push to finish the manuscript.

Ann Willem Martin and James S. Martin II, my mother and father-in-law, have positively shaped my life since I was just sixteen years old. I am so grateful to be a part of the most over-educated family I know.

With apologies to academia, raising my daughters, Sarah Elisabeth Barakso Martin and Eleanor Ann Martin Barakso, is by far the most important thing I will do in my life. The responsibility and joy of that undertaking is awesome. At some points, they seemed to make it almost impossible for me to complete the thesis, and yet ultimately they made it impossible for me not to do so. I realized I had to finish to set an example for my girls. I would also like to recognize the superlative care my children received from the teachers and administrators at Peabody Terrace Children's Center.

Larry Martin proved unwavering in his belief in my ability to pursue the Ph.D. I dedicate this dissertation to him with love and gratitude.

TABLE OF CONTENTS**PAGE**

Chapter 1.	Introduction.....	5
Chapter 2.	The Formation and Maintenance of Groups: Insights from the Literature.....	22
Chapter 3.	Inventing NOW: 1966-1971.....	63
Chapter 4.	Organizational Challenges and Leadership Responses in NOW, 1970-1982.....	106
Chapter 5.	Surviving the Failure of the ERA	158
Chapter 6.	NOW in the 1990s and Beyond	196
Chapter 7.	Mobilizing and Sustaining Grassroots Mobilization in NOW, 1966-2000.....	249
Appendix A.....		264
Appendix B.....		267
NOW Documents Cited.....		274
Bibliography		278

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

By any measure, voluntary associations dedicated to the advancement of sociopolitical goals face an uphill battle.¹ While the 1960s and 1970s were especially vibrant periods for grassroots mobilization, for example, a great number of these organizations faltered within less than a decade of their origination. The Weatherman, Students for a Democratic Society and the Black Panthers are among the most notable of such groups.

Organizations constituting the second wave of the feminist movement, which also developed in the 1960s, similarly experienced their share of failures. New York Radical Women, the Chicago Women's Liberation Movement (CWLUM), and The Feminists are some examples of feminist groups that did not survive through the 1970s. In fact, all of the thirteen feminist groups discussed by Alice Echols in her work on radical feminism disbanded by the mid-1970s save the CWLU, which died around 1977.² Less radical women's

¹ Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1965; Robert H. Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13, 1969, pp. 1-13.

² Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

groups, including The Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), succumbed as well.³

The National Organization for Women (NOW) is perhaps the most prominent surviving feminist association of the 1960s. In spite of the fact that it remains the leading feminist organization in the United States, NOW's survival was far from inevitable. A brief sketch of early challenges to the organization makes this point clearly.

Just one year after its birth in 1966, the National Organization for Women experienced major organizational crises. In 1967, members of NOW hotly debated whether to add two new issues to its "Bill of Rights" for women: the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and support of abortion rights. In the end, the majority decision to support these goals cost NOW both activists and office space "creating administrative chaos in the process."⁴ In addition, by 1968 those NOW members dissenting with the group's position on reproductive rights decided to leave NOW entirely and form their own group, the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL).⁵

Struggles over structure - specifically, the hierarchical nature of decision-making in the organization - comprised a third

³ Roberta M. Spalter-Roth and Ronnie Schreiber, "Outsider Issues and Insider Tactics: Strategic Tensions in the Women's Policy Network during the 1980s," in Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin, eds. *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1995, p. 115.

⁴ Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process*, New York, David McKay, 1975, p. 80.

⁵ Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*.

basic conflict facing NOW by 1968. Yet another split within NOW ensued and a breakaway group (ultimately known as The Feminists) calling for more egalitarianism and less bureaucratic structure formed.⁶ Ti-Grace Atkinson, the President of the largest NOW chapter by far at that time (New York NOW), led the charge to abandon NOW.

Instead of dooming this major women's movement organization, the National Organization for Women weathered these tests. Not only did NOW survive, but the organization proceeded to lead what students of social movements have called the most active mobilization period for feminist organizations, from 1972 to 1982.⁷

The central questions this study seeks to answer are: What accounts for NOW's organizational survival in spite of the many challenges it encountered throughout its history? How did NOW maintain its resources, volunteers, and its political influence throughout its history? This dissertation examines how the National Organization for Women survived the vagaries of both the external political environment in addition to its intraorganizational problems and controversies over its thirty-five year history. A detailed qualitative analysis of NOW's history is conducted.

⁶ On the commitment to a structure reflecting utopian ideals, see Wini Breine's discussion of the significance of "prefigurative politics" to members of the new left. Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left: 1962-1968*, New York, Praeger, 1982.

⁷ Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier, "The New Feminist Movement," in Laurel Richardson, Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier, eds. *Feminist Frontiers IV*, New York, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1997, p. 545.

NOW's longevity suggests a second set of issues for investigation. NOW institutionalization over time as a player in civil rights politics invites the following questions: Has NOW been co-opted by the political system? Has the organization become "just another" interest group among many? Has NOW's institutionalization in American politics brought about its deradicalization? How is NOW different from interest group organizations who rely mainly on checks, rather than member involvement, for their sustenance? How has NOW's aging affected the organization's attention to its founding principles?

The National Organization for Women remains the largest feminist women's organization in the United States. The political environment of the past three decades in which NOW operated spanned the political liberalism of the pre-Nixon years, the support of congressional insiders for the goals of the women's movement and the success of *Roe v. Wade*, to the nadir of the mid-1980s, which brought the loss of the Equal Rights Amendment, near financial disaster for NOW and the dramatic growth of the political influence of the religious and conservative right and growing attacks on abortion rights.

NOW is an important focus for research because of its long and influential history in American politics and culture. To date, no study has taken into account the breadth of the organization's history through the 1990s.⁸ Nor do studies of social movement

⁸ Comments, Mary Katzenstein, *Women in Politics Research Seminar*, Kennedy School of Government, September 1998. Taylor and Whittier note the

groups or interest groups routinely analyze them from the dual perspective of the groups' agency in managing their internal issues and conflicts in addition to their response to the dynamics of change in American political life. We have become familiar with parts of the elephant: Jo Freeman's groundbreaking analysis of NOW's early years, Mansbridge's study of the pursuit for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, and Costain's examination of NOW activities through lens of political opportunity theory are three of the most extensive and important examinations available.⁹

While excellent analyses of the feminist movement and its groups exist, few focus on the internal dynamics of social movement groups.¹⁰ This is also true of the scholarship on interest groups

paucity of research on the women's movement in the 1980s and 1990s. Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier, "The New Feminist Movement," in *Feminist Frontiers: Rethinking Sex, Gender, and Society*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1992, p. 544. Ryan notes that "...until recently, the contemporary women's movement has been studied almost exclusively in terms of the formation and early years of movement activism." Barbara Ryan, *Feminism and the Women's Movement: Dynamics of Change in Social Movement Ideology and Activism*, New York, Routledge, 1992, p. 66.

⁹ Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*; Jane Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1986; Anne N. Costain, *Inviting Women's Rebellion: A Political Process Interpretation of the Women's Movement*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.

¹⁰ Examples include sociologist Barbara Ryan's examination of the role of ideology in the movement in *Feminism and the Women's Movement*, historian Susan Hartmann's work, *From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics since 1960*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1989. See also Breines, *Community and Organization on the New Left*; Myra Marx Ferree and Beth B. Hess, *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1985; Ethel Klein, *Gender Politics*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1984; and Sheila Tobias, *Faces of Feminism: An Activist's Reflections on the Women's Movement*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1997. Sara Evans examines the history of women's movement organizations as progeny of the civil rights and New Left movements and Staggenborg studies feminist organizations of the pro-choice movement. Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, New York, Vintage Books, 1980; Suzanne Staggenborg, "The Consequences of Professionalization and Formalization

in American politics.¹¹ The role of members in shaping the activities of voluntary groups and their involvement in organizational governance, the content of internal group conflict and the role of such conflicts in affecting the actions of leaders and ultimately group strategy are largely uninvestigated issues in the research on social movements or groups in American politics. Yet, the answers to these questions which link members and leaders are fundamental to our understanding of how organizations survive and maintain themselves and to our knowledge of the kind of organizations they become. How are organizational decisions made? How are member concerns addressed? How is information passed from leaders to members and vice versa? How does the organization

in the Pro-Choice Movement," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 53, 1988, pp. 585-605.

¹¹ Scholars noting this dearth include Jeffrey Berry, Scott Ainsworth, and Cary Coglianese. Jeffrey Berry, "An Agenda for Research on Interest Groups," in William Crotty, Mildred A. Schwartz and John C. Green, eds., *Representing Interests and Interest Group Representation*, Lanham, MD, University Press of America, 1994, p. 22; Scott Ainsworth, "The Maintenance and Governance of Interest Groups," <http://www.arches.uga.edu/~sainswor/CHAP4dsV1.pdf>; Cary Coglianese, "Unequal Representation: Membership Input and Interest Group Decision-Making," <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/prg/cary/unequal.htm>.

Some important exceptions include Seymour Martin Lipset, M.A Trow and J.S. Coleman's *Union Democracy: The Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union*, Glencoe, Free Press, 1956; Andrew S. McFarland's *Common Cause: Lobbying in the Public Interest*, Chatham, N.J., Chatham House, 1984 and Laurence Rothenberg's *From the Ground Up: Linking Citizens to Politics at Common Cause*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992. New investigations are underway, and include the work of Scott Ainsworth, "The Maintenance and Governance of Interest Groups," and Cary Coglianese, "Unequal Representation: Membership Input and Interest Group Decision-Making."

See also Kay Lehman Schlozman and John T. Tierney, *Organized Interests and American Democracy*, New York, Harper & Row, 1986; Philip Selznick, *The TVA and the Grassroots: A Study of Politics and Organization*, Berkeley, University of Berkeley Press, 1949 and Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*.

create and sustain a collective belief system that can attract and retain loyal members?

Four periods, each of which are marked by crisis and change and are approximately a decade long, are examined in detail to show how NOW's leadership resolved the challenges the organization experienced. The periods include 1) the founding of NOW and its early development, 1966-1971; 2) NOW's prioritization of the pursuit of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and its management of the demands by chapters for greater representation, 1972-1982; 3) the role of NOW's leaders in managing the failure of the ERA 1980-1989; and finally 4) maintaining NOW's identity into the 1990s and beyond.¹² Conveniently, the examination of these four periods not only clarifies NOW's history generally but also provides evidence of the role of NOW's belief system, its resources, and the political context in its leadership's decisions about the most appropriate strategies and/or tactics to employ.

¹² My periodization differs slightly from that of Costain and Costain, who outline these phases of the women's movement and the strategies undertaken by feminist movement groups between 1966 and 1980 in this way:

[T]he formative period of the women's movement (1966 to 1972) utilized two competitive tactics: protest, and working through political elites. Neither approach emphasized contacts with political parties... In the routinizing period (1972 to 1977... [t]here was a fairly broad consensus within the movement that all political tactics must now be tried to get a positive response from government. The institutionalizing phase (1978 to the present) represents an effort to consolidate the gains won during the preceding stage. Movement groups emphasized legislative lobbying, which had proved successful in the 1970s, and added new initiatives in electoral politics to bring themselves into closer alliance with political parties. Anne N. Costain and W. Douglas Costain, "Strategy and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States: The Role of Political Parties" in Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1987.

To understand the variables influencing NOW's origination and maintenance I rely on the insights of research on American interest groups as well as sociologists. Thus, in this analysis I take into account the role of organizational structure,¹³ of patrons and leaders,¹⁴ the role of the state,¹⁵ of mobilization structures¹⁶ and of political opportunities¹⁷ in NOW's history.

¹³ Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, New York, Collier, 1962; Lipset, et al., *Union Democracy*; James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995/1974; John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization*, Morristown, NJ, General Learning Press, 1973; John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*, New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction, 1987; William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, Belmont, CA, Wadsworth, 1975/1990; Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why they Succeed, How they Fail*, New York, Vintage, 1977/1979; Jo Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," in Jane Jaquette, ed., *Women and Politics*, New York, Wiley, 1974; Kathy E. Ferguson, *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1984; Staggenborg, "The Consequences of Professionalization."

¹⁴ Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory;" Terry M. Moe, *The Organization of Interests: Incentives and the Internal Dynamics of Political Interest Groups*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980; Laurence S. Rothenberg, *Linking Citizens to Government*; Jack L. Walker, *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1991; David C. King and Jack L. Walker, "The Provision of Benefits by Interest Groups in the United States," *Journal of Politics*, 54, 1992, 394-426; Anthony J. Nownes, *The Other Exchange: Public Interest Group Entrepreneurs and their Patrons*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Kansas, 1993; Anthony J. Nownes and Robert Cigler, "Public Interest Groups and the Road to Survival," *Polity*, Vol. 27, No. 3, Spring, 1995.

¹⁵ Walker, *Mobilizing Interest Groups*.

¹⁶ Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*; Douglas McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency: 1930-1970*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982; Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, New York, Free Press, 1984; Evans, *Personal Politics*.

¹⁷ Peter K. Eisinger, 1973, "The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 67, March; Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, MA, Addison-Wesley, 1978; McAdam, *Political Process*; Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action, and Politics*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

However, the dissertation emphasizes one other major variable: the group's collective identity. While political scientists have not emphasized the role or impact of an organization's identity or belief system on its survival, newer work by sociologists argues for its relevance and perhaps even its centrality.¹⁸

¹⁸ In this dissertation, I take the terms "collective identity" and "belief systems" to be equivalent.

An early scholar of groups in American politics, David B. Truman, did point out the role group leaders play in disseminating "internal propaganda" which encourages the loyalty of members to the organization. David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process*, New York, Knopf, 1951.

See for example, Alain Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1981; Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989; Bert Klandermans and Sidney Tarrow, "Mobilization into Social Movements: Synthesizing European and American Approaches," in Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi and Sidney Tarrow, eds. *From Structure to Action: Comparing Movement Participation across Cultures, International Social Movement Research* 1, 1988, pp. 1-38; Aldon Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds. *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992; Joan Cassell, *A Group Called Women: Sisterhood and Symbolism in the Feminist Movement*, Prospect Heights, Ill., Waveland Press, 1977; Barbara Ryan, "Ideological Purity and Feminism: The U.S. Women's Movement from 1966 to 1975," *Gender and Society*, Vol.3, 1989, pp.239-57; Steven M. Buechler, *Women's Movements in the United States: Women's Suffrage, Equal Rights, and Beyond*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 1990; Lee Ann Banaszak, *Why Movements Succeed or Fail: Opportunity, Culture and the Struggle for Woman Suffrage*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1996.

Others, including McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, note the continuing gaps in our knowledge on this subject. Douglas McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly, "To Map Contentious Politics," *Mobilization*, Vol. 1, 1996, pp.17-34. Rebecca Klatch has examined these issues on the New Right and Kristin Luker with respect to anti-abortion activists. Rebecca Klatch, *Women of the New Right*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1987; Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984. Gretchen Arnold argues that coalition work among feminists groups is difficult precisely because of conflict between "the structural features of coalitions and the organizational requirements of some feminist ideologies." Gretchen Arnold, "Dilemmas of Feminist Coalitions: Collective Identity and Strategic Effectiveness in the Battered Women's Movement," in Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin, eds., *Feminist Organizations*, p. 277.

This study contends that NOW's attention to such issues as the attainment of resources and the exploitation of political opportunities only explain a portion of this organizational survival story. NOW also invested a great deal in maintaining the group's collective belief system: This focus helped NOW survive the crises it faced. As Jenkins notes, "mobilization...is the process of creating collective consciousness and self-images dependent on membership in the movement organization and the cause it represents."¹⁹ I argue that while the formation, maintenance and influence of collective identity as a political instrument has not constituted a major focus of analysis by students of social movements, NOW's belief system and its leaders' commitment to maintaining that system is a core factor explaining the persistence of the National Organization for Women over time.

NOW's organizational belief system or collective identity can be understood as a collection of "founding principles" which became embedded in the language, strategies and expectations of members and leaders by the end of NOW's initial organizing period which spanned the years 1966-1971. These principles include NOW's commitment to 1) remaining the leader of the women's movement; 2) maintaining the support and vitality of the organization's grassroots base; 3) maintaining a focus on a broad range of issues and tactics; 4) remaining politically independent of parties and

¹⁹ Craig Jenkins, "Farm Worker Organizing in California," in Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson, eds., *Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the 1960s*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999, p. 288.

governmental bodies and 5) a focus on action versus study or education.

The most important reason for examining the role NOW's founding principles played throughout NOW's history is because these principles affect all other variables affecting organizational survival. NOW's belief system influenced the evolving structure of the group, its goals and its tactics for carrying out those goals in addition to shaping the group's response to the political environment.²⁰

In addition, the collective belief system is crucial to recruiting the most important resource for a mass-based action group: adherents. Unable to provide valuable selective incentives for members, volunteers are bound instead to the group by the benefits accrued by inclusion (solidary benefits) and participation (purposive benefits).²¹ Jenkins has shown that building strong intraorganizational community was key to the survival of Cesar Chavez' farm workers organization in the face of virulent opposition.²² Buechler and Mansbridge each illustrated the importance of exclusivity, homogeneity, and doctrinal purity in

²⁰ See for example Staggenborg's discussion of the demise of the groups Reproductive Rights National Network (R2N2) and Women Organized for Reproductive Choice (WORC). Suzanne Staggenborg, "Can Feminist Organizations Be Effective?" in Ferree and Martin, eds. *Feminist Organizations*, p. 350.

²¹ James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations*, New York, Basic Books, 1973; Robert H. Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups."

²² Jenkins, "Farm worker Organizing in California." in Freeman and Johnson, eds., *Waves of Protest*.

binding volunteers to the organization.²³ In addition, Aldon D. Morris has argued "...the evolving consensus is that theoretical and empirical work on the cultural-social psychological aspect of collective action must lie at the center of the intellectual agenda if a comprehensive explanation of collective action is to be realized."²⁴

In fact, the maintenance of a collective belief system does not occur serendipitously or automatically, but must be created and maintained by the group itself. Nor are a group's structure and decision-making processes pre-ordained but they are created, developed and changed by the members and the leadership over time.

A Brief Review of Movement History

The modern feminist movement in the United States developed in the mid-1960s.²⁵ During the dynamic (and organizationally speaking, chaotic) period between 1966 and 1975, the "liberal" strand of the feminist movement benefited from the influx of ideas and volunteers from both civil rights groups and the more radical "women's liberation" groups as well. Initially focused almost entirely on the strategy of eliminating sexual discrimination in the workplace through the application of pressure on the Executive

²³ Steven M. Buechler, *Women's Movements in the United States: Woman Suffrage, Equal Rights and Beyond*, New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1990; Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*.

²⁴ Aldon D. Morris, "Political Consciousness and Collective Action," in Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds. *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992, p. 369.

²⁵ See Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, on the distinction between women's movement groups.

branch, the goals and tactics of the liberal strand of the movement quickly diversified. This diversification can be attributed in part to the influence of radical feminist groups, which drew upon their members' experiences in New Left, anti-war, and civil rights groups in formulating their goals and strategies.

Liberal women's organizations mobilizing for equal rights for women at this time included the National Organization for Women, (NOW), the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), and the Association for Business and Professional Women (BPW). One major conflict within (and between) these organizations involved whether or not to support abortion rights. NOW's decision to do so fractured the organization; those women not wishing to pursue the issue of abortion rights created WEAL. Another hotly contested subject, tentatively resolved in 1971, involved whether or not feminist groups should become involved in securing rights of lesbians.

From 1971 forward, feminist organizations large and small pursued a wide variety of issues including the support of battered women and rape victims, the investigation of the role of the church in subjugating women, the attainment of reproductive rights and equal employment rights, equal credit, the right to participate in sports and the end of pregnancy discrimination. In addition, groups sought to support women and feminist candidates to run for political office. Feminist organizations' tactical repertoire similarly expanded to include protest politics, grassroots lobbying, marches, picketing, legislative lobbying, civil

disobedience, street theater, campaigning, public education and consciousness raising.

The years 1972 to 1982 marked the zenith of feminist mobilization generally, but the demise of the radical feminist movement.²⁶ The battle for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment sparked significant contributions of time and money to the cause by both volunteers and sympathizers. In addition, this period saw the proliferation of feminist and women-centered organizations aimed at providing health services, counseling, and shelter to women in need.²⁷

In spite of the health of the feminist movement during this time, significant conflicts, controversies and dilemmas arose as well. Tensions within coalitions of feminist groups, the difficulties encountered in managing an influx of volunteers, the challenge of maintaining large organizations and arguments over the appropriate goals and tactics of the feminist movement all threatened feminist movement groups' growth and survival.

The 1980s looked quite different from the previous two decades from a feminist organizer's point of view.²⁸ The vigorous anti-ERA campaign headed by Phyllis Schlafly helped tip the balance

²⁶ Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*; Taylor and Whittier, "The New Feminist Movement."

²⁷ Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*.

²⁸ On the rise of the New Right, see for example: Richard Viguerie, *The New Right: We're Ready to Lead*, Falls Church, Virginia, Viguerie Company, 1981; Cheryl Hyde "Did the New Right Radicalize the Women's Movement? A Study of Change in Feminist Social Movement Organizations, 1977-1987," Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 1991; and Klatch, *Women of the New Right*.

against the constitutional amendment, which failed three states short of its goal. The election of the popular Ronald Reagan, his staunch anti-abortion stance and the growth of the Christian Right's influence in politics also dampened the mood of the feminist movement.²⁹ Some antiabortionists stepped up their use of direct-action tactics including civil disobedience and clinic bombings, which increased greatly during this period.³⁰ These factors, combined with the dispiriting effect of the loss of the ERA on volunteers, suggested to many that not only was the movement's "peak period" over, but that it might be fading out completely.³¹

In spite of this apparently bleak political environment, more women than ever identified with the goals of NOW, if not with the term "feminist." In the 1980s and 1990s, we witnessed the increased activism of feminists in electoral politics, especially after the discovery of the "gender gap" in 1980. Students of social movements and social movement groups have noted the healthy

²⁹ Costain, *Inviting Women's Rebellion*; Myra Marx Ferree and Beth B. Hess, *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1985; Donald G. Mathews and Jane S. DeHart, *Sex, Gender and the Politics of the ERA: A State and the Nation*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1990; Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*; Ryan, *Feminism and the Women's Movement*; Nancy Whittier, *Feminist Generations: The Persistence of the Radical Women's Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1995.

³⁰ Ryan, *Feminism and the Women's Movement*; Patricia Ireland, *What Women Want*, New York, Penguin Books USA Inc., 1996; Suzanne Staggenborg, *The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991.

³¹ Taylor and Whittier, "The New Feminist Movement;" Costain, *Inviting Women's Rebellion*. See also Verta Taylor, who uses the term "period of abeyance" to describe the state of the feminist movement today. "Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 54, 1989, pp. 761-75.

persistence of many feminist organizations.³² Today, the National NOW office is comprised of four officers, a small staff, and approximately 35 elected board members. NOW's regional divisions exist primarily to elect these board members. It also has state-level organizations and between 400 and 500 chapters at the local level.

Chapter Outline

Chapter Two examines the literature on organizational creation and maintenance on which this study builds. Chapter Three examines the founding and development of NOW from 1966-1971, including the development of NOW's founding documents as well as the influence of the women's liberation movement on NOW's nascent identity. Chapter Four analyzes NOW's mobilization for the Equal Rights Amendment and recounts the grassroots chapters' demands for a greater voice in National NOW's agenda and decisionmaking processes. Chapter Five examines the response of NOW's leaders to the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment. Chapter Six asks whether NOW's founding principles, formulated between 1966 and 1971, remain in force today in the organization. Chapter Seven concludes by reviewing the findings of this study, including the

³² Mayer Zald, "The Trajectory of Social Movements in America," In Louis Kriesberg, ed., *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change*, Vol. 10, Greenwich, Conn., JAI Press, 1988, p. 29; Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Collective action, Social Movements and Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994; Verta Taylor and Leila J. Rupp, "Women's Culture and Lesbian Feminist Activism: A Reconsideration of Cultural Feminism," *Signs*, Vol. 19, 1993, pp. 32-61; Buechler, *Women's Movements in the United States* and Staggenborg, *The Pro-Choice Movement*.

role played by organizational structure, patrons and leaders, of the state and mobilizing structures, political opportunities and organizational identity in creating and sustaining the National Organization for Women. Finally, I discuss how and why, in spite of its success at survival, NOW's future is constrained by the very factors which supported it through crises over thirty-four years.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FORMATION AND MAINTENANCE OF GROUPS: INSIGHTS FROM THE LITERATURE

This study investigates the origins and maintenance of one membership group over time. This chapter reviews research on the mechanisms that aid and undermine voluntary groups. It addresses the work of both political scientists, who largely focus on the study of interest groups, and sociologists, who have more often investigated social movements. Mayer N. Zald observed that, "As more groups are represented in the polity, on the one hand, and as groups that are well represented increase their tactical repertoire to include mobilizing the grass roots, on the other hand, the line between social movement analysis and pressure group analysis becomes blurred."³³ As scores of voluntary organizations have developed, persisted and failed, so too has our knowledge on membership. This review draws from previous analyses both fruitful paths for further study and guiding suggestions for this dissertation.

³³ Mayer N. Zald, "Looking Backward to Look Forward: Reflections on the Past and Future of Resource Mobilization Research," in Mayer M. Zald and John D. McCarthy, *Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Essays*, New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction Books, 1992, p. 319. Joyce Gelb, "Feminist Organizational Success," in Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin eds., *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1995. For one explicit discussion of the differences between "pressure groups" and social movements see Bert Useem and Mayer N. Zald "From Pressure Group to Social Movement: Efforts to Promote the Use of Nuclear Power." In Zald and McCarthy, *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*.

Groups in American Politics and Political Science

As Tocqueville famously pointed out, groups have always played a prominent role on the American political scene.³⁴ Before the 1950s, however, the study of voluntary associations was less central to the field of political science which focused heavily on the institutional bases of American politics: the presidency, congress, and the judiciary.³⁵

Beginning in the 1950s, however, the study of groups gained popularity with scholars of social movements and interest groups just as their absolute numbers and visibility began increasing.³⁶ In political science, this increase in attention to interest groups reflects a general backlash against the heavy institutional and legal basis of the study of politics. Scholars were interested in examining the more informal areas of influence in politics. They also evidenced an increased interest in examining questions of

³⁴ Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1904/1899.

³⁵ For an example of this genre, see Woodrow Wilson, *Congressional Government*, Cleveland, Ohio, 1885/1973.

³⁶ Early examinations include those of Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, and Arthur Bentley, *The Process of Government*, Evanston Ill, Principia Press, 1949. See accounts of increase in Kay Lehman Schlozman and John T. Tierney, *Organized Interests and American Democracy*, New York, Harper & Row; Jeffrey Berry, *Lobbying for the People*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977; Jeffrey Berry, *The Interest Group Society*, 2nd ed., Glenview, Ill., Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown, 1989; Jack Walker, *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professionals, and Social Movements*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1991; Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*, New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993; Mark P. Petracca, *The Politics of Interests: Interest Groups Transformed*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1992.

representation and democracy as the civil rights, peace, and women's movements gained strength.

An early scholar in the "pluralist school" argued that "disturbance theory" helped explain the mobilization of individuals. External factors - layoffs, for example, were natural factors motivating individuals to join groups. Subsequently, however, researchers in the pluralist school of interest group literature argued that organizations could be formed at any time, for any reason: grievances were expected to be ever-present in society and only required a stimulus to be expressed. Scholars explored the normative implications for governing and conclusions alternately described the pluralist system as either pro-democratic or destabilizing to representative government.³⁷ In the pluralist view, no one group monopolized government; even where individuals were unrepresented by organizations, the latent threat of potential organization kept would-be oligarchs in check.³⁸ Competition among interest groups would hold *them* in check.

Problems inherent in the pluralist school did not go undetected. Schattschneider's well-known observations about the

³⁷ Look at L. Harmon Ziegler and G. Wayne Peak, *Interest Groups in American Politics*, 2nd ed., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1972. For example, research by scholars including Bauer, Poole and Dexter and John Mark Hansen offers empirical evidence about the ways in which interests compete against each other to provide the most credible information to political elites. Raymond A. Bauer, Ithiel de Sola Pool, and Lewis Anthony Dexter, *American Business and Public Policy: The Politics of Foreign Trade*, 2nd ed., Chicago, Aldine-Atherton, 1972; John Mark Hansen, *Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919-1981*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991.

³⁸ David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process*, New York, Knopf, 1951; Bauer, Pool and Dexter, *American Business and Public Policy*.

upper-class bias in politics emphasized the fact that business and corporate interests enjoyed disproportionate influence in politics. Scholars including Lindblom and Lowi similarly pointed out the empirical and theoretical problems with the pluralists' conclusions.³⁹ Lowi pointed out the narrowness of the interests of interest groups and the problems for governing that these interests created.⁴⁰ Lindblom argues that business interest groups, by far the largest and best-organized sector of interests involved in American politics, are not "special interest groups." Business is a successful and privileged group because American government functions within a private enterprise market-oriented system. The need to encourage business operates as an all-pervasive constraint on government authority - even in the absence of organized business pressure groups.

Unfortunately, as Baumgartner and Leech note, these debates were lacking in theoretical coherence and indulged too heavily in normative argument.⁴¹ For example, those distressed by the unrepresentative character of the interest group system - including at one point the American Political Science Association -

³⁹ Grant McConnell, *Private Power and American Democracy*, Vintage Books, 1966; C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, Oxford Press, 1956; Grant McConnell, *Private Power and American Democracy*, New York, Knopf, 1966; Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, "The Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 56, 1962.

⁴⁰ Also see Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1982; Jonathan Rauch, *Demosclerosis: The Silent Killer of American Government*, New York, Times Books, 1994.

⁴¹ Frank Baumgartner and Beth Leech, *Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and Political Science*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998.

frequently prescribed a strengthened party system as the curative. In 1965 Mancur Olson's work, as we will see, struck a fatal blow to the pluralist school.⁴²

The Rational Choice Revolution

Mancur Olson's 1965 work inspired nothing short of a revolution in thinking about the formation and maintenance of groups.⁴³ His insights, which assumed that individuals behave rationally (calculating the costs and benefits of participation) illuminated above all the difficulty inherent in organizing individuals to collective action.⁴⁴ Supporting the criticisms of the pluralist school, Olson argued against the inevitability of citizen participation in group formation and mobilization. Large voluntary groups (such as most interest groups and social movement groups) providing a nondivisible collective benefit or "public good" face the most challenges, particularly from the "free rider" - one who reaps the benefit without participating in its production. In short, maintaining a membership organization is a constant challenge.

⁴² Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1965.

⁴³ A few examples include James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations*, New York, Basic Books, 1973; Russell Hardin, *Collective Action*, Baltimore, Resources for the Future, 1982; Dennis Chong, *Collective Action in the Civil Rights Movement*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991.

⁴⁴ "These are the costs of communication among group members, the costs of any bargaining among them, and the costs of creating, staffing and maintaining any formal group organization." Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, p. 47.

The legacy of this innovation in thinking about organizational behavior is heavily reflected in the subsequent studies of social movement and interest group organizations.⁴⁵ For example, it focused researchers' attention away from more normative discussions of pluralism, and turned instead to analyzing the individual and institutional costs of organizing. Instead of focusing on structural change in society and the purported psychological effects thereof, it focused on the individual, and his or her interests and preferences. Shortly after the publication of Olson's book, Michael Lipsky, for example, found in his study of urban protest that protesters and their targets were engaged in rationally based back and forth bargaining, not mass hysteria or unorganized vitriol.⁴⁶

Olson also redirected attention towards the importance of leadership in bearing the costs of organizational development. In addition, scholars began exploring the ways in which groups worked to overcome the problems of securing commitment from members through various incentives.

⁴⁵ See for example Terry M. Moe, *The Organization of Interests: Incentives and the Internal Dynamics of Political Interest Groups*, Chicago, University of Chicago press, 1980; Moe, "Toward a Broader View of Interest Groups," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 43, 1981, pp. 531-43; Lawrence S. Rothenberg, "Organizational Maintenance and the Retention Decision in Groups," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, 1988, pp. 1129-52.

⁴⁵ Lipsky, Michael, "Protest as Political Resource," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 62, 1968, pp.1144-58; Moe, "Toward a Broader View of Interest Groups," and Rothenberg, "Organizational Maintenance."

⁴⁶ Lipsky, "Protest as Political Resource."

Wilson, for example, developed Olson's argument that organizations could overcome free rider problems by offering "selective incentives."⁴⁷ He argued that organizations overcome the "strain" of maintaining their organizations arising from the need to motivate individuals to participate by providing some combination of material, purposive and selective or collective solidary incentives.⁴⁸ Wilson defined material incentives as "tangible rewards: money, or things and services readily priced in monetary terms." Purposive incentives are "intangible rewards that derive from the sense of satisfaction of having contributed to the attainments of a worthwhile cause." Selective solidary incentives include rewards such as "offices, honors, and deference," while collective solidary benefits are those that accrue to a participant "by the act of associating" and which "must be enjoyed by a group if they are to be enjoyed by anyone."⁴⁹

The critical lesson for this study garnered from Olson's work is the fact that organizational formation, mobilization and maintenance are far from inevitable, and entail great costs for both organizers and volunteers. Any explanation of the survival of the National Organization for Women must take this insight into account, and in the detailed study of NOW's history I show the

⁴⁷ Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, p. 51.

⁴⁸ Peter B. Clark and James Q. Wilson, "Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 6, pp. 129-66; Wilson, *Political Organizations*.

⁴⁹ Wilson, *Political Organizations*, pp. 31-34.

recurring attention and deference paid by NOW leaders to the issue of maintaining membership loyalty.

Olson's Legacy to the Study of Groups

Scholars building on Olson's work underscored in their analyses the importance of addressing the costs of organizing. Thus, two issues in particular proved critical when explaining group formation and survival: the accumulation of resources and methods for minimizing the impact of free riding.⁵⁰ While highlighted in studies of organization in both political science and in sociology, sociologists initially developed the term "resource mobilization theory" to emphasize the support needed to sustain groups, activists, and activism.⁵¹

⁵⁰ For an excellent examination of the broad category of "resources" see Jo Freeman, "A Model for Analyzing the Strategic Options of Social Movement Organizations," in Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson, eds., *Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the Sixties*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999. Douglas McAdam outlines the difficulties encountered by civil rights groups whose resources were diverted from action to defending themselves in court and from repressive forces of the state. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982. See also John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization*, Morristown, N.J., General Learning Press, 1973; John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 82, 1977, pp.1212-41; William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, 2nd ed.; Belmont, California, Wadsworth, 1975; Craig J. Jenkins, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 9, 1983, pp. 527-53.

⁵¹ See, for example, Anthony Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1973; John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *The Trend of Social Movements in America*, Morristown, NJ, General Learning Press, 1973; Craig J. Jenkins, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements," *American Review of Sociology*, Vol.9, pp. 527-53; Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*; Mayer N. Zald and Roberta Ash, "Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay and Change" in Joseph R. Gusfield, ed., *Protest, Reform and*

Below, I outline four major areas revealed by contemporary scholars to play a crucial role in the origination and sustenance of voluntary associations in general. These include the role of 1) organizational structure; 2) leaders and patrons; 3) the state; 4) mobilizing structures; and 5) strategy and tactics. I discuss the particular problems for organizing that each of these factors presented for NOW as a feminist organization.

The Role of Structure in Organizational Creation and Maintenance

The Effect of Formalization on Sustaining Feminist Organization

Early theorists argued that as groups aged, their organizational structure became more professional and bureaucratic. If successful, a group became institutionalized.⁵² Freeman writes that

Institutionalization is what happens when a movement either penetrates existing institutions, capturing them sufficiently so that some of their resources can be used for movement goals, or movement organizations

Revolt; New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1970,; Gary T. Marx and J. L. Wood, "Strands of Theory and Research on Collective Behavior," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 1, 1976, pp. 368-428; McCarthy and Zald, *The Trend of Social Movements in American*; John D. McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory;" Mayer N. Zald, "The Continuing Vitality of Resource Mobilization Theory: Response to Herbert Kitschelt's Critique," in D. Rucht, ed. *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1991, pp. 348-54; Mayer N. Zald, "Looking Backward to Look Forward: Reflections on the Past and Future of Resource Mobilization Research," in Zald and McCarthy, *Social Movements and Organizational Society*, 1992, p. 319.

⁵² Michels, *Political Parties*; Seymour Martin Lipset, M.A. Trow and J.S. Coleman, *Union Democracy: The Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union*, Glencoe, Free Press, 1956; Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements*, New York, Vintage, 1979.

become routinized: that is, acquire stable sources of income, staff and defined tasks.⁵³

Ironically, however, this "success" sometimes brought with it the downfall of participatory groups. Scholars argued that these developments were both inevitable, occurring as the group aged, and devastating to grass roots support of the leadership.

Professionalization weakened ties between leaders and members, prompting the latter to withdraw support.⁵⁴ Recently, for example, Michael Goldfield argued in his study of the decline of organized labor that "[o]verall...the bureaucratization of U.S. unions begun in the late thirties stifled opposition, dissent, and much rank-and-file initiative."⁵⁵

However, other scholars argue that professionalization is in fact a critical sustaining force in groups.⁵⁶ A formal leadership and structure aids organizations in surviving difficult periods,

⁵³ Jo Freeman, "From Seed to Harvest: Transformations of Feminist Organizations and Scholarship," Ferree and Martin, *Feminist Organizations*, pp. 404-5. See also Michael Schwartz, *Radical Protest and Social Structure in the Southern Farm Alliance and Cotton Tenancy, 1880-1890*, New York, Academic Press, 1976, p. 176.

⁵⁴ Michels, *Political Parties*; Philip Selznick, *The TVA and the Grassroots: A Study of Politics and Organization*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984/1949; Schwartz, *Radical Protest*; Deborah K. King, "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: the Context of a Black Feminist Ideology," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 14, no. 1, 1988, pp. 42-72; John B. Judis, "The Pressure Elite: Inside the Narrow World of Advocacy Group Politics," *American Prospect*, no. 9, 1992, pp. 15-29.

⁵⁵ Michael Goldfield, *The Decline of Organized Labor in the United States*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 238.

⁵⁶ Wilson, *Political Organizations*, 1973; McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements;" Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1978; Suzanne Staggenborg, *The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991.

for example.⁵⁷ Gamson found that successful movement organizations were "bureaucratic, pursued narrow goals, employed selective incentives and used unruly methods."⁵⁸

As discussed in more detail below, disagreements and conflict over questions of formalization and bureaucratization have frequently erupted in feminist organizations. Such conflicts inspired one activist and scholar Jo Freeman to argue that the rigidly egalitarian and leaderless style of the new left radical feminist groups led to their demise.⁵⁹

Whether or not professionalization and organizational structure abets group survival, professionalization can incite intraorganizational conflict. One way that organizations stimulate participation, for example, is by characterizing group members in opposition to political elites. If group leaders subsequently seem to work too closely with these elites, for example, rank and file members might feel betrayed.

Although this is a common problem with social movement groups, it has been an especially salient issue for groups

⁵⁷ Joreen (Jo Freeman), "The Tyranny of Structurelessness;" in Anne Koedt, E. Levine and A. Rapone, eds., *Radical Feminism*, New York, Quadrangle Books, 1973, pp. 285-299; William Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, Homewood, ILL, Dorsey Press, 1975/1990; Wilson, *Political Organizations*, pp. 236-7, Carol McClurg Mueller, "The Organizational Basis of Conflict in Contemporary Feminism," Ferree and Martin, *Feminist Organizations*, p. 267.

⁵⁸ Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*.

⁵⁹ Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, pp. 119-129; Jo Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness;" Judith Hole and Ellen Levine, *Rebirth of Feminism*, New York, Quadrangle Books, 1971, pp. 159-163; Carol McClurg Mueller, "The Organizational Basis of Conflict," Ferree and Martin, *Feminist Organizations*, pp. 271-272; Staggenborg, *The Pro-Choice Movement*.

constituting the second wave of the women's movement. The underlying philosophy of this movement borrowed from the new left ideology of an egalitarian participatory democracy. The establishment was the clear enemy; those who acted like traditional hierarchical leaders or who advocated a dialogue with politicians were suspect. As the modern women's movement progressed and expanded, the essential problem of transforming the political system while remaining aloof from it created significant intraorganizational conflict for movement groups, many of which collapsed under the strain.⁶⁰

In their discussion of feminist organizations, for example, Spalter-Roth and Schreiber find that the question of whether, how, and to what extent to engage in insider tactics remained a prominent point of debate and dissension well into the 1980s and 1990s.

Not all of the nineteen organizations [we studied] survived [the hostile environment of the 1980s and 1990s]. Those organizations that survived constantly faced the tension between their insider techniques and their outsider issues. The daily choices they made combined elements of radical and insider techniques and their outsider issues. The daily choices they made combined elements of radical and mainstream feminism...the organizational tensions that were introduced also threatened their survival.⁶¹

⁶⁰ See for example Alice Echols, *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989; Gretchen Arnold, "Dilemmas of Feminist Coalitions: Collective Identity and Strategic Effectiveness in the Battered Women's Movement," in Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin, eds., *Feminist Organizations*, 1995.

⁶¹ Roberta Spalter-Roth and Ronnee Schreiber, "Outsider Issues and Insider Tactics: Strategic Tensions in the Women's Policy Network During the 1980s," Ferree and Martin, *Feminist Organizations*, p. 115.

The organizational structure of feminist organizations has been guided by a feminist ethic or collective belief system that emphasizes individual transformation through participation.⁶² This ethic emphasizes the accountability of group leaders to the members. The legitimacy of the organization's structure depends upon its openness to member concerns and involvement. Jo Freeman describes this dynamic in the Chicago Women's Liberation Union:

The Chicago Women's Liberation Union created an elaborate organizational structure for demanding accountability through constant self-reports and criticism - so elaborate that it limited the number of people who had time to participate... The need for accountability is created by the possibility of empowerment. Empowerment of women is one of the few ideas on which feminists have agreed virtually from the beginning.⁶³

The importance of the outsider/insider debate will be a recurring theme throughout this discussion of the history of the National Organization for Women. As I describe in the chapter on NOW's formation, the feminist participatory ethic became ingrained in the organization's collective identity by 1971. The member-leader discourse in the National Organization for Women consistently and frequently involved debate over the use of insider or outsider tactics, and the

⁶² Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left: 1962-1968*, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1982.

⁶³ Jo Freeman, "From Seed to Harvest," Ferree and Martin, *Feminist Organizations*, pp. 407-8.

compatibility between their use and NOW's organizational purpose.⁶⁴

Invariably, NOW's leadership managed these issues by underscoring their accountability to the membership, to NOW's historical purpose, thus enabling the leadership to legitimize not only the use of insider tactics but also their own rightful place as leaders.⁶⁵ These findings may be generalizable, as Nownes and Cigler found in their survey of public interest group leaders, who agreed that credibility was

...extremely important in lobbying public officials and attracting financial support from members. It was the perception of most respondents that credibility is threatened when a group becomes too dependent on patronage, does not represent "real" constituents, and/or when it takes money from patrons that are unpopular with its members and primary patron supporters.⁶⁶

The Effect of Federalization on the Maintenance of Groups

Olson observed that large groups experience greater difficulty in organizing than do smaller groups.⁶⁷ This is a result of several factors, including the fact that large groups

⁶⁴ Gais and Walker's survey of insider/outsider tactics is a good example of the lack of attention to the influence of the context of a group's collective identity in its strategic and tactical choices. Thomas L. Gais and Jack L. Walker, Jr., "Pathways to Influence in American Politics," Jack L. Walker, Jr., *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*.

⁶⁵ As Mansbridge argues, "Without understanding that the feminist movement is discursive and that the accountability of feminists to the movement is internal, we cannot understand what we see...in any organization in which a feminist is trying to do feminist work." Jane Mansbridge, "What is the Feminist Movement?," Ferree and Martin, *Feminist Organizations*, p. 33.

⁶⁶ Anthony Nownes and Allan J. Cigler, "Public Interest Groups and the Road to Survival," *Polity*, Vol. X, no. 3, Spring 1995, p. 390.

⁶⁷ Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, pp. 53-65.

incur larger costs and the fact that preventing individuals from free riding is more easily accomplished in smaller groups - through social pressure, or "social incentives" - for example.

One way organizations can limit these inherent problems with large groups, Olson argued, is through federalization.⁶⁸ As a federalized group, NOW has undoubtedly enjoyed the benefits of the small-group social context in combination with the efficiency gains of the national bureaucratic structure. I thus examine the relationship between different levels of NOW and the impact of this relationship on organizational decisionmaking.

The Role of Patrons and Leaders in Organizational Creation and Maintenance

The role of patrons in funding incipient and fledgling groups emerged as a critical element of most resource mobilization oriented studies, and scholars still debate their relative importance in group origination and survival.⁶⁹ Sometimes these patrons are wealthy or otherwise resource-rich individuals. Businesses or large institutions may also provide essential contributions to voluntary organizations. The scholarly consensus

⁶⁸ Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, p. 63.

⁶⁹ See Baumgartner and Leech, *Basic Interests*, p. 12 and the extended debate between scholars in *Political Research Quarterly*. Anthony J. Nownes and Grant Neeley, "Public Interest Group Entrepreneurship and Theories of Group Mobilization," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 49, no. 1, March 1996, pp. 119-146; Douglas R. Imig and Jeffrey M. Berry, "Patrons and Entrepreneurs: A Response to "Public Interest Group Entrepreneurship and Theories of Group Mobilization," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 49, no. 1, March 1996, pp. 147-154; Anthony J. Nownes, "Response to Imig and Berry: Entrepreneurs, Patrons and Organization," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 49, no. 1, March 1996, pp. 155-162.

is that a focus on membership alone as the major means of organizational support is misguided.⁷⁰

Leaders may also comprise a critical element of organizational formation and survival.⁷¹ These are individuals (Salisbury called them "leader-entrepreneurs") who bore an unusually large share of the costs of organizing and who helped determine the "mix of incentives" to entice and maintain the support of members.

In fact, Salisbury argues that "an entrepreneur's primary goal is to ensure group survival."⁷² In membership organizations, leaders also manage the critical tasks of membership recruitment and guide their participation.⁷³ Leaders must inculcate a sense of efficacy for members of the organization. Political or tactical failures can engender a sense of futility, discouraging volunteers

⁷⁰ See Jack L. Walker, "The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups," and Walker, *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professions and Social Movements*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1991.

⁷¹ Robert H. Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13, 1969, pp. 1-13; Terry M. Moe, *The Organization of Interests: Incentives and the Internal Dynamics of Political Interest Groups*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980; Lawrence S. Rothenberg, "Organizational Maintenance;" David C. King and Jack L. Walker, "The Provision of Benefits by Interest Groups in the United States," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 54, 1992, 394-426; Anthony J. Nownes, *The Other Exchange: Public Interest Group Entrepreneurs and their Patrons*, PhD Dissertation, University of Kansas, 1993; Nownes and Cigler, "Public Interest Groups and the Road to Survival."

⁷² Quoted in Nownes and Cigler, "Public Interest Groups," p. 389.

⁷³ Kenneth M. Goldstein, *Interest Groups, Lobbying and Participation in America*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999; Paul Johnson, "Interest Group Recruiting: Finding Members and Keeping Them," A.J. Cigler and B.A. Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics*, 5th ed., Washington, D.C., Congressional Quarterly Press, 1998, pp. 35-62.

and the group's ability to obtain other resources. The leadership must thus actively work to seek out "avenues of possibility."⁷⁴

Scholars find that leaders are acutely aware of their organization's membership in their decisionmaking. Nownes and Cigler remind us that an organization's members often, if not usually, contribute the bulk of its funds. Leaders do not overlook this fact; "most...group [leaders] believe that members are the key to influencing public policy and thus spend an inordinate amount of group resources on seeking member support. This is often the case when patron support is 'cheaper' to procure than member [sic] support..."⁷⁵ This is true for several reasons, including the fact that patron support can be unreliable, and because members may become suspicious of outsider support. In addition, as few organizations can afford large paid staffs, members are the ones who volunteer their time and energy into educating, recruiting, publicizing, and organizing.

As we see in the National Organization for Women, leaders attend quite closely to the membership. While their public tasks included much interaction with politicians, officials, and the leaders of civil rights organizations, internally NOW's national leaders also managed members' education, alerted them to political threats, arranged for their training in a variety of tactics, framed strategies and developed their implementation, and

⁷⁴ See Jane Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* .

⁷⁵ Nownes and Cigler, "Public Interest Groups," p. 392.

discovered and publicized new issues. As we see throughout the study, one of the leaders' main tasks included reassuring the membership that NOW's activities reflected NOW's founding principles - the basis of NOW's organizational culture.

Frequently, the study of leaders focuses on one level of leadership, normally the national level in a federated organization. In this study, I argue that leaders at all levels of the organization were critical to NOW's formation and survival. In NOW's formation, for example, Betty Friedan obviously loomed large as publicist for the national organization. As I point out, however, she was only one of a handful of pivotal leaders at the founding of the organization. Others played a larger role in structuring the group and cementing the organization's core beliefs and goals at the outset. In addition, between 1968 and 1971, local chapter members and leaders proved especially important in the final development of the national organization's founding principles which formed the basis of NOW's culture. Students of social movement groups typically identify these activities as "framing processes." McAdam explains framing as: "the conscious, strategic efforts of movement groups to fashion meaningful accounts of themselves and the issues at hand in order to motivate and legitimate their efforts."⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Doug McAdam, "The Framing Function of Social Movement Tactics: Strategic Dramaturgy in the American Civil Rights Movement," in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996. For the original conceptualization of "framing" see David Snow et

The Role of the State in Organizational Creation and Maintenance

Some scholars have observed that the state can play an important role in providing resources necessary for voluntary group formation and maintenance.⁷⁷ Ferree and Hess noted the critical role played by Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women played in developing the women's movement.⁷⁸ Walker, in particular, has discussed the relationship between the burgeoning numbers of interest groups and federal assistance.⁷⁹

While some have asserted the national government's role in NOW's creation, in particular, the history here shows that while the Kennedy Commissions were a convenient spot for organizing, it

al., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociologist Review*, Vol. 51, pp. 464-81 and David Snow and Robert D. Benford, "Ideology, Frame Resonance and Participant Mobilization," in Bert Klandermans, Hans Kriesi and Sidney Tarrow, eds., *From Structure to Action: Comparing Social Movement Culture Across Cultures*, Greenwich, CT, JAI, 1988, 1992, pp. 197-217.

⁷⁷ For a recent discussion see Theda Skocpol, "The Tocqueville Problem," *Social Science History*, Vol. 21, no.4, 1997.

⁷⁸ Myra Marx Ferree and Beth B. Hess, *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1985.

⁷⁹ Regarding the role of government in organizational growth see Walker, "Origins and Maintenance;" Jeffrey Berry's discussion of the "participation ethos" generated by social programs in *The Interest Group Society*, 2nd ed., Glenview, Ill., Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown, 1989; and Robert H. Salisbury, "Are Interest Groups Morbific Forces?," Paper Presented to the Conference Group on the Political Economy of Advanced Industrial Societies, August 1980. While Walker asserted that government encouraged the growth of the public interest group sector, contrary to other observers he argues that this heightened electoral participation does lead to a certain fragmentation or seeming chaos in the system, but that the proliferation of interest groups has only strengthened the American political system. The proliferation has led to a dramatic increase in the range of interests being represented in Washington. Not only has government benefited from and adapted to greater participation of the public, but parties have also been modernizing and transforming themselves to appeal to the electorate's ideological concerns. The quest for the public good is best met when this competition exists among groups for the attention of the electorate.

is very likely that if NOW did not form there, it would have formed elsewhere. As I discuss below, an increasingly interconnected network of activist and feminist-oriented women and men existed before the Commissions; this latent group did not have to depend on President Kennedy in order to organize.

The Role of Mobilizing Structures in Creating and Maintaining Organizations: Social Networks

McAdam, McCarthy and Zald define mobilizing structures as "...those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action. [These include] meso-level groups, organizations, and informal networks."⁸⁰

Aldon Morris' study of the early years of the civil rights movement (1953-1963) is one good example of attention to the role of local social networks as mobilization resources.⁸¹ Using an "indigenous perspective," Morris was especially interested in smaller, community-based organizations (such as churches) that had not been studied as frequently as the larger, nationally based organizations.

⁸⁰ McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, "Introduction," *Comparative Perspectives*, p. 3.

⁸¹ Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, New York, Free Press, 1984. For other studies discussing the role of networks and mobilizing structures in movements see Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, New York, Vintage Books, 1980; Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, New York, Longman, Inc., 1975; Douglas McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency: 1930-1970*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982.

He found that critical to the planning and organizations of the civil rights movements were the well-developed, pre-existing social and communications networks between educators, leaders and others in colleges, churches and local community institutions. Indeed, new organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Coalition grew out of pre-existing institutions. Morris also argues that resource mobilization theorists' analyses of the early civil rights movement are problematic because they "...assign heavy weight to outside elites and events [and it does] not reveal the scope or the capacity of the movement's indigenous base. In contrast, my research demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of local movements were indigenously organized and financed."⁸²

The importance of mobilizing structures, or more simply, social networks, show through clearly in this analysis. Just prior to NOW's origination and helping to instigate its formation, social networks of elites including professors, EEOC employees, lawyers and businessmen and women shared information about women's rights issues, strategies and tactics. Although national NOW was initially unenthusiastic about sponsoring state level organizations, (indeed, early leaders questioned even the advisability of instituting chapters) once organized, chapters and state-level organizations served as built-in mobilizing networks which shared information with each other and with NOW's national office, and vice versa.

⁸² Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*.

The Role of Strategy in Creating and Sustaining Organization

An organization's goals together with its tactical choices constitute its strategy. Resource mobilization theorists point out that an organization's strategy and the breadth of tactics it has at its disposal (its "collective action repertoire") are important to the maintenance of the organization.⁸³ Effective strategies supply some victories, recruiting members and bolstering old ones. They garner available resources effectively. They seek out weaknesses in the political opportunity structure and exploit them. The strategy choices of a social movement group and its ability to change course when necessary strongly influence both the success and survival of the group.⁸⁴ All social movement groups must either evolve strategies to weather changing political scenarios and the inevitable internal group conflicts that will arise, or risk dissolution.

Strategic choice is thus a critical aspect of what voluntary groups do. These choices are affected by external factors, such as the political and economic environment as well as internal factors, including the group's skill set as well as its organizational identity. Social movement and interest group studies to date have

⁸³ Tilly showed that forms of protest - a society's collective action "repertoires" - differ during different periods in history, depending on the structure of "the culture and history of protest in each society, the environment, the specific grievances of the protesters, their varied goals and by the various political opportunities and/or constraints that shape daily experience." Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*.

⁸⁴ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*.

identified the 1) wide range of tactics used by voluntary organizations and 2) the ways in which extraorganizational factors may affect strategic and tactical choices.⁸⁵ A broad range of tactics and the flexibility to change in light of new information about the political context can foster organizational survival.⁸⁶

However, most current research sheds little light on intraorganizational influences on strategic choices. The role of a group's belief system and purpose on strategies as a whole or tactics in particular is unexplored. When intraorganizational issues are considered, scholars are referring to the level of professionalization of the group, the amount and types of resources available and the skills of its leaders.⁸⁷ In part, this is a result of the type of data available. Baumgartner and Leech point out that while "[t]hanks to the surveys, we know much about how groups use particular tactics, but little about how they choose their strategies."⁸⁸

Costain's work is critical because it does take into account the discord that questions of strategy can elicit in organizations. She argues that controversial strategies become acceptable when

⁸⁵ Jeffrey Berry, *The Interest Group Society*; Schlozman and Tierney, *Organized Interests*; Walker, *Mobilizing Interest Groups*.

⁸⁶ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*.

⁸⁷ Schlozman and Tierney, *Organized Interests*; Berry, *The Interest Group Society*; David Knoke, "The Mobilization of Members in Women's Associations," Louise A. Tilly and Patricia Gurin, *Women, Politics and Change*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 383-410; David Knoke, *Organizing for Collective Action: The Political Economies of Associations*, Hawthorne, NY, Aldine de Gruyter, 1990; Walker, *Mobilizing Interest Groups*; Nownes and Cigler, "Public Interest Groups and the Road to Survival."

⁸⁸ Baumgartner and Leech, *Basic Interests*, p. 162.

three conditions are met. These include 1) a change in the external environment which influences members to dampen their opposition; 2) the ability and willingness of 'secondary groups' to aid the movement in successfully mastering the new technique; and 3) the assistance of institutional insiders (i.e. members of Congress) willing to help get lobbying efforts off the ground.⁸⁹

Costain's explanation focuses largely on the external resources that are necessary for an organization to test a new strategy. However, these are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the acceptance of controversial strategies by the membership of social movement groups. While Costain's work is especially valuable because she acknowledges the difficulty of strategy choice and change, the compatibility of a particular strategy with membership conceptions of the organization's culture is a missing factor in Costain's analysis.

Yet, the question of strategy choice is a critical one, not only because it may influence successful maintenance (by winning victories which may motivate others to join, for example, or by attracting more resources) but also because the link between political context, intraorganizational resources and strategy choice is not "straightforward." These choices, instead, are

⁸⁹ Anne N. Costain, "Representing Women: The Transition from Social Movement to Interest Group," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 34, 1981, p. 105.

mediated by the group's collective identity, and implemented by group leaders.

For example, while political environment may suggest the strategic benefits of forming coalitions of like-minded organizations, such a strategy might be rendered difficult or impossible to execute due to the internal belief systems of the individual groups. Thus, in her study of battered women's shelters Gretchen Arnold observes that

...one would have expected decisions concerning the organization's internal structure and membership to be of minor importance [in the coalition of battered women's groups]. But the participant's stands on these latter decisions were significant because they reflected a concern with the symbolic representation of the group's collective identity.⁹⁰

Deciding on a strategy or changing strategic course is not a simple process. When introducing or implementing a new strategy, for example, group leaders can frequently be seen to "frame" issues and tactics to assure members of their legitimacy. Strategies and tactics must mesh with not only the skill set of members but also with members' view of the purpose of the group. The adoption of strategies (goals and the tactics used to pursue them) is a contested and at times contentious process in the life of a social movement group.⁹¹ This is true because tactical repertoires

⁹⁰ Arnold, "Dilemmas of Feminist Coalitions," in Ferree and Martin, eds., *Feminist Organizations*, 1995.

⁹¹ Costain and Costain, "Strategy and Tactics of the Women's Movement," in Katzenstein and Mueller, eds., *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, p.198. See also Anne N. Costain, "Representing Women."

reflect a group's values and its belief system: "...Actions taken by insurgents and the tactical choices they make represent a critically important contribution to the overall signifying work of the movement."⁹²

Frederick Miller's conclusions regarding the causes of the decline of two social movement groups, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and Weatherman point to the importance of intraorganizational factors, including strategy choice and change.⁹³ He argues that to avoid failure, organizations must 1) have flexible structures; 2) plan for the incorporation of new members; 3) have leaders manage the "gaps between the tactics and goals endorsed by leaders and those sought by members"; and 4) avoid factionalism. This analysis suggests that a focus on a group's leadership and its purposive actions is critical to understanding organizational viability as well as the importance of maintaining a cohesive group identity.

Strategy choice is relevant for this study not because a particular strategy helped the organization in its formation or survival. Instead, the thrust of the argument is that strategy choice and change constituted in NOW a persistent source of contention. While in broad terms the accepted wisdom which argues that NOW has followed a straightforward strategic path from

⁹² McAdam, "The Framing Function of Movement Tactics."

⁹³ Fredrick D. Miller, "The End of SDS and the Emergence of Weatherman: Demise Through Success," in Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson, eds., *Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the 1960s*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999, pp. 323-324.

lobbying the Executive Office and joining law suits, to protest-oriented, legislative lobbying and finally to tactics based on influencing electoral politics, is accurate, these analyses elide the struggles involved in these strategy shifts.⁹⁴ Leaders were constantly forced to justify and frame strategy choices for the membership. The fact that they were able to do so helped ensure continued membership loyalty, and thus the sustenance of the group.

Advances in Resource Mobilization Theory:
Political Opportunities, New Social Movements and Collective
Identity

Political Opportunities

In moving so far away from ascribing organization and protest activity to demographic or macrostructural change, resource mobilization theory exposed itself to criticism for missing the ways in which macropolitical change could affect the relative receptivity of government to group influence, which in turn could influence the creation of new social movements and organizations.

⁹⁴ Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1986; Carol McClurg Mueller, "Collective Consciousness, Identity Transformation and the Rise of Women in Public Office in the United States," in Mary Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds. *The Women's Movements in the United States and Western Europe*; Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier, "The New Feminist Movement," in Laurel Richardson, Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier, eds. *Feminist Frontiers IV*, New York, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1997; Anne Costain, *Inviting Women's Rebellion*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. Zillah Eisenstein's *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism* is one notable exception, arguing that NOW (and other women's organizations), by virtue of the expansion of their issues and strategies, were actually more radical by the end of the 1970s. Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1981/1993. See also Debra C. Minkoff, "Bending with the Wind: Strategic Change and Adaptation by Women's and Racial Minority Organizations," *The American Journal of Sociology*, May 1999.

A new approach acknowledged Olson's basic insights and resource mobilization theorists but focused in particular on extraorganizational "political opportunities." The dawn of this approach was heralded by the work of Peter Eisinger, Michael Lipsky, and Charles Tilly and followed by scholars Theda Skocpol, Douglas McAdam and Sidney Tarrow.⁹⁵

Eisinger was perhaps the first to operationalize the concept of a community's political opportunity structure. He argued that this included "...such factors as the nature of the chief executive, the mode of aldermanic election, the distribution of social skills and status, and the degree of social disintegration..."⁹⁶ Eisinger found that protest behavior is a function not only of the individuals and the resources they have but is also critically linked to the characteristics of the political system in which they are situated - particularly whether these systems are strong or weak, open or closed to change. More recently, Tarrow described the structure of political opportunities in three ways: "1) the openness or closure of formal political institutions; 2) the stability or instability of political alignments within the

⁹⁵ Peter K. Eisinger, "The Conditions of Protest Behavior;" Michael Lipsky, "Protest as Political Resource," Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979; McAdam, *Political Process*; Tarrow, *Power in Movement*.

⁹⁶ Eisinger, "The Conditions of Protest Behavior," p. 11.

political system; and 3) the availability and strategic posture of support groups."⁹⁷

McAdam's analysis of the rise and decline of the civil rights movement employs a "political process" model to understand this movement's dynamics.⁹⁸ In *The Decline of the Civil Rights Movement* McAdam cogently describes the three elements of this model that predict movement continuation:

...the organizational strength of movement forces; the "structure of political opportunities" available to insurgents at any point in time; and the response of other groups to the challenge posed by the movement. A significant negative change in any one of these factors is expected to diminish the ability of insurgents to sustain collective protest.⁹⁹

The temperature of the political environment looms large in this model because it defines whether a favorable or unfavorable context for mobilization exists.

NOW's case spans quite a variety of political environments. It experienced periods with and without serious countermovement opposition, with and without party support, with and without executive support. While these factors certainly affected NOW's political environment by opening some doors and closing others, the evidence does not allow us to empirically weigh the effects of all of the combinations of "political environment" NOW faced over time.

⁹⁷ Sidney Tarrow, "Struggling to Reform: Social Movements and Policy Change During Cycles of Protest," Occasional Paper 15, Center for International Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 1983, p. 3.

⁹⁸ Note this analysis focuses on NOW's survival, not its "success."

⁹⁹ Douglas McAdam, "Decline of the Civil Rights Movement," Freeman and Johnson, eds. *Waves of Protest*, p. 326.

An organization's viability depends in part on how successfully group leaders actively take advantage of the political context in which they find themselves - whether that context appears to be favorable or not.¹⁰⁰

New Social Movements and Collective Identity

A separate strand of theory on social movement groups emerged from Europe in the 1980s. Proponents argued that the rise (and ultimately, the dominance) of the service-based economy in the postwar era led to the development of a new middle class which includes a petit bourgeoisie of lower and middle-class white collar workers, those who used to be craftsmen and those who are "administrators of the new clients of the welfare state" including psychiatrists and teachers.

In describing the new character of social movements since the 1960s, a prominent theorist of the new approach argued that "...social conflicts are being replaced henceforth by political ones; the struggle of the citizen against the State prevails today over that of the worker against his or her boss."¹⁰¹ The petit bourgeoisie has difficulty identifying with either the upper

¹⁰⁰ Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia H. Hine, for example, note the fact that the existence of opposition actually aids in the maintenance of social movements. *People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation*, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1970.

¹⁰¹ Alain Touraine, *The Return of the Actor: Social Theory in Post-Industrial Society*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988, p. 131.

bourgeoisie or the lower classes, and this dilemma is evidenced in the three forms of protest favored by them.¹⁰²

The first form of the new protest can be identified by the emphasis placed on moralism, of which there are three types: 1) individualistic optimism (evident in the women's and peace movements) and 2) puritanical moralism (characteristic of antifeminist and antipornographic movements); and 3) ethical doctrines of salvation. Eder notes that their focus is on expression, versus strategy, and that the protests of these movements are "legitimate, if not legal." Dissatisfaction with the welfare state and party politics animate the second form of protest. Here, individuals and groups attempt to bring new issues (with new experts) to the political table, creating new pressure groups in the process. Hearings and citizen action groups characterize this second group - for example, the environmental movement. Finally, the third form of new protest focuses not on securing legal justice or on bringing new issues to the political arena, but on enhancing the "life-world." Eder's example is the self-help movement, which highlights the importance of relationships other than the social relationships of production.

While resource mobilization and its assumptions still underlies much of current analyses of social movement and interest groups, critics of the theory and new insights have further

¹⁰² Klaus Eder, "The New Social Movements: Moral Crusades, Political Pressure Groups, or Social Movements?," *Social Research*, Vol. 52, no. 4, 1985, pp. 869-890.

developed the field of research on social movements. Friedman and McAdam argue that rational choice theory, which underlies resource mobilization theory, generally falters because it does not explain why some individuals value participation more than others, and it ignores "...the degree to which individuals are already embedded in the movement by virtue of prior ties or group affiliations."¹⁰³

Collective Identity

New social movement research with its focus on identity issues opened new pathways for investigations of the role played by feelings of solidarity and of beliefs and value systems in collective action.¹⁰⁴ For the purposes of this study, which hopes to speak to a broad range of group scholars, the terms "group ideology" and "group" or "collective identity" and "organizational culture" will be used interchangeably. Hyde succinctly describes the components, scope and import of collective identity in this way:

¹⁰³ Debra Friedman and Doug McAdam, "Collective Identity and Activism: Networks, Choices and the life of a Social Movement," Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992.

¹⁰⁴ Myra Marx Ferree and Frederick Miller, "Mobilization and Meaning: Some Social-Psychological Contributions to the Resource Mobilization Perspective on Social Movements," *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 55, 1985, pp. 38-61; Louis A. Zurcher, Jr. and David Snow, "Collective Behavior: Social Movements," in Morris Rosenberg and Ralph H. Turner, eds., *Social Psychology: Sociological Perspectives*, New York, Basic Books, 1981; Barbara Ryan, *Feminism and the Women's Movement: Dynamics of Change in Social Movement Ideology and Activism*, New York, Routledge, 1992; Steven M. Buechler, *Women's Movements in the United States: Women's Suffrage, Equal Rights, and Beyond*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 1990.

An organization's ideology transmits basic values and visions, frames appropriate problem analysis and interventions, fosters membership recruitment and solidarity, and suggests strategic response to environmental forces. Ideologies are conveyed explicitly through public statements (such as manifestos) or implicitly through governance mechanisms, rituals, rhetoric, and technology.¹⁰⁵

Chong refined Olson's argument by incorporating a limited notion of group identity. He sought to understand why and when individuals participated in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, a participation that was at times fraught with danger and even death. By analyzing participation in the civil rights movement in game-theoretic terms using the classic model of the prisoner's dilemma, he concludes that

...the promise of social and psychological benefits for cooperating in collective action alters the choices facing the potential activism. Instead of preferring to free ride regardless of how others behave, he prefers to act in conformity with others: if others cooperate, he wishes to cooperate; if they act selfishly, he wants to do the same.¹⁰⁶

Eschewing free rider status, according to Chong's argument, depended in part on the perceptions of the activity of one's peers and one's identification with them. Thus, the ability of a group to foster a sense of solidarity, community and common purpose helps mobilize and retain members. A strong collective identity can also sustain a movement and its groups during periods of the

¹⁰⁵ Cheryl Hyde, "Feminist Social Movement Organizations Survive the New Right," Ferree and Martin, *Feminist Organizations*, p. 309.

¹⁰⁶ Chong, *Collective Action*, p. 233.

"doldrums."¹⁰⁷ Turner found, for example, that "protesters interviewed tended to describe their motivations for participation in strike activities in terms of social solidarity. In at least some instances it appears that collective identities are more important determinants of individual protest than the rational calculation of costs and benefits."¹⁰⁸ A strong collective identity becomes an important selective incentive in itself.¹⁰⁹

Groups can foster a collective identity by manipulating symbols, by promoting exclusivity, and by actively educating new members in their chosen ideology. For example, Morris found that "such cultural factors as religious beliefs, music, and sermons, which although refocused by activists, were important to the development of the movement."¹¹⁰

The development of modern feminist ideological frameworks together with new left influences were powerful organizing tools which feminist organizations used liberally to recruit and mobilize participants.¹¹¹ Eder argued that to mobilize it was critical to

¹⁰⁷ Rupp and Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums*; Verta Taylor, "Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 54, no.5, 1992, pp. 761-75; Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier, "Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities: Lesbian Feminist Mobilization," Morris and Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, pp. 104-132.

¹⁰⁸ Cited in Baumgartner and Leech, *Basis Interests*.

¹⁰⁹ Friedman and McAdam, "Collective Identity and Activism."

¹¹⁰ Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, p. 282.

¹¹¹ Breines, *Community and Organization*; Maren Lockwood Carden, *The New Feminist Movement*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1974; Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*; Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*; Jo Reger, *Social Movement Culture and Organizational Survival in the National Organization for Women*, Ph.D. Diss., Ohio State University, 1997; Taylor and Whittier, "Collective Identity;" Ryan, *Feminism and the Women's*

encourage the "collective learning process". Small group activities practicing consciousness raising were one way feminist groups educated and recruited members, socializing them into the larger group and reframed their grievances into action.¹¹² Burns argues, for example, that "...the CR group was a unique creation of radical feminists - at once a recruitment tool, a process for shaping politics and ideology, and a microcosm of an egalitarian community that prefigured a feminist society."¹¹³

A strong sense of collective identity or organizational culture can improve member loyalty and retention, but it can also constrain leaders. In the above discussion of the role of strategy choice and change in groups, for example, I argue that strategy choices are contentious and must mesh with members' views of the organization's *gestalt*. Halci's study of the AIDS activist group ACT-UP illustrates the potentially hazardous effects of an organization's failure to successfully legitimize strategy change. After successfully gaining the public's attention in the 1980s and highlighting the AIDS crisis, ACT-UP demobilized. She attributes this result in part to internal conflict over whether the change in strategy suggested by the leadership appropriately reflected the

Movement. See also J. Lofland, ed. *Protest: Studies of Collective Behavior and Social Movements*, New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction Books, 1985.

¹¹² Eder, "The New Social Movements," p. 883.

¹¹³ Stewart Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s: Searching for Democracy*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1990, p. 130.

organization's collective identity.¹¹⁴ McAdam argues that similar conflicts hindered the effectiveness of the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and other civil rights groups after 1965.¹¹⁵

DISCUSSION: THE STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This dissertation seeks to understand how the National Organization for Women managed to form successfully and to maintain itself over time. Since it is impossible to analyze and compare the parallel universe in which NOW failed to form or sustain itself, a more indirect method is employed.

This study investigates the nature of the major crises NOW experienced, analyzes the discourse within the organization during these crises, and uncovers the methods leaders used to resolve them. I make the reasonable inference that the inability of the National Organization for Women to successfully negotiate these serious conflicts would have resulted in organizational extinction, as each episode constituted a potentially lethal threat to the organization.¹¹⁶ This approach parallels George and McKeown's description of the use of "process-tracing" in the analysis of case studies. The procedure of process-tracing

...entails abandonment of the strategy of "black-boxing" the decision process; instead, this decision-making process is the center of the investigation.

¹¹⁴ Abigail Halci, "AIDs, Anger and Activism: ACT UP as a Social Movement Organization." In Freeman and Johnson, eds. *Waves of Protest*.

¹¹⁵ McAdam, "Decline of the Civil Rights Movement," in Freeman and Johnson, eds. *Waves of Protest*.

¹¹⁶ The very first "crisis" NOW had to negotiate, of course, is the founding of the organization.

The process-tracing approach attempts to uncover what stimuli the actors attend to; the decision process that makes use of these stimuli to arrive at decisions; the actual behavior that then occurs; [and] the effects of various institutional arrangements on attention, processing, and behavior... [P]rocess-tracing...involves both an attempt to reconstruct actors' definitions of the situation and an attempt to develop a theory of action.¹¹⁷

For example, the review of the literature lays out a variety of factors that are believed by scholars to affect chances for organizational maintenance, including the political opportunity structure, the availability of resources, strategy and collective identity. However, this thesis does not argue that a particular political environment, resource base, strategy choice or organizational culture led to NOW's durability. Instead, I show how these factors interrelated during episodes of significant conflict in the organization.

Examining the discourse and actions of members and leaders during periods of crisis illustrates the effects of the variables described in this review on the organization. For example, to understand the effect of a changing political environment on NOW, the study examines how leaders and members react to such a shift and the constraints on the organization's flexibility in responding to the change.

Intraorganizational debates reveal how members and leaders experience and react to issues like strategy choice, resource

¹¹⁷ Alexander L. George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decisionmaking," *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations*, Vol. 2, 1985, p. 35.

acquisition problems and changes in the receptivity of the political environment. As Ryan observes, for example, such moments of contestation are ideal points from which to analyze groups because it is precisely then that leaders and members must publicly express their vision of the group's mission.¹¹⁸ The resolution of intraorganizational conflict is also revelatory. How leaders resolve conflicts sheds light, for example, on the question of how representative NOW is of its members.

In fact, this study's significance is not limited to achieving a more comprehensive understanding of the intraorganizational dynamics of the National Organization for Women. The issues embedded in this study - for example, those regarding the mechanisms of membership mobilization and retention, the dissemination of political information to members, the quality of membership representation, and the characteristics of organizational governance - are also the focus of the most important contemporary research and debate in the social sciences.

This debate documents and attempts to understand the decline of participation in civic activity since the heyday of associational formation and membership growth between 1880 and 1920.¹¹⁹ One major concern of this scholarship is that this decline

¹¹⁸ Ryan, *Feminism and the Women's Movement*, p. 45.

¹¹⁹ For a representation of the discussion about the state of contemporary civic culture see Rosenstone and Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*; Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Voluntarism in American Politics*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995; Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 2000; Theda Skocpol, "Unravelling from Above," *American Prospect*, Vol.

has negatively affected political participation. Groups are no longer mobilizing individuals to political action to the extent that they once did, for example.¹²⁰ In addition, political information and analysis relevant to different sectors of society may not be as readily available as they were in times of stronger parties with more coherent agendas and greater numbers of associations.

The study suggests that the scholars investigating changes in American political culture reorient their gaze from the macro level of analysis to the organizational level. This is because the relationship between a decrease in the absolute numbers of voluntary associations and the effect of this decline on political participation is based on little empirical evidence. While we have a good sense of the makeup of the interest-group universe, including the numbers and characteristics of individuals who do participate in organizational activity, we have much less knowledge about the extent of deliberative democracy, for example, or the extent of formal political education going on in such groups. We know little about their internal governance, and discussions of associational democracy in American political organizations are

25, 1996, pp. 20-25; Theda Skocpol, "Advocates Without Members: The Recent Transformation of Associational life," in Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina, eds., *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*, Washington D.C. and New York, Brookings Institution Press and the Russell Sage Foundation, 1999, pp. 461-509.

¹²⁰ Rosenstone and Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*.

largely theoretical.¹²¹ Yet, without such information we cannot adequately describe or understand the true import of changes in the universe of social and political associations in American politics.

Methodological Approach

The methodological underpinnings of this study are guided by accepted norms regarding the conduct of empirical research generally in addition to those regarding the conduct of case studies. The case study "is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed... Case studies...are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data."¹²² Yin outlined the common criteria for evaluating the quality of research design and analysis and the techniques that can be employed by scholars using the case study method to ensure well-designed case studies.¹²³ The data collection and its analysis comport with these guidelines.

The data collected for this study spanned thirty-four years of history and comprised multiple sources of evidence. I examined two different sets of archives and gathered data from a wide variety of documents including national and state board meeting minutes, annual conference transcripts, official NOW newsletters,

¹²¹ See, for example, discussions in Jane J. Mansbridge, ed., *Beyond Self-Interest*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990 and Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, *Associations and Democracy*, London, Verso, 1995.

¹²² Winston Tellis, "Application of a Case Study Methodology," *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September 1997.

¹²³ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 2nd Edition, London, Sage Publications, Inc., 1994, pp. 32-53.

internal correspondence, press releases and budget documents in addition to feminist and mainstream press accounts of NOW's activities. I also personally attended state and national conferences, which took place in such varied locations as Boston, New Hampshire, Los Angeles and Memphis. I conducted open-ended, in-depth interviews - none less than ninety minutes long - with founders of the organization and with current leaders and members. I uncovered major factions within the membership and the leadership, gaining access to informants in each.

In the next four chapters, I describe the major challenges that faced the National Organization for Women throughout its history. I illustrate the effect of these challenges on NOW leaders and members and the actions NOW leaders took to resolve them. I conclude by reviewing the issue that consistently proved to be of utmost salience to NOW members in these conflicts and challenges - the maintenance of the organization's collective identity - and examine the ways in which leadership attention to this concern helped sustain the group while also constraining it in important ways.

CHAPTER THREE

INVENTING NOW: 1966-1971

The 1960s clearly presented opportunities for activism.¹²⁴ By 1966, the responsibility of upholding Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 fell to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), making the institution an excellent target for protest. Students organized marches on Washington protesting the Vietnam War. Civil rights activists marched from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. All of these actions increased the pool of activists and sympathizers, creating a dynamic political environment.

A broad network of feminists and sympathetic organizations existed well before NOW's founding and from which the organization drew heavily in its early moments.¹²⁵ Organizations such as the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs

¹²⁴ On this period see Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1988; Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement, The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, New York, Free Press, 1984, Douglas McAdam's *Political Process*, Douglas McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency: 1930-1970*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982; Judith Clavir Albert and Stewart Edward Albert, *The Sixties Papers: Documents of a Rebellious Decade*, New York, Praeger, 1984; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, New York, Bantam books, 1987/1993; Amy Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993; Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press; David Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1994.

¹²⁵ Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1986.

(BPW) together with individuals like EEOC commissioner Aileen Hernandez and academic Pauli Murray, constituted important elements of the political environment before NOW's founding.¹²⁶

In November 1965 for example, Dr. Murray, along with another feminist, Mary O. Eastwood, published an analysis of judicial discrimination against women. Their *George Washington Law Review* article, "Jane Crow and the Law," also examined the effect of Title VII on women's rights.¹²⁷ Shortly before this article appeared, Dr. Murray's address to the National Council of Women of the United States, which included an indictment of sex-segregated ads, prompted Betty Friedan to contact her. *The New York Times* reported that Murray urged protest: "If it becomes necessary to march on Washington to assure equal job opportunities for all, I hope women will not flinch from the thought."¹²⁸

During this period, another woman began attracting significant attention from the media. Betty Friedan's 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique* showed that cultural and demographic events since the Depression allowed more women to entertain and experience a wider range of personal choices in work and family life. However, the climate of the 1950s and early 1960s fostered the idea that women's nature achieved its highest expression in the arena of

¹²⁶ The BPW had 170,000 members and maintained that discrimination against women in employment did exist. Its support for the ERA arose from the fact that they found state protective labor laws to be a major deterrent to equal employment. Toni Carabillo, Judith Meuli and June Bundy Csida, *Feminist Chronicles*, Los Angeles, Women's Graphics, 1993, p. 50.

¹²⁷ Carabillo, et al., *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 47.

¹²⁸ Carabillo, et al., *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 47.

home and family life. Women who rejected or resisted their "natural" sphere risked being seen as unbalanced. Friedan's well-received work gave her the opportunity to speak around the country on women's issues.¹²⁹

Friedan's freelance writing on union topics also gave her access to union activists - contacts that provided valuable resources for NOW's early organizing efforts. Her celebrity attracted the attention of feminists involved in Washington politics, the state status of women commissions and the National Women's Party as well as those concerned with enforcing Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Betty Friedan ultimately pushed for the creation of a new feminist organization, but the fact that the group came to fruition is largely due to the "underground" (to use Friedan's term) of feminist and women's rights sympathizers who recruited and cajoled her.¹³⁰ The underground network included insiders like Richard Graham at the EEOC and EEOC lawyer Sunny Pressman. She writes

...my phone began to ring in the middle of the night with calls from suffragettes, dauntless old women now in their eighties and nineties who had chained themselves to the White House fence to get the vote. These leftover feminists who refused to die were seen as a joke and a nuisance by Washington political observers, even by the underground concerned with jobs and Title VII. But now these ancient fighters were calling me and saying in their wavery voices:

¹²⁹ Betty Friedan, *The Feminist Mystique*, New York, W.W. Norton, 1963.

¹³⁰ Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1999; Betty Friedan, *Life so Far*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 2000, pp. 17-172.

"You've got to do something about getting Title VII enforced."¹³¹

Friedan compared the contemporary and moderate women's groups like the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women unfavorably to these fiery veteran feminists. She admired women willing to chain themselves to fences if necessary. Later, in thinking about the kind of organization she wanted to lead, Friedan specifically embraced radicalism, activism, and political independence from government entities.

The formation of the National Organization for Women occurred during the 1966 annual national conference of the state commissions. State status of women commissions evolved from the original President's Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) initiated by John F. Kennedy's executive order in 1961. One of the PCSW's recommendations in their 1963 report suggested the creation of a more permanent organization to continue this research. Shortly thereafter Kennedy created the "Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women" (CACSW) and a parallel cabinet-level "Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women." (ICSW) By 1964, state-level commissions met together annually under the aegis of the ICSW.

The commissions on the status of women helped create and extend networks of mobilizable women with their own personal and

¹³¹ Friedan, *Life so Far*, p. 169.

political resources.¹³² The various state commissions had been meeting annually in Washington since 1964, drawing 322 participants in 1965.¹³³ The meetings, discussions, and reports emanating from these state and national conferences laid the informational foundation for a women's rights platform and plan of attack while gathering together like-minded women. In fact, NOW's first Chairman of the Board, Kathryn Clarenbach, also chaired Wisconsin's Status of Women Commission.

Friedan felt pressured by the underground to hold a press conference at the 1966 annual meeting to publicize the lack of vigor with which the EEOC pursued Title VII complaints. Not a member of any commission on the status of women, Friedan used a press pass to attend the meeting. Before the conference, Friedan resisted both the suggestion to call for a press conference and initially also the suggestion that she form an "NAACP for women." At the meeting itself, however, Friedan agreed, at the behest of Pauli Murray and Dorothy Haener, to host a meeting of like-minded women's rights advocates in her hotel room.

At that meeting, however, her companions-in-arms decided to give the national commission one more chance to show its commitment to Title VII and to action, versus speech, on behalf of women's civil rights. After spending the evening discussing the EEOC's

¹³² "...NOW...will act on the basis of information and recommendations available from status of women commissions, government agencies and specialized orgs." "An Invitation to Join," Memo, National Organization for Women, August 1966.

¹³³ Carabillo et al., *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 47.

inattention to employment discrimination against women and possible remedies, attendees at Friedan's meeting decided to present a resolution for a vote at the continuation of the conference the next morning

...demanding enforcement of Title VII and calling for Richard Graham's reappointment. Graham was the only one of the four male EEOC commissioners who was sympathetic to women's claims and his term was nearly up. However, the next morning when the women informed Esther Peterson that they wanted to propose a resolution, she told them that the purpose of the conference was to share information, not to take action, and that no resolutions would be allowed; they were outraged.¹³⁴

This failed attempt to influence the commission's activities resulted in Betty Friedan joining with others during the remainder of the conference to plot out the purpose and outline of the new organization. The confederates planned an organizing conference for four months later. Above all, "such a group would be free to act...and be free to speak out unhampered by official connection with the government."¹³⁵

Early Founders and Leaders

The first NOW members comprised the richest source of intraorganizational resources for the group for many years after its inception. These women and men, members of government bodies,

¹³⁴ Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, p. 54.

¹³⁵ Minutes of the Organizing Conference, National Organization for Women (NOW), Saturday, October 29, 1966. All primary documents, unless noted otherwise, are archived at Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe, National Organization for Women Collection.

labor organizers, political party activists, members of the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL) and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW), were a source of some revenue but were initially more valuable for their knowledge of politics and of the media in addition to their professional networks.

NOW's early legal actions relied heavily on the volunteer efforts of its own members: As of November 1967 at least 30 NOW members were attorneys or judges.¹³⁶ Even NOW's office space relied on members' occupational status: NOW found its first home at the University of Wisconsin and its second at the United Auto Workers (UAW) office.¹³⁷

The initial slate of candidates for leadership positions in NOW reflected the kinds of experience and contacts available to the early organizers. The slate included representatives from the legal, religious, and union organizing sectors. In addition to their contacts, the founding members possessed valuable information about the political process by virtue of their professional status. Davis notes, for example, the wealth of information available to the group through members like Catherine East. A federal worker for many years and one of the people who originally encouraged Friedan to start a women's organization, she was

¹³⁶ Report of the Legal Committee to Board and Members of NOW at First Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., November 18-19, 1967.

¹³⁷ Jo Freeman, "A model for Analyzing the Strategic Options of Social Movement Organizations" in Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson, eds., *Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the 1960s*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999, p. 223.

...also the chief source of information for feminists who wanted statistics or position papers... or who simply needed a Washington insider view on what was happening in congress. She suggested strategies for lobbying and supplied names of government officials to contact.¹³⁸

Friedan and the early leaders wasted no time staking a claim for women among the many other activist organizations seeking governmental redress of wrongs. Within six months of its formation, the Board held two press conferences: one in November 1966 in New York City and another in Washington, D.C. in January 1967.¹³⁹ The agreed upon "targets for action" at the October 1966 organizing conference included 1) equal opportunity in employment; 2) educational opportunities for women; 3) fundamental social equality between sexes; 4) changing stereotypical images of women; 5) addressing the problem of women in poverty; and 6) equal rights and responsibilities as citizens. To pursue these targets, NOW sent letters to the EEOC and attended a meeting with EEOC officials, took a position on women in the military, pressured the President for more female appointees and filed a brief in support of a stewardess's employment dispute.

The National Organization for Women's 1966 "Invitation to Join" showed clearly the founders' conviction of the ripeness of the political environment for a new women's rights organization.

With so many Americans consciously concerned with full participation of all our citizens, and with

¹³⁸ Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, p. 53.

¹³⁹ Report of Informal Meeting of NOW members from Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin, Saturday, January 21, 1967.

dramatic progress at many levels in recent years, the time is ripe for concerted, directed national action. The report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women, "American Women" has laid out a broad field of action... The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in employment on the ground of sex, as well as of race, religion or national origin, and the Alabama jury case of 1966, *White vs. Crook*, brings women under the "equal protection of the law" as provided in the 5th and 14th amendments of the Constitution.¹⁴⁰

NOW's founders also laid out the organization's purpose in this "Invitation to Join." NOW was to be above all an activist organization "...not...limited in its targets for action or methods of operation by official protocol."¹⁴¹ Independence and activism were the two hallmarks of the group from its inception.¹⁴² In a letter from Alice Rossi to potential members, she reiterates the fact that NOW was created due to the

...conviction that there is a pressing need for an independent organization, free of involvement with political organization on the state and federal level, which can move quickly to apply pressure when and where it is needed.¹⁴³

From its inception in June 1966 to NOW's first organizational meeting in October 1966, Friedan and other founders

¹⁴⁰ "An Invitation to Join," Memo, National Organization for Women, August 1966.

¹⁴¹ NOW. "An Invitation to Join."

¹⁴² In a letter to Friedan, Rossi says: "One of the major reasons I am delighted to see a new organization in the forming is to have a large organization totally independent of the political system. This has been the undoing of the state commissions on the status of women; they can not engage in any strong direct pressure since they are keyed to the state political system; their function is thus purely advisory, with no bite whatsoever."

¹⁴³ Letter from Alice Rossi to potential members, September 1, 1966.

quickly began writing letters to others who might be interested in joining. However, NOW's status as a grassroots, membership-driven organization was far from established. In fact, Friedan equivocated at first as to whether the group should remain small, and thus able to act quickly, or whether (and to what extent) the organization should be membership based and led.¹⁴⁴ Two influential founders, Alice Rossi and Kathryn Clarenbach, pushed Friedan to focus on increasing NOW's membership, believing that this offered the greatest strategic flexibility.

I certainly agree with you on the need for an independent organization dedicated to pressing hard and quickly on topics that are of direct concern to women and to the relations between men and women. I do not think, however, that such an organization should be a tiny group of elite persons, since there are so many situations in American society in which what will be politically and socially effective is not just direct personal influence, or quotes from prominent women, but the pressure represented by numerical strength....¹⁴⁵

Friedan reassured Alice Rossi in an October 12, 1966 letter:

My stress against a "big bureaucratic organization" did not mean I want a small select group, but rather an organization directed to action and not to perpetuating its own bureaucracy in the fashion of most women's organizations, all of which it would seem to me to be completely ineffective, and none of which even dare to tackle the problems we want to tackle.¹⁴⁶

Founding Documents: Creating Organizational Culture and Principles

¹⁴⁴ But see Friedan's contradictory statement in *Life so Far*.

¹⁴⁵ Letter to Betty Friedan from Alice Rossi, August 23, 1966.

¹⁴⁶ Letter from Betty Friedan to Alice Rossi, October 12, 1966.

Friedan wrote in a recent memoir that "[t]he ideology of those of us who started the women's rights movement was not sexual or political. I would have said, then, we had no ideology. It was simply the idea of equality, of American democracy."¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the organizational principles and priorities shaping the National Organization for Women can be gleaned in part from its founding documents: in its Statement of Purpose, its National Bylaws and in its Bill of Rights.

Statement of Purpose

NOW's Statement of Purpose was adopted as it was developed by founders on the Temporary Steering Committee. Debate on the Statement of Purpose was somewhat limited by a rule of the organizing conference which stated that "[t]he steering committee has agreed on the draft statement of purpose and it is suggested that unless there is disagreement of purpose it be accepted without playing with words."¹⁴⁸ The Statement, adopted in October 1966, details the areas of American society underutilizing and denigrating the abilities of women. It also described the strategies appropriate to addressing these inequities. This is above all a political document, emphasizing NOW's commitment to ensuring women's place on center stage of American politics. This demand situates itself comfortably in the American liberal tradition: "...The time has come to confront, with concrete action,

¹⁴⁷ Friedan, *Life so Far*, p. 184.

¹⁴⁸ NOW National Board Meeting Minutes, October 29, 1966, p. 2.

the conditions that now prevent women from enjoying the equality of opportunity and freedom of which is their right, as individual Americans, and as human beings."¹⁴⁹

This is not to say that NOW founders rejected those issues on which more radical women's groups would shortly be focused, especially the need to fundamentally change the social structure in order to bring about a truly egalitarian culture. In fact, one reason Friedan felt so reluctant initially to organize a women's organization is because she did not see the NAACP model - the one frequently suggested to her - as radical enough for the purpose.

...the NAACP analogy never seemed quite right, even at the time. We were talking about a *revolution*, and though the NAACP fought for black people (not like those women's organizations so afraid of being called "feminist"), the NAACP was not considered a radical organization at all.¹⁵⁰

NOW founders above all felt the need for action, and saw this as most readily accomplished by becoming "part of the decision-making mainstream of American political, economic and social life."¹⁵¹ NOW's Statement of Purpose documents NOW leaders' recognition of the economic inequalities facing those women, including black women, at the lowest rung of the job ladder in addition to the limitations on women seeking higher education. It emphasizes the need for women to become true partners in governing in order to redress these injustices. The document represents the

¹⁴⁹ Carabillo et al., *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 159.

¹⁵⁰ Friedan, *Life so Far*, p. 171. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵¹ Carabillo et al. *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 159.

conviction that only when women become equal members of Congress, of party leadership, of the judiciary and of academia and industry, will women's status in society improve. The demand to become a part of the decision-making mainstream in this document suggested to some that the organization was uninterested in fundamental social change. This was not the case. For example, the Statement repeatedly describes the limitations placed on women's advancement by social institutions including marriage and motherhood.

We reject the current assumptions that a man must carry the sole burden of supporting himself, his wife, and family, and that a woman is automatically entitled to lifelong support by a man upon her marriage... In the interests of human dignity of women, we will protest, and endeavor to change, the false image of women so prevalent in the mass media and in the texts, ceremonies, laws, and practices of our major social institutions.¹⁵²

By-Laws

Although Friedan remained an influential force in NOW as its president until 1970, the democratization of the group's procedures and structure eroded her pre-eminence within months. At its first organizing conference in Washington in October 1966, in addition to electing its first leaders and adopting its Statement of Purpose, NOW began the process of hammering out its "constitutional principles".

The Bylaws emphasized the importance of membership control of NOW policy by describing the annual conference as a membership meeting in which NOW's governing policy is formed. It also created

¹⁵² Carabillo et al. *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 163.

a hierarchy with provisions for a group of term-limited board members, an Executive Committee and a President. Members attending the conference amended the proposed Bylaws in significant ways, increasing the number of board members, providing for membership election of national officers, the conference selection of board members and ensuring that the national conference be membership-focused.¹⁵³ In addition, while the initial Statement of Purpose evolved largely from the ideas of the founding leaders, newly created task forces were charged with developing the organization's philosophy, targets for action and strategies.¹⁵⁴

A good deal of debate took place on the subject of these bylaws. NOW leaders had to balance the question of action and representation: Founders wanted to ensure the action-oriented basis of the group, while members wanted to ensure their representation and opportunities for intraorganizational discussion. In her report on the matter, Friedan noted that:

This will be...our third try at a Constitution to mesh NOW's specific needs and the democratic will of its members. Previously, the Steering Committee and the National Organizing Conference were not able to agree on draft constitutions modeled after other organizations such as the American Veterans Committee, the American Civil Liberties Union, and national labor unions, nor did we want to model ourselves after women's organizations whose constitutions preclude the action to which we are dedicated.

¹⁵³ Minutes of the Organizing Conference, National Organization for Women (NOW), Saturday, October 29, 1966.

¹⁵⁴ Jo Freeman, "A Model for Analyzing the Strategic Options of Social Movement Organization," in Freeman and Johnson, eds. *Waves of Protest*, p. 232.

Friedan emphasized the nature of the distribution of power and the structure of accountability in NOW. Ultimate policy power resides in the membership itself, which expresses its preferences at the annual conference. The membership elects NOW leadership, with the understanding that these elections will be as representative of the membership as possible and that the elected officers have the freedom to conduct the business of the group between conferences.

The structure we have now agreed upon...gives the basic power to the membership as a whole...[and has] provisions to prevent domination by any one group or region, to provide representation for those unable to attend, and to insure continuity. Between such conferences, the national board of 35, including the five national officers, will be free to act, meeting every three months. Between its meetings, the five officers will be free to execute agreed policy.

Bill of Rights

The 1967 national conference produced a Bill of Rights for Women which proposed to embody NOW's Statement of Purpose. The Bill of Rights as adopted included the following demands:

- I. Equal Rights Constitutional Amendment
- II. Enforce Law Banning Sex Discrimination in Employment
- III. Maternity Leave Rights In Employment and Social Security Benefits
- IV. Child Day Care Centers
- V. Equal and Unsegregated Education
- VI. Equal Job Training Opportunities and Allowances for Women in Poverty
- VII. The Right of Women to Control Their Reproductive Lives

The membership's vote to include support for the Equal Rights Amendment and for abortion rights in particular sparked

controversy.¹⁵⁵ For a new organization with meager financial resources, the adoption of these positions entailed significant costs. Labor unions, for example, continued to repudiate the Equal Rights Amendment. NOW consequently lost its office space, which at that time was located in the UAW, in addition to the printing and mailing facilities it enjoyed there.¹⁵⁶ As a result, "NOW was forced to divert precious funds to renting an office in Washington, D.C., which it had trouble staffing."¹⁵⁷ In addition, more conservative members argued that the abortion issue detracted from the foremost goal of securing equal employment opportunities for women. These women defected to form the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), an organization that focused on such legal issues facing women. Founder Judith Meuli noted that the diversity of the membership made these changes possible despite their organizational consequences.¹⁵⁸

To implement the Bill of Rights, NOW focused a great deal on tactics involving institutionalized political channels.¹⁵⁹

Responsibility for implementation of the Bill of Rights rested on

¹⁵⁵ Friedan strongly supported these initiatives.

¹⁵⁶ Friedan, *Life so Far*, p. 177.

¹⁵⁷ Jo Freeman, "A Model," in Freeman and Johnson, eds. *Waves of Protest*, 223.

¹⁵⁸ Written communication to author, March 2000.

¹⁵⁹ Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why they Succeed, How they Fail*, New York, Vintage, 1977/1979; Suzanne Staggenborg, "The Consequences of Professionalization and Formalization in the Pro-Choice Movement," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 53, 1988, pp. 585-606. Also see Costain and Costain, "Strategy and Tactics of the Women's Movement," in Mary Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, 1987, p. 204.

both the membership and the national leadership. Friedan especially urged that the Bill of Rights be presented to those in political power.

Now it is up to every member and chapter of NOW to act to bring our Bill of Rights for Women in 1968 to the attention of local political representatives and Candidates as well as to your representatives in Washington, and to devise new ways of exposing and combating sex discrimination in employment, education, the political parties, churches, and mass media.

For their part, the National Officers were charged with

...urging support by appropriate officials of the executive and legislative branches of Government and other organization specifically the President of the United States and members of Congress and the State Commissions on the Status of women, and by the Republican and Democratic parties by inclusion in their party platforms.^{160 161}

Despite this focus on institutionalized politics, however, Friedan clearly wanted to employ a variety of tactics at once: she hoped to activate cross-organizational alliances, to lobby industry, to hold demonstrations, and to mobilize the membership and the public to become involved in all of these endeavors. An overlooked hallmark of NOW from 1966 to the present is the breadth of its tactical repertoire.¹⁶² Friedan, like many other founders and NOW members, did not hesitate to participate in marches or picket lines. In December 1967, for example, NOW held a national

¹⁶⁰ Carabillo, et al., *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 178.

¹⁶¹ Carabillo, et al., *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 161.

¹⁶² But see Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action, and Politics*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

demonstration against EEOC intransigency in handling want-ad segregation.

[D]irect-action tactics, and NOW's other activities, were not just to catch the public eye but also to pressure the government. They were part of an overall campaign that also used letter writing, court suits, and meetings with government officials. Many early NOW members had engaged lobbying for other groups, and it seemed perfectly logical to continue same types of activities for a new movement.¹⁶³

Nevertheless, internal debate and conflict accompanied NOW's increasing use of protest politics in the late 1960s. Direct action tactics did not appeal to all members, some of whom left NOW as a result.

FROM FOUNDERS TO MEMBERS: STRUGGLING TO CREATE A GRASSROOTS BASE

In spite of the small, select group that formed NOW in its early days, NOW quickly garnered a membership reflecting many different ideological positions and style of activity, including women and men from unions, the business community, leftist activists, and the National Women's Party. In addition, within a year of its inception, NOW began coping with a changing demographic base - an influx of younger members.¹⁶⁴ These younger members were attracted by NOW's position on reproductive rights and by their own

¹⁶³ Freeman, "A Model," in Freeman and Johnson, eds. *Waves of Protest*, p. 230.

¹⁶⁴ Letter from President Betty Friedan to Member of Board of Directors Alice Rossi, October 20, 1967.

frustrations with other civil rights and student groups on the left who declined to address women's rights issues.¹⁶⁵

Chapters were formally incorporated into the Bylaws at the February 1967 national board meeting. NOW initially did not discuss the importance of chapters, except to allow them to be set up in the Constitution. "It was agreed that NOW will basically function as a national organization of individual members, with provisions, however, for setting up local chapters where desired."¹⁶⁶ In spite of rapid membership growth, however, the formation of chapters occurred on an ad-hoc basis for a long time, with few guidelines or support from the national level. Chapters quickly formed in major cities like New York and Chicago, but by 1970 only ten official chapters existed. (Overall in 1970 the organization registered 3000 members.)¹⁶⁷ Freeman observed that "local chapters have sprung up almost incidentally, usually through the efforts of local people, not national organizers."¹⁶⁸ New chapters lacked well-defined bridges to the national organization.

The national newsletter came out only quarterly, and occasionally not at all. Letters to the national office often were not referred to the right official

¹⁶⁵ See Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, New York, Random House, 1979. Letter from President Betty Friedan to Member of Board of Directors Alice Rossi, October 20, 1967.

¹⁶⁶ Minutes of the Organizing Conference, National Organization for Women (NOW), Saturday, October 29, 1966.

¹⁶⁷ These numbers exploded between 1970 and 1972, when chapters numbered 200. Friedan, *Life so Far*, p. 232; Carabillo, et al., *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 61.

¹⁶⁸ Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process*, New York, David McKay, 1975, p. 88.

or even answered. Requests for material were backlogged for months and occasionally lost. Chapter presidents did not get the National Task Force Reports and thus were often unable to connect local task force projects with national efforts... Potential members could not find the local chapter and were not referred by the national office. Other people wanted to start NOW chapters, but could not find out how to.¹⁶⁹

Overall, NOW's progress on details like membership recruiting, smoothing information transmission, and setting up bureaucratic procedures proceeded slowly. Rossi noted that at the October 1966 organizing conference "It seemed to me a high priority matter was membership recruitment. But no serious discussion of this took place."¹⁷⁰ At an "informal" meeting of 35 members (including six Board members) in January 1967, a consensus felt that

With respect to the entire area of recruiting, questions were raised about getting application forms and membership acknowledgements more readily from Detroit. It was feared that momentum and enthusiasm are being lost where there is a delay.¹⁷¹

Clarenbach took the opportunity of this meeting to outline the weaknesses and strengths of the organization to date. She emphasized that NOW's infrastructure needed building, and that the organization was hampered by little in the way of financial resources as well as the fact that the leaders and members were

¹⁶⁹ Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, p. 87.

¹⁷⁰ Letter to Kathryn Clarenbach from Alice S. Rossi. November 9, 1966.

¹⁷¹ "Report of informal Meeting of NOW Members from Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin, Illinois," January 21, 1967.

dispersed all over the country. Few funds existed to reimburse board or committee members, let alone the membership for attendance at national conferences or board meetings. This was a serious deterrent to participation. At the same time, major decisions about NOW's vision had to be arrived at by a diverse membership:

...decisions on priorities need to be arrived at, the leadership and membership involve a range of philosophy and view point on both specific issue and approaches to organization (Civil Rights emphasis, extent of public relations, etc.) and there is the obvious circumstance of individual's learning to know and work with each other.¹⁷²

Discussions of goals and priorities seemed to take a back seat to those of creating and sustaining the organization in the early years. President Friedan was frustrated by this fact, noting in March 1967 her impatience with all this "brick and mortar of constitution making."¹⁷³ She was relieved in September 1967 that that month's board meeting was the "...most successful and productive...to date, since we were able to spend a good part of it, for the first time, on substantive issues instead of structure and housekeeping details."¹⁷⁴

More than a year after its founding, NOW's actions and issue priorities were still heavily driven by the founders and board members. Few routes were in place for membership input. Actions

¹⁷² "Report of informal Meeting of NOW Members from Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin, Illinois," January 1967.

¹⁷³ Letter from Friedan to Rossi, March 1, 1967.

¹⁷⁴ Letter from President Betty Friedan to Alice Rossi, September 20, 1967.

and positions were still being initiated by individual board members without input from the full board or from other members. While some founders wanted the organization to move quickly, the rapidity with which Friedan committed NOW to some controversial positions left others distinctly uncomfortable. For example, before its October 1966 organizing meeting NOW already stated a position in support of women in national service, a position that some members first heard about through the mail.

In a letter to the Kay Clarenbach, (Chairman of the Temporary Steering Committee) Alice Rossi argued that NOW's first priority should be to focus on consensus issues to develop membership and solidarity; a mass membership group, it should focus on its image in order to draw new members. "Can't you just see the field day the press would have on "American women urged to join our boys in Vietnam jungles?"¹⁷⁵ She argued that NOW should remain focused on women's issues and not nonpolitical issues such as "peace"

Managing women's issues is a big enough job and to move into more peripheral issues should only be done, I should think, after we have a viable organization and have laid down some guidelines for executive officers to follow in pursuit of our general goals.¹⁷⁶

In December 1966 Rossi expanded upon her objections:

I am very distressed about the premature actions taken. There seems to be absolutely no reason for seeking 'presidential appointments' at this juncture, before we are fully organized in details, and have so small a membership list. There is much 'in-house

¹⁷⁵ Letter from Alice S. Rossi, October 4, 1966, to Dr. Kathryn F. Clarenbach.

¹⁷⁶ Letter from Alice S. Rossi, October 4, 1966, to Dr. Kathryn F. Clarenbach.

education' to do in our own, and a lot of specific targets to work on while we build a reputation and a membership that amounts to something.¹⁷⁷

Clarenbach worried that "...priority for action items needs thorough and constant reevaluation. The "crisis" approach to action does not allow for initiative on our part with proper preparation, or for the fullest understanding and participation of members." The role chapters would play in the organization also remained unclear. Chairman Kay Clarenbach suggested in June 1967 that "...local chapters (and state) may turn out to be the major action vehicles as well as the route to membership involvement. They must have a part in formulation of task force statements."¹⁷⁸

In this detailed memo to the Board, Clarenbach also laid out the main organizational issues that still needed major attention a year after NOW's founding. A major theme running through the document is the necessity of laying out pathways for membership input into NOW's agenda and structure. Clarenbach urged the "systematic representation [of the membership]" in officers and board members and in the members of committees, and suggested consideration of ways in which chapters might be represented by delegates at the national conference.

The Task Force Statements, whose purpose was to lay out NOW's action agenda and issue philosophy, were to be evaluated by the 1967 national conference. However, procedures were still unclear

¹⁷⁷ Letter from Alice S. Rossi, December 13, 1966, to Dr. Kathryn F. Clarenbach.

¹⁷⁸ June 14, 1967, memo to board of directors from Kathryn F. Clarenbach.

as to how a broader range of members could participate in the formulation of these statements.

The composition of task forces needs to be drawn from total membership, yet geography and mobility are problems.... Task force statements are basic documents of philosophy and will only reflect total NOW thinking when they become the products of many minds. At the moment we only have the tentative, summary thoughts of one or two people, except for the Employment Statement, which was the work of 30 people, and even this should not be regarded as a final document.

In addition, in spite of NOW's focus on action and not on creating reports or education, this emphasis had its drawbacks. If NOW focused more on creating reports and conducting research, it would have been able to garner more funding from foundations. Lack of emphasis on education also affected the membership. Clarenbach stated that

Many members are seeking information and are not on a very sophisticated wavelength. This has implications for total focus and emphasis of NOW. Our Statement of Purpose is not enough for those members rather new to the subject. Education of NOW members through our organization must be part of our program.... More guidance on issues and action items is an apparent need of some local chapters. Where a national board member can be present at each chapter meeting this problem is minimized, but a national director is not always available.¹⁷⁹

In spite of Friedan's feeling that too much time was spent attending to organizational issues, by the end of 1968, NOW was still floundering as far as communication within and outside of the organization was concerned. One report in November emphasized the

¹⁷⁹ Memo to board of directors from Kathryn F. Clarenbach, June 14, 1967,.

importance of having routines to route incoming mail and of having material to send to members of the public with questions. Over two years after its founding, NOW's national board had to authorize the "...purchase [of] a locked file cabinet and necessary office supplies (i.e., duplicating supplies, stationery, postage, etc.) up to the amount of \$200.00."¹⁸⁰ As late as the spring of 1969, the entire contents of the national office could be moved easily from Washington DC to New York with new national executive director in a car. Throughout the period from 1966 to 1970 NOW struggled greatly with organizing information about its membership and chapters, maintaining accurate accounts of donors and members, of answering pleas for help and for information, for establishing lines of communication and enforcing the national organization's structure on independent minded chapters.

Financial issues plagued NOW: it commanded few funds with which to buy postage, pay phone bills or transportation, or make photocopies. In fact, during its first three years the organization's entire budget consisted solely of member dues.¹⁸¹ While NOW moved quickly out of the starting block after its founding to work on equal employment issues, the fact that it was forced to rely for years almost exclusively on member-volunteers rather than paid staff hampered its effectiveness. In a desperate letter to NOW Chapter Conveners and Presidents in May 1968,

¹⁸⁰ Minutes, National Organization for Women. National Board Meeting, November 27-28, 1968, p. 9.

¹⁸¹ Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, p. 91.

Clarenbach spoke of the need for money for copies of court documents.

We know how many demands are being responded to these days by NOW members for civil rights, peace, the Poor People's Campaign, and this Presidential nomination and election year...we must still repeat that unless we meet our commitments in these several cases and win them, the cause of equal employment opportunity for women will be set back many years.¹⁸²

In spite of their recognition at least by the end of 1968 that they needed a paid executive officer, this option remained a financial impossibility for a long time. In November 1968 the National Board adopted a motion that the Board "make an urgent call to chapters to raise funds for the conduct of the national organization - the funds raised to be divided between the national and local treasuries on a 50-50 basis."¹⁸³ At this point NOW had essentially no funds at all in its coffers, and this call was seen as a "do-or-die effort".

Five months later the national board noted that the appeal made few inroads into the problem, and the call for financial help was reiterated. In NOW's March 1969 newsletter emphasized that the reason funds were necessary was that it had become impossible to manage without some paid assistance. "...We have grown too big too fast, and we can no longer exist on volunteer help alone. For lack of an office and staff, we have been only able to answer

¹⁸² Memorandum to NOW Chapter Conveners and Presidents from Kathryn F. Clarenbach, Chairman of the Board, re: Legal Defense. May 23, 1968.

¹⁸³ Minutes, National Organization for Women. National Board Meeting, November 27-28, 1968, 3.

correspondence of immediate urgency. Communication with the chapters and individual members has been minimal; we have been unable to provide them with many services."¹⁸⁴

Despite this paucity of resources, NOW initiated its newsletter "NOW ACTS" in May 1968, in which board decisions and conference resolutions would be published. Chapters could also learn what other chapters were doing through reporting in NOW ACTS. Soon thereafter, national also decided to hire one staff member, but not without other costs to the organization. "Operating on the slimmest budget, Miss Alexander literally has taken NOW into her home. The national office in Washington DC was closed in order to save money; and the files, mimeo machine, et al. were moved temporarily into her 2 ½ room apartment."¹⁸⁵

By November 31, 1969 NOW's treasury held \$1,735 and NOW boasted approximately 1500 active members.¹⁸⁶ At the December board meeting the board passed a resolution stating that everyone present at the meeting "be asked to pledge 100 or 10 a month."¹⁸⁷ In the Winter 1970 NOW ACTS an article entitled "Dollars and Sense of Revolution" reminded members of the great expenses incurred in fighting court battles and in maintaining and improving communication among NOW members.

...any organization needs three things in order to be effective: meaning, members, and money. We have the

¹⁸⁴ March 1969 *NOW ACTS*.

¹⁸⁵ March 1969 *NOW ACTS*.

¹⁸⁶ Minutes, December 6, 1969.

¹⁸⁷ Minutes, December 6, 1969.

first two but very little of the third. Up until now a major problem has been just making our existence known. Recently publicity in the mass media about our organization and about the plight of women has helped. But the publicity has carried with it two dangers; people think that we are bigger than we are, and 2. they assume that mass recognition of the woman problem means that it's solved... But understand that the real struggle, the work stage, is still very much with us.¹⁸⁸

The years 1969-1971 marked an important turning point for NOW. Leaders sought solutions to NOW's monetary and bureaucratic crises by taking steps to formalize the organization and to bring members into the decisionmaking processes more definitively. In addition, changes in the political environment pushed NOW to extend and modify its underlying belief system to include the concerns of a burgeoning radical women's liberation movement.

Formalizing the Organization

The December 1969 board meeting heralded changes that would help organize the organization. A restructuring of NOW helped begin to resolve monetary and bureaucratic issues. National NOW Board members approved resolutions to place before the 1970 Conference, which would deal with the serious communications problems of the organization. NOW decided, for example, to publish its national newsletter more frequently (bimonthly).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ NOW ACTS. "Dollars and Sense of Revolution." Vol. 3 No. 1: Winter 1970.

¹⁸⁹ Funded for the first time by advertising revenues.

The fact that too much of the daily organizing work rested on the shoulders of the National office presented yet another dilemma. It began to make more sense to delegate more of these responsibilities. To this end, NOW restructured the organization along regional lines. The board also expanded the number of national vice presidents, giving each a specific task. NOW explained the changes in the winter 1970 Newsletter:

...NOW's tremendous growth has created its own problems in communication, in feelings of isolation, and in the too heavy or concentrated leadership load. The board, in meetings in San Francisco and New Orleans, envisioned a new NOW structure that would minimize the responsibilities of any one individual and simultaneously allow all members and geographic area more participation. The effect of the amendments on the bylaws... is to reorganize NOW on a regional basis.¹⁹⁰

This new structure would help spread out fundraising tasks and mailings to interested members of the public to regional board members and chapters themselves.¹⁹¹ Four regional directors were created, representing the South, East, Midwest and West.¹⁹² These directors, together with a vice president for fund raising, vice president for public relations, vice president for legal activities, and the vice president for legislative activities would

¹⁹⁰ NOW ACTS. "Dollars and Sense of Revolution." Vol. 3 No. 1: Winter 1970.

¹⁹¹ "Chapter presidents make up regional boards with regional counterparts to the vice presidents, also on the regional board. Regional directors are to be responsible for organizing new chapters, to be elected by regions."

¹⁹² Today NOW is comprised of nine regions.

make up the Executive Committee along with the other two officers.¹⁹³

Political Environment, Networks, and the Modification of NOW's Organizational Culture

Before becoming president of NOW, as we have seen, Betty Friedan was rooted in an underground network of activists and sympathetic government officials and employees. As NOW president, she remained a strong proponent of such networking. Meetings with officials and with potential allies, she argued

...need not wait upon the completion and adoption of a constitution which will give us the formal structure for setting up chapters. The many hundreds of men and women who have joined NOW as the result of the public word of NOW's goals since early November, are very eager indeed to contribute personal efforts and energies to concrete projects. Our Statement of Purpose and the decisions already made by the Executive Committee on concrete objectives to which we have begun to address ourselves nationally provides ample framework for local and state action.¹⁹⁴

Friedan and the Board were interested in quickly making contacts with other groups like the Leadership Council on Civil Rights, labor groups, and others sympathetic to women's issues in order to further their relationship with Washington politicians but also to gain information and resources.¹⁹⁵ Relationships with civil

¹⁹³ The President and the Chairman of the Board.

¹⁹⁴ Memo to all board members from NOW President Friedan, January 24, 1967.

¹⁹⁵ "Along with this should go an attempt to involve other organizations concerned with civil rights (or with women generally, or even with labor unions or professional organizations) in this battle."

rights organizations were among the first to be forged. In 1968, for example, a NOW chapter leader named Eliza Paschall initiated such a relationship in Atlanta with civil rights leaders who "...helped plan NOW's participation in the Poor People's campaign." This was reported in NOW's newsletter as an important liaison:

A major first has been scored by [the Georgia-Atlanta Chapter] in its success in forming an alliance between the female civil rights movement and the black civil rights movement and the beginning of a dialogue on the mutuality of the causes...¹⁹⁶

In June 1969 Friedan argued for the utility of an "alliance of NOW with other women's groups to form a political power block for the attainment of specific goals, and the support of candidates pledged to work for NOW goals."¹⁹⁷ The ensuing discussion suggested a great deal of support for such coalition work - even with more radically oriented groups.¹⁹⁸ Board members passed a resolution which replaced the scheduled September 1969 board meeting with a

In 1968 the NOW membership further resolved that

"...NOW will urge the Urban Coalition, the National Alliance for Businessmen and similar organizations to seek the participation and advice of women in an effort to deal with the problems of the hard core unemployed - the majority of whom in many communities are women - and to go to John Gardiner of the Urban Coalition and other appropriate officials to implement this..."

¹⁹⁶ NOW ACTS. ~May 1968 "Chapter News."

¹⁹⁷ Report, President Friedan. Minutes of national board meeting, June 28-29 1969.

¹⁹⁸ "The idea of seeking to form coalition with other groups interested in various NOW goals was supported by most speakers, and comments were made that it would be possible to work with some "radical" groups on the basis of selective coalition. It was suggested that a major purpose of conferences with other groups could be to identify areas of agreement and suggest ways to implement social change." Report, President Friedan. Minutes of national board meeting, June 28-29, 1969.

conference to be attended by organizations who might be interested in forming a coalition with NOW on one or more issues.

The great variety of organizations attending this conference (and others held at about the same time) underscores the interaction between NOW and radical women's liberation groups.¹⁹⁹ Representatives reached agreement on a number of issues, including the need for child-care centers, on "establishing a continuing communication network between women's organizations on issues pertinent to their membership and convening another coalition meeting within a few months," reproductive rights, the need to join together to combat workplace discrimination against women and the "promotion of women's caucuses in the unions, professions and political parties." In her December 1969 report to the Board, Friedan noted that "[t]he regional conferences held during the fall were a major NOW effort and were successful in bringing together various groups and individuals involved in the women's liberation movement."²⁰⁰ Friedan's phrasing here suggests that by the end of

¹⁹⁹ Attending the conference were representatives from the following organizations:

Women's Liberation, Woman Power, Women Inc., Women's Caucus of the Berkeley Sociology Association, Women's City Club, Women For Peace, National Negro Business And Professional Women, Daughters Of Bilitis, Women's Bureau of The US Department Of Labor, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Soroptimist Club of San Francisco, Society For Humane Abortions, California Institute Of The Arts, Young Socialists Alliance, Negro Historical and Cultural Society, Student Mobilization Committee, Mexican-American Political Association, California Committee To Legalize Abortions, American Association Of University Women, Business And Professional Women, Women's International League For Peace And Freedom, Socialist Workers Party.¹⁹⁹

²⁰⁰ Report, President Friedan. Minutes of National Board Meeting, December 6, 1969.

1969 NOW's identified itself not only with the earlier "women's rights" movement, but with "radical" women's liberation movement as well.

Other factors influenced the development of NOW strategy and its founding principles between 1969 and 1971, however. The weakening of the civil rights movement and the increasing violence encountered by the anti-war and anti-draft movements were depressing examples of movement decline on the one hand and the even more pressing need for change on the other. Many felt as a result that a stronger statement of NOW's strategy and vision for the future were necessary. The tactics of the civil rights movement groups historically influenced NOW's own activities. The efficacy of their tactics, however, was now in question. ⁴

NOW's strategy, particularly in the areas of protest, legislation and litigation - has leaned heavily on the experience of the black civil rights struggle. What we borrowed from the blacks - the peaceful protests, the legislative lobbying, the pressure on employers and educators, the filing of complaints and lawsuits - has helped us win a seriousness, even awe, for our organization.

...But we in NOW must realize that the black struggle has accomplished no real revolution, that in some ways it is only just discovering itself, that we must not be trapped in the same pitfalls, and that we are at a point of departure from it and from all others. Thus, the need to develop new, more effective strategy.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ NOW ACTS. "Highlights of NOW's national membership conference, December 7-8, 1968 in Atlanta," 1969. Also in this issue, "An Editorial" by Dolores Alexander. "The Women's Movement: a Unique Revolution Demanding a Unique Ideology for NOW."

However, the network with the most influence on NOW's development over time proved to be that of the women's liberation movement. In 1967 women's liberation groups began growing independently from the more "conservative" groups like NOW and the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL). Nevertheless, they overlapped frequently in terms of membership, tactics and goals. Although traditionally NOW has been deemed the "liberal/legal" strand of the women's movement and women's liberation the "young/radical" side of the movement, this characterization ignores how NOW was influenced by the "radical" groups.²⁰²

Many of the early radical women's groups formed in New York, including organizations like New York Radical Women (NYRW), the group credited with introducing consciousness-raising. The membership of the NYRW and the New York NOW chapter overlapped. NOW sought out meetings and conferences with members of radical women's groups, participating for example in the Congress to Unite Women in 1969, which included many radical women's liberation

²⁰² Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*. Other excellent examinations and representations of the early wave of this branch of the women's movement include Echols, *Daring to be Bad*; Karla Jay, *Tales of the Lavender Menace: A Memoir of Liberation*, New York, Basic Books, 1999; Hole and Levine, *Rebirth of Feminism*; Blanche Linden-Ward and Carol Hurd Green, *Changing the Future: American Women in the 1960s*, New York, Twayne Publishers, 1993; Nancy Whittier, *Feminist Generations: The Persistence of the Radical Women's Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1995; Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*, New York, Viking, 2000; Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution*, The Dial Press, New York, 1999; Redstockings of the Women's Liberation Movement, *Feminist Revolution: An Abridged Edition with Additional Writings*; Random House, New York, 1975/1978; Marcia Cohen, *The Sisterhood: The True Story of the Women who Changed the World*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1988; Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Ann Snitow, eds., *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices from Women's Liberation*, New York, Three Rivers Press, 1998.

groups. NOW chapter leaders also quickly absorbed new tactics including consciousness-raising. Freeman argues that it was initially *members* who demanded this activity: "...[I]t was with great reluctance that many NOW chapters set them up to 'cater' to the needs of their newest members. The idea...was contrary to NOW's image of itself as an action organization."²⁰³ This method of group discussion helped individuals see the social construction of their problems and the problems of society. The educational aspect of the technique supported NOW's goals and its use became widespread just as a surge of members joined the group in 1970.²⁰⁴

Finally, the energy and attention garnered by the women's liberation movement certainly provided competition for NOW, who wanted to maintain its status as the leading women's rights group in the country.

What started out as the second stage of feminism, which NOW mounted...has expanded with the burgeoning of numerous other groups into what is being called the Women's Liberation Movement. If we in NOW are to stay in the vanguard of this revolution, we are faced with the responsibility of developing an ideology for the future. Our task is to venture beyond that "primitive" stage, break new ground, formulate unprecedented policy: visionary, undogmatic and, above all, responsible....²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, p. 86.

²⁰⁴ Freeman describes surging membership in NOW just after the first national women's rights demonstration: Betty Friedan's Women's Strike on August 26, 1970. *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, p. 85.

²⁰⁵ *NOW ACTS*. "An Editorial" by Dolores Alexander. "The Women's Movement: a Unique Revolution Demanding a Unique Ideology for NOW." 1969.

While Freeman's observations about the differences between the "older" and "younger" branches of the women's movement are frequently repeated, her observations regarding the dynamic relationship between the strands of the movement are largely overlooked. In fact, the burgeoning women's liberation movement helped remedy NOW's "vision problem". The women's liberation strand of the movement included many young women who had participated in the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement through the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) or Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). These women tended to be young but were experienced activists and were well-versed in the ideology of oppression, and understood their critical task as one of revealing to women the reality of their domination by men. In addition, many became strongly disaffected from organizations like SNCC and SDS, which were led by men. The attempt by women activists' to draw the attention of these leaders to women's oppression failed: their reports and queries were suppressed and ridiculed.²⁰⁶

In response, women's liberation groups, including the Feminists, New York Radical Women, the Chicago Women's Liberation Union, the Furies and the Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (WITCH) were characterized both by a commitment to non-hierarchical organizations which would ensure

²⁰⁶ Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, New York, Vintage Books, 1980; Myra Marx Ferree and Beth B. Hess, *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1985, pp. 57-64.

first that an elite would not overtake the movement and second, that the broadest number of women should benefit from the opportunity to learn and participate in all aspects of organizational activity. Leadership opportunities should be open to all women.²⁰⁷

As to method and strategy, these groups favored the 'politics of protest' - waging demonstrations, picketing, overtaking bureaucratic offices and making demands on officials therein, and engaging in street theater to bring to the attention of passers-by the absurdity of the status of women in society.

The ideas of the new groups forming the women's liberation movement were in part already embedded in NOW's Statement of Purpose and Bylaws and the ideals of the founders. Taking cues from the women's liberation movement, and even accepting the term to describe itself as well, NOW incorporated more protest politics into its tactical repertoire and used the liberation movement's educational innovation, consciousness-raising, to educate and inspire members old and new.

Women's liberation also helped put lesbian rights on NOW's priority list in the early 1970s. By 1971, the organization accepted lesbian rights as a feminist issue - rejecting the advice of its recently replaced president, Betty Friedan. The influence of the women's liberation movement's participatory ethos also helped solidify NOW's somewhat vague ideal of continual

²⁰⁷ Ferree and Hess, *Controversy and Coalition*, pp. 57-64. See also, Redstockings of the Women's Liberation Movement, *Feminist Revolution*.

mobilization of women at the grass-roots level. Finally, women's liberation ideology helped keep the fear of institutionalization and cooptation in the forefront of members' concerns. In her 1969 report to the Board, Friedan emphasized that the new regional structure would organize NOW and allow for greater member participation in the organization, but also that

...there is a need for discussion and writing on the ideological thrust of NOW. To continue to stay in the vanguard of the women's liberation movement NOW must continue to emphasize that man is not the enemy but is the fellow victim of discrimination; we must work for radical changes in society, but meanwhile, push for child care centers and other devices which enable women to progress here and now.²⁰⁸

NOW leaders were optimistic that NOW's reorganization would sustain the organization while maintaining an openness to the evolving nature of the women's liberation movement. In July 1970, Chairman Wilma Scott Heide wrote

NOW has achieved a basic restructuring designed to facilitate our operations and enhance the strength and momentum of our women's rights-liberation movement. NOW has been and is the catalyst of this emerging, most profound social change the world has yet known....[With the organization's leadership and structural changes]...we can hope to move to a sounder financial and organizational foundation without becoming institutionalized.

By 1971, NOW successfully institutionalized a basic, though still rather weak and inefficient, organizational structure. Its feminist vision also expanded considerably to include such issues

²⁰⁸ Report of the President. NOW National Board Meeting Minutes. December 6, 1969.

as world peace, abortion rights on demand, gay and lesbian rights, the rights of minorities, the rights of sex workers and older women's rights. NOW's Statement of Purpose envisioned the group as leading the "vanguard" of the women's rights movement. By 1971, the organization clearly accomplished this goal.

DISCUSSION

This chapter examined the founding and early development of the National Organization for Women. The group's internal dynamics and resources, on the one hand, and the external political arena on the other each presented opportunities and obstacles to the group in its formation and survival of these first years.

NOW's limited access to tangible resources meant that these played only a minimal role in its early growth. Nor did efforts at mobilizing more of these resources dominate these years - in fact, their actions often led to major financial stresses for the organization. In addition, NOW's founders' commitment to activism instead of research meant that foundation grants were unavailable.²⁰⁹

Instead, NOW's leadership sought to increase other kinds of resources, including gathering information and support from existing civil rights and women's organizations through meetings and alliances. It also sought to firmly position itself with the media as *the* national women's organization dedicated to action.

²⁰⁹ The creation of an independent arm of NOW, the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, helped overcome this obstacle to foundation funding.

NOW's founders' main frustration with the status of women commissions and existing women's organizations like BPW and LWV hinged on their inability or unwillingness to act. NOW's founding documents exemplified its initial commitment to action in which NOW rapidly began meeting with government officials, participating in demonstrations and in lawsuits. These documents maintained NOW's purpose to be political action, not research or education.

The documents, including NOW's constitutional bylaws, also opened NOW up to a highly diverse grassroots membership. Stereotypes of NOW's membership suggest that primarily white, wealthy, middle-aged women constituted the bulk of NOW's membership. It is true that the group was overwhelmingly white. However, members' previous experience commonly included participation in union organizing, political campaigns, business and business organizations, the civil rights and peace movements. These women and men brought with them varying degrees of comfort and experience with different tactics and issues. This diversity, along with the early prominence of the New York City chapter in the organization, helped resolutions supporting abortion rights and the Equal Rights Amendment pass in spite of the fact that these positions alienated important activists favoring a less radical agenda as well as labor activists and employees (whose unions, including the AFL-CIO and the UAW still maintained their opposition to the ERA.)²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Personal communication from Judith Meuli to author, March 10, 2000.

This diverse and growing membership presented other problems as well. Between 1967 and 1971, NOW's membership rose from one thousand to between four and five thousand members and approximately 150 chapters. These members had limited knowledge of feminism. NOW had no educational program in place, nor did it have the communications infrastructure or financial resources necessary to convey much information, guidance or assistance to members or chapters. As far as members and chapters were concerned, their exposure to NOW's overall mission and philosophy remained limited for some time to NOW's Statement of Purpose, its Bylaws and Bill of Rights in addition to its (infrequently published) newsletter and NOW's annual conference (which many could not afford to attend).

At the very least, this situation suggests group chaos and inefficacy. At worst, Olson's groundbreaking work suggests NOW's imminent disintegration because of its inability to continue to mobilize and bind volunteers to the group to act collectively for a public benefit.²¹¹ Instead, the fortuitous innovation by the women's liberation movement of a new mobilization tool, the creation of consciousness-raising groups, helped ameliorate these early problems by educating members and providing solidary and selective incentives. As we will see in subsequent chapters, although the organization has over time expanded the tools and resources available to it to mobilize and motivate membership loyalty, consciousness raising continues to be an important

²¹¹ Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1965.

activity in NOW. Chapters conduct consciousness raising groups and workshops at national conferences explain its purpose and how to conduct them. Its continuing presence serves similar purposes today as an example of NOW's continuing adherence to a coherent feminist philosophy and its attention to grass roots members.

By 1971, NOW leaders and organizers framed the groups' founding principles. These principles support the organization's belief system and thus its culture. Several are firmly embedded in the physical documents produced in 1966 and 1967, including the principal that NOW's overarching goal is to maintain its role as the leader of the women's movement, its commitment to action versus education, to pursuing a broad range of issues while employing a wide variety of tactics and the commandment to remain politically independent. These principles happened to find reinforcement in the values expressed by the "younger" branch of the women's movement, thus solidifying over time.

The final critical principle laid out in NOW's early documents but not fully realized by 1971 is an emphasis on cultivating and including grassroots members in decisionmaking. In large part, members demanded this emphasis themselves.²¹² In part members were able to do so simply because national leaders were limited in their power to control members in several hundred chapters across the country. In addition, the participatory ethos and anti-elite sentiment promulgated by the New Left and radical

²¹² The bottom-up demand for organizational power culminates dramatically in 1975 as I show in Chapter 4.

women's liberation groups shaped the expectations of NOW members over time.²¹³ By the early 1970s these increased expectations for influence and power rose up against the reality of NOW's inadequate organizational structure and ineffective information processing. This tension constituted one of NOW's major intraorganizational crises of the 1972-1982 period.

²¹³ Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, pp. 119-129; Jo Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness;" Judith Hole and Ellen Levine, *Rebirth of Feminism*, New York, Quadrangle Books, 1971, pp. 159-163; Carol McClurg Mueller, "The Organizational Basis of Conflict," in Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin, eds. *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1995, pp. 271-272; Suzanne Staggenborg, *The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991.

CHAPTER FOUR

ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES AND LEADERSHIP RESPONSES IN NOW, 1970-1982

Hrebenar notes that "[e]ventually some social movements evolve into political interest groups with a well-defined membership, regular funding, a permanent staff, and knowledge on how to operate within the political system."²¹⁴ The period 1972-1982 marks what some scholars have described as NOW's transformation into just such a professionalized, bureaucratized organization.²¹⁵ The provision of salaries for officers, an increasingly vigorous participation in electoral politics, the adoption of a state structure and a more formal bureaucracy (including, briefly, a new "Public Information Office") supports the position that NOW had indeed become, by the end of this period, an institutionalized interest group in American politics.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Ronald Hrebenar, *Interest Group Politics in America*, 3rd Ed., M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1997, p. 8.

²¹⁵ Anne N. Costain and W. Douglas Costain, "Strategy and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States: The Role of Political Parties" in Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1987.

²¹⁶ This period is significant in American political development for several reasons, including the fact that it heralded a dramatic increase in the formation of interest groups. These groups arose to take advantage of changes in campaign finance laws in the early 1970s that allowed them to influence political campaigns through political action committees (PACs). This influence was possible, as well, due to the rise of the candidate-centered political campaign, as parties mobilized fewer voters and became less central to political decisionmaking. Women's organizations, women's PACs, and women's presence in Washington increased as did the presence of other citizens and citizen groups during the

While these changes might seem to constitute a natural evolution for the group, in fact they induced conflict between leaders and members in NOW. This chapter shows why and how the parallel processes of formalizing the organization and of increasing participation in electoral politics challenged NOW, and how the leaders dealt with these challenges.

The first half of this chapter focuses on the process of organizational formalization. Although by the end of the 1960s NOW's leaders began taking steps to make the organization more financially efficient and to improve internal communications, many problems persisted well into the mid-1970s, when destabilizing financial and leadership problems once again surfaced. NOW's major internal challenges during this period can be divided into three major areas, although in fact they overlap to some extent. They

period 1960 to 1980 (and beyond). David C. King and Jack L. Walker, Jr., "An Ecology of Interest Groups in America," in Jack L. Walker, Jr., *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*, University of Michigan, 1991, p. 63. See also Paul S. Herrnson's overview in, "Interest Groups, PACS, and Campaigns," in Paul S. Herrnson, Ronald G. Shaiko, Clyde Wilcox, eds., *The Interest Group Connection*, New Jersey, Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1998; Jeffrey Berry, *The Interest Group Society*, 2nd Ed., Glenview, Ill, Scott, Foresman, 1989; Jack L. Walker, Jr., *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professions, and Social Movements*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1991; Jeffrey Berry, *The New Liberalism: The Rising Power of Interest Groups*, Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 1999.

Regarding the increased presence of women's organizations in Washington see Kay Schlozman, "Representing Women in Washington: Sisterhood and Pressure Politics," in Louise A. Tilly and Patricia Gurin, eds., *Women, Politics and Change*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1990). The 1970s brought forth a greater attention to the "political woman" in general. One of the earliest treatises focused on women's electoral prospects was published in 1977: Suzanne Paizis, *Getting Her Elected: A Political Woman's Handbook*, California, Creative Editions, 1977. Joyce Gelb and Marion Leaf Palley published their influential book on *Women and Public Policies* in 1982 (New Jersey, Princeton University Press), and Sandra Baxter and Marjorie Lansing examined *Women and Politics: The Invisible Majority* in 1980 (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press).

include financial, structural and leadership problems. I then analyze the categorical distribution of resolutions passed by NOW's National Board between 1966 and 1983 in order first to discern changes in the distribution of matters acted on by the Board. This analysis shows that by the end of this period, the National Board passed many more resolutions concerning issues of organizational maintenance than they did during the earlier period.

I also analyzed resolutions to uncover shifts in the set of tactics approved by the Board. Every tactic mentioned in resolutions passed by the Board during this period was tabulated. I find no contraction in NOW's tactical repertoire (for example, activities focusing on the support of electoral campaigns do not overshadow activities involving grassroots mobilization). In addition, resolutions concerning outreach to members increased during this period.

In the second half of this chapter I document how NOW's increasing focus on the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) together with its steps towards partisan politics resulted in organizational tension. During the discussions and debates over matters of goals and tactics at this time I found NOW members frequently referred to the need to sustain NOW's original purpose, its political independence (indicating both an independence from any political party as well as its independence from any governmental body), its grassroots orientation and action-oriented agenda.

These concerns acted as a significant brake on the leadership's enthusiastic pursuit of what I call "electoral

activism." While NOW members accepted as legitimate their organization's participation in mainstream kinds of activity like legislative lobbying or court action, they expressed concern about group actions they called purely "political." Legitimate mainstream activities included lobbying and participating as *amicus curiae* in part because these were familiar tactics, utilized since NOW's inception. In addition, however, their legitimacy derived from the fact that they focused on specific *policies*, whereas campaign work and involvement in partisan politics resulted in victories for candidates. The history of NOW member participation in electoral campaigns suggested to members in the trenches that even when the investment in them resulted in the candidate's victory, the newly elected frequently reneged on promises to the feminist community. "Political" work also seemed to privilege the national office, giving its leaders stature and influence that did not necessarily benefit local or state levels. "Political" work implied an erosion of NOW's independence from political parties and the potential to weaken NOW's firmly nonpartisan history. I argue that NOW's founding principles are reflected the actions of NOW leaders who carefully legitimized their involvement in electoral activism.

ORGANIZING THE ORGANIZATION

Finances

The minutes of NOW's 1970 May Board meeting indicate that the organization's financial difficulties continued. Task forces,

NOW's main engine for research on new issues and the development of tactics, were seriously underfunded. NOW's regional structure also lacked funds for its development. Communications among leaders, members, chapters, and regions suffered as only extremely limited funds existed for mimeographing, travel, and the phone.²¹⁷

Individual activists covered many of these expenses, and the national newsletter warned potential candidates for the Board or for national office that they must expect to shoulder some expenses.²¹⁸

These problems became magnified beginning in 1973 when several chapters began withholding dues from National NOW. These actions resulted from chapters' dissatisfaction with services provided to them by National NOW, and/or concern about the integrity of NOW's leadership during the major leadership battle of 1975. The divisions within NOW leadership circles between 1973 and 1976 took a toll on fundraising as well.²¹⁹

The national office took a variety of steps in an attempt to dramatically reduce expenses.²²⁰ Publication of the monthly newsletter *DO IT NOW*, the main conduit of national organizational

²¹⁷ Task forces were allowed to begin raising their own funds - 25% of which would return to the main coffers of the organization.

²¹⁸ *DO IT NOW*, March/April 1975.

²¹⁹ In 1976, for example, the Secretary of the Board argued that the President of the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund was touting herself as an alternative to NOW's current leadership, and this was negatively impacting NOW's fundraising. National NOW Board Meeting Minutes, April 1976.

²²⁰ NOW's net income in 1970 totaled less than twelve thousand dollars, whereas membership in mid-1971 was estimated to be approximately 5500.

information, switched from monthly to only bimonthly, and it began accepting paid advertising. All expense items for the 1975 budget were cut "...to minimum survival appropriations."²²¹ In fact, members could expect only minimal assistance with administrative tasks as well as "information supply" and chapters' lobbying activities.²²²

Structure

Largely to address information processing problems that plagued NOW from its inception, NOW leaders created both a public information office in New York City as well as an administrative national headquarters in Chicago in 1973. In addition to systematizing the provision of information to the public, these offices were to free national leaders so that they might get out in the field more often to meet with local leaders and follow up on national priorities.

Another important change in structure was afoot as well: the formal recognition and financial support of state level organizations. The creation of NOW's state structure in the By-Laws vote of 1976 appears to add an extra layer of insulation between NOW chapters and the national officers. In fact, chapters and their leaders forced the adoption of state structures because they felt it would result in better communication between chapters and the National organization and more independence and strength at the local level. The incorporation of a state structure in NOW,

²²¹ *DO IT NOW*, January/February 1975.

²²² *DO IT NOW*, January/February 1975.

then, was a bottom-up innovation that increased the bureaucracy for the purpose of greater democracy and representation of the grassroots level.

In 1973 New York NOW and California expressed their demand for National NOW's approval of a state structure by voting to withhold dues from National until it agreed to return a certain percentage back to the state level.²²³ The Director of the Eastern Region from 1971-1974 wrote to President Heide:

I believe state organization is the trend of NOW for the future, and a very healthy trend, and I feel National must give this trend more recognition, funds, etc. rather than ignore it. [re: the withholding of dues]...This represents I believe a sign of real and continued dissatisfaction with national, especially concerning the service the national office gives for the dues.²²⁴

To many, the creation of a state structure would alleviate the problem of NOW members seeing the National NOW office as a monolithic "Mother" with full control of her "children." In 1973 Vice President Toni Carabillo pleaded with members to recognize the true limitations on National's power - and the need to strengthen rather than weaken it. She noted that NOW comprised

...600 chapters which cannot be *commanded*, but only *invited*, to provide the essential support and follow-through, and who may, at the critical time, be absorbed in significant projects of their own.

National is fewer than a half-dozen full-time employees, (all of whom were hired less than a year ago), in three different cities trying to be responsive to 13 national officers, 25 national board

²²³ Letter from Fran Kolb to Wilma Scott Heide, Dec. 11, 1973.

²²⁴ Letter from Fran Kolb to Wilma Scott Heide, Dec. 11, 1973.

members, 30 national task force coordinators and members of all 600 chapters.

National is a Public Information Office and a Legislative Lobbying Office in their respective cubby-holes in New York and Washington, functioning on a total budget -for salaries and operations - of 20,000 each...

...National is not, in short, 'them', -it's 'us' out of town.²²⁵

NOW National further attempted to quell its members' feelings of dissatisfaction by reassuring them that they were indeed getting their fair share of funds.

Both LWV [League of Women Voters] and BPW [Business and Professional Women] claim to have raised over 100,000 each on this issue [the ERA]. However, NOW is the only organization to have provided direct cash aids to its subunits in unratified states to use in accordance with their individually developed ratification plans. This is a departure from the usual patters on 'maternalism' by national organizations. Since it represents a means of providing a support system by utilizing the national organization merely as a conduit and collection agent for getting money directly to the grass roots. We think our members should know that in fund raising, as in all else, we seek nontraditional approaches to solving old problems in new ways freed of constraints inherent in patriarchal systems.²²⁶

The National NOW Board attempted to stem the tide of dissatisfaction and ordered regional directors "to hold

²²⁵ Carabillo pushed for the more politically efficient state structure as opposed to regions, which "correlate to no political reality." She also insisted that those who opposed paying staff members were ill-considered: "We find them [the "unconstructive"] in those who make a sin of volunteerism outside of NOW but insist it is the cardinal virtue within, who can't conceive of elected and salaried chapter, state or national officers and organizers..." The distaste for salaried officers and staff members was a legacy of the women's liberation movement organizations, which discouraged activists from engaging in elite, power-hungry behavior.

²²⁶ Pamphlet, "NOW, It's Money."

a meeting of State Coordinators and Board Members from their regions to implement the will of Chapters that they be provided with an opportunity to supply input on state needs to Board members." In addition, the 1975 conference voted to hold a constitutional convention in late 1976. Among the proposed amendments were provisions institutionalizing a state structure for NOW and the creation of a system of delegate voting at national conferences. To this point in NOW's history, an individual's NOW membership and attendance at the conference determined voting eligibility at national conferences (which determine NOW's policies and priorities).

At National Board meetings after a contentious October 1975 national election, the Board set to work on provisions which would exemplify to members National's subordinate role to the will of the members and chapters, and their eagerness to share power. Beverly Jones, Chair of the Committee on Board Organization, noted three main resolutions passed in this regard. The first involved much better financial support for task forces and their initiatives - especially action oriented projects. "Approximately 20%" of all national dues would be fed back into state organizations. In addition, the Board assured chapters that NOW would not force any state to pursue the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and that it would not overrun any state in its own zeal to do so.

[W]e passed a measure which placed the authority and the responsibility for developing strategy to pass the ERA in the hands of those state organizations in the unratified states which must themselves do the work necessary for ratification. That measure explicitly defines the role of the national

organization as one of unstinting support. The national organization will offer whatever funds and expertise it can muster and permit the unratified states to draw on these resources in whatever manner they, themselves, deem helpful and appropriate.²²⁷

The recently created public information office and Chicago arm of NOW were axed to pay for these provisions, although the Washington office would be maintained as before. The Chair of the Committee on Board Organization, Beverly Jones, noted in a memo to Board members that:

Most of us on the Board ran for election on a platform that advocated greater autonomy for chapter and state organizations... No uniform program at the national level can possibly encompass all of our differences, and the price of attempting to enforce a unitary program on a large and unwilling segment of the membership is alienation, factionalization, splits and decay.

The object of the current program was to minimize such problems.

Nevertheless, by January 1976 many members and local leaders remained convinced that the organization's problems remained significant and required more fundamental change. Midwest Regional Director Mary Anne Sedey described a meeting she attended with other Midwest state coordinators in a memo to Board members that month. The attendees passed fifteen motions, the bulk of which involved such power-related matters such as requesting clarification as to how appointments to task forces and Board committees were being made, (i.e. does the President ask for input on these appointments?) and requests that National leaders desist

²²⁷ Memo, Beverly Jones, Chair of Board Organization Committee, to National Board, January 1976.

from releasing press statements or meeting with media in the region without consultation with regional and chapter leaders.

The group also had a serious question about the budget, and whether the amount allocated to action programs in 1976 was comparable to previous years. Sedey presented the problem:

It appears to us from an analysis of the 1976 budget that a total of 297,500 (26.3%) is allocated for program. This compares with a percentage of 29.4% allocated for program in the 1975 budget. However, 150,000 of these funds are restricted to ERA-related expenses in 1976. (ERA Budget has been incorporated into the general funds budget in 1976). Consequently, excluding ERA funds, only 147,500 of NOW's million dollar projected budget is allocated for NOW's program (14.4%) How is this consistent with the objectives of the National Organization for Women?

Clearly, the emphasis on the ERA did not satisfy the entire organization, many of whom felt strongly that NOW's action program must encompass the breadth of interests expressed by NOW's members at annual conventions. These interests included issues related to attaining equality for lesbian women, eliminating poverty and racism, attaining full reproductive rights for women, equality in broadcasting and media, and ending rape. Although the success of the Equal Rights Amendment seemed in greater jeopardy as the 1970s wore on, the same groups lending the anti-ERA campaign its power also threatened to quell progress - or to reverse progress - on these issues.

These and similar concerns were expressed to National leaders throughout this year as the organization prepared to vote on changes in its By-Laws (the changes were declared ratified in

January 1977). In a "Pro" Statement supporting the proposed NOW By-Laws, activists Sandy Roth and Lillian Waugh wrote

This year in hearings around the country, you demanded the decentralization of the organization; the streamlining of internal operations; the development of a fiscally sound organization; the return of power to the membership through leadership accountability; and the creation of a flexible structure, able to respond quickly to demands of growth and change.²²⁸

The "pro" voters, ultimately the majority of members who voted, hoped that the amendments would address these issues. The most critical changes ratified involved election procedures that distributed power to states and regions. Instead of being elected at large by members attending national conferences, for example, National Board Members would be elected by members attending their regional conferences. Regional Directors, for their part, lost the status of being National Officers. Five newly salaried National Officers remained, reduced from thirteen.

Leadership Crises

After four years of her leadership, the exit of NOW's first president Betty Friedan from National office in 1970 was bound to be somewhat destabilizing for the organization. Aileen Hernandez (ex-EEOC Commissioner) succeeded her for a brief time until Wilma

²²⁸ "Pro Statement, Proposed NOW Bylaws" by Sandy Roth and Lillian Waugh, October 17, 1976.

Scott Heide took office in September 1971.²²⁹ NOW's commitment to lesbian rights was one of the organization's outstanding issues after Friedan's departure. However, the volatility of the issue (a volatility driven in large part by Friedan, who was an outspoken opponent of NOW's involvement in lesbian activism) was partially defused in 1971 when NOW members voted at that year's National Conference to "legitimize" the pursuit of lesbian rights as a bona fide organizational goal. Two years later NOW set up its first task force on lesbian rights.²³⁰

Power issues within the group of Officers, Board Members and Task Force leaders, combined with the issues described above with chaotic management and extremely limited funds led to many tensions at the National level after Friedan's departure. One distressed board member wrote in a letter to another about fractious board meetings in 1973 that

...what is bothering the Board of NOW is a power struggle. That power struggle involved the question of who shall run NOW and how. Some of the issues are ideological - e.g. volunteerism within NOW, multiple chapters, state structure, etc. - and some are about power - e.g. whose project shall have how much funding, who shall make critical decisions, etc. ... It is a matter of applying our principles of fair play, openness and democracy to our practices in our organization... The factions that are forming are not dividing us, they are coalescing around different philosophies, which are more destructive than any outside force.²³¹

²²⁹ Hernandez went on to help found the National Black Feminist Organization in 1973, and there is some suggestion that Hernandez' quick departure involved charges of institutional racism.

²³⁰ Nevertheless, for some time to come, some lesbian NOW members still experienced some hostility from their chapters and other forms of discrimination.

²³¹ Letter to Gene Kolb from Jo Ann Evans Gardner, December 11, 1973.

Over time, two main factions formed. The first group felt that a state structure and delegate system for voting in NOW elections would lead to NOW's deradicalization. They pushed for recognizing NOW's membership diversity in its task forces and priorities. Chapters' autonomy and power needed to be increased, along with their financial allotment from National. National had a habit of initiating a new major organizational activity (an "action") without properly incorporating chapter concerns or interests, nor even giving chapters' adequate time or resources to carry out these action plans.²³² For these members and leaders, investing a great deal of NOW's energy and time in the mainstream political process was not in keeping with NOW's broad goals, and instead this strategy only empowered the National officers.

A second group, the "Majority Caucus," group agreed on the importance of developing a strong state level. However, the Majority Caucus insisted that NOW could not succeed without a concomitantly powerful national level: The mobilization for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, for example, required efficient coordination of activity and information at both state and national levels.

²³² A "Seattle Ad-Hoc Committee" formed and sent a letter to NOW National trying to understand the problems and discord at the national level. They also protested was a Nationally organized action called, "Alice Doesn't Day," a kind of women's strike. They argued that "...such tactically questionable, poorly organized national events usurp chapter option and jeopardize local credibility." Letter from Seattle Ad Hoc Committee to National Board, March 13, 1975.

In addition, the Majority Caucus wanted NOW to increase its visibility and participation in elections. For example, NOW's National Secretary, Majority Caucus member and specialist in politics Charlene Suneson argued that simply lobbying legislators would not secure the ratification of the ERA - instead, key to success involved the active campaigning and involvement in electing or defeating candidates in crucial positions in state legislatures.

The divisions between these two groups became more pronounced between 1974 and 1976 as the groups vied against each other in divisive national elections for officers and Board members. The major leadership battle at NOW's annual conference in 1975 comprised these two groups - the first, "anti-establishment" faction ultimately calling themselves "Womansurge" and the other (the "Majority Caucus") - against each other. Karen DeCrow, (in many ways a transitional figure who attempted to keep the peace between factions) was elected in 1974 under the pro-Majority Caucus slogan, "Out of the Mainstream, Into the Revolution!" This slogan intended to emphasize that the Majority Caucus did not subscribe to an oligarchical, elitist or conservative ethic (represented by their proposals to strengthen the National office and to work in electoral campaigns) but to a participatory, radical and grassroots oriented ideal that members expected from NOW. DeCrow emphasized that "I stated, very clearly, all along, that what I wanted to do was not enter the mainstream in full partnership with men, but

change the mainstream."²³³ Activist Lois Reckitt noted that "This sentiment was, in large part, the crux of the controversy that enveloped NOW for the next ten years."²³⁴ In response to the Majority Caucus platform in 1975, one faction calling themselves the Seattle Ad Hoc Committee observed that "We are not even clear about their platform; it seems fraught with inconsistencies. They say "out of the mainstream," while insisting that NOW endorse and work for political candidates. They say "into the revolution," while arguing that NOW should extend its appeal to housewives and working women."

Indeed, the concept of bringing either women in general or NOW in particular into the "mainstream" was at best uninspiring and at worst suspect to many NOW members. NOW's 1966 Statement of Purpose declared "The purpose of NOW is 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." By the mid-1970s, however, the "mainstream" appeared to represent largely corrupt political institutions, such as political parties and the electoral system.

The significant minority within NOW thus remained unconvinced of the revolutionary nature of the Majority Caucus. They were concerned that the new By-Laws that proposed to move to a delegate election system, for example, only added confusing layers of

²³³ Karen DeCrow, "Call to Philadelphia Conference," *DO IT NOW*, May/June 1975.

²³⁴ Lois Reckitt, unpublished manuscript ("Memoir"), pp. 9-10.

bureaucracy between the grassroots and the national office, making it more difficult for individuals to figure out how to have an influence on the system. It should be noted that although By-Laws changes at this conference which provided for a delegate based conference were ratified overwhelmingly, the dissenting group was not an insignificant part of NOW. In fact, they included at least five of NOW's officers who formed an underground activist group and who "perceived ourselves as radicals.... We would leave the mainstream - and if it caught up with us, we would leave again."²³⁵ Reckitt, the writer of the official statement against the changes, complained, "Must we imitate the systems of the oppressor?"

National NOW tried to explain these divisions in its newsletters, suggesting in mid-1975 that in spite of the controversies, the two sides had worked out their difficulties in communicating and were ready to move forward. At the same time, Karen DeCrow attempted to reassure members that the upcoming October By-Laws Conference would be a useful one, in keeping with NOW's goals and helping the organization right itself.

Raising consciousness, through formal and informal education, will of course be one of the conference goals... Our conference will begin with actions and with workshops. There will be no plenary sessions until Saturday. ... [I]t is time, as we approach NOW's Tenth Anniversary, as the nation celebrates its bicentennial, and as the world celebrates international women's year, to strengthen our ideology and galvanize into meaningful, feminist action.²³⁶

²³⁵ Reckitt, *Memoir*, p. 22.

²³⁶ Karen DeCrow, "Call to Philadelphia Conference," *DO IT NOW*, May/June 1975.

As if to underscore National's interest in member opinions, this issue of the newsletter also included a member survey in which member opinions were sought about their preferences as to NOW priorities. They asked specific questions about whether and to what extent NOW should get involved in the following issues: advertising, housing, employment and economic security, health care, food production, distribution, costs and quality, national energy production and distribution; worker layoffs due to economic crisis, child care funding, eliminating rape, and the criminal justice system.

Unfortunately, by the end of 1975, few outstanding organizational issues were truly resolved. This is especially true of the question of how NOW could be politically influential without becoming a co-opted, elite-driven, passive organization. The Seattle Ad Hoc Committee recounted the disagreements:

Our overriding concerns internally at this point at the constitutional convention, the question of political endorsement, and whether the board will be responsive to the membership... Political endorsement is to us an unresolved issue, although it does not seem to be to the majority caucus. All three workshops held on this issue at the Philadelphia conference indicated strong disagreement in this organization over whether political endorsement should occur at all.

Implementation was never discussed because of this basic difference. In the second workshop, a straw vote strongly opposed national endorsements (including U.S. Senators and Reps.) and at the local level, our chapters span the political gamut from socialists to republicans. Endorsement decisions would be highly divisive. But this issue never came to the floor of the conference. Seattle NOW has voted unanimously to oppose political endorsement.

WE feel that involving NOW in the political process in this way jeopardizes the very nature and effectiveness of the organization.

Nevertheless, as the Majority Caucus took hold, it did begin to consolidate power and used their influence to push NOW to an increased investment in the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. This fact was not lost on the outsiders - members of the Board not affiliated with Smeal's platform.²³⁷ However, in spite of the persistent concerns with NOW's activities in the political arena, NOW members consistently voted at national conferences to back both the Majority Caucus as well as political activism. Ultimately, at the Detroit National Conference in 1977, members passed a resolution creating the ultimate modern-day interest group weapon - a political action committee - by a narrow margin.²³⁸

ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL BOARD MEETING RESOLUTIONS, 1966-1983

The data includes motions coded from every board meeting between 1969 and 1983 for which minutes were available.²³⁹ Every motion that passed during a board meeting was coded according to the strategy or action it referenced.²⁴⁰ The analysis aims to

²³⁷ Memo to National NOW officers and Board Members from Martha Buck and Mary Anne Sedey, March 22 1976.

²³⁸ National NOW Board Meeting Minutes, July 30-31, 1977.

²³⁹ To the best of my knowledge, these are: June, October and December, 1976, April and July 1982 and December, 1983.

²⁴⁰ Thus, three motions in one board meeting might refer to a protest/grassroots strategy. If all of these motions passed, they would all be included in the analysis even if they all referred to the same action or built on a previous motion. See also Appendix A: Methodological Notes.

understand the changing nature of what I will call "consensus initiatives" devoted to various strategies and actions. The categories included in the final analysis included the following:

Table 1

Categories of Motions	Examples
Organizational Maintenance Activities	budget, procedure, staffing, membership
<i>Member-benefits</i> ²⁴¹	training, insurance benefits, publications, retreats
Influence Activities	take a position, declare state of emergency, finance activity
External Relations	form coalitions, act as consultants, media relations
Protest/Grass-roots Activities	marches, walkathon, petition, refusal to pay taxes
Legislative/Lobbying Activities	testify, recommend appointments, lobby Congress
Legal Activities	join lawsuit, file formal complaint, demand compliance with federal law
Electoral Activities	recruit candidates, influence political platforms, financial aid

How does the mix of activities considered in NOW board meetings change over time? We examine how the proportion of initiatives involving institutionalized forms of activism including legal, legislative/lobbying, and electoral activities compares over time to the consideration of protest politics and member-directed activity. If increasing attention to mainstream political action fostered an inattention to grass-roots mobilization, we should find that the proportion of NOW board consensus initiatives involving

²⁴¹ A subset of Organizational Maintenance Activities.

grass-roots forms of activism decreased over the period 1969-1983. We also test the hypothesis that attention to a group's membership base suffers when the organization's elites focus more attention on the mainstream political arena. If this were the case in NOW, we would expect to find that consensus initiatives involving member-directed activity, such as member training on issues concerning feminists and in new tactics, decreased.

Limitations of this Study

There are at least three significant limitations inherent in the coded data used in this analysis. First, while the data give indications about the types of strategies and actions discussed and agreed upon in national board meetings, the number of approved resolutions in board meetings does not necessarily reflect the number of resources and amount of time spent by the organization in implementing or pursuing this strategy. NOW is a large, chapter-based organization and clearly much of its activity takes place on the local level.²⁴² While chapters are linked to NOW National for financing, for the publications NOW produces, and for the action initiatives planned by the NOW leadership, chapters also have a great deal of autonomy in choosing the types of activities in which they will participate. The information in this study does, however, give a picture of the types of issues around which the NOW

²⁴² In 1974, for example, NOW consisted of 700 chapters and had approximately 40,000 members. Suzanne Staggenborg, *The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 167.

Board reached consensus, and the way these issues changes if at all over time. Second, a significant amount of time during board meetings was spent debating motions and issues that ultimately failed. Thus this analysis focuses only consensus initiatives. Finally, an analysis of the distribution of resolutions passed by the NOW board suggests only what the board is doing, and not why it is doing it. While the board minutes suggest changes of strategic emphasis over time, an understanding of why they occurred and their importance to the organization requires an analysis of supplementary materials.

Findings of Coded Analysis²⁴³

An analysis of the data (see Table 2) shows trends in board activity between 1969 and 1983. Over time, the percent of all resolutions devoted to basic organizational maintenance increased steadily and significantly from a low of 4.94% of all resolutions in 1969 to 83.45% of all resolutions in 1983. Member-benefits or outreach related activity, a sub-category of organizational maintenance resolutions, shows peaks in 1973 (17.42%) and 1982 (21.05%), but otherwise hovers between 6-9% of resolutions throughout most of the period.

The prominence of influence activities, or those activities which involve the use of NOW's "power to persuade" or its financial

²⁴³ See Appendix B for a detailed list of the strategies and actions included in each category discussed in this section.

power to influence others, reached a peak in 1973 of 46.21% of all consensus initiatives but declined dramatically after 1978.

Consensus initiatives involving NOW's relationship and activity with other groups ("external relations") decreased significantly after 1973. External relations were referred to in fewer than three percent of all consensus initiatives in 1980 and 1983.

Resolutions discussing protest/grassroots activity peaked in 1969 (14.81%), 1979 (8.21%) and 1982 (7.89%). Consensus initiatives involving this type of strategy diminished in the period between 1972 and 1976, but rose in importance in the following years.

On the other hand, legal activity experienced a major drop after 1975. Similarly, legislative/lobbying activity was most prominent before 1973. Although it experienced a slight recovery between 1975 and 1979, its prominence in National board meetings dips again thereafter.

No clear pattern exists for electoral activity throughout this period except that after 1974 there is always at least one passed resolution on electoral activity - never zero again as it was three years of the six before 1975. At its peak electoral activity comprised a little over 4% of resolutions in 1979 but in general remained under (sometimes well under) 3% of total resolutions passed in each year since then.

A second part of this analysis divides the data into two periods: 1969-1975 and 1976-1983. 1975 marked a turning point in

NOW history for many reasons. First, the IRS clarified NOW's ability to participate in electoral politics while retaining its tax-exempt status. In addition, one of the issues of the contentious 1975 National NOW Conference involved a debate on the appropriate strategic emphasis for NOW. The question was whether NOW should turn more towards mainstream electoral politics or to concentrate on grass-roots endeavors and issues. These national conference elections resulted in the election of a grass-roots oriented President of NOW, Karen DeCrow, and of a National Board oriented towards politics.²⁴⁴ Thus, dividing the data in this fashion allows us to analyze the enduring effects of these controversies.

When we compare the average percent of resolutions passed in each category of activity in our two time periods (Table 3) it becomes clear that the major difference between the 1969-1975 and 1976-1983 time periods is the much greater prominence of organizational maintenance initiatives over time. In the early period, the greatest average percent of resolutions was devoted to influence activities at 39.2%. The next highest-ranking activity was that of organizational maintenance, which comprised 26.18% of all resolutions on average.

²⁴⁴ National Conferences, the "supreme governing body" of NOW, are annual meetings of the membership that conduct the business of NOW. Any NOW member is allowed to speak at the Conference, though only chapter delegates may vote. Since 1976, Delegates are chosen by chapters, and each chapter is allowed "one delegate for the first ten members and one delegate for each additional thirty members or major fraction thereof...National Officers and National Board Members shall be voting delegates at the National Conference." "National Organization for Women Policy Manual: Administration," 1979, pp. 39-40.

In contrast, in the 1976-1983 period, 68.81% of the average percent of resolutions were devoted to organizational maintenance activities - more than double the number of the early period. The highest-ranking strategy/action after maintenance activities in this period is that of influence activity, at 16.41%. Resolutions dealing with a whole host of substantive action including protest/grassroots, and legal and legislative/lobbying activity were all more numerous on average during the years 1969-1975 than in the later period.

Only two categories of consensus initiatives besides that of organizational maintenance increased in the second period, albeit negligibly: member-benefits and electoral politics.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ Note that four categories of consensus initiatives in the latter time period (involvement with other organizations, legal, legislative/lobbying, and electoral activities) each comprise less than 3% of all activity for that time period. In contrast, during 1969-1975, only one category comprises less than 3% of all activities: electoral politics.

Table 1 % Distribution of Resolutions Passed by NOW National Board, 1969-1983

Activity	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
All Resolutions	81	53	56	81	132	208	167	100	208	209	134	205	140	38	139
%MA	4.94	15.09	28.57	20.99	25.76	41.83	46.11	66.00	62.50	48.33	64.93	76.59	82.86	65.79	83.45
%FM	3.70	7.55	14.29	4.94	5.30	18.75	25.15	49.00	28.85	20.10	21.64	40.98	40.71	23.68	12.95
%STAF	0.00	0.00	1.79	0.00	0.76	0.96	0.00	1.00	1.44	0.96	1.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
%GO	0.00	0.00	5.36	7.41	2.27	12.50	14.37	10.00	21.15	15.79	32.84	30.24	39.29	21.05	61.87
%MD	1.23	7.55	7.14	8.64	17.42	9.62	6.59	6.00	11.06	11.48	8.96	5.37	2.86	21.05	8.63
%ER	9.88	13.21	8.93	16.05	12.88	5.77	2.40	3.00	3.85	7.18	9.70	1.46	4.29	5.26	2.88
%OO	9.88	9.43	3.57	9.88	5.30	3.37	1.20	2.00	0.48	1.44	5.97	1.46	1.43	5.26	0.72
%OE	0.00	3.77	5.36	6.17	7.58	2.40	1.20	1.00	3.37	6.22	3.73	0.00	2.86	0.00	2.16
%IA	44.44	35.85	39.29	43.21	46.21	36.06	29.34	22.00	26.92	34.93	6.72	15.61	3.57	15.79	5.76
%PI	43.21	35.85	37.50	35.80	37.12	25.00	16.77	15.00	23.08	34.45	5.22	6.34	2.86	15.79	5.76
%AI	1.23	0.00	1.79	7.41	9.09	11.06	12.57	7.00	3.85	0.48	1.49	9.27	0.71	0.00	0.00
%PRO	14.81	3.77	7.14	1.23	5.30	0.48	2.99	1.00	2.88	3.35	8.21	1.95	3.57	7.89	2.16
%LEGL	13.58	16.98	7.14	13.58	7.58	15.38	16.77	3.00	0.48	1.91	2.99	1.95	3.57	2.63	0.72
%LOB	12.35	11.32	7.14	3.70	2.27	0.48	1.20	2.00	2.88	3.83	2.99	0.49	1.43	0.00	4.32
%ELEC	0.00	3.77	1.79	1.23	0.00	0.00	1.20	3.00	0.48	0.48	4.48	1.95	0.71	2.63	0.72

Legend:

MA All Maintenance Activities as % of Total Resolutions Coded for Given Year

FM Maintenance Activity: Finance Matters

STAF Maintenance Activity: Staffing Decisions

GO Maintenance Activity: General Organizational Maintenance

MD Maintenance Activity: Member-directed Activity

ER All External Relations

OO External Relations: Involvement with Other Organizations

OE External Relations: Outreach and Education Activities

IA All Influential Activities

PASS Influential Activity: Passive

ACT Influential Activity: Active

PRO Protest/Grassroots Activities

LEGL Legal Activities

LOB Legislative/Lobbying Activities

ELEC Electoral Activities

Table 3

Average % of Resolutions in Each Category of Activity,
1969-1975 and 1976-1983

	Average	1969-1975	1976-1983
MA	48.92	26.18	68.81
MD*	8.91	8.31	9.43
IA	27.05	39.20	16.41
ER	7.12	9.87	4.70
PRO	4.45	5.10	3.88
LEGL	7.22	13.00	2.16
LOB	3.76	5.49	2.24
ELEC	1.50	1.14	1.81

Legend:

MA Maintenance Activities as % of Total Resolutions
 *Member-oriented, Subset of Maintenance Activity
ER External Relations
IA Influence Activities
PRO Protest/Grassroots Activities
LEGL Legal Activities
LOB Legislative/Lobbying Activities
ELEC Electoral Activities

DISCUSSION

Perhaps the most important trend in this data is the much greater prominence of general organizational maintenance activity during the period 1976-1983. In fact, while over 80% of consensus initiatives in the earlier period involved some form of *activism* only 40% of consensus initiatives did so in the latter period: routine organizational work engulfed the rest. It seems institutionalized forms of activism did not crowd out protest politics at the NOW board meetings. Instead, this task may have been accomplished, at least on the national level, by NOW's bureaucratic concerns.

A second interesting point is the fact that protest initiatives do not dominate the earlier period. Instead, a mix of protest, legal and lobbying tactics was discussed. Third, member-benefits remain important to the NOW board over the entire period.

In addition we find that initiatives devoted to electoral politics did not increase dramatically to 1983. This fact is puzzling until we realize that NOW did not begin to push its electoral strategy fully until after the ERA defeat in 1982. As we will see, this defeat provided ammunition for the NOW leadership in its attempt to fully incorporate the strategy into its repertoire and to convince its membership of the necessity and the legitimacy of this move.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ See Appendix A for methodological notes.

The second half of this chapter comprises three sections. The first documents NOW's history of participation in electoral politics and its increasing focus on the goal of passing the Equal Rights Amendment between 1966 and 1982. The nature and substance of the controversies that erupted concerning these two issues are described in the second section, and the final section is illustrates the methods leaders used to mollify internal factions.

NOW'S INVOLVEMENT IN ELECTORAL POLITICS AND THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Interest within the leadership of NOW in investing in electoral politics rose as the mobilization for the passage of the ERA increased, but NOW leaders expressed an eagerness to be involved in such activity very early on. President Betty Friedan's report at NOW's March 1969 national board meeting, for example, clearly showed her own interest in political action. She discussed the importance of pressuring Nixon to appoint more women, and suggested that NOW join in an "alliance...to form a political power bloc for the attainment of specific goals, and the support of candidates pledged to work for NOW goals."²⁴⁷ The board discussed the latter suggestion; the consensus seemed to be that since masses of votes were the key to the political arena, NOW had to focus on increasing its membership. In addition, members agreed that it was

²⁴⁷ NOW National Board Meeting Minutes, March 29-30, 1969.

important to support men and women who were sympathetic to NOW's agenda, regardless of party.²⁴⁸

A 1970 NOW policy similarly encouraged members' direct participation in electoral politics.

Even when election appears unlikely, NOW members should run for office to educate the public about our concerns. Local chapters should encourage women already active in politics to run on women's issues. Local chapters should set up committees to seek out candidates. Regional conferences should include workshops to train prospective candidates and campaign workers.²⁴⁹

From the beginning, the fight for the passage of the ERA encouraged NOW's participation in electoral politics. This is partly because of the nature of the ERA fight, which took place in both state and national legislatures, but also because NOW board knew that many NOW members volunteered for candidates and parties already, and hoped to capitalize on this involvement. In 1970, for example, the board passed a resolution calling for NOW's president to hold a press conference to ask women to donate money or time only to candidates or parties supporting ERA.²⁵⁰

Even national convention themes echoed NOW's cognizance of electoral politics: the 1971 national conference theme was "From the Doll's House to the White House." The Politics Task Force Chair in 1972 noted that "This shows our obvious heavy focus on politics as a key means of getting women into the 'mainstream of

²⁴⁸ NOW National Board Meeting Minutes, March 29-30, 1969.

²⁴⁹ NOW National Board Meeting, May 2-3, 1970.

²⁵⁰ NOW National Board Meeting, May 2-3, 1970.

American life' and more important, for changing the mainstream of American life...During the last two years, the Politics Task Force has worked with hundreds of NOW members who have run for office."²⁵¹ In 1971 NOW also conducted schools for political candidates. An invitation to these training sessions stated that: "The National Organization for Women, in running the School for Candidates, believes a most effective rallying-cry to be RUNNING FOR POLITICAL OFFICE..."²⁵²

NOW worked with other organizations as well from a very early stage to enhance its political influence and resources. In fact, Wilma Scott Heide, NOW President from 1971 to 1974, was a member of the National Women's Political Caucus and met with them regularly. NOW national conferences resolved to support the goals of the NWPC, including that of training feminist candidates.²⁵³ In fact, a number of the founding members of the NWPC were NOW members and many continued to be involved in both organizations.²⁵⁴

Involvement in party politics always encompassed a significant share of NOW's political action. A 1970 conference

¹⁸² "NOW Politics Task Force Report," October 1972.

¹⁸³ In folder "P10 Task Forces, Politics '71-'76."

²⁵³ Some of the NWPC's other goals that NOW supported in the 1971 National Conference included "forming women's caucuses within every party and every state; forming a caucus within every county in every party; forming a caucus within every congressional district in every party; ensuring that 50% of delegates to national conventions are women; ...teaching women through school for political candidates not only on the party ticket but elected in the primaries and later elected against the opposition candidates from major parties." NOW. "1972-1973, "Revolution: Tomorrow is NOW." 1973?

²⁵⁴ A 1974 survey of NOW members (342 replies) found that 16% claimed membership in NWPC as well. "Summary of Questionnaire for NOW."

resolution, for example, "called for the formation of women's rights caucuses within existing political parties and organizations as well as the establishment of independent women's political caucuses."²⁵⁵ In 1971 it was resolved that "NOW insist on the inclusion of a women's rights plank in all party platforms and recommends that the NOW National Board present our demands to the platform committees at the parties' national conventions."²⁵⁶ In a memo to board members and others in 1972, the Chair of the Politics Task Force emphasized NOW's participation at the national Democratic and Republican conventions.

As you can see from watching the news, our impact is being felt enormously in the pre-convention committees of rules, credentials and platform...we have been working at committee hearings - and behind the scenes - with NOW members, members of NWPC, and Planned Parenthood.²⁵⁷

By 1975, NOW's tax status was finally clarified. The Internal Revenue Service informed NOW that as long as support of candidates was not the primary activity of the organization, its tax-exempt status would remain valid.²⁵⁸ One result of this decision is the first endorsement by the NOW board of a political

²⁵⁵ NOW. "NOW Conferences Make History," 1979 National NOW Conference Book, 8.

²⁵⁶ NOW. "National Organization for Women Policy Manual: Issues," 1979, 69.

²⁵⁷ Involvement in the Republican convention seemed less intense. In the memo DeCrow noted that three NOW members planned to testify at the Republican Platform hearings and requested others inform her if they also planned to participate in that convention. Memorandum, Karen DeCrow to Politics Task Force, National Officers and Board Members, Chapter Presidents and Conveners, June 26, 1972.

²⁵⁸ NOW National Board Meeting Minutes, July 1975.

candidate. The board voted to support Bella Abzug in the New York democratic primary for the U.S. Senate. This was passed by the board ("contingent on endorsement of New York State NOW"), 23 in favor, 2 against, 4 abstaining. The following day, five yes votes switched to no, but the resolution passed nevertheless.²⁵⁹ Another resolution was passed by the board asking its Task Force on Politics to draw up guidelines for future endorsements.²⁶⁰

In 1974, the new chair of the Republican National Committee was a longtime GOP activist and party co-chair as well as a member of NOW and the NWPC - Mary Louise Smith.²⁶¹ This year NOW and other feminist organizations celebrated as they were invited to a meeting with President Ford - the first time any President had consented to such a meeting.

Bureaucratic, financial and leadership problems in the early to mid-1970s affected the ability of NOW's leaders to move forward on issue priorities. This disorganization left many in NOW feeling adrift.

I fear that we have gone too strongly in directions that do not directly relate to our real purpose. We have diffused our energies, spread them thin over a number of activities relating to goals not directly related to NOW's purposes. Specifically, we have a membership approaching 30,000 with insufficient resources to serve them in their chapters, we have almost 30 task forces on subjects

²⁵⁹ NOW National Board Meeting Minutes, July 1975.

²⁶⁰ Memorandum, Jan Pittman-Liebman, Legislative Vice President and Casey Hughes, Director of Legislative Office, to NOW National Board of Directors, July 23, 1975.

²⁶¹ Toni Carabillo, Judith Meuli and June Bundy Csida, *Feminist Chronicles*, Los Angeles, Women's Graphics, 1993, p. 50.

as diverse as ERA/State Legislation and Women and the Arts, with no mechanism for selecting priorities except our National Conference where we pass resolutions vaguely creating new priorities...

In spite of the disorganization with which NOW faced the 1970s, the picture was not all bleak. The early 1970s brought feminist successes on a variety of electoral, legislative, and judicial fronts. Although Nixon vetoed the Comprehensive Child Care Act in late 1971, and subsequently handily won re-election in 1972, other events favored NOW. Representative Shirley Chisholm's presidential candidacy, the Democratic Convention's accessibility to feminist concerns and female delegates, and a favorable election year all provided political opportunities for women in 1972. The January 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision was one of the most significant victories at this time. In 1975, Congress passed a minimum wage bill. The passage of the Educational Equity Act, anti-pregnancy discrimination initiatives, and FCC license revocations for discriminatory hiring were also important wins for NOW and other feminist organizations. Many of these successes could be attributed to the work of development of NOW's lobbying capabilities under NOW's Legislative Vice President, who helped open NOW's Legislative Office at the outset of the 93rd Congress.²⁶²

The successful movement of the ERA out of the Senate to the states for ratification also buoyed feminist spirits.²⁶³ In fact in

²⁶² *DO IT NOW*, March/April 1975.

²⁶³ Soon thereafter, the League of Women Voters and the YWCA voted to lobby for the ERA. (By 1973, the AFL-CIO also reversed its longstanding

the early 1970s, NOW felt certain of the ERA's passage. One longtime activist noted "The 1973 convention, the first since the ERA was sent to the states...had only one workshop on the ERA - and it didn't even have a write-up in the post-convention summaries. We were that confident."²⁶⁴

This confidence began to be shaken by mid-1973.²⁶⁵ By this point, some leaders were beginning to grasp the utility of the Equal Right Amendment as an organizing tool. At the same time, they also began to realize that NOW, in 1973, was in no shape to do adequately what was required in order to ratify the amendment. In 1973 Eastern Regional Director Jacqueline Ceballos wrote to Jo Ann Evans Gardner that NOW members "...have really organized around the ERA...and we now have a state organization and 14 new NOW chapters just because of the fight for ERA. I wonder will we ever have as strong an issue to organize around..."

Politics Task Force Chair Charlene Suneson understood the political realities of the ERA fight. Suneson doggedly argued for a temporary "political arm" of NOW (in part for tax reasons and also to sidestep concerns of members regarding such political activities) which would operate specifically for the ERA, and "facilitat[e] the removal of anti-ERA state legislators from office in unratified states." Suneson argued that those states in which

opposition to the Amendment and in this year eight more states voted for ratification.)

²⁶⁴ Reckitt, *Memoir*, p. 5.

²⁶⁵ Reckitt, *Memoir*, p. 6.

the ERA had already failed "by a large margin shows that the ERA was solidly defeated in each of these states even though NOW has reasonable strength and organization in the majority of these states."

Suneson realized that the political environment had changed, and that anti-ERA groups, linked with conservative and religious organizations, were effectively countering feminist lobbying efforts.

There is no known basis for any belief that continued sole use of legislative tactics will produce anything different in the future than it did in 1973 in these states. A substantial number of the 18 ERA coordinators from unratified states present at the ERA colloquium in May 1973 indicated essentially that the legislators in their states did know and understand that opposition to the ERA was ill founded & often from out of state, and regardless of any grass roots pro-ERA sentiment were simply ...anti-ERA and no amount of lobbying or grassroots support would change this. The only effective action left was to remove anti-ERA legislators from office....In view of the critical nature of the 1974 election, such direct political action must be started immediately....

As failures of ratification attempts around the country mounted National NOW became convinced that it needed more power to coordinate these battles. In spite of National's earlier insistence that chapters were completely in control, the sanctioning of the creation of ERA "Strike Forces" in 1977 by voting members at the annual conference that year, a resolution pushed by NOW leaders, made the ERA a campaign whose coordination would increasingly occur at the national level.

By 1976 much of NOW's involvement in national party

conventions involved the Equal Rights Amendment.²⁶⁶ This involvement included resolutions to lobby the Democratic and Republican national conventions to ensure support for ERA in their political platforms.²⁶⁷ More opportunities existed within the Democratic Party for the pursuit of the feminist agenda than existed within the Republican Party. NOW leaders and activists at the 1976 National Democratic Convention managed to secure equal gender representation among delegates, for example. In 1980, in spite of the efforts of Carter supporters at the subsequent Democratic Convention August, the delegates passed a platform that contained strong pro-ERA and reproductive rights planks.

On the other hand, feminists had little effect on the national Republican agenda. This, in spite of the fact that NOW continued to emphasize its nonpartisanship. In 1977, for example, NOW strongly campaigned for pro-ERA Republican Gary Myers for election to the Virginia House against the anti-ERA Democratic incumbent. Soon thereafter, President Carter's lack of interest in the ERA or in other feminist issues similarly won him a strong vote of no confidence in 1979. In December,

²⁶⁶ For a more detailed history on the dynamic between women's organizations, political parties and the Equal Rights Amendment, see Jo Freeman, "Political Culture of the Democratic and Republican Parties," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 101, no. 3, Fall 1986, pp. 327-356; "Who You Know Vs. Who You Represent: Feminist Influence in the Democratic and Republican Parties," in Mary Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Feminist Consciousness, Political Opportunity and Public Policy*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, pp. 215-44; "Feminism vs. Family Values: Women at the 1992 Democratic and Republican Conventions," *P.S.: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 26, no. 1, March 1993, pp. 21-28.

²⁶⁷ Memorandum, Chris Guerrero to National Board Members, April 3, 1976.

The NOW National Board...voted unanimously to recommend to the NOW Political Action Committee (NOW/PAC) that it opposes the nomination and re-election of President Jimmy Carter. The recommendation was unanimously passed by the PAC the same weekend.²⁶⁸

In spite of these political activities, it was not until the 1977 National NOW Conference in April that the NOW membership approved the formation of a political action committee. This, in spite of the fact that the political environment after 1974 included many examples of the employment of this tactic by other social movement groups.²⁶⁹

The resolution, which carefully proclaimed its roots in past NOW history, passed by a close vote.²⁷⁰ In spite of the contentiousness of this vote, and the concerns expressed regarding this strategy, the conference also voted to elect Eleanor Smeal, a woman committed to the electoral approach, as the new NOW

²⁶⁸ Carabillo, et al. *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 91.

²⁶⁹ For example, the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) was established in 1974. The National Right to Life PAC was organized in 1975, the same year that Phyllis Schlafly formed the Eagle Forum. In addition, in November, 1975, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops decided to deploy a "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities" - in which they planned to use "all Church sponsored or identifiable Catholic national, regional or diocesan and parochial organizations and agencies...to create an anti-abortion political network throughout the country. The Pastoral Plan specifically calls for the formation of "citizen lobbies" in every congressional district in the United States to work for these ends." Karen DeCrow. "The First Women's State of the Union Address," delivered by NOW President Karen DeCrow on January 13, 1977 at George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

²⁷⁰ Just a few months after the conference, however, the Northwest region passed a resolution (that they subsequently attempted to have adopted at the July, 1977 board meeting) that exhorted NOW to abstain from increased political action, echoing many of the same fears voiced at the National Conference in April about NOW's deepening involvement in political affairs.

president.²⁷¹

As the fight for the passage of the ERA wore on, with few victories and much time spent battling recision attempts, NOW increased its attention to dethroning anti-ERA state legislators and especially those who initially promised support and subsequently traded the votes away. In 1978, NOW PAC proclaimed that "No Turncoat Will Return."

As the fight for ERA became more heated by 1978, Eleanor Smeal moved to adopt an Emergency Declaration resolution (eventually passed) at a National Board meeting that emphasized the need to get the deadline for ERA extended in order to take advantage of election cycles. This, in spite of her acknowledgement of the past failures of this strategy.²⁷²

Her intention to focus on political goals was further brought out in her speech at the 1978 National NOW Conference. Smeal emphasized the emergence of women's issues as vital to the American political arena, and the fact that "in the last 18 months we have become a political movement in every state of this nation."²⁷³

In 1979, NOW guidelines for handling political endorsements within the organization were created. In December of that year,

²⁷¹ Indeed, Smeal was founder (in 1987) and president of the Fund for Feminist Majority (an organization whose opening action was a 'Feminization of Power' campaign to recruit feminist candidates to run for public office) and in 1992 was elected National Secretary of the 21st Century Party. One goal of the 21st Century Party is for women to be 52% of the Party's electoral candidates. Carabillo, et al., *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 148.

²⁷² NOW National Board Meeting Minutes, February 1978.

²⁷³ Transcript, 1978 National NOW Conference, 62.

the national board voted to recommend to the NOW/PAC that it endorse Kennedy for the Democratic and Anderson for the Republican presidential nominees.²⁷⁴

Indeed, NOW's growing investment in the electoral arena reflected a more general trend. For example, feminist organizations became increasingly active in identifying winnable seats for women in party politics as well.²⁷⁵ They also increased their financial contributions to political campaigns at this time. For example, whereas in 1974 only one women's political action committee (PAC) existed, by July of 1983 there were sixteen.²⁷⁶ In 1977, NOW had no political action committee; five years later, NOW had 81 PACs in 40 states.²⁷⁷

Conflict and Controversy in NOW: The ERA and Electoral Politics

In 1980 the Republican Party reversed its historic commitment to the ERA, while the Democratic Party supported its passage for the first time. In spite of the Republican reversal, NOW did not

²⁷⁴ "...chapters and states may determine their own level of participation and therefore may choose to 1. make Anderson or Kennedy endorsements through their own PACs; 2. encourage members to remain uncommitted as to candidate although active in the election campaign on behalf of NOW issues; 3. encourage their members not to participate in the election campaigns; or 4. encourage their members to participate in anti-Carter activities.

²⁷⁵ In 1988, for example, the Women's Campaign Fund (WCF) provided the spark for the inclusion of a new plank in both parties' platforms that encouraged the recruitment of and support for women candidates.

²⁷⁶ *News and Notes*. Center for American Women in Politics, July 1983.

²⁷⁷ Ferree and Hess, *Controversy and Coalition*, p. 118.

abandon hope of influencing Republicans, nor did NOW intend to throw itself completely into Democratic arms: in fact NOW resolved to protest both the Democratic as well as the Republican national conventions in this year.²⁷⁸

The political influence of the far right in the Republican Party increasingly concerned NOW after 1979. This fact was illustrated powerfully by NOW President Eleanor Smeal in her welcoming letter to the 1980 National NOW Conference in which she saw the new battles as being fought in the electoral arena.

We are in the midst of the 1980 election campaigns with a resurging Far Right determined to defeat pro-women's rights candidates and to return women and the nation to the last century. The battle is being fought in selected legislative and Congressional campaigns throughout the nation. NOW/PACs, but most importantly, feminists, are everywhere fighting the -at last- visible political opposition to women's rights.²⁷⁹

In spite of these strong statements, the history of NOW's work towards a full-blown, organized electoral battle towards the passage of the ERA shows that progress towards this goal came in small steps. The opportunity for the ERA to eclipse all other NOW issues, the way it opened the door to a great deal of national influence (increased money, specialized NOW activists) and the way National's ERA strategy evolved all set a significant portion of NOW's members on edge.

²⁷⁸ The Democratic Party planned to use a binding rule on delegates - delegates would be required to support the candidate they supported at the time of their selection as delegates.

²⁷⁹ Letter from Eleanor Smeal, 1980 National NOW Conference Book.

While it appears that even early on the political action strategy seemed very much on the minds of National NOW, the leadership was also aware of the unease with which members sometimes greeted attempts to enter mainstream politics, and was therefore cognizant of the need to show their commitment to grassroots and protest-oriented action. Charlene Suneson's 1973 proposal for a political action arm of NOW focused on using such a vehicle only for a specific purpose, the ERA. In addition, the structure of this temporary 'political device' would mimic existing NOW structures, and Suneson's memo carefully outlined the terms of its dissolution. In spite of these assurances, it appears considerable discomfort remained with the idea in the organization.

I have had a couple communications (sic) that indicate there is some misunderstanding about the political device. It has not been put forth because I or anyone else "likes" political action. My own involvement in NOW has been entirely legislative. Where legislative action can accomplish ratification of the ERA there is no reason to bring in political action. However, various state ERA coordinators have indicated they do not believe legislative action alone will ratify the ERA.²⁸⁰

Throughout this period, dissenters expressed a variety of concerns falling into three major categories. First, NOW's commitment to grassroots mobilizing seemed to be threatened by these activities. Second, NOW's position as an outsider in the system and as the

²⁸⁰ Memorandum, Charlene Suneson to Board of Directors, October 12, 1973. This proposal was shelved in any case in 1974 because she was still unable to get complete clarification from the IRS regarding NOW's relationship with the political arm. NOW National Board Meeting Minutes, February 1974.

vanguard of feminist activism might be eroded. Finally, NOW's independence from political parties, an integral part of NOW's founding Statement of Purpose, could be compromised.

NOW's Commitment to Grassroots Mobilizing

In a memo to National Board members, Suneson outlined the political realities of winning the passage of the ERA. So conscious of skepticism regarding this tactic was Suneson that she noted in one memo that

...It undoubtedly will be wondered if there is a hidden agenda to this proposal, if it is a grab for internal power in NOW, etc. IT IS NOT. I personally have been a federal government employee since 1954 and am precluded from direct political action by the Hatch Act.

The ERA issue also concerned some members because the enormity of the task practically required coalition work with organizations like ERAmerica and the National Women's Political Caucus. Yet, participation in these coalitions cost NOW precious funds, as well, and often the positions or strategic preferences of the other organizations in the coalition were objectionable to NOW leaders and/or members.²⁸¹ For example, Mansbridge notes the tension that erupted between NOW and its partners in Illinois when the local NOW group insisted on staging a demonstration during a critical stage in state legislative deliberation.²⁸²

In part this fact was a result of persistent concerns about

²⁸¹ See, for example, "Memo to NOW Board Members, from Legislative Task Force, Florida State Legislative Coordinator, March 8, 1976.

²⁸² Jane Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1986.

NOW's endorsement policy. One workshop at NOW's Western Regional Conference in 1976 was entitled, "NOW's Political Endorsement - Power or Confusion?" Indeed these questions came to a head at the 1977 NOW National Convention during debate on a number of issues related to NOW's political activity and ambitions. The election of a new president, Eleanor Smeal, brought up questions about the strategic directions NOW leadership intended to pursue. The following excerpts from the minutes of the 1977 Convention illustrate these points.

[Clare Frenzel, Philadelphia NOW]
...Yesterday at a press conference, Karen [NOW President DeCrow] said that there was unity in NOW. Well, I think there's unity in terms of our determination to build NOW, and to make it grow, but I think that in terms of the strategy we should be using there is a great deal of discussion that must come out on the floor. She said that today it was not our fault that the ERA was not passed, but I would maintain that it is our fault, and that the strategy of going around and sending a strike team to hold tea parties with these legislators and turn around and vote down the ERA, and vote down the ERA, has got to be questioned. I think we need to be out on the streets.²⁸³

[Robbie Sheer, Newark, NJ NOW]
...I think electing officers of NOW is a very important responsibility, and I want to make clear that we know who we're electing to lead us in the next year, where they stand on the debate that has been taking place in the workshops and in the corridors of this convention ever since yesterday morning. A debate over whether to continue relying on politicians to solve and to win women's rights, or whether to build a vast feminist movement...²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Transcript, National NOW Conference, April 22-24 1977, Sunday, April 24, A.M. and P.M. Sessions, pp. 28-29.

²⁸⁴ Transcript, National NOW Conference, April 22-24 1977, Sunday, April 24, A.M. and P.M. Sessions, pp. 39-40.

The conference attendees also debated a proposal to create an ERA "Strike Force." The provisions of the proposal were not very specific, but it engendered many questions about whether such a committee was intended to be primarily involved in political activity or not. Repeatedly, individuals demanded to know whether all forms of protest activity were to be encouraged with a strike force, or whether it was simply another mainstream political tool.²⁸⁵ In spite of these objections, the motion was carried.²⁸⁶

These events stoked the fear in some of NOW's activists that the organization was no longer theirs.

For many of us this resolution represented our fears that a centralized monolith would indeed be created under Ellie's direction - with little accountability to the membership... In addition, we feared that all other issues would be neglected in favor of ERA. This was a particular concern of the Lesbian Caucus in NOW. However, on the floor of the Convention few delegates dared stand up and vote against the rhetoric as well as the legitimate arguments centered around the success of such a team in Indiana.²⁸⁷

One group of leaders and activists dissenting with the path paved by the majority of delegates and officers managed to influence NOW in other ways. The "group with no name" helped invigorate NOW's attention to lesbian rights issues, and legacy of their work has helped keep lesbian rights on NOW's agenda to the

²⁸⁵ Transcript, National NOW Conference, April 22-24 1977, Sunday, April 24, A.M. and P.M. Sessions, pp. 113-114.

²⁸⁶ Transcript, National NOW Conference, April 22-24 1977, Sunday, April 24, A.M. and P.M. Sessions, pp. 114. The minutes do not record the vote tally.

²⁸⁷ Reckitt, *Memoir*, p. 27.

present. One critical event occurred when this group helped orchestrate a Lesbian Rights Conference hosted by the Northeast Region of NOW. "[C]alled 'With a Little Help from Our Friends,' [t]his conference ...was a watershed in NOW's fight to make lesbian rights an issue for all feminists."²⁸⁸

Outsider/Insider Tensions

In addition, some members felt that participating in the partisan politics would lead NOW in a more conservative direction. The desire to influence electoral outcomes involves attracting the prototypical median voter and convincing the candidate for office that you are a good representative of the median voter. Not surprisingly then, NOW began working more visibly after 1975 (testifying before Congress, for example) on issues facing displaced homemakers and regarding questions of equal allocation of social security benefits. Carabillo, et al. state that in 1980, for example, that "Bay Area NOW and Houston (TX) NOW coordinated a "Family Day for the ERA" Rally on the steps of Houston's City Hall. The purpose of the rally was to educate the public on the candidates' positions on the ERA, to emphasize that the ERA would strengthen family life and to demonstrate the importance of the homemaker's contribution to the family."²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ Reckitt, *Memoir*, p. 24.

²⁸⁹ Carabillo, et al., *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 96.

These actions on the part of chapters and National NOW were in keeping with the recommendations of those working on NOW's public relations. Esther Kaw, Vice President of Public Relations in 1976 underscored the fact that "...the objectives of NOW's program 1976-1977 fall into three major areas:

1. promoting the ERA as the embodiment of traditional American values
2. providing technical and informational assistance to NOW chapters and task forces;
3. encouraging greater involvement in NOW by women who are not, for the most part, aligned with the feminist movement (homemakers, older women, minority women, office workers, rural women, teachers)²⁹⁰

NOW also called for and President Smeal chaired a meeting in Washington of both pro- and anti-choice groups in order to "discover any interests in common." This attempt at understanding seemed odd since, after 1975, Catholic, Mormon and conservative groups as well as members of Congress began to seriously threaten abortion rights through vehicles such as the Human Life Amendment (HLA) and the Hyde Amendment. In addition, NOW knew that these groups were often also working together to gain the rescission of the ERA in ratified states (costing NOW and other groups time and money to defeat), to pass anti-gay and lesbian legislation, and to defeat feminist proposals generally. It is unlikely, then, that National NOW truly thought common ground could be reached on the abortion

²⁹⁰ Memo from Esther Kaw, Vice-President of Public Relations to National NOW Board of Directors, April 3, 1976.

issue. Instead, the press conference turned chaotic as one anti-choice group turned up with "displays of so-called pickled fetuses." This may have helped NOW and pro-choice groups look more rational than the anti-choice groups to the mainstream press and their readers, but NOW activists might not have appreciated its leadership's participation in such a meeting.²⁹¹

Compromising NOW's Political Independence

Finally, by participating in electoral politics, NOW could stray from its initial Statement of Purpose by identifying itself with one party or another. The non-partisan nature of NOW's involvement was repeatedly stressed in board meetings and especially at national conventions; NOW's 1966 Statement of Purpose was often referred to as a guiding principle in this respect. One way NOW tried to ensure that it remained a non-partisan organization was by refusing to endorse presidential candidates. In spite of continuous resolutions to support candidates and to get involved in the financing of electoral campaigns, at this stage it was not only NOW's historical commitment to non-partisanship that restrained its political activity. A significant institutional barrier existed as well: rules regarding NOW's tax-exempt status (under 501 (c) (4) of the Internal Revenue Code) prohibited national NOW or its chapters from supporting, endorsing or contributing to political parties or candidates. As late as 1974 letters were sent to 'all political parties' to both inform them of

²⁹¹ Carabillo, et al., *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 86.

the May NOW National Conference but also to warn them that

We are continually analyzing the behavior of politicians based on documented information and share this with our increasing numbers of members and friends. In this educational effort, we often work with the NWPC to which many of us belong...²⁹²

The resolution on the establishment of a NOW political action committee in the late 1970s similarly illustrated the unease members felt with the use of political tactics. Debaters frequently mentioned incidents in Florida and Nevada in which NOW time, money and energy were spent on legislators' election campaigns who subsequently failed to support NOW positions. In other cases, NOW chapters apparently compromised their strategies in order to try to gain consideration for ERA, which failed nonetheless.

The concerns expressed during the debate on the PAC resolution included: 1) NOW would be duped by politicians who took NOW resources without intending to support NOW in crucial votes after elections; 2) concern that NOW would be co-opted by party organizations; 3) fear that such action would alienate NOW members not of the endorsed party; 4) concern that other feminist organizations (such as the Women's Political Caucus) whose main goal was to support women's candidates would be weakened; and finally 5) worry about the possibility that increasing involvement in electoral campaigns would hinder lobbying efforts. Those supporting the resolution focused on the political "realities" and

²⁹² Memorandum to All Political Parties, January 17, 1974.

the fact that electoral politics was not a new dimension in NOW's collective action repertoire.²⁹³

Leaders' Responses: Maintaining Founding Principles

While electoral activity clearly gained attention and legitimacy in NOW after 1979, it is important to remember the wide range of issues and tactics that continued to be discussed and employed in the organization. Throughout the period from 1979 to 1984, workshops at national conferences consistently included a wide variety of topics including worksite organizing, mental health, early childhood development, organizing homemakers, feminist consciousness raising, lesbian rights, insurance and credit discrimination and women in the military. In February 1983, after the failure of ERA, the National NOW Board moved to "reaffirm its commitment" to the broad range of feminist issues while maintaining the political resources it acquired during the ERA battle.²⁹⁴

In fact, even as Smeal and the Majority Caucus' view that a full-force electoral strategy was critical to the ERA's ratification became an accepted truth at the 1977 Detroit National Conference, NOW continued to employ a diverse array of tactics. National regularly reassured states that they would not be overrun

²⁹³ It should be noted that political betrayal in the 1970s was a common concern, given the events of the Vietnam War, Nixon's unfortunate exit, and the fact that during this period activist groups like NOW discovered that they had been infiltrated and watched by the FBI.

²⁹⁴ NOW National NOW Board Meeting Minutes, February 1983.

with National NOW activists without their consent. They encouraged chapters to decide on the best way to work on the ERA project, and NOW National also initiated diverse activities, including White House vigils, boycotts, door-to-door education campaigns, walkathons, marches dedicated to suffragists and protests at Mormon Temples (one of which involved activists chaining themselves to Temple gates) and conservative churches.

Each chapter must and should do what it believes best to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. No one is wiser than you in your chapters. You know your people. You set your strategy. You make your decision you do to or for your legislators whatever and wherever you feel will pass the ERA... The people's march has been suggested from input from almost all chapters... Whether you wish to quietly lobby...whether you wish to participate only at home in your area. These will be your decisions. The choice will be yours. You are wise...²⁹⁵

Finally, a dramatic example of NOW National's continuing adherence to the feminist principles it preached since its inception occurred at a critical stage in the ERA campaign. NOW released its position in early 1980 stating that women must be included in the military draft. This position had enormous costs: Mansbridge, for example, notes the assistance this position gave the opposition and the concomitant crippling effect it had on NOW's ability to argue that it represented the average woman or average voter, and the divisions this announcement evoked among volunteers.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ Edna Saffy, *DO IT NOW*, January/February 1975.

²⁹⁶ Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*.

The historical analysis presented suggests that NOW continually couched its deployment of the electoral strategy in a manner calculated to be soothing to its membership, and this testifies to the fact that the leadership understood the need to remain attentive to its grass-roots supporters.

While NOW certainly professionalized over time, this fact is not the sole impetus for its involvement in mainstream forms of political action. The political environment -- for example, the growth of conservative political action committees -- also encouraged this shift.

The leadership of NOW, in pursuing the opportunities that electoral activism offers, continues to acknowledge the importance of these organizational values to its membership. NOW's membership is to remain committed to the organization. The fact that the electoral strategy continues to be controversial in the organization shows that its acceptance by NOW members as a legitimate form of activism is contingent upon National NOW's attention to the potential problems that institutionalized political action can bring, including cooptation and the alienation of its members.

CHAPTER FIVE

SURVIVING THE FAILURE OF THE ERA

The depth of NOW's investment in the ratification campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment should not be underestimated. The push towards ratification, begun in 1972, became NOW's primary goal in 1978 as the organization declared an ERA "State of Emergency" at its annual conference that year. The group hoped at this time to achieve an extension of the deadline for ratification from Congress, and the State of Emergency mobilized the entire organization for the cause. At the 1980 annual national conference, NOW members further voted for "total ERA mobilization" which called for increasing the size, diversity, and range of the ERA ratification campaign:

...[NOW] pledges the development of at least three major projects the size of the 1980 Illinois campaign, continuing drives to stop rescission, development of new techniques of creative nonviolent protest, maximum use of NOW resources across the country, and vigorous pursuit of legal cases on the ERA Extension/Rescission and the Boycott.²⁹⁷

In addition, members voted to extend officer and board terms by one year in order to provide continuity and to allow full concentration on the ERA drive.

²⁹⁷ "Total ERA Mobilization Voted," *National NOW Times*, October/November 1980, p. 1.

In the final years of the drive, approximately one quarter of NOW's entire budget was devoted to ERA. In the revised 1980 budget, 24% of the total expenditures were earmarked for the ERA, versus 6.75% of the total budget earmarked for general action programs.²⁹⁸ In 1981, 25% of total expenditures were allocated for the ERA campaign, and 9% for all other issues.²⁹⁹

As the struggle for the ERA wound down, NOW found itself not only flush with money and members but also with political contacts and a great deal of valuable information on inner workings of both state and federal legislatures. The organization also enjoyed a much more comprehensive understanding of legislator's campaign cycles.

The decade long battle for ERA has been a political training ground for women. Even if they lose the war, they have learned well how to play the game. The troops in the National Organization for Women and sister groups who have fought for ERA now know how to lobby legislators, run candidates for office, hold news conferences, raise money, stage rallies, and effectively use both the news media and paid advertising to get their message across.³⁰⁰

NOW's members gained an enormous amount of experience in creative and cutting-edge techniques for fundraising for the ERA. For example, by 1982 the organization was capable of raising \$1

²⁹⁸ "Summary of National Board Meetings: October 2, 1980," *National NOW Times*, October/November 1980, p. 23.

²⁹⁹ "Summary of National Board Meeting: April 24-26, 1981," *National NOW Times*, September 1981, p. 15.

³⁰⁰ Clay F. Richards, "Women Seen as Major Political Force," *National NOW Times*, April 1982, p. 1.

million dollars per month via direct mail.³⁰¹ NOW also became sophisticated in its employment of legislative lobbying tactics, in the organization and management of rallies and protests, and in understanding the kinds of influence NOW could wield in electoral contests.

The intricacies of party politics became more transparent to the group, as more of NOW's members and its leadership became involved in the Democratic and Republican parties. NOW Vice President Jane Wells-Schooley, President Eleanor Smeal, and NOW activist Molly Yard all were major proponents of political action and were active themselves in party politics. Jane Wells-Schooley, for example, testified on the inclusion of women's rights issues before the Democratic Party's temporary platform committee in 1980, and Molly Yard, a member of the Rules Committee, also served as floor manager for one provision (Article 11), which provided for the equal representation of women at all levels of Democratic Party organization.³⁰²

NOW encouraged such activism in party politics through a resolution passed by NOW's 1979 annual conference attendees. By vote of the 1979 NOW Convention, members were urged to be active both inside and outside the Democratic and Republican conventions. Participants at "how to" workshops served as the nucleus for organizing NOW members to run as delegates to the National

³⁰¹ Paul Taylor, "NOW Seeking \$3 Million War Chest to Oust ERA Foes, Fight New Right," *National NOW Times*, September 1982, p. 6.

³⁰² "Democratic Rules Committee to Offer Strong 'Equal Division' Proposals," *National NOW Times*, August 1980, p. 4.

Conventions. State and National NOW leaders were kept informed as to proposed delegate rules, action teams were put on alert during primaries, and state delegate selection information was compiled. As a result, over 200 of the delegates and alternates to the Democratic Convention were NOW members.³⁰³

At the moment of ERA's demise, NOW's main organizational challenge was to maintain as many of the resources it gained in the campaign as possible. To do this, the leadership needed to explain the failure in terms that shifted the focus of attention on a new battle to be won. In this way, NOW would be able to stave off major disillusionment within its ranks of activists and donors. As we will see, many months before the 1982 deadline for ratification, NOW's leadership prepared the way for an exit strategy that attempted to quell these membership concerns about the organization's participation in electoral activism in the post-ERA era.

The Political Environment

The election of Ronald Reagan in late 1980 clearly put feminists on the defensive. Feminists realized that the rise of the New Right and the Religious Right posed formidable challenges to previous feminist gains and that any new steps forward seemed

³⁰³ "Feminist Display Clout at Democratic Convention," *National NOW Times*, September 1980, p. 4.

unlikely.³⁰⁴ These groups were major supporters of Reagan and now enjoyed access to the Executive office. Among the powerful groups focusing on electoral politics in the early 1980s were Reverend Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, the Life Amendment PAC (LAPAC), the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) and Paul Weyrich's Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress.³⁰⁵ The political influence of the far right in the Republican Party increasingly concerned NOW after 1979. This fact was illustrated by NOW President Eleanor Smeal in her welcoming letter to the 1980 National NOW Conference in which she described the new battleground, the electoral arena.

We are in the midst of the 1980 election campaigns with a resurgent Far Right determined to defeat pro-women's rights candidates and to return women and the nation to the last century. The battle is being fought in selected legislative and congressional campaigns throughout the nation. NOW/PACs, but most importantly, feminists, are everywhere fighting the -at last- visible political opposition to women's rights.³⁰⁶

In response to these changing political circumstances, NOW rescinded a December 1979 resolution which opposed the re-election of President Carter at its 1980 National Conference, stating that the Republican party "is now held totally captive by the Radical Right," and that

³⁰⁴ Roberta Spalter-Roth and Ronnee Schreiber, "Outsider Issues and Insider Tactics: Strategic Tensions in the Women's Policy Network during the 1980s," in Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin, eds. *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1995, p. 105.

³⁰⁵ "Right-Wing Victory Claims Distorted," *National NOW Times*, December/January 1980-1981, p. 1, 5.

³⁰⁶ Letter from Eleanor Smeal, National NOW Conference Book, 1980.

...The Republican Party is being used by the Radical Right to change the fact of America by...using the millions of dollars big business is pouring into political action committees, to seize control of state legislatures and control of the Congress of the United States itself; And Whereas, in light of these dire developments NOW cannot remain on the sidelines...³⁰⁷

In light of this apparent threat, the 1980 Conference then voted to work against Reagan's election, to expose his viewpoints to the American people, and to "launch an unceasing campaign to turn out votes for our friends in Congress and in the state legislatures."³⁰⁸

In 1980, the Republican Party reversed its historic commitment to the ERA, as the Democratic Party supported its passage for the first time. In spite of the Republican reversal, NOW did not abandon hope of influencing Republicans, nor did NOW intend to throw itself completely into Democratic arms. In fact, NOW resolved to protest both the Democratic as well as the Republican national conventions in that year.

While initially feminists hoped for assistance from Congress, the election in the 1980s of numerous conservatives meant that this assistance would be marginal.³⁰⁹ In fact, in order to pass pro-feminist legislation in the 97th Congress, in which Republicans held a majority in the Senate and had made substantial gains in the House, a great deal of compromise was inevitable. NOW, however,

³⁰⁷ "1980 Conference Resolutions, 1980 Presidential Elections," *National NOW Times*, October/November 1980, p. 6.

³⁰⁸ "1980 Conference Resolutions, 1980 Presidential Elections," *National NOW Times*, October/November 1980, p. 6.

³⁰⁹ Spalter-Roth and Schreiber, "Outsider Issues," p. 112.

has historically often proved unwilling to accede to such compromises.³¹⁰

Anti-feminist groups also affected the sociopolitical environment of the early 1980s. Anti-ERA groups, for example, had effectively portrayed NOW and feminist movement groups generally as far left of the mainstream, and as radicals bent on destroying all separation between men and women in society. In their struggle against feminists, anti-feminists had an ally in the new Administration.

...The Reagan administration looked benignly on a right-wing counterattack against the modest feminist legislative gains and organizational funding. As women's organizations faced conservative backlash in the 1980s, the distinction between "radical" and "mainstream" feminism continued to fade. Even the most mainstream feminist issues, such as educational equity, came under attack...³¹¹

In the early 1980s, abortion rights again became a critical issue for feminists as anti-abortion groups gained in power and visibility and as women's clinics became major targets for these groups. After Reagan (a staunch opponent of abortion) took office, NOW noted an increase in violent acts perpetrated against women's health clinics and the doctors and employees who worked in them.³¹²

³¹⁰ Comment to author by Lois Reckitt, longtime NOW member and activist. Also see Spalter-Roth and Schreiber, "Outsider Issues," p. 114. Spalter-Roth and Schreiber state that "[f]or example, NOW and others refused to accept a compromise cap on damages in sex discrimination suits in the 1991 Civil Rights Bill and dropped out of the coalition organized by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights to support the legislation."

³¹¹ Spalter-Roth and Schreiber, "Outsider Issues," p. 112; Patricia Ireland, *What Women Want*, New York, Penguin Books USA Inc., 1996, p. 167.

³¹² Ireland, *What Women Want*, pp. 167-8.

The introduction of the Human Life Amendment (HLA) in Congress, a bill that exposed physicians to prosecution if they provided abortions, was a further blow to NOW and other pro-choice activists. The *National NOW Times* noted that

President Reagan is orchestrating the assault [on abortion rights] on all fronts from the White House - by his appointment of well-known anti-abortion and anti-birth control leaders to top positions in the Department of Health and Human Services; by his administration's regulations and proposals that make it more difficult to get an abortion and to use preferred methods of birth control; and by his endorsement of a constitutional amendment that would prohibit abortion and certain forms of birth control.³¹³

Threats to the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision convinced many feminists that the judiciary could not be relied upon to uphold feminist gains. The increase in the appointment of conservative judges throughout the 1980s left little room for hope for feminist goals. At the same time, the rescission battles NOW was forced to wage in state courts (against states wishing to rescind their ratification of the ERA) was further evidence that feminists needed strong allies within state legislatures themselves.³¹⁴

³¹³ Jane Wells-Schooley, "Reagan Leads Republican Assault on Abortion, Birth Control," *National NOW Times*, August 1982, p. 1.

³¹⁴ See, for example, Ellen Goodman, "At Large," *National NOW Times*, November 1981, p. 5.

In fact, even appointments of women to federal office fell during Reagan's tenure, further depleting the pool of possible feminist allies. Representative Patricia Schroeder (D-CO), chair of the Subcommittee on Civil Service of the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, found that by mid-term, Carter's appointments of women (22.4%) greatly exceeded that of Reagan (14.6%). Toni Carabillo, Judith Meuli and June Bundy Csida, *Feminist Chronicles*, Los Angeles, Women's Graphics, 1993, p. 108.

In addition, NOW learned that public support did not always move intransigent legislators. Marches, rallies, and public outreach all constituted important tactics during the ERA campaign, for example, but the public support that this activity generated did not result in victory. By mid-1982, just before the deadline ratification, a Harris Survey found that public support for the amendment reached 63% nationwide.³¹⁵ Similar levels of support were found in North Carolina. However, as the *National NOW Times* reported in disgust,

...despite the fact that North Carolinians favored the ERA by a 60-31% margin, the Senate voted to table the Amendment, 27-23. In fact, opponent senators showed an overwhelming disregard for the wishes of their constituents. According to polls taken in 12 districts represented by 17 senators, public support ranged from a high of 65% for ERA...to a low of 56% [in favor].³¹⁶

A similar scenario occurred when activists attempted to revive the ERA in Congress. "...Once again, as in the state legislatures, some Representatives pledged to support the ERA voted

³¹⁵ Louis Harris, "ERA Support Soars As Deadline Nears," *National NOW Times*, June/July 1982, p. 3.

³¹⁶ "ERA Countdown Ends: Spurs Renewed Fight for Equality," *National NOW Times*, August 1982, p. 1.

The battle in Illinois to overturn the rule that a required a 3/5 majority to ratify the Amendment further showed NOW activists the importance of having allies on the inside of legislative institutions. Illinois House Speaker George Ryan proved the major obstacle in this fight in his refusal to allow consideration of a change to majority rule. The Amendment finally failed by four votes.

"no," including 14 cosponsors - just enough to make the Amendment fall short of the required 2/3 vote by six votes."³¹⁷

The discovery of a "gender gap" - a difference between the sexes in their voting behavior - in the 1980 elections encouraged NOW leaders during this difficult period.³¹⁸ The existence of this gap was immediately noted by the leadership and reported to NOW's membership.³¹⁹ Its existence was also noted by electoral candidates. At the 1983 NOW National Conference all six Democratic presidential candidates pledged that they would consider a woman for vice president during a forum featuring presidential hopefuls Senators Alan Cranston, John Glenn, Gary Hart, Earnest Hollings, former Senator George McGovern and former Vice President Walter Mondale. Their presence was recognition of both the political stature of NOW and the growing awareness of the gender gap.³²⁰ The National Women's Political Caucus experienced similar success in attracting presidential candidates at their own meeting in 1983.³²¹

³¹⁷ Carabillo, et al., *Feminist Chronicles*, p. 109. For examinations of the reasons for the failure, see Jane De Hart Mathew and Donald Mathew, "The Cultural Politics of ERA's Defeat," *Organization of American Historians Newsletter*, Vol. 10, no. 4, November 1982; Jane Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1986; Mary Frances Berry, *Why the ERA Failed: Women's Rights and the Amending Process of the Constitution*, Bloomington, Indiana University, 1986; Donald G. Mathews and Jane S. DeHart, *Sex, Gender and the Politics of the ERA: A State and the Nation*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1990.

³¹⁸ Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1999, pp. 415-432.

³¹⁹ "Women Vote Differently than Men: Feminist Bloc Emerges in 1980 Elections," *National NOW Times*, December/January 1980-1981, p. 1.

³²⁰ Carabillo, et al., p. 109

³²¹ Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, p. 420.

The gender gap, and politician's reactions to it, bolstered arguments made by NOW's leadership that the potential for creating change existed in the electoral arena, and that NOW's involvement in politics had not been misguided. One UPI writer noted that "Republicans are so worried about the women's vote in the 1982 congressional elections that their campaign manual urges candidates to play up their identification with women's groups wherever possible."³²²

Another important aspect of the political environment of the early 1980s was NOW's success at the 1980 Democratic Convention. As noted earlier, NOW initially began its major push for member involvement in the national party conventions at its 1979 annual conference, and subsequently the organization held trainings and workshops to that end.³²³ The 1980 Convention was the first convention at which women comprised 50% of the voting delegates at a party convention; 200 delegates and alternates were NOW members. NOW members were deeply involved in the entire process, including Platform and Rules Committee Meetings.

In spite of the opposition of Carter delegates, major feminist successes at this convention included one plank in the Democratic platform that enjoined the party to refuse assistance to candidates unsupportive of the ERA and another that supported

³²² Clay F. Richards, "Women Seen as Major Political Force," *National NOW Times*, April 1982, p. 6.

³²³ "Feminists Display Clout at Democratic Convention," *National NOW Times*, September 1980, p. 4.

federal funding of abortions for Medicaid patients.³²⁴ In addition, "the Rules Committee had voted to amend the Democratic Party Charter to provide equal division not only in its delegate selection rules, but also on the membership of the Democratic National Committee, the Executive Committee, all national official Party bodies, and state central committees."³²⁵

These successes suggested to NOW leadership the potential gains available when working within the political arena. To that effect, an editorial in the *National NOW Times* noted that the real significance of the Democratic Convention is the point that equal representation makes a difference in terms of the ability of feminists to wield influence, and that when women are represented equally, they can overcome even hostile socio-political environments. This equality of representation allowed feminists to resist policy compromise and the co-optation of their positions (two major problems concerning NOW when working within the party system) since they enjoyed power in numbers.³²⁶

NOW's Response to the Failure of the ERA

The demise of the ERA left NOW with several challenges critical to its long-term stability and viability as an organization. One of these challenges was to maintain the

³²⁴ "Feminists Display Clout at Democratic Convention," *National NOW Times*, September 1980, p. 1.

³²⁵ "Feminists Display Clout at Democratic Convention," *National NOW Times*, September 1980, p. 4.

³²⁶ "The Significance of the Democratic Convention," *National NOW Times*, September 1980, p. 7.

political and economic resources gained during the ten-year ERA campaign. Another problem was the fear that many newer members, attracted to NOW initially by the ERA issue, might be tempted to exit now that the ratification deadline had passed. Thus, NOW was pressed to find ways to redirect members' and donors' attention to other issues in order to retain their support. It had to manage these challenges within the context of a socio-political environment largely hostile to its goals. Finally, the organization's public image suffered as a legacy of the ERA drive, as Anti-ERA groups succeeded in painting NOW and other feminists as being well out of the mainstream of public opinion.

NOW's leadership managed the end of the ERA campaign in several ways. First, NOW's officers carefully laid the groundwork for the post-ERA period well before the 1982 deadline. Obstacles to passage of the ERA, after all, were many, and well-known by the leadership and by political analysts. (Indeed, no state ratified after 1977.) NOW prepared its activists for possible failure while managing to commit the organization wholeheartedly to the final push towards ratification. The advantages to the organization of maintaining its commitment to the ERA strategy in spite of the long odds against ratification included the continued influx of members and money, in addition to the publicity created for the feminist agenda in general and NOW in particular.

As the *National NOW Times* reported at NOW's annual conference in 1980, President Smeal did not pretend success was inevitable. Instead she stated that:

I cannot, will not promise victory. I'm begging you and begging us not to save this organization for something else, but to put it on the line now for equality. There is something wrong when we must be assured a victory. We must be willing to put ourselves on the line for the principle of equality for women...Knowing that all the political pundits will tell us that we will lose. Knowing that they are probably right under normal circumstances. But knowing that it is our duty, responsibility, love, commitment to women's equality. And knowing that our belief that it can be done is as important as all the wisdom of those political analysts.³²⁷

In an effort to maintain membership rolls, NOW embarked on a membership drive shortly after June 1982 even though the group had more members than ever before at that time. Such a drive took advantage of NOW's visibility, emphasized its continued presence as a group to the public and to politicians and supporters, and was a way to stem the inevitable tide of members exiting the group after the ERA battle was over. NOW also made a commitment to renew its investment in the broad range of feminist issues, while also retaining the passage of the ERA (especially state ERAs) as one of its priorities.

Turning the explanation for the failure of the ERA (the fact that too few feminists were in office) into a new strategic focus for NOW offered several advantages to the group. First, the numbers were so clearly unbalanced in favor of men that this focus was not likely to cause much controversy. In fact, seeking equal

³²⁷ "Total ERA Mobilization Voted," *National NOW Times*, October/November 1980, p. 1.

representation through the election of women officials could be seen as a mainstream goal.

In addition, the focus on electoral activism built on the changes within the American political system since ERA work began in 1972. It was in the early 1970s that more and more groups began to wield influence directly through campaign politics and fundraising for politicians. Concentration on electoral activism was also a likely new strategy for the group because of the skills and resources developed within the organization over the ERA drive. Finally, electoral activism had the potential to insert a wedge into the conservative block which otherwise presented few opportunities for feminist influence.

NOW President Eleanor Smeal closed the campaign to ratify the ERA on June 24, 1982. In her statement, she outlined the obstacles encountered on the ratification drive and four major reasons for its failure. She emphasized in particular NOW's failure to influence legislators through lobbying and the marshalling of public support, and the need for feminists to find a way to become holders of legislative power. The reasons for ERA's demise, as outlined by Smeal, included the following: 1) the new Republican opposition to women's rights; 2) the lukewarm support of Democrats for the ERA; 3) "special corporate interests" such as insurance companies who contributed to anti-ERA groups and to legislators directly; and 4) "sex bias" in the legislatures.

In her statement, Smeal noted the token representation of women in the important unratified states of North Carolina,

Illinois, Oklahoma and Florida. In these legislatures, the ERA was supported by 75% of women lawmakers in contrast to 46% of the men.³²⁸ These findings were borne out more generally by a 1981 study by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), reported in the *National NOW Times*, which surveyed elected officials on their positions on the ERA. Smeal argued that

Unquestionably, the most significant and historic outcome of this campaign is that it will usher in a new era of direct political participation for women. Untold thousands of women have lobbied legislators in the course of this campaign, and what many of them discovered, time and time again, was that they were better qualified to hold office than the men they were lobbying... We are determined to seek direct and just representation for women in government; we are determined to build an independent political force, with the freedom and flexibility to support candidates or not support candidates based upon their proven commitments to women's rights... NOW seeks to recruit and elect a new breed of candidate.³²⁹

Smeal also vowed that NOW would expand upon the use of the economic boycott and "media educational campaigns" to attack companies profiting from discrimination against women. She noted that the passage of the ERA would not be abandoned as a goal, but that activists must work to change the political climate before a reasonable chance of success was possible.

Current NOW President Patricia Ireland noted in her memoirs that it was clear to the leadership why ERA had lost: "...We had to

³²⁸ "ERA Countdown Ends: Spurs Renewed Fight for Equality," *National NOW Times*, August 1982.

³²⁹ "ERA Countdown Ends: Spurs Renewed Fight for Equality," *National NOW Times*, August 1982.

get more women and people of color into elected office. Period."³³⁰
She also argued that "[w]hen state legislators failed to ratify the ERA in 1982, we learned an important lesson: All the grassroots work in the world won't result in progress if there aren't enough women...elected."³³¹

President Smeal underscored the increased strength of the organization even as it faced this major defeat.

We have developed a network of 750 phone banks which have worked and will continue to work for women's rights, a funding base which is bringing in more money monthly than the Democratic Party, an experienced nationwide volunteer and professional corps which numbers in the thousands, and an award-winning media advertising program. The campaign also generated such widespread, enthusiastic support that it has been able to continually produce mass public events, ranging from such single-site events as the ERA Extension March in 1978 that brought 100,000 people to Washington, D.C., to the simultaneous rallies of more than 10,000 each in four unratified state capitols on June 6.³³²

In spite of Smeal's personal reluctance to continued pursuit of the ratification of the ERA, the national NOW board resolved to continue the ERA campaign at a February 1983 board meeting. The resolution stated that, due to the greater emphasis on the political power of women due to the gender gap and PAC activity, and the fact that "full equality for women will be achieved only through a three-pronged strategy that includes 1) the politicization of American women, 2) a comprehensive and vigorous

³³⁰ Ireland, *What Women Want*, p. 135.

³³¹ Ireland, *What Women Want*, p. 263.

³³² "ERA Countdown Ends: Spurs Renewed Fight for Equality," *National NOW Times*, August 1982.

campaign to eliminate sex discrimination, and 3) passage of the Equal Rights Amendment," NOW must renew its commitment to the ERA while acknowledging that "we reaffirm our commitment for a national program emphasizing the full range of priorities of the organization..."³³³

Well before the ratification deadline arrived in mid-1982, NOW's leadership began preparing the membership for the possibility of failure. In the years between 1979-1982, they frequently suggested the importance of bypassing recalcitrant legislators by directly electing those supportive of feminist goals. In addition to these exhortations, the organization devoted more resources to this tactic after 1980. NOW President Eleanor Smeal warned legislators in 1982 about the new electoral threat NOW posed: "If [legislators] cynically thwart women's just and reasonable demands for equal rights under the law, they will discover a new reality on July 1. Not only will our determination be undiminished, but our numbers and our political skills will be vastly increased."³³⁴

This position was held as well by the next president elected by NOW, Judy Goldsmith, in October of 1982. She pledged to continue strengthening and expanding NOW's political power. She stated at a news conference in 1982 that "I see the results as a strong mandate for the continuation of the electoral political direction we've taken for the last year."

³³³ "NOW Vows New Campaign to Win ERA," *National NOW Times*, March 1983, p. 1.

³³⁴ "Congressional Sponsors Take New Initiative in Campaign," *National NOW Times*, April 1982, p. 1.

...Our organization stands for full participation of women in every area and that means in politics... We are strengthening our political action committees and putting strong emphasis on the economic issues relevant to women..."³³⁵

NOW's leadership thus deftly wove together its explanation for the loss of ERA with a new strategic vision. This new focus offered several advantages for NOW as a whole. First, it focused anger about the loss into a related battle and seemed a natural consequence of the lessons of the ERA drive. The election of friendly candidates was unlikely to be controversial in the public eye, and had the potential to appeal to a broad swath of members, old and new, as well as past and potential donors. When the organization's leaders spoke of the inequity in the representation of women in state and federal elected and appointive offices and in the judiciary, they appealed to the American sense of fairness, and helped combat NOW's radical image.

In addition, over the course of the ERA ratification campaign, NOW's leadership and its members developed a good deal of experience with electoral politics, which meant the group could realistically expect success in the continued development of the electoral strategy. As members participated in campaign politics over the years, they became more comfortable with the tactics and such mainstream activism thus became legitimate in their eyes. As the ERA campaign heated up in the 1980s, for example, one common

³³⁵ "A President with a Pragmatic Approach," *National NOW Times*, October 1982, p. 3.

chant heard at marches and rallies was "We Will Remember in November."

To naysayers, who noted that some of the candidates NOW supported during the ERA process turned their backs on NOW's goals after they won election, the leadership responded with calls for recruiting NOW's own members and other feminist women in the community for office. NOW's success in Florida immediately after the end of the ERA drive demonstrated the great potential in electoral activism. The August 1982 issue of the *National NOW Times* reported a strong increase in the numbers of women filing as candidates in Florida state legislative races after the defeat of the ERA there in June. Smeal noted that "This development is a dramatic indication that we are entering a new era of direct political participation for women...We are committed to working to increase the numbers of women holding elected office, to support those who supported women's rights issues, and to remove from office as many opponents as possible."³³⁶ Patricia Ireland called this change

...a significant shift in NOW's strategy - what then-President Ellie Smeal called a "feminization of power." Instead of just trying to influence those in power, we would now become the people in power... In the six weeks between the defeat of the ERA and the filing deadline for the 1982 elections in Florida, we conducted an urgent search to convince strong feminist women to run for political office... Our strategy worked. Not only did we get more women elected, but we also inspired new

³³⁶ "Unprecedented Numbers of Women File in Florida State Races Post-ERA," *National NOW Times*, August 1982, p. 1.

campaign workers and women voters by having candidates in whom we could believe with our whole hearts.³³⁷

Immediately after the end of the ERA ratification campaign, NOW redeployed activists in North Carolina to work on their primaries, targeting election campaigns of those who had voted against the ERA. "A core of Countdown Campaign activists demonstrated their organizational ability by putting together all the nuts and bolts of the campaign, including phone banking, mailing and literature drops...Their effort continues to point up the development of feminism as a third force in American politics."³³⁸ NOW scheduled a PAC/Woman Walk for August 1982, in order to raise money for NOW PACs at the state level.³³⁹ ERA walkathons were important sources of income for NOW and at the April NOW national board meeting voted that these events should henceforth be NOW PAC fundraisers.³⁴⁰ As if to underscore the point, the Washington D.C. office of NOW changed its window display to exhibit Susan B. Anthony's words, "FAILURE IS IMPOSSIBLE. No Self Respecting Woman Should Wish or Work for the Success of a Party That Ignores Her Sex."³⁴¹

1982 marked the first time that a NOW national conference included workshops on exploiting the apparent electoral gender gap.

³³⁷ Ireland, *What Women Want*, pp. 135-6.

³³⁸ "ERA Supporters Win Major Victories in NC Primaries," *National NOW Times*, August 1982, p. 4.

³³⁹ Note that four types of PACs are affiliated with NOW. These include NOW/EQUALITY/PAC, a national NOW PAC for state and local races; NOW/PAC, the PAC for federal races; and the NOW chapter and state PACs.

³⁴⁰ Judy Goldsmith, "PAC/Woman Walk to Raise Funds for Feminist Candidates," *National NOW Times*, August 1982, p. 5.

³⁴¹ "Window on Washington," *National NOW Times*, September 1982, p. 2.

The gender gap significantly influenced NOW's continued focus on electoral politics, already spurred on by the example of the far right's political activism and NOW's experience in electoral politics through the ERA drive. The NOW board accordingly passed a resolution at its December, 1982 national board meeting to recommend to its NOW/Equality/PAC that a line item in its budget be established to train feminist electoral candidates.

NOW's emphasis on participating in electoral politics was due not only to the fear that relying on entrenched politicians to support feminist goals was a hopeless cause, but also because NOW did not want to squander the skills and resources it gained in the political arena during the campaign for the ERA. A 1983 national conference workshop called "We'll Remember Each November! NOW's Role in Electoral Campaigns" declared that "During the ERA and other women's rights campaigns, NOW has learned political skills that are directly transferable to election campaigns." They addressed issues such as "campaign management and policy development in a candidate's campaign; converting issue phonebanks to political phonebanks; models of individual chapter, state and national NOW involvement in specific campaigns. Overview of campaign training available from National NOW as well as other organizations."³⁴²

The newly elected NOW President, Judy Goldsmith, seemed to be similarly conscientious about the need for the organization to

³⁴² National NOW Conference Book, 1983.

maintain the political resources mobilized during the ERA campaign.

She observed that:

We must capitalize on the strong foundation that has been laid, and take advantage of the extraordinary momentum and opportunities that now exist...The assaults to the Right Wing on women's rights will only be halted with the defeat of the Reagan forces at the voting booth. To that end, I am committed to the political mobilization that will clearly establish us as a nationwide independent political force.³⁴³

As Goldsmith's first term as NOW president drew to a close, however, it became clear to insiders that serious problems with the organization's finances needed to be addressed.³⁴⁴ NOW found itself in debt during Goldsmith's tenure; although repeatedly warned by those with access to the numbers, apparently she was unwilling to cut spending to comport with new funding realities after the ERA campaign ended. The Board repeatedly asked for financial statements, which she did not provide. Shortly before the 1985 NOW elections, NOW members with knowledge of its precarious financial situation (including overdue payments to vendors) asked former president Eleanor Smeal to help save the organization from bankruptcy and to run for president.

One great difficulty with Smeal's return was that Smeal and her supporters did not want to publicize NOW's financial problems for fear of press attention and further loss of support from members and donors. In addition, some members protested that Smeal

³⁴³ "Goldsmith Speech to 1982 NOW Conference," *National NOW Times*, October, 1982, p. 2.

³⁴⁴ Interview with NOW Vice President- Executive Kim Gandy.

was trying to take over the organization. In the end, Smeal's extraordinary record of service to NOW in addition to her campaign that emphasized both massive demonstrations and protests in addition to full-blown electoral activism, won the election. Smeal successfully negotiated a bridge loan to allow NOW to pay its vendors and cut its expenses.

Dilemmas Engendered by NOW's New Strategic Focus

NOW's emphasis on the importance of electoral politics to feminists as the ERA drive wound down was not without controversy in the organization. For example, attention had been paid to electoral politics during the ERA campaign, with only mixed results. Not all members were convinced that electoral political action afforded feminist causes any advantages, since the loyalty of legislators seemed difficult to maintain after elections were over. In addition, some members voiced concern that NOW would limit its work mobilizing women and forsake its activist principles in favor of fundraising and electioneering.

In addition, since the 1980 Republican Convention at which support for the ERA was withdrawn, the ERA and other feminist issues received little positive attention among Republicans.³⁴⁵ NOW's successes within the party structure, then, relied primarily on activity within the Democratic Party. This fact prompted some

³⁴⁵ The bipartisan NWPC felt similarly disenchanted -if not disgusted- with the Republicans and especially Ronald Reagan. Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, p. 424.

members to be concerned that this apparent partisanship undermined member unity and would alienate non-Democrats. The *National NOW Times* reported on the partisan nature of feminist supporters in 1982:

[M]uch of the current Republican political leadership is opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment... ERA proponents can no longer ignore the demonstrated opposition of the Republican political leadership to the Equal Rights Amendment and to women's rights. The issue is rapidly becoming, despite the efforts of Republicans who believe in individual rights, a partisan issue.³⁴⁶

These controversies tended to surface during annual conferences and during campaigns for the national NOW presidency since the late 1970s, which often emphasized this increasing focus on electoral activism.³⁴⁷ These debates engendered many member questions about the place of political activity versus grassroots mobilization in the organization. Repeatedly, individuals demanded to know whether all forms of protest activity were to be pursued, or whether tactics would be limited to electoral politics.³⁴⁸ These questions arose, for example, with the National Board's endorsement of Walter Mondale for president in December 1983. NOW leaders "...hoped it would give them access to Mondale's campaign and a chance to provide some input on issues and tactics."³⁴⁹ However,

³⁴⁶ "Republicans Block Equality for Women," *National NOW Times*, March 1982.

³⁴⁷ On the 1982 NOW National Conference see Myra Marx Ferree and Beth B. Hess, *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1985, p. 118.

³⁴⁸ Ferree and Hess, *Controversy and Coalition*, pp. 113-114.

³⁴⁹ Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, p. 421.

Judy Goldsmith, President of NOW during this period, drew fire from members for being too interested in the national political spotlight and less in the grassroots of the organization.

Choosing Mondale also meant repudiating Jesse Jackson's campaign and abandoning any hope of influencing the Republican Party. Finally, Mondale's appointment of Geraldine Ferraro as his running mate, while a symbolic win for feminists, lost its luster as the campaign subsequently ignored women's issues and advised Ferraro to play them down as well. As Davis notes, ultimately Mondale's campaign contributed little to the feminist cause.³⁵⁰

Questions about the legitimacy of becoming involved in partisan politics arose in feminist organizations other than the National Organization for Women as well, including the National Women's Political Caucus.³⁵¹ Some were unable to maintain the loyalty of activists and the vitality of their groups as they became participants in mainstream forms of political action in the 1980s, including the Women's Equity Action League and the Project on Equal Education Rights (PEER). But all "faced charges that they were irrelevant to most women, were outdated survivors of a more radical era, and had been co-opted and could no longer stir or mobilize the marching millions."³⁵²

First, there was tension between marketing feminist issues in the dominant language of individual liberalism, while simultaneously trying to raise

³⁵⁰ Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, pp. 415-434.

³⁵¹ Spalter-Roth and Schreiber, "Outsider Issues," p. 115.

³⁵² Spalter-Roth and Schreiber, "Outsider Issues," p. 115.

collective consciousness, to mobilize, and to educate around structural issues....[In addition], tension arose between claims to speak for all women and the limited success achieved in trying to recruit a more diverse membership, to participate in diverse coalitions, and to put issues of importance to women of color, lesbians, and working-class women on the policy agenda.³⁵³

Spalter-Roth et al. argue that successful organizations (those who survived the difficult period of the 1980s) had to manage conflicts in strategy choice and change. In particular, the differences among members and leaderships of these groups with respect to the advisability of using insider (mainstream, institutionalized) versus outsider (protest, mobilization-oriented) tactics were a major cause of disagreement.

Management of Conflict and Controversy over NOW Strategy of Electoral Activism

One observer of NOW's involvement in party politics in the 1980s and 1990s, Jo Freeman, has argued that adverse consequences to organizations that participate in electoral politics - including the co-optation of the organization and the loss of support of the organization's 'radical flank' - threaten to undermine the power of the National Organization for Women. In her view, a social movement organization cannot both be a radical advocate of social change and a major player in institutionalized politics.

The Democratic Party's traditional approach to insurgent groups is to co-opt them. The price of becoming an insider is that one must abide by the inevitable requirement to curtail one's commitment to one's own

³⁵³ Spalter-Roth and Schreiber, "Outsider Issues," p. 115.

agenda...NOW may also decide to follow them (the rules), but the consequence of its doing so will be to remove it from the cutting edge of social change... Since an organization cannot be both in the mainstream and in the radical flank without losing credibility and legitimacy, NOW will have to choose which path to follow.³⁵⁴

Although, as Tarrow has argued, a certain flexibility in use of tactics and of strategy choices helps maintain an organization's credibility and visibility during times of unfavorable environments, these choices can also pit members against members, and members against leaders.³⁵⁵ NOW's leaders employed a variety of techniques to limit such discord within the group and to emphasize NOW's continuing commitment to NOW's founding principles.

NOW leaders dealt with member concerns about changing strategies after the demise of the ERA in three ways. They focused on the following: 1) integrating the organization, 2) emphasizing the fundamental principles of feminism and of NOW's continuing commitment to these principles, and 3) underscoring NOW's independence of political parties.

Integration

In order to maintain the cohesion developed during the ERA campaign and to increase this unity now that it was over, NOW leaders instituted a variety of initiatives. They increased funds

³⁵⁴ Jo Freeman, "Whom You Know Versus Whom You Represent" in Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1987, p. 241.

³⁵⁵ Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action, and Politics*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

for chapter development to help further integrate ex-ERA volunteers into the organization as well as to encourage new recruits.³⁵⁶

Leaders vowed to increase communication and information transfers among National NOW, its chapters, and state organizations by paying greater attention to outreach and officer visits. This addressed the fear that electoral politics might alienate National NOW from the grass-roots activists.

NOW President Judy Goldsmith vowed that the organization would "increase and regularize mailings...increase the use of audio and video tapes...increase officer and activist travel to state and regional conferences...and increase the number of conference calls for situational and issue briefings for fast-breaking news." She also pledged to "establish a formal program for both leadership and membership training..." and to "expand our national fundraising and provide assistance to states and chapters for their fundraising projects by providing technical assistance and/or seed money."³⁵⁷ New staff members were hired to deal with major issues of controversy and concern to feminists - racism and lesbian issues. In the 1980s National NOW focused new attention on fighting internal racism, hiring both an "antiracism" coordinator in addition to a Lesbian Rights Project Coordinator.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ "Summary of National Board Meeting, December 4-5, 1982," *National NOW Times*, November/December 1982, p. 11.

³⁵⁷ "Goldsmith Speech to 1982 NOW Conference," *National NOW Times*, October 1982, p. 2.

³⁵⁸ Spalter-Roth and Schreiber, "Outsider Issues," p. 122.

National NOW also attempted to reassure members about the new focus on electoral politics by frequent references to both feminist and NOW history. NOW officers often expressed the fact that political action always constituted a priority for the National Organization for Women. References to mainstream political action undertaken by suffragettes are found in editorials of the *National NOW Times*, and mention of NOW's historical commitment to politics often arose in resolutions supported by officers and board members. Finally, NOW's leadership helped to unite the membership behind the new strategic focus by increasing the number of workshops offered at national annual conferences on party politics, campaign finance and political fundraising.

Emphasizing Fundamental Principles of Feminism

After the end of the ERA campaign, National NOW stepped up its commitment to consciousness raising and to educating its members about feminist principles. The 1982 the National NOW Conference passed a resolution on feminist consciousness raising and NOW board members revised its 1983 budget to fund a national Consciousness-Raising campaign.³⁵⁹

...Whereas, new members who are joining NOW in ever-increasing numbers, may join us out of support for a single issue, like the ERA, and may not be aware of the pervasiveness of sexism, racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, etc, and

³⁵⁹ "Summary of National Board Meeting, December 4-5, 1982," *National NOW Times*, November/December 1982, p. 11.

Whereas, the implementation of NOW's purpose...can best be achieved by increasing the activism and unity of our members,

Whereas, CR is the most successful method of bringing us from the isolation of personal experience to personal awareness of the commonality of injustice perpetuated against women, and

Whereas ... CR thereby increased the unity and activism at all levels of NOW;

Therefore, be it resolved, that this National Conference reaffirms NOW's belief in, and its active commitment to CR as a tried, proven and effective tool for achieving the above-stated objectives...³⁶⁰

NOW leaders also emphasized the fact that the organization now intended to reengage a wide range of feminist issues. In February 1983, after the failure of ERA, the National NOW Board moved to "reaffirm its commitment" to the broad range of feminist issues while maintaining the political resources it acquired during the ERA battle.³⁶¹ Throughout the period from 1979 to 1984, workshops at national conferences consistently included a wide variety of topics such as worksite organizing, mental health, early childhood development, organizing homemakers, feminist consciousness raising, lesbian rights, insurance and credit discrimination and women in the military.

In fact, NOW leaders felt it necessary to emphasize its involvement in a variety of issues and tactics not only in the course of its participation in electoral politics, but also when undertaking any major campaign that involved a mainstream institution such as the media. For example, the 1981 National

³⁶⁰ "1982 Conference Resolutions, Feminist Consciousness Raising Resolution," *National NOW Times*, October, 1982, p. 4.

³⁶¹ NOW National NOW Board Meeting Minutes, February 1983.

Conference passed a resolution committing NOW to raise ten million dollars towards a major ERA media campaign. The resolution carefully assured members as to how this campaign would affect the overall ERA drive.

Whereas, the women of this nation deserve the most modern and comprehensive campaign possible in pursuit of their justice;

Whereas, a several state media campaign is an essential part of a successful contemporary national political campaign;

...Be it further resolved that we reaffirm the multi-tactical, comprehensive nature of the national ERA Countdown Media Campaign which employs political and legislative pressure, mass organizing, grassroots lobbying, coalition building...³⁶²

Resolutions at this conference involving political action on behalf of reproductive rights issues sought to ensure that "the election strategy be centered around maximum involvement of NOW members in recruiting of candidates and the development of campaign support through the training of campaign staff and volunteers..."³⁶³

Emphasizing Political Independence

NOW also emphasized its continuing adherence to the principle of nonpartisanship and took pains to justify its closer involvement with the Democratic Party. In Eleanor Smeal's announcement in June 1982 of the failure to ratify the ERA, she specifically noted not only the major opposition of Republicans but also the reluctance

³⁶² "1981 Conference Resolutions, ERA," *National NOW Times*, October 1981, p. 6.

³⁶³ "1981 Conference Resolutions, Political Action for Reproductive Rights," October 1981, p. 6.

and waffling of Democrats in supporting the Amendment. Just a few days after her message ending the ERA campaign, NOW held a rally in Philadelphia intended to impress upon Democrats

...that although women are showing a preference for Democrats in the polls, the Democrats can't take women for granted.' ... If the Democrats will not discipline their party membership, we will...[W]omen's support...will not be automatically granted...The women's movement is an independent political force.³⁶⁴

The *National NOW Times* regularly reassured members in its opinion sections that NOW would not confine itself to supporting Democrats for office but also insisted that Republicans needed to be "neutralized."

The Equal Rights Amendment Campaign taught us a lesson that we will never forget about American politics..We will never forget that the Republican Party not only deserted women's rights, but it led the attack...This is why in the 1982 elections, very few Republicans can or will be supported by the NOW PACs...This is not to say that NOW/PACs are always against the Republicans...[the] situation is not of our making and not of our choice...The newspapers are making much of the fact that NOW PACs are supporting some men over women... But in 1982 we are not dealing with the most perfect of worlds. We are dealing with what is.³⁶⁵

NOW leaders first drew the attention of members to the importance of gaining "equal division" or gender parity in party in 1979 and 1980. The parity achieved at the 1980 Democratic Convention served as an example of the change that could be wrought

³⁶⁴ "ERA Countdown Ends: Spurs Renewed Fight for Equality," *National NOW Times*, August 1982.

³⁶⁵ "Women Weren't Born Democrat, Republican, or Yesterday," *National NOW Times*, October 1982, p. 7.

by having direct representatives in politics. The strength accrued thereby reduced the possibility of co-optation by the parties.

As the Democratic Party development and platform have been changed by equal division of delegates, so can the Congress and the state legislatures of this country be changed in equal division... Until we have women legislators in numbers equal to men our issues will continue to receive short shrift...Therefore, be it resolved, that the National Organization for Women calls for and commits itself to work for parity in the legislative halls of this nation and at every level of government.³⁶⁶

In addition, National NOW emphasized that there simply were not enough feminists running for elected office. In 1982, women comprised only 6% of candidates for congressional and no more than 20% of candidates for state legislative elections.³⁶⁷ "Therefore, the NOW PACs pledge that at least 20% of all fundraising will be set aside for recruiting and training candidates, campaign managers, and workers for future races. NOW/PACs will create an institute for women's policies to help develop a new breed of political candidate committed to women's rights."³⁶⁸ In addition, NOW made a point of supporting its own activists in their political forays. To encourage and support them the Political Action

³⁶⁶ "1980 Conference Resolutions, Equal Division," *National NOW Times*, October/November 1980, p. 6.

³⁶⁷ "Yes, Ronnie, There Really is a Gender Gap!," *National NOW Times*, November/December 1982, p. 7.

³⁶⁸ "NOW PACs Seek \$3 Million to Fight Right Wing Assault," *National NOW Times*, September 1982, 2.

Committee voted to set aside \$50,000 for NOW/Equality/PAC for these races.³⁶⁹

DISCUSSION

Although questions about the advisability of pursuing lobbying and electoral politics over grass-roots mobilizations began very early in NOW's history, NOW's involvement in mainstream institutions such as party politics began in earnest in the late 1970s.

While conflicts and controversies continually arose regarding the use of insider versus outsider tactics and strategies, controversies which persist today, NOW's attention to sustaining the commitment of its activists helped defuse major defections of membership support and the potential de-legitimization of NOW as a representative of women's issues. In addition, it is likely that the consciousness of NOW's officers of the need to present the organization as an independent, progressive force for feminist issues has resulted in an organization that is effectively more radical, rather than less so, even as it becomes an increasingly political force.³⁷⁰

NOW's management of the organizational crisis caused by the end of the ERA drive was successful in the sense that the organization managed to move purposively towards explicit new goals

³⁶⁹ "NOW PACs Seek \$3 Million to Fight Right Wing Assault," *National NOW Times*, September 1982, p. 2.

³⁷⁰ Spalter-Roth and Schreiber, "Outsider Issues," pp. 125-6.

while maintaining its membership and its financial resources to a large degree. First, Eleanor Smeal's leadership in 1985 in reining in NOW finances and in securing funds to pay off outstanding debt provided critical cement for a crumbling foundation.

Smeal also played a pivotal role in legitimizing the new, electorally oriented strategy. To do so, she and other leaders prepared its membership long before the deadline for ratifying the ERA had passed. They simultaneously emphasized the ways in which the new strategy was consistent with NOW's feminist principles, with its commitment to the mobilization of activists and to the political independence of the organization.

The ability of the National Organization for Women to pursue a new strategic focus on electoral politics was not a foregone conclusion. To do so, it needed to convince old and new members that this goal directly related to the work they had been doing on the Equal Rights Amendment and that it was consonant with NOW's founding principles. This is true because, in addition to needing "accumulated experience" with the new strategy and the impetus of the socio-political environment to legitimize a new strategy, an organization's credo (in this case NOW's feminist principles and its goal of mobilizing activists) may set significant boundaries on the acceptable range of tactics.³⁷¹ Strategies are reflections of organizational life, and as such they convey information about the

³⁷¹ For an example of Tilly's emphasis on the importance structure of government and politics in shaping repertoire see Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, MA, Addison-Wesley, 1978, p. 170.

priorities and commitments of those organizations. Thus, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly note that "...repertoires serve an expressive function as well, one whose logic encourages persistence rather than change."³⁷²

This "moment" in NOW's history illustrates the variety of ways in which an organization's leadership can prepare the group for strategy change. NOW's officers increased the numbers of workshops devoted to electoral tactics and partisan politics at conferences to increase members' comfort with them. They revived consciousness-raising training which helped to further commit newer recruits to feminist activism and also helped convince older members of NOW's continuing involvement in traditional feminist activities. They assured members that monies spent on electoral activism would benefit NOW members as well and that NOW members would be encouraged to run for political office with the support of the organization. The leadership assured members that NOW would not become co-opted by the party system. Finally, NOW employed a wide variety of tactics on a wide variety of issues, quelling arguments that the group was only concerned with mainstream activists and mainstream issues.

NOW's leadership prepared the groundwork for NOW's post-ERA era through a conscious effort to take advantage of the political skills and resources developed during the ERA years. This was aided by the increasing comfort the membership felt in using these

³⁷² Douglas McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly, "To Map Contentious Politics," *Mobilization*, Vol. 1, 1996, p. 23.

skills. At the same time, the organization increased the time and resources it spent on consciousness-raising and education about feminist ideals. This both 1) emphasized NOW's continuing commitment to its feminist principles and 2) encouraged newer members to remain in the group despite the loss of the ERA as a mobilizing issue.

CHAPTER SIX

NOW IN THE 1990S AND BEYOND

In chapters Three through Five I discussed the ways in which, from its inception through the 1980s, the National Organization for Women managed to adhere to its guiding principles in varying political environments. NOW formulated these principles during its founding years - between 1966 and 1971. These principles emphasized that NOW must: 1) remain at the vanguard of the women's rights movement; 2) maintain the support and vitality of its grassroots members; 3) commit itself to a multi-issue, multi-tactical strategy; 4) remain politically independent; and 5) focus on action.

Analysis of NOW's activities and development between 1966 and 1989 showed that in spite of its increasing professionalization and growing attention to electoral politics, NOW continued to adhere to these principles closely throughout that period. In this chapter I bring my analysis forward through the 1990s and ask how NOW's founding principles have fared recently and consider as well how they might fare in the future.

This is an important question because NOW's principles form the basis of its public identity and influence the commitment of its activists. In addition, there are *prima facie* reasons to question whether NOW continues to pursue its agenda in a manner consistent its ideals. For example, the 1990s were marked by NOW

National's increased participation in electoral politics. It launched campaigns to elect feminists to Congress and conducted many conference workshops on this tactic. At the 2000 annual conference, for instance, NOW held a three day advanced "Political Institute" to train organizers in electoral activism. This commitment to insider politics prompts the following questions: does NOW continue to be committed to mobilizing and supporting its grassroots - the members and chapters of NOW - in addition to pursuing influence in national electoral politics? Has National NOW's enthusiasm for recruiting, funding and working for feminist candidates eroded its focus on a broad agenda and tactical variety? Has contact with the pragmatic world of elections and campaigns moderated NOW's stands on issues? Finally, given NOW's lukewarm support of the women who came forward charging President Clinton with sexual misconduct and the allegiance NOW leaders subsequently exhibited to the Democratic party in campaigning against Clinton's impeachment, it is important to ask whether and how NOW is maintaining its political independence.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the realities of the political environment facing NOW in the 1990s with particular attention to three areas of the special concern to feminists throughout this period: the erosion of abortion rights, electoral politics, and the "Clinton dilemma."

The second section examines NOW's internal issues during this period, showing how its intraorganizational environment also affected its goals and actions. The information I gathered during

my attendance at national conferences between 1993 and 2000 provides unusual insight into the mechanisms by which members and leaders exert power over the organizational agenda. By analyzing both the internal and external environments it is possible to evaluate whether NOW's founding principles remain an important guide for the National NOW office.

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Abortion Rights

In this section I present the major Supreme Court decisions affecting abortion rights in this period before turning to legislative and executive decisions. I then examine the range and consequence of clinic violence and anti-abortion protest and finally look at the feminist response to challenges to women's right to choose abortion in the 1990s.

Supreme Court Decisions

Generally speaking, Supreme Court decisions between 1989 and 2000 upheld the basic tenets of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* case. However, four Justices consistently argued the right to abortion was not constitutionally guaranteed, resulting at times in only bare majorities upholding the right to choose abortion as outlined by *Roe*. Even so, this decade saw the Court upholding an increasing numbers of state statutes that restrict the provision of abortion services.

However, the Court also upheld fixed "buffer zones" around abortion clinic entrances that ensured clients could enter without hindrance by anti-abortion protesters. On the other hand, rulings during this period agreed with earlier decisions that allowed the states and the federal government to prohibit the use of state or federal funds to pay for abortions not medically necessary to preserve the health of the mother. In addition, they overturned portions of previous rulings supporting abortion rights including the *City of Akron v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health* (1983) and *Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists* (1986).³⁷³

The Supreme Court's 1989 decision in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* foreshadowed the problems to come for pro-choice and feminist organizations. In this ruling the Court held constitutional state statutes preventing abortions from being performed in public hospitals and that denied public funding of abortions. This decision, which was widely perceived to have seriously undercut *Roe v. Wade*, sent shock waves throughout the feminist community and caused state's rights and anti-abortion rights advocates to claim victory.

In 1991's *Rust v. Sullivan*, the Court upheld the so-called "gag rule" supported by the Reagan and Bush administrations. This

³⁷³ The *Akron* decision found statutes that mandated first-trimester abortions be performed in hospitals to be unconstitutional. *Thornburgh* struck down statutes that required doctors to tell women about the risks of abortion procedures and assistance available from the state for pregnant women.

rule made it illegal for medical personnel to advise women about the legality and availability of abortion services.

The Court's 1992 decision in *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, while nominally upholding *Roe*, legitimated government's interest in the fetus throughout a pregnancy. Significantly, as mentioned above, it overturned portions of Supreme Court decisions in *Akron* and *Thornburgh*. In *Casey*,

[b]y a vote of 7-2, the Court upheld provisions of a Pennsylvania statute that required (1) physicians to provide patients with anti-abortion information, including pictures of fetuses at various stages of development to discourage women from obtaining abortions; (2) a mandatory 24-hour delay following these lectures; (3) the filing of reports, available for public inspection and copying, including the name and location of any facility performing abortions that receives any state funds; and (4) a one-parent consent requirement for minors with a judicial bypass...³⁷⁴

The Supreme Court's decision in *Mazurek v. Armstrong* in 1997 built on this ruling by allowing a Montana statute that allowed abortions to be performed only by a licensed physician. Referring to the undue burden standard articulated in *Casey*, NARAL noted that the *Mazurek*

decision indicates that the standard is less protective than it initially appeared and that

³⁷⁴ In addition, "[t]he plurality opinion of three Justices abandoned the "strict scrutiny" standard of review applied to fundamental rights for a less protective "undue burden" standard of review, which these restrictions passed...Four justices voted to uphold all challenged provisions and overturn *Roe* completely, stating that it was wrongly decided and the Constitution does not protect the right to choose." NARAL. <<http://www.naral.org/mediaresources/fact/decisions.html>>

regardless of a law's intended effect, the Court will not invalidate state restrictions on abortion before viability unless the actual effect is to create a substantial obstacle on women obtaining an abortion.³⁷⁵

On the other side of the ledger, the Supreme Court issued an important ruling in favor of the National Organization for Women and other pro-choice advocates in 1994. In *National Organization for Women v. Scheidler*, NOW won the right to sue those blocking access to abortion clinics under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO).³⁷⁶ In another 1994 case, *Madsen v. Women's Health Center* and in the 1997 case *Schenck v. Pro-Choice Network*, the Court upheld the creation of fixed buffer zones around clinic entrances.

Finally, in June 2000, in *Sternberg v. Carhart*, the Supreme Court narrowly struck down a Nebraska statute that prohibited an abortion procedure resulting in what is now commonly called "partial-birth" abortions. This ruling is especially significant because Congress has repeatedly attempted to pass such laws and because many states other than Nebraska currently have comparable statutes.

Legislative and Executive Decisions on Abortion

³⁷⁵ NARAL. <[http:// www.naral.org/mediaresources/fact/decisions.html](http://www.naral.org/mediaresources/fact/decisions.html)>

³⁷⁶ In 1999, NOW used the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) to win a permanent injunction against anti-abortion activists Joseph Scheidler and the Pro-Life Action Network/League from blocking access to abortion clinics.

The decade began poorly for abortion rights supporters as President Bush's administration proved a stalwart supporter of those seeking to undermine *Roe*. For example, in an unusual move, the Justice Department supported Operation Rescue (OR) in their attempt to overturn an injunction preventing them from blocking access to abortion clinics. In addition, despite the Democrat-controlled Congress' attempt to repudiate the "gag rule", it was unable to muster the two-thirds vote necessary to overcome Bush's vetoes.³⁷⁷

The "gag rule" was finally repealed shortly after President Clinton took office, just as new women members of Congress were taking their places in the wake of the much-heralded "Year of the Woman" in 1992. These electoral changes also brought about a number of other important changes, including ending the "Mexico City" policy, which prevented the United States from sending aid to countries that publicly funded abortions and re-invigorating efforts to medications inducing chemical abortions, including RU-486. The 1994 passage of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE) also encouraged abortion-rights activists. The Act was

[d]esigned to curtail escalating violence and protect access to abortion services, FACE prohibits the use of force, threat of force, or physical obstruction to injure, intimidate, or interfere with persons obtaining or providing reproductive health services. In addition, the law prohibits the damage to or destruction of the property of a facility providing reproductive health services and

³⁷⁷ Toni Carabillo, Judith Meuli and June Bundy Csida, *Feminist Chronicles*, Los Angeles, Women's Graphics, 1993, p. 141.

provides criminal penalties and civil remedies for violations.³⁷⁸

Nevertheless, to the chagrin of feminists, not only did clinic violence continue, but also RU-486 still lacks final FDA approval.³⁷⁹ Pro-choice activists' overriding concern for the future is that the election of George W. Bush could mean the end of Roe, especially considering the fact that he may have the opportunity to appoint as many as three new Supreme Court justices.

Clinic Violence and Blockades

Close links exist between well-known anti-abortion activists Randall Terry, Joseph Scheidler and their organizations the Pro-Life Action League (founded in 1980), the Pro-Life Action Network (founded in 1985), and Operation Rescue (founded in 1986). Beginning in the mid-1980s, members of these organizations were very active in supporting and participating in clinic protests (and occasional violent attacks on abortion providers) and in blocking clinic entrance. They continued their efforts after the Supreme Court's *Webster* decision in 1989.

Operation Rescue (OR) and other anti-abortion organizations actively pursued the goal of hindering the operation of abortion clinics in the early 1990s by training and mobilizing activists. They conducted direct actions against women's clinics throughout

³⁷⁸ NARAL. <<http://www.naral.org/mediaresources/fact/freedom.html>>

³⁷⁹ "FDA Again Delays Abortion Pill Approval," *Washington Post*, February 19, 2000.

the country. In 1992, OR spearheaded protests at the Democratic and Republican conventions. Until the shooting of a doctor providing abortions in Florida by one anti-abortion individual in 1993 and the subsequent enactment of FACE in 1994, few local or federal police authorities paid attention to these events.

Feminist Responses

The *Webster* decision was widely perceived to have seriously undercut *Roe v. Wade* and therefore spurred an increase in members and donors to feminist organizations, NOW included. NOW activists were so incensed at their inability to influence politicians on the abortion question that they passed a resolution at their 1989 annual conference instructing NOW National to investigate the possibility of creating a feminist third party. At the same time, NOW renewed its commitment to electing pro-choice legislators at the state and national levels.

However, the most powerful responses by NOW to the increased direct-action tactics and aggressive activities of anti-abortion activists in the 1990s clearly lay in its involvement in defending women's access to clinics. This is one area in which NOW worked well with organizations including the YWCA, Planned Parenthood (which raised money for clinic defense) and Mary Dent Crisp's National Republican Coalition for Choice. NOW and its "sister" organization, the Feminist Majority Foundation (which conducted its own "Clinic Defense Project" capable of sending organizers around the country to clinics experiencing attacks) headed by Eleanor

Smeal, trained hundreds of grassroots "clinic defenders" in addition to mounting successful legal challenges to organizations like Operation Rescue. Despite the Justice Department's support of OR's blocking of clinic entrances in Wichita, Kansas in 1991, NOW began to successfully hamper the work of OR and its leaders through injunctions and fines.

NOW chapter activists across the country "shadowed President Bush, Vice President Quayle, and Secretary Sullivan wherever they spoke. At the public speaking events, NOW activists protested by wearing white gags on their mouths and holding signs that read 'Overturn the Gag Rule.'"³⁸⁰ In 1991, at NOW's national conference

[m]ore than 2,000 activists from around the nation forged a dynamic plan of action for the 90's at the National NOW Conference in New York. A march and rally also brought 7,500 people to the streets of New York during the conference to protest the "gag rule."³⁸¹

NOW organized a much larger march in 1992 in support of reproductive rights in D.C. as well as pro-choice "Mother's Day March" in Florida in 1993. In an effort to match the direct action tactics of anti-abortion activists, and to compliment its rallies and marches, NOW began a civil disobedience campaign in 1992 in response to the Casey decision. At they embarked on this campaign,

NOW President Patricia Ireland, Feminist Majority President Eleanor Smeal, and five other speakers were arrested [in addition to] Urvashi Vaid, Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; Ruby Sales, National Chair of Women of All Colors;

³⁸⁰ Carabillo et al., p. 140.

³⁸¹ Carabillo et al., p. 140.

Kay Ostberg, Lesbian Rights Program Director at the Human Rights Campaign Fund; Aida Bound, Legal Director of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; and Jane Tennington, Field Service Assistant of the Older Women's League.³⁸²

If 1992 marked the high point of OR actions against clinics, it also helped mobilize activists and staffers in many pro-choice women's organizations to cooperate against them. At NOW's 1992 annual conference, members endorsed "a strategy to step up non-violent civil disobedience actions" to protect abortion rights. For example, before OR's planned action against women's clinics during the 1992 Democratic Convention, NOW and the Feminist Majority worked in coalition as

advance teams from the Feminist Majority, led by Katherine Spillar, went to New York weeks before the convention at the invitation of local groups who wanted to learn the successful tactics that had been used in Buffalo. Feminist Majority organizers worked with the New York Clinic Defense Task Force training and mobilizing thousands of clinic defenders. Constantly covering up to 35 of the city's 151 clinics at a time, up to 3,000 clinic defenders kept all clinic doors open during OR's attempted blockades.³⁸³

While the first half of the 1990s focused on direct clinic defense, the latter half focused on working with law enforcement and the Justice Department to enforce buffer zones around clinic entrances (upheld by the Supreme Court decision in *Schenk*, as noted above), and using FACE. By 1998, forced to file bankruptcy, Randall Terry no longer headed Operation Rescue. Nevertheless,

³⁸² Carabillo et al., p. 146.

³⁸³ Carabillo et al., p. 147.

while the FACE helped decrease aggressive clinic blockades, anti-abortion activists increasingly turned for support to more radical right wing groups, including white supremacists. The New York Times reported that between 1993 and December 1998 "there have been seven murders of doctors and other clinic workers - something previously unheard of - along with 14 attempted murders and many incidents involving bombing, arson and vandalism."³⁸⁴

Electoral Politics

Since the 1980s, National NOW has stepped up its participation in electoral politics. The discovery of a so-called "gender gap" in the 1980 elections by NOW's then-president Eleanor Smeal gave feminists new hope for influencing the political process. Feminists coined the term "gender gap," a phrase that the media then adopted to explain gender differences in voting behavior.³⁸⁵ Gender gaps are nothing new; they existed in the 1950s as well. During this earlier period, women were more likely to vote Republican. Beginning in the 1980s, however, a stable pattern holds in which women are more likely than men to vote Democratic.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁴ John Kifner, "Finding a Common Foe, Fringe Groups Join Forces," *New York Times*, December 6, 1998.

³⁸⁵ See for example Carol M. Mueller, ed. *The Politics of the Gender Gap: The Social Construction of Political Influence*, California, Sage Publications, 1988; Janet A. Flammang, *Women's Political Voice: How Women are Transforming the Practice and Study of Politics*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1997; Everett Ladd, "Framing the Gender Gap," in Pippa Norris, ed. *Women, Media and Politics*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1997.

³⁸⁶ Since the 1980s, important research and analysis of gender differences in voting patterns, political preferences and participation has emerged from political scientists as well as from such entities as the Center for

The hope of using the gender gap as a political tool, together with the heightened influence of anti-abortion activists and the Religious Right on local, state and national politics helped focus NOW's attention on ousting anti-abortion state and congressional legislators. In 1990, NOW combined electoral politics with grass-roots activism by launching its "Freedom Caravan for Women's Lives," barnstorming around Pennsylvania working for feminist candidates' political campaigns. NOW further evidenced its commitment to increasing feminist participation in electoral politics through its year-long project beginning in 1991 to recruit and support women in Louisiana for state legislative races and through the launching of its "Elect Women for a Change" campaign in 1992 which brought NOW's organizing resources to bear on elections throughout the country, an effort whose lessons continue to be taught to NOW members interested in effecting electoral change in their own states today.

NOW's Freedom Caravan for Women's Lives and the Feminist Majority campaign in Pennsylvania paid off. By the conclusion of the March 6 filing date for candidates for the 1990 elections, 91 women had filed for the state legislature. Only 17 women served in the legislature out of a total membership of 252. Many of the male candidates were also running on pro-abortion rights positions...³⁸⁷

American Women and Politics, the Center for Women Policy Studies, the Center for Responsive Politics and even EMILY's List. However, as Pippa Norris and Anna Greenberg have noted, more research is necessary to fully understand the provenance of these gender differences. Pippa Norris, "Gender in Political Science: Framing the Issues;" presented at PSA Annual Conference Glasgow, April 11, 1996; Anna Greenberg, "Deconstructing the Gender Gap," John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 1998.
<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/prg/greenb/gengap.htm>

³⁸⁷ Carabillo, et al., p. 133.

While organizations and members associated with the Christian right flexed their muscle at the Republican convention, journalists were hailing 1992 as "The Year of the Woman" in races for congressional seats. A record 117 women candidates ran for Congress in 1992; 54 won. The proportion of women in Congress jumped from 5.6% to 10%. The high visibility of "women's" issues in 1992, including abortion rights and sexual harassment (both the Thomas-Hill hearings and the Navy's Tailhook scandal), House ethics scandals largely involving male incumbents, and the media's focus on women and politics may all have contributed to women's success in obtaining financial backing and their ultimate success.

Women political elites, in the form of PACs and feminist organizations such as EMILY's List, were very active in 1992 in garnering support for women candidates, and they continued this involvement through the 1990s. In 1992, for example, the Feminist Majority embarked on a "Feminization of Power Campaign" which focused on finding and supporting women candidates for political office. As for NOW, it geared itself up for the 1992 elections. Carol Moseley Braun in Illinois and Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein in California all benefited from funds and activists from NOW chapters and PACs. At NOW's 1992 annual conference, members voted to support NOW's "Elect Women for A Change" campaign which "had projects running full force in Connecticut, Florida, Georgia

and Tennessee, helping feminist candidates win Congressional, state and local primaries."³⁸⁸

In addition, members at this conference voted to endorse the creation of the 21st Century Party, a new party focused on women's issues.

[M]ore than 230 members from 30 states [were] in attendance to adopt a constitution and platform. Its founding principles called for women as 52% of the Party's candidates and officers who must reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the nation; it also called for an expanded Bill of Rights for the 21st century. Dolores Huerta, co-founder and Vice President Emerita of the United Farm Workers of America, was elected National Chair. Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority was elected National Secretary.³⁸⁹

Despite wide-ranging support in NOW and other organizations participating in the three-year study of the third-party strategy, the Party was not heard from again after its first convention in D.C. in 1992.

With the 1996 elections and the impetus of Newt Gingrich's "Republican revolution," NOW focused in particular on supplying NOW/PAC field organizers to help organize grassroots campaign workers on key electoral campaigns.³⁹⁰ At NOW's 1996 annual

³⁸⁸ Carabillo, et al., p. 147.

³⁸⁹ Carabillo, et al., p. 148.

³⁹⁰ NOW's "top reasons to oust Newt" include the fact that the "Newt Congress" "passed a punitive welfare bill...attempted to outlaw a legal abortion procedure...sabotaged reproductive rights, as well as domestic and international family planning funds, by attaching amendments to other legislation;...pushing the misnamed Defense of Marriage Act...moved ahead with stealth legislation that would legalize sex discrimination, eliminate all federal affirmative action programs...wage[d] budget battles that held hostage millions of dollars in funding for the Violence Against Women Act." NOW. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/11-96/elex.html>.>

conference, delegates voted to "make electoral politics a major focus for all levels of the organization through November."³⁹¹ NOW's newsletter, the *National NOW Times*, argued that "...because turnout was low, NOW/PAC's longstanding emphasis on grassroots get-out-the-vote campaigning proved to be a winning strategy for many candidates across the country who succeeded in turning out their strongest supporters."³⁹² After the 1998 elections, NOW/PAC immediately began working on the 2000 campaign cycle, for which it

[c]onducted political trainings and briefings in Washington, D.C., and in the field to enable activists to elect feminist candidates. A network of activists in every congressional district in the country provided NOW/PAC with the nucleus of an effective grassroots political campaign...³⁹³

For the 1998 congressional elections NOW/PAC successfully supported eleven feminist candidates, along with many others across the country. The Democratic party managed to irritate NOW during this election period, having "recruited about a dozen opponents of abortion rights to run for open seats...additionally, a number of incumbents, previously steadfast in their support of reproductive rights, have signed on to a bill to ban all late-term abortions."³⁹⁴ This led NOW/PAC member Hannah Olanoff to emphasize that "As much as we would like to see Newt out of the speaker's chair, we must

³⁹¹ NOW. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/11-96/elex.html>>

³⁹² NOW. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/winter-99/electns.html>>

³⁹³ NOW. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/winter-99/electns.html>>

³⁹⁴ NOW. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/fall-98/elect.html>>

make it clear that no party has an automatic claim on the feminist vote."³⁹⁵

In spite of NOW's emphasis on its grassroots contributions to elections, which are very difficult to calculate, NOW/PAC does, of course, contribute funds to candidates as well. Constantly aware of the sometimes fickle nature of politician's support, NOW/PAC subjects potential recipients of funds to extensive questioning aimed at ensuring that recipients' philosophies match NOW's as closely as possible.

Because NOW's Political Action Committee is the only women's rights PAC that screens candidates on a wide range of feminist issues - full reproductive rights; economic equality; civil rights for all with a strong emphasis on the rights of people of color, lesbians and gay men; affirmative action; and violence against women - none of our endorsed candidates are the kind of people who will waver on women's rights.³⁹⁶

Other women's organizations ask for a more limited ideological commitment. For example, EMILY's List funnels its bundled contributions to women who are pro-choice Democrats.³⁹⁷ In the 2000 current election cycle, the Center for Responsive Politics characterized NOW as a "top donor" in the category of

³⁹⁵ NOW. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/fall-98/elect.html>>

³⁹⁶ NOW, <<http://www.now.org/nnt/fall-98/elect.html>>

³⁹⁷ This technique allows EMILY's List to give huge sums; for example, in the 1997-1998 election cycle, EMILY's List members contributed \$7.5 million to pro-choice Democratic women candidates. EMILY's List. <<http://emilyslist.com/el-newsstand/pr/1999/990729-nrcc.asp>>

women's issues (ranked fourth).³⁹⁸ Of 13 ideological "industries" identified by the Center for Responsive Politics, "women's issues" ranked fourth overall, ahead of "democratic/liberal" donations to candidates.³⁹⁹

In 1988, NOW was a top contributor in three federal races.⁴⁰⁰ It ranked fourth in the 1998 election cycle, contributing to 63 federal candidates and giving over \$58,000 to house candidates.⁴⁰¹ Eight PACs categorized as women's issues PACs have contributed in the 2000 election cycle; among them, NOW ranks first in contributions to federal candidates.⁴⁰² To date, NOW contributed over \$118,000 to federal candidates and is a top contributor in 18 federal races as well as in the at-large D.C. race.⁴⁰³

NOW and other feminist organizations were keenly aware that opposing organizations including the Christian Coalition were similarly involved at every level of American politics. Formed by Pat Robertson in 1989 using the organizational resources Robertson amassed during his failed presidential bid, the Christian Coalition

³⁹⁸ Open Secrets.

<<http://www.opensecrets.org/pubs/bigpicutre2000/industry/ideology.ihtml>>

³⁹⁹ Open Secrets.

<<http://www.opensecrets.org/pubs/bigpicture2000/industry/ideology.html>>

⁴⁰⁰ According to data compiled from the Center for Responsive Politics, these were Wisconsin's District 2, Georgia's District 4, and Missouri's District 9.

⁴⁰¹ Open Secrets. <<http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/indus/1998/Q08.htm>>; Open Secrets. <<http://www.opensecrets.org/acs/pacgot/1998/00092247.htm>>.

⁴⁰² Open Secrets. <<http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/indus/2000/Q08.htm>>

⁴⁰³ Open Secrets.

<<http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/pacgot/2000/00092247.htm>>

worked aggressively throughout the 1990s using a combination of grassroots and technologically sophisticated methods to influence national and local political campaigns and referendum issues. The Coalition and religious conservatives played an important role in helping Republicans win both houses of Congress in 1994 and have succeeded in maintaining a Human Life Amendment plank in the Republican party platform. In 1996 NOW organized a "Fight the Right" march which included a focus on the religious right's electoral activism, and, in a nod to the Christian Coalition successful Voter's Guides, NOW/PAC embarked on the creation of an internet-based Feminist Voter's Guide.⁴⁰⁴

The Christian Coalition stumbled in the late 1990s as it lost the leadership of Ralph Reed, suffered other staff departures and investigations into its tax-exempt status by the IRS and FEC. Pat Robertson, however, has stepped back in to reorganize and announced a \$21 million dollar fundraising drive to elect conservative Christian candidates. For its part, NOW reacted to the significance of the 2000 election for pro-choice feminists by not only holding the aforementioned three day "Political Institute" but also by

...taking an unprecedented step: asking NOW members to make a monthly pledge to help win back Congress and target key state legislatures. After careful analysis showed antifeminist candidates could capture not only both houses of Congress, but also the White House itself, NOW/PAC decided to launch its Victory 2000 Support Committee. The Committee's goal is to raise almost a million

⁴⁰⁴ NOW. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/11-96/elex.html>>

dollars a month through NOW member pledges to support feminist candidates.⁴⁰⁵

President Clinton

Even before his election, Bill Clinton's record and agenda never thrilled feminists. Clinton's pro-choice stance for the presidential campaign was encouraging, but his "New Democrat" economic policies drew fire from NOW.

Nevertheless, after Clinton's election, feminists enjoyed some gains. The election of an avowedly pro-choice president, along with the long-awaited passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act in 1993 and the appointment of women including Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the Supreme Court, Janet Reno as Attorney General, and Hazel O'Leary as Secretary of Energy, among others, gave feminists hope.

However, leaders of groups like the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL), the Women's Legal Defense Fund and the National Women's Political Caucus interpreted the political environment as one calling for moderation in voice and tactics given Clinton's conservatism and his lack of support in Congress.⁴⁰⁶ NOW leaders disagreed with this strategy and upon hearing from insiders that Clinton might not follow through on his promises to appoint substantial numbers of women for public office,

⁴⁰⁵ NOW. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/fall-99/pac.html>>

⁴⁰⁶ Art Levine and Amy Cunningham, "Post-Triumph Trauma: For the Long-Suffering Left, Winning Can Feel Weird," *Washington Post*, November 29, 1992. See also Harriet Woods' recent memoir, *Stepping Up to Power: The Political Journey of American Women*, Boulder, Westview Press, 2000.

they quickly sent the message to the President that they were not going to maintain a decorous silence. NOW leaders communicated their feelings on the subject to Clinton as well as the media, leading Clinton to publicly castigate them as feminist "bean counters."⁴⁰⁷

NOW's concerns about Clinton's support for women's economic security came to the fore as it became clear that the President supported major reforms in welfare, including the largest program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children. NOW conducted a (poorly reported) 21-day vigil and fast in front of the White House before the 1996 vote on the bill. When Clinton signed the bill, (which also restricted assistance to legal immigrants and whittled away at the food stamp program), Bob Dole noted: "He's done everything but change parties..."⁴⁰⁸ As a result of Clinton's support for this bill, NOW/PAC would not endorse Clinton's 1996 re-election bid. In November 1996, NOW President Patricia Ireland wrote in an article in the *National NOW Times* entitled "Clinton: Our Option, Not Our Answer" where she outlined the President's betrayals after the Dole/Gingrich-led Congress took over after 1994. In addition to welfare reform, these included attempts to undermine funding for the Violence Against Women Act as well as Clinton's "so-called compromise" regarding the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy on gays in the military. Nevertheless, she wrote,

⁴⁰⁷ Ruth Marcus, "Clinton Berates Critics in Women's Groups," *Washington Post*, December 22, 1992.

⁴⁰⁸ Vanessa Gallman, "President Signs New Welfare Deal But Ally Calls It 'Moment of Shame,'" *Detroit Free Press*, August 23, 1996.

Clinton may be the option for some of us again this election year, but he's not the answer. We are. At a time when some argue for a return to narrow, single-issue politics or feel they cannot stomach electoral politics at all, NOW's direction continues to be toward deepening the ties among progressive movements and moving more of us into elected office.⁴⁰⁹

Not long thereafter, however, this pragmatism led many observers to question NOW's commitment to its principles. NOW ran into trouble with its measured response to allegations that Clinton sexually harassed Paula Jones when he was Governor of Arkansas, in addition to allegations of sexual assault by the President against Juanita Brodderick and Kathleen Willey. Ultimately, NOW issued at least 19 statements and press releases regarding these issues, dating from May 6, 1994 to February 1999.⁴¹⁰ Ironically, feminist success in attracting attention to the problem of sexual harassment, so vividly displayed in the resignation of Senator Robert Packwood in 1995, made their apparent equivocation especially embarrassing. NOW's formal statements, while decrying Clinton's behavior, tended to lay blame at the feet of conservatives in the House and Senate as well. In addition, while NOW and Feminist Majority leaders clearly said that the allegations against Clinton should be investigated, they also stated feminist organizations would not support the women's cases as *amicus curiae*

⁴⁰⁹ Patricia Ireland, "Clinton, Our Option, Not Our Answer," *National NOW Times*, November 1996.

⁴¹⁰ NOW, "NOW Statements and Articles on Jones vs. Clinton," <<http://www.now.org/issues/harass/jones.html>>; NOW, "NOW Statements and Articles on Allegations Against President Clinton," <<http://www.now.org/issues/harass/clinton.html>>.

because their stories sounded "legally weak."⁴¹¹ Of course, the NOW Foundation, the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, and other activist groups regularly turn down cases for this reason. Given the delicate situation, however, this response seemed politically naive.

INTRAORGANIZATIONAL TENSIONS

While members and money flowed into the organization freely because of the 1989 *Webster* decision, the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill Senate Judiciary hearings in 1991 (which brought in 13,000 new members) and the 1992 "Year of the Woman," the latter half of the 1990s proved less fruitful. In 1992 NOW reported a membership of 275,000.⁴¹² Over the past four years, however, NOW's membership has declined by ten percent a year.⁴¹³ While officially NOW states their membership is currently at 250,000 "contributing members," the true numbers are closer to some 101,000 individuals who identify themselves as members plus roughly 49,000 who simply sent in monetary contributions without indicating a desire to become members.⁴¹⁴ Official numbers state that NOW has between 550 and 600

⁴¹¹ Justin Blum, "Dissenting Dulles Chapter Wages High-Profile Battle Within NOW," *Washington Post*, June 1, 1998.

⁴¹² Carabillo, et al., p. 143.

⁴¹³ As have the memberships of other voluntary organizations of late, including, for example, that of the League of Women Voters, the NAACP and the NWPC.

⁴¹⁴ Statement by Loretta Kane, newly elected Vice President-Action, in a workshop at NOW's National Conference in Miami, Florida, 6/29-7/2, 2000.

chapters; I estimate the number is closer to 405.⁴¹⁵ Many of these chapters have fewer than 100 members; like many activist organizations, chapters generally have a core of fewer than 25 activists.⁴¹⁶

In the following section I examine the internal and external challenges to NOW's guiding principles during the 1990s and how National NOW managed these challenges. Again, these principles include being at the forefront of women's rights issues, sustaining grassroots activism, a commitment to a multi-issue, multi-tactical strategy, the preservation of NOW's political independence and its commitment to action. While these principles are dealt with separately here, they obviously overlap in some areas, especially with regard to concerns over inside/outside strategies, fears of elitism and worry over the quality of grassroots representation.

Preserving NOW's Vanguard Status

NOW leaders and members continue to think about the organization as one committed to standing on the frontlines of feminist thought and action. For this reason, NOW's maturation over the past two decades into a professionalized group focusing more strongly on electoral activism has caused concern among some

⁴¹⁵ I obtained this number from adding up the number of possible chapters you can join (identified as codes to enter into your membership application). NOW. <<http://www.now.org>>.

⁴¹⁶ "Prizes Added to Mega-Membership Drive: Extra Incentives Boost Participation," *National NOW Times*, May 1997. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/05-97/megamemb.html>>.

members that NOW is no longer in touch with its members, has become too focused on self-preservation and is too elitist.

One sign of NOW's maturation as an organization is its creation of a tax-deductible 501(c)(3) foundation in 1986. Its income is approximately \$500,000.⁴¹⁷ "[NOW and the NOW Foundation] are sister organizations, sharing some staff and office space. Patricia Ireland is the president of both organizations and they have overlapping officers and board." Its purpose is to

[a]dvanc[e] women's rights and promot[e] the goal of equality in the United States and around the world through education, litigation, advocacy, networking, conferences, publications, training and leadership development.⁴¹⁸

The Foundation sponsored most, if not all, of the various educational and networking summits (including Women of Color and Allies, Lesbian Rights and Young Feminist summits) held by NOW in the 1990s. An important aspect of the Foundation's work is the leadership training it conducts for NOW's own activists as well as community and campus activists. These groups attend workshops educating them about substantive issues including women's health and prejudice reduction in addition to learning specific organizing techniques. The Foundation's educational focus also allows NOW to underwrite Patricia Ireland's travels around the country to give speeches and presentations. The Foundation has been active, as

⁴¹⁷ Information is from fiscal year 1997 data drawn from financial information collected by Philanthropic Research, Inc., <<http://www.guidestar.com>.

⁴¹⁸ NOW, "About the NOW Foundation." <<http://www.nowfoundation.org/about.html>>.

well, in the *NOW v. Scheidler* case, using the Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) against anti-abortion activists. With respect to this case, the foundation's program called "Stop the Rescue Racket" collects detailed information on anti-abortion activists, their networks, and activities.⁴¹⁹

However, by the late 1990s, some NOW activists questioned National NOW's relationship with its Foundation, and the fact that a portion of the NOW's staff's salaries (25%) are being paid through Foundation monies. In spite of the activities noted above, in fact, NOW has always emphasized action over education. Some NOW members point to the recent campaign entitled "Love Your Body Day," funded by an outside grant and widely promoted by National NOW staff, as an example of how the leadership's time and energy can be siphoned away by Foundation projects. As these members point out, no grassroots activists called for such a campaign; it was undertaken only because the grant specifies such a campaign. Dissenters reason that, in order to maintain the highest accountability of leadership and staff, NOW, Inc. and not NOW's Foundation should provide for all of National NOW salaries.⁴²⁰

Nevertheless, NOW continues to take on difficult issues, frequently finding itself on the cutting edge of the civil rights movement. For example, at its annual conference in 1998, NOW

⁴¹⁹ The National Organization for Women Foundation Annual Report, 1994, <http://www.nowfoudnation.org/board94.html>.

⁴²⁰ These observations come from notes I took of discussions at NOW's 2000 National Conference in Miami, Florida, at the Young Feminist Caucus and at the "Other Issues" Hearing.

members voted to support the rights of the transgendered, earning scorn among press who attended the meeting. NOW's support for the transgendered seems unlikely to help the organization sidestep controversy and appeal to a broader swath of the public. NOW also continues to insist that women should participate in the military alongside men - a position that some argue hurt their chances to pass the Equal Rights Amendment.

NOW's reformulation of the Equal Rights Amendment itself is another example of how the organization maintains a radical vision. At its 1995 annual conference, NOW delegates passed a resolution supporting another form of the ERA, now dubbed the "Constitutional Equality Amendment," (CEA) which specifically includes the protection of an individual's civil rights regardless of race, sexual orientation, national origin, or indigence and "guarantees the absolute right of a woman to make her own reproductive decisions including the termination of pregnancy."⁴²¹

Controversy erupted at the 2000 annual conference regarding the CEA and the original ERA. A small group of activists working on renewing the ERA campaign wanted a clear statement that NOW delegates unequivocally support the original ERA. The body, guided by Patricia Ireland, ultimately passed a resolution worded in such a way as to convey support for both the old and new versions. In

⁴²¹ NOW, "1995 National NOW Conference Resolutions," <http://www.now.org/organiza/conferen/1995/resoluti.html>. This change would have the effect of raising the category of sex to the level of strict scrutiny applied to that of race in cases before the Supreme Court.

this way these activists could return to their states and reassure their coalition partners that NOW backed their participation fully, while retaining National NOW's ability to back the expanded version. Far from mollified, however, the ERA activists felt they received lukewarm support for their cause. This is in fact the case: Patricia Ireland and national leaders felt that since the passage of any ERA is unlikely, they would rather support the Constitutional Equality Amendment which more accurately reflects NOW's progressive vision.

Sustaining Grassroots Activism: Organizational Structure and its Accountability to Members

NOW leaders commonly deflect questions about their role in NOW, repeatedly insisting that NOW is "grassroots-led." Kim Gandy, current Vice President-Executive and candidate for President in the upcoming NOW election has called NOW "excruciatingly democratic."⁴²² Mobilizing the grassroots was not necessarily something NOW's founders envisioned in 1966, but the early leaders soon realized that members, organized first through chapters and later through state and regional organizations, would be their political base. Throughout the 1970s, one of NOW's main tasks as an organization was to ensure that the grassroots would be its leading voice.

⁴²² *The Memphis Flyer*, July 10, 1997.

NOW's Bylaws state that "the local, grassroots chapters are the building blocks of NOW, serving as the focus of feminist action."⁴²³

For the sake of the clarity of the following discussion I will briefly describe NOW's structure and procedures. NOW leadership includes four elected positions: President, the Vice President-Executive, Vice President-Action and the Vice President-Membership. These four-year, salaried positions may be held for a maximum of two consecutive terms upon election by delegates at NOW's annual conference. The requirements for office in the Bylaws state that "all national officers shall have been members of NOW for at least four years immediately prior to election and shall have served at least one year as a chapter or state officer or National Board member." The National Board consists of approximately 34 board members elected to a maximum of two consecutive two-year terms by the at-large group of members attending one of nine regional meetings held yearly. NOW's Bylaws state a minimum number of Board seats which must be filled by persons of color. The Board meets three to five times a year; Board members are unsalaried, but their expenses are reimbursed. There are approximately 30 paid staff members on the national level including the four officers. Some states pay their state presidents a small salary from their share of membership revenue.

NOW holds its annual conference in a different region each year; it is held "for the purpose of transacting the business of

⁴²³ NOW Bylaws, Section 1. Chapters. In this section I refer to NOW Bylaws as amended June 1996.

the organization" and the conference is "the supreme governing body of NOW." It is at these conferences that members elect national leaders, where members participate in workshops and issue hearings, where special interest caucuses meet and where resolutions are introduced, debated and voted upon. Delegates at issue hearings may vote out a maximum of two resolutions each (generally resulting in approximately 26 resolutions), which are then presented before the delegates as a whole for amendment and a vote during the final day of the three-day conference in a plenary session.⁴²⁴ It is also possible to petition for the presentation of a resolution to the body; such a petition must receive a specified minimum number of signatures, usually between 100-200 conference attendees. This is a common occurrence. Although the final plenary session, which follows Roberts Rules of Order, technically lasts from approximately 9 am to 4 pm, there is normally only enough time to vote on about half of the resolutions. The remainder is often remanded to the National Board for disposition.

One legacy of NOW's founding years (1966-1971) is the influence of the women's liberation movement's suspicion of elites, even among the leadership of their own organization. Concerns about elitism among NOW's leadership have sprung up constantly since then, and the 1990s have been no exception. A petition circulated at NOW's annual conference in 1993, for example, that

⁴²⁴ Approximately 3,000 delegates are allocated among the nine regions. David S. Broder and Kenneth J. Cooper, "Revolt Brewing for NOW Election," *Washington Post*, June 20, 1993. Generally, between 400 and 1200 delegates actually vote at National Conferences.

would have made the officer's salaries equal to that of all other staff members, organizers and receptionists alike. Efia Nwangaza, running for president in 1993 on a slate opposing Patricia Ireland, argued that

[t]he Ireland administration has maintained "an elitist, classist, racist approach to issues." This, [said Efia Nwangaza] is typified by Ireland's \$110,000 salary and by such recent NOW events as "the lebutante ball that was \$125 per person (and) the women of power luncheon, which was \$100... There was nothing for women who are of average income to make meaningful contact with this organization."⁴²⁵

Nwangaza also stated that "their focus is not to create a system, to create a world that is inclusive; they just want to be a part of the one that exists." In response, Ireland argued that NOW tries to accommodate lower-income women and that Nwangaza underestimated the importance of fundraising. Today, these power luncheons, NOW/PAC auctions and gala dinners continue to exist and continue to annoy some activists.

However, as far as access is concerned, NOW members do have numerous methods for contacting the leadership and for making their voices heard. Officers and Board members mingle freely among members at national conferences. Board members maintain strong ties to those individuals from the state organizations in the regions that elected them and are easily contacted. Individuals

⁴²⁵ The president's salary is now approximately \$140,000. Thomas B. Edsall, "Ireland Wins Bitter Battle for NOW Post; Challenger Alleged Racism and Elitism," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1993. See also the statements of opposing slates in "Teams Come Forward for 1993 Election," *National NOW Times*, June 1993.

are not prevented from joining NOW because of a lack of funds; an individual can join NOW on a sliding scale, and can register for conferences on a sliding scale as well. While attending conferences is very costly, many state organizations raise funds to send some chapter delegates to the conferences; activists frequently double and triple up in hotel rooms in order to afford the expensive trips which are held in large hotels in major cities around the country. States and regions hold smaller scale events that are both less expensive to attend and more accessible.

NOW leaders, including the four officers and the National Board, enjoy a great deal of leverage in shaping National NOW's activity and agenda, but much less with respect to the local and state organizations. The officers and Board meet independently of the membership at frequent intervals throughout the year and are empowered to make decisions for NOW as a whole between conferences, as long as those decisions are consonant with NOW's Statement of Purpose and By-Laws. The Board alone holds the power to distribute funds among projects.

Nevertheless, for large projects and changes in policy direction, NOW's officers and its Board tend to abstain from action until they have received what amounts to a vote of confidence from the floor of the conference. Leaders conceived and initiated both of NOW's major electoral projects in the 1990s, "Elect Women for a Change" and "Victory 2000," for example. Nevertheless, members voted for these proposals twice: once in an issue hearing, where winning a majority vote allowed the proposal to come before the

convention as a resolution, and a second time before delegates in a plenary session at an annual convention.

Ordinary members and chapters also have significant opportunities to influence the organization. First, most chapters have a small core of activists; it is therefore relatively easy within a short period of time to become a delegate at NOW's annual convention, a chapter officer, a state president, and then to win election as a region's delegate to the National Board. In addition, NOW chapters are highly autonomous, working only on those national projects that they consider relevant to their sociopolitical environment and to their activists' interests. NOW/PAC endorses only those candidates approved by the state and local organizations.

The politics of NOW's resolution process at national conferences shows the balance of power between National NOW and individuals and chapters quite well. Throughout NOW's history, the organization has always seemed to engender within its ranks a "loyal opposition." In the 1990s, a group of individuals from Gainesville, Florida became regular critics of National NOW for, among other things, a lack of attention to the decline in the number of members and chapters, and out of concern that National NOW's attention is being diverted from its priorities as a result of its Foundation-related work. (Interestingly, the woman running for Vice President-Executive on the slate opposing that of Patricia Ireland also hailed from Gainesville.) When the Gainesville contingent attempted to bring up their concerns at the 2000 annual

conference, first, at a special constituency caucus and then at its own (unauthorized) issue hearing, National officers and board members flocked to the room to rebut activists' claims and to ensure that the Gainesville contingent's proposed resolutions would not make it out of the Hearing and therefore onto the floor of the conference. Nevertheless, the group was able to obtain enough signatures by petition to allow two resolutions to be voted on by delegates in plenary session.

National NOW leaders have an important trump card in this process: their appointees fill the Resolutions Committee, which determines the order in which the delegates will consider the resolutions. I asked one long-standing member of the leadership how resolutions are prioritized; she responded haltingly, "I'm not sure - randomly, I think." However, the next morning the Gainesville women's resolutions were at the bottom of the list, keeping company with a resolution demanding the right of women to wander "top-free."

As I noted above, the order of resolutions is important because conference delegates rarely get to vote on the latter half of resolutions on the list; time simply runs out. The remainder usually reverts to the National Board for action where the Board can easily let them fall by the wayside. The Gainesville women, although mostly young feminists, employed Robert's Rules of Order with aplomb, their strategies gleaned from supportive NOW leaders in their state and region. The Gainesville contingent used parliamentary procedures throughout the plenary session to try to

move their resolution closer to the top of the list and, failing that, to move the debate along in the hopes of gaining consideration for their resolutions before the end of the conference.⁴²⁶

These strategies did not ultimately succeed. Nevertheless, as burrs under the saddle of the institution, they show NOW's leadership that members will hold them accountable. These activists also remind other, perhaps more jaded members about NOW's principles and vision, which demand leadership responsiveness to the grassroots, the maintenance of NOW's mobilization and its continued independence. Bringing these issues to light helps ensure NOW leaders remember their obligations to the membership.

There are certainly instances where individual members can have a visible effect on the national organization without the immediate consent of National leaders. This is most likely to happen when activists are persistent, willing to mobilize others around their concern and are patient. In 1995, one faction within NOW calling themselves the "Nyack Group" and voicing concern with NOW's lack of focus, argued that NOW must conduct strategic planning. This proposal did not succeed, but as a compromise, former Board member Gay Bruhn suggested to the National Board the idea of holding a national conference which would reconsider NOW's purpose - a "Vision Summit." The Board still did not approve, but Bruhn persisted, ultimately succeeding in winning support for the

⁴²⁶ Author's notes.

Vision Summit at the 1996 annual conference. The Vision Summit was ultimately held at Rochester, New York, where members considered their past and future and whether NOW's 1966 Statement of Purpose needed to be revised to reflect NOW's current and future goals.

Active members greatly influence the efficacy of the entire organization. For example, passed resolutions are referred to Conference Implementation Committees (CICs) whose members are appointed on by NOW's president with the advice and consent of the Board. If the Chair of the CIC devoted to the resolution directing it to update NOW's consciousness-raising manual, for example, does not follow through by contacting the other members, setting up meetings and following up on tasks, the manual does not get revised. The constant problems of regional diversity which makes it difficult for committees to easily meet, as well as cost (CICs have a small budget) and time pressures mean that normally even those resolutions passed by "the supreme governing body of NOW" will not be acted upon without the involvement of activists unless the National officers are behind the effort.

During the 1990s, as I have noted, NOW experienced a contraction in its membership. While NOW's Foundation subsidizes approximately 25% of the salaries of the four officers, its total budget is only about \$500,000. NOW, Inc. still relies almost exclusively on membership outreach for its income; NOW National keeps for itself less than half of the usual membership fee of \$35. Because of the cost of direct mail, most of NOW's revenue comes from membership renewals rather than new members.

These facts help explain why dips in the membership rolls are serious business and why NOW officers and Board members have incentives to keep the interests of members in mind as they fulfill their duties. In response to the membership declines of the 1990s, NOW held a total of six summits over ten years, organizing Young Feminist Summits in 1991, 1995 and 1997; a Women of Color and Allies Summit in 1998, an ERA Summit in 1995 and a Lesbian Rights Summit in 1999. These were made possible in part by the sponsorship of the NOW Foundation. These gatherings typically include activities that characterized the 1991 Young Feminist Summit, where

[y]oung feminists from all over the country converged on Akron, OH, for NOW's Young Feminist Conference that attracted 750 participants from 42 states. Conference participants attended workshops and issue hearings, discussed, debated, caucused and passed resolutions, signed up for campus action teams, internships and field organizing work and organized a zap action to demonstrate their opposition to the Persian Gulf War.⁴²⁷

The advantage to these Summits (which do not take the place of the annual conference) is that they bring together many organizations, unaffiliated women and men in addition to helping to energize communities and raise consciousness. However, NOW has had trouble translating this energy immediately into more members, although this might happen over time. In addition, these Summits are of limited benefit in that they do not produce policy that

⁴²⁷ Carabillo, et al., p. 138.

translates into concrete action in the same way as do NOW's annual conferences.

To directly boost its membership, which is the largest part of NOW's income as donations to the organization are not tax-exempt, NOW also undertook a "Mega-Membership Drive" in 1997 and again in 1998, offering prizes to chapters for every ten new members recruited by a state organization or local chapters.⁴²⁸ For comparison's sake, in 1986 NOW's annual budget was \$6,300,000.⁴²⁹ In 1997 NOW's expenses amounted to a bit less than six million dollars.⁴³⁰ Karen Johnson, Vice President-Membership, noted the benefits of the drive when she stated that "[w]e know that the new members who are most likely to become local activists are those who are recruited by and affiliated with a local NOW chapter, and that's why we're committed to making this membership drive a big success."⁴³¹ By the end of the 1997 drive, even with the added incentive of additional prizes, only 42 of about 405 chapters (or about 10.4%) "qualified for the prize drawing by recruiting at least ten members each and 16 of those chapters qualified for multiple chances."⁴³²

⁴²⁸ Both drives were "essentially failures." Lois Reckitt, written comment to author.

⁴²⁹ Carabillo, et al., p. 120.

⁴³⁰ This is the only document referring to NOW's income and expenses on the internet of over 3,000 documents available. NOW, "1997 Budget," <<http://www.now.org/nnt/05-97/budget.html>>

⁴³¹ "Mega-Membership Drive Amplifies NOW's Voice; Payoff Includes Prizes - And New Members," *National NOW Times*, March 1997. <<http://www.now.org.nnt.03-97/mega.html>>.

⁴³² "Membership Contest Increases Activist Ranks," *National NOW Times*, October, 1997. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/10-97/memb.html>> One activist

In addition to organizing Summits and recruiting members, National NOW also focused on improving communications between National NOW leaders and staff and local chapters and state organizations. The *National NOW Times* publicized a new "Activist Liaison System" in its fall 1998 and winter 1999 issues. Complaints about a lack of response or guidance from the National office have frequently surfaced throughout NOW's history. This new service was "designed to improve communication between the activists in the field and the activists in the Action center with periodic updates on important issues and campaigns." Yet, further discussion illuminates other advantages to setting aside a specific time for the National Action Center to be available to member/activists queries. Liaison Team members "can also troubleshoot any communication problems a chapter or state is having with the Action Center."⁴³³

Finally, NOW began in the 1990s (again, in part with the funds from the tax-deductible donations to its Foundation) to improve its technological outreach. In the mid-1990s NOW created a web presence and currently has over 3,000 documents available. It is also able to communicate with its chapter and state leaders

called these drives "a complete failure." Comment to author by Lois Galgay Reckitt.

⁴³³ "Connecting Grassroots Activists and NOW Action Center a Priority," *National NOW Times*, Winter 1999. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/winter-99/activists.html>>.

through web pages accessible only to chapter, state and regional presidents and officers.⁴³⁴

Preserving a Multi-issue, Multi-tactical Strategy

Much of NOW's activity in the 1980s and 1990s involved electoral politics and abortion rights. Such a strong focus on these two areas spurred debate in NOW about whether the organization abandoned its commitment to other feminist issues. In addition, as the women's studies and feminist community increasingly incorporated the insights of women of color, of poor women and lesbian women into their consciousness and activism during this period, so too did NOW members who in turn pressured leaders to adequately represent the concerns of these groups.⁴³⁵ The question of whether National NOW maintains its commitment to diversity in issues and tactics in the 1990s hinges on NOW's

⁴³⁴ NOW, "Technological Equipment and Service Needs," <http://www.now.org/organiza/computer.html>

⁴³⁵ At other times, leaders led members, as with the acceptance of the rights of the transgendered. Some influential writings on issues facing women of color and women in poverty include: Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, New York, Kitchen Table Press, 1983; "Documents from the Black Women's Liberation Movement," *Women's Liberation Movement*, in Documents from the Women's Liberation Movement, an On-Line Archival Collection, Duke University; *The Combahee River Collective Statement: Black Feminist Organizing in the Seventies and Eighties*, New York, Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1985; bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, Boston, South End Press, 1989; Kathleen Mullen Sands and Gloria Anzaldua, eds., *Making Face, Making Soul: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*, San Francisco, Aunt Lute Books, 1990; Diana Pearce, *The Feminization of Poverty*, Washington, D.C., Institute for Women's Policy Research, 1989; Ruth Sidel, *Women and Children Last: The Plight of Poor Women in Affluent America*, New York, Viking, 1982; Linda Gordon, ed., *Women, the State and Welfare*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

commitment to supporting diverse groups of women, including poor women, lesbian women and women of color.

The most frequent complaint is that NOW focuses too intently on abortion rights. It is true that NOW has invested a great deal in the 1990s on preserving *Roe v. Wade*. However, an account of the events held at the 1992 National NOW Conference (theme: "Strength in Diversity") provides an accurate picture overall of the range of issues with which members as well as leaders concern themselves.

Resolutions passed by the conference included: endorsement of NOW's "Elect Women For A Change" campaign; a strategy to step up non-violent civil disobedience actions in support of legal abortion; opposition to anti-lesbian and gay ballot measures such as those in Colorado and Oregon; and a campaign to pressure the Department of Defense to make a full investigation into the Tailhook incident. Conference delegates also voted to endorse the 21st Century Party, the creation of which was proposed by NOW's Commission for Responsive Democracy in 1991. NOW President Patricia Ireland, Executive Vice President Kim Gandy, Secretary Ginny Montes and Action Vice President Rosemary Dempsey also led a NOW delegation of more than 250 activists in Chicago's Gay Pride March.⁴³⁶

Of course, conferences are in part spectacle. It is therefore important to take into account the distribution of National NOW's actions throughout the year. For example, the media, other women's organizations and NOW members frequently

⁴³⁶ Carabillo, et al., p. 146.

criticize NOW's insensitivity to the policy needs of poor women.⁴³⁷ In 1993, however, NOW renewed connections with the National Welfare Rights Organization and continually renewed its criticism of Clinton's positions on welfare reform. In 1996, National NOW held a 21-day fast and vigil along with other organizations devoted to the impoverished in front of the White House to pressure Clinton to veto what NOW called the "welfare repeal" bill; Clinton signed the bill and NOW received little coverage of its actions from either the *New York Times* or *The Washington Post* for its efforts.

NOW's activism on behalf of the passage of the Violence Against Women Act and then on behalf of its full funding since 1994 is also directed at women who are often either in poverty or who may become impoverished and/or homeless as a result of their escape from domestic violence. The organization's commitment, as well, to obtaining federal funding for abortions also speaks to its commitment to women in poverty.

NOW has also made an effort to deal with its internal racism.⁴³⁸ National NOW censured one California chapter leader, Tammy Bruce, for her racially insensitive comments during the O.J. Simpson case and publicly apologized for her. Recently, NOW voted to change its bylaws to provide for increased minority group participation on the National Board. The NOW Foundation helps fund

⁴³⁷ This is also a criticism of the feminist movement as a whole. Stewart Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s: Searching for Democracy*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1990, p. 172.

⁴³⁸ See interesting documentation of this in Jennifer Gilbert, *Diversity, Difference and Power: The National Organization for Women and the Politics of Identity, 1966-1976*, Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1988.

prejudice awareness workshops and sponsored a Women of Color and Allies Summit as well. NOW passed a resolution to fight Governor Pete Wilson and Newt Gingrich's attempts to dismantle affirmative action in 1995 and continues to work on this issue.⁴³⁹ NOW helped chapters create affirmative action plans. Nevertheless, tensions remain and surface occasionally, perhaps largely because of the differences that remain between women of color and white women in the way each group frames issues of discrimination and even the concept of feminism.⁴⁴⁰

Finally, NOW has persistently been attacked for its conservatism and unwillingness to understand the needs of lesbian women. This story has become NOW's own urban legend; in interviews, NOW leaders of varying sexual orientation have independently mentioned this as the most irritating misunderstanding about NOW that they encounter.⁴⁴¹ The reality is that lesbian women comprise approximately 40% of NOW's membership.⁴⁴² Many lesbian women serve and have served on the National Board and as officers. The possibility of discrimination and misunderstanding still exists of course, especially at the

⁴³⁹ This action can be seen as self-serving, however, as affirmative action is a major benefit to white women.

⁴⁴⁰ Suzanne Rumph, "Black and White NOW Members Talk About the Racial Diversification of the National Organization for Women," Master's Thesis, Wayne State University, 2000.

⁴⁴¹ Interviews with author, June 2000. Early harassment and discrimination was certainly evident throughout the organization in its early years; see Gilbert, *Diversity, Difference and Power*.

⁴⁴² Megan Rosenfeld, "The NOW and Future Feminist: New President Patricia Ireland, Taking a '90s Tack on Persistent Problems," *Washington Post*, January 11, 1992.

chapter level. However, with the notable exception of one group of women unhappy with NOW's lack of radicalism in 1975 (a group which subsequently organized NOW's first Lesbian Rights Summit in 1977) and the accusations of a candidate for NOW president in 1992, complaints of internal insensitivity to lesbian activists and members are few.⁴⁴³ In fact, the major problems with the issue of lesbians in NOW were largely resolved (with some pain and difficulty experienced by all) in NOW's founding period; NOW members accepted the legitimacy of lesbian rights as a part of NOW's agenda and founding principles in 1971. In addition to conducting frequent workshops on the topic of lesbian rights organizing, in 1994 NOW members included guarantees of lesbian rights in the version of the Constitutional Equality Amendment it endorsed.

As far as national NOW's attention to electoral activism is concerned, available budget documents do not break down the amounts NOW devotes to electoral politics. NOW/PAC numbers are available, but the staff of NOW/PAC does not completely overlap with NOW itself: It is thus difficult to determine exactly what proportion of National's attention electoral politics consumes versus all other issues. An examination of the workshops available to conference attendees since the 1980s does provide evidence that while National NOW seems increasingly focused on training NOW members to be competent electoral activists from 1979 to 1984, the

⁴⁴³ Lois Reckitt, interview with author and written comments to author.

period between 1993 and 1999 finds fewer workshops on electoral politics until this year.⁴⁴⁴ In Figure 2 we see that general organizing concerns, which includes chapter development, make up the bulk of workshops at conferences at almost 27% of all workshops during these four years; electoral politics workshops comprise approximately 14% of workshops, whereas other most frequently appearing workshops make up between 4% and 9% of workshops presented at conferences.

⁴⁴⁴ This, in spite of the fact that Ireland argued in 1992 that lobbying was "hopeless" in the current atmosphere, and therefore helping feminists get elected was a better strategy. Megan Rosenfeld, "The NOW and Future Feminist: New President Patricia Ireland, Taking a '90s Tack on Persistent Problems," *Washington Post*, January 11, 1992.

Figure 1

Political Action Workshops at NOW National Conferences,
Selected Years, 1979-2000

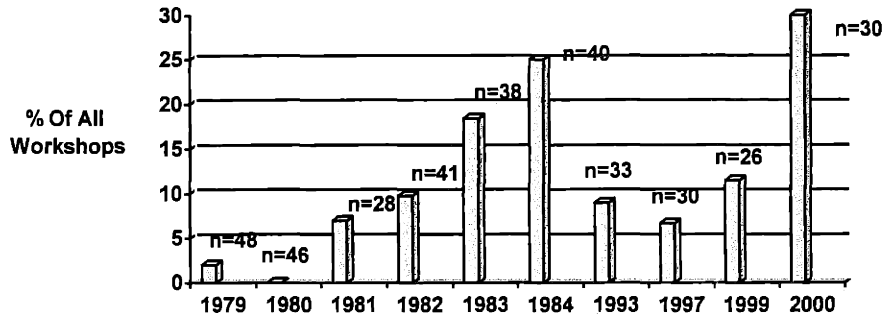


Table 1

Workshops at NOW National Conferences, Selected Years,
1993-2000

	GENERAL ORGANIZING STRATEGIES	MEDIA TRAINING	YOUNG WOMEN	ELECTORAL POLITICS TRAINING	REPRO. RIGHTS, HEALTH	LESBIAN RIGHTS	VIOLENCE	POVERTY
1993 n=33	7	1	3	3	5	1	3	3
1997 n=30	9	2	1	2	3	2	4	2
1999 n=26	9	3	1	3	1	1	0	1
2000 n=30	8	2	1	9	2	1	1	2
Total/ percent of all workshops	32/26.9%	8/6.7	6/5.0	17/14.3	11/9.2	5/4.2	8/6.7	8/6.7

*These eight categories comprise 80% of all workshops.

In the 1990s, National NOW has conducted non-violent civil disobedience campaigns, fasts, vigils, rallies, "Media Institutes," "Political Institutes" to train electoral organizers, boycotts, has

testified at party platform hearings, held get-out-the-vote drives, conducted campaigns to alter the media's depiction of women, education campaigns and pickets against companies like Mitsubishi and Ford which were accused of sexual harassment and the unequal treatment of women workers.

Finally, it is important to note that much of NOW's electoral organizing is exceedingly grassroots based and cannot be accomplished without the participation of activists. Participating in campaigns involves not only phone banking for dollars by any means, but also includes door-to-door canvassing, holding signs, dropping leaflets, get-out-the-vote drives and rallies.

Preserving NOW's Political Independence

The story of NOW's challenge to maintain its political independence of parties and of governmental institutions is sandwiched on the one hand by the reaction of NOW's grassroots to the 1989 *Webster* decision and the reaction of NOW's leadership to the various charges against Clinton and the politics surrounding his impeachment trial on the other.

Members reacted strongly to the *Webster* decision:

Attendees at NOW's 1989 annual conference expressed their disgust and anger over the *Webster* decision by passing a resolution calling for National NOW to investigate the possibility of creating a third party. This event reflected the irritation felt by NOW members not only with this Supreme Court case but also with the slow pace of positive change for their cause in general and their inability to wield much influence the Republican or Democratic parties.

Although NOW President Molly Yard supported the resolution, the resolution came not from the national leadership but from the membership itself. Other NOW leaders who had doubts about the third-party strategy told reporters that this was a true grassroots initiative. Unfortunately, most editorials and perhaps more importantly, most other feminist leaders, including National Women's Political Caucus President Harriet Woods, scoffed at the idea of a third party, taking Yard herself to task for potentially ruining years of their hard work forging relationships with those inside the Republican and Democratic parties. The press roundly derided NOW's "radical" stance and the outlandish tactics of current NOW president Molly Yard. In spite of the outpouring of contempt for the idea, the NOW Board set up a NOW Commission on Responsive Democracy to study its feasibility. After holding a series of "town-hall" like meetings in D.C., Texas, Florida and Minnesota, complete with speakers, workshops and expert testimony, the Commission ultimately voted to endorse the creation of the "21st Century Party" in September 1991.

Although NOW has frequently been accused of being a pawn of the Democratic Party, NOW historical distrust of distance from both parties (save for a brief moment in the 1980s with the endorsement of the Mondale/Ferraro ticket) largely continues. However, this separation is complicated by the fact that the Republican Party at the national level has expressed complete disinterest in women's rights in the 1990s. Lauren Carney, Deputy Political Director of the Republican National Committee insisted in 1993 (in spite of the

prominence of the Christian Right at the 1992 Republican Convention) that economic issues, not women's issues, mattered to the National Republican party.⁴⁴⁵ Emily's List recently reported that the future looks no brighter for feminists interested in influencing the Republican agenda: the National Republican Congressional Committee told *Roll Call* that it has "no current plans to try and increase women's participation within the party."⁴⁴⁶

The hostility to feminist issues on the part of the Republicans makes the Democratic Party the "only game in town" for feminists. However, the Democratic Party also earned NOW's ire in the 1990s first with its "New Covenant" platform in 1992 which supported welfare reform among other conservative policy measures and again as the Party scrambled to attract conservative voters by running right-leaning candidates in 1994.⁴⁴⁷ In 1996, Patricia Ireland's speech to the Democratic National Committee criticized the Party's proposed addition of a "conscience clause" allowing members of the Party to bow out of the party's official position supporting abortion rights; the clause remained in the platform.⁴⁴⁸

NOW activists' experience working on electoral campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s taught them well that they cannot guarantee

⁴⁴⁵ Interview with author, March 23, 1993.

⁴⁴⁶ EMILY's List. <<http://emilyslist.com/el-newsstand/pr/1999/990729-nrcc.asp>>

⁴⁴⁷ Thomas B. Edsall, "Show of Party Unity Masks Scars of Ideological Battle: Center Wins Day in Democrats' Tug of War," *Washington Post*, July 13, 1992.

⁴⁴⁸ 1996 Democratic Party Platform. <<http://www.democrats.org/hq/resources/platform/platform.html>>.

their efforts will ultimately result in votes cast in line with NOW's agenda. This is one reason why NOW was unwilling to moderate its agenda when Clinton came into office, as leaders of other organizations like of the National Women's Political Caucus and the National Abortion Rights and Reproductive Action League were inclined to do.⁴⁴⁹ It seemed entirely plausible that feminist positions would be tossed aside in spite of their work for Clinton and his party during the 1992 election season.

NOW's response to President Clinton's impeachment trial towards the end of the 1990s is puzzling in that it breaks with history and displays a strong investment in the President's fate. NOW's awkward support of the Democratic party through its high-profile questioning of right-wing involvement in the entire process was punctuated by the strange picture of NOW leaders urging members of Congress not to impeach the President.⁴⁵⁰ This support caused conservative commentators to argue that NOW lost its "moral authority" and political independence, proving itself a pawn of the Democratic Party.⁴⁵¹ In April 1998 Patricia Ireland responded by

⁴⁴⁹ In keeping with their sense of the conservative mood of the country, the National Abortion Rights Action League changed their name to the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (still NARAL). President Michelman argued that "I'm okay if someone calls this moderate. I just know it's right." Art Levine and Amy Cunningham, "Post-Triumph Trauma: For the Long-Suffering Left, Winning Can Feel Weird," *Washington Post*, November 29, 1992.

⁴⁵⁰ "Statement of NOW President Patricia Ireland Calling for Fair Treatment of Jones' Suit, Questioning Right Wing's Disingenuous Fervor," May 6, 1994. <<http://www.now.org/issues/harass/jones.html>>.

⁴⁵¹ See, for example, commentary at Rightgrrl's web page, "NOW Watch;" Terry M. Neal, Thomas B. Edsall, "Allegations Against Clinton Leave Women's Groups Conflicted About Responding," *Washington Post*, January 30, 1988; many documents at NOW's website, <<http://www.now.org>>, including press

noting that "NOW is an independent political force that believes feminist principles trump practical politics. Our political action committee did not endorse in the presidential races of 1992 and 1996, and we have organized many protests over policy differences with the Clinton administration."⁴⁵² Nevertheless, in this situation, NOW's position was commensurate with those taken by the more moderate National Women's Political Caucus and NARAL, both of whom reserved judgment on Clinton.⁴⁵³

Perhaps the most shocking reaction, however, to NOW's official position came from within the organization. In a fit of pique, the Dulles, Virginia area NOW chapter tried to formally unite with the Independent Women's Forum (a conservative woman's organization) to protest NOW National's position and its statements regarding the Paula Jones case. This chapter, headed by Marie-Jose Ragab (also a former National staff member and contributor to the *National NOW Times*) released a statement to the press in June 1998 noting that "[w]e continue to be chagrined at the lack of leadership from National NOW on sexual harassment, which has jeopardized the overall

releases "NOW Calls on Clinton to Foreswear "Nuts or Sluts" Defense, Work with Congress to Strengthen Women's Rights Laws," "NOW President Patricia Ireland Challenges Livingston to Rein in Conservatives and Calls upon Women to Lobby Against Impeachment," December 11, 1998. See also press releases from the Independent Women's Forum, including "Women's Group Demands that Paula Jones Have Her "Day in Court"; Notes Hypocrisy of NOW, Other Womens' Groups;" and Justin Blum, "Dissenting Dulles Chapter Wages High-Profile Battle With NOW," *Washington Post*, June 1, 1998.

⁴⁵² Patricia Ireland, "Letter from Patricia Ireland to the Media About Portrayal of NOW," April 1998. <<http://www.now.org/press/04-98/letter-ed.html>>

⁴⁵³ Terry M. Neal, Thomas B. Edsall, "Allegations Against Clinton Leave Women's Groups Conflicted About Responding," *Washington Post*, January 30, 1998.

credibility of the women's movement... Therefore, we maintain our call for their immediate resignation."⁴⁵⁴

In spite of these strong words, criticism from chapters, states or regions regarding the Clinton matter or the Dulles chapter's allegations is almost non-existent. The analysis of NOW in the 1990s suggests that their mishandling of the Clinton political situation and the right-wing's exaggeration of NOW's breach of integrity will not have a lasting effect on the organization. This episode does not seem to signify a lasting policy change in the organization, but an aberration reflecting the political, social and juridical conservatism facing NOW in the 1990s.

DISCUSSION

NOW faced an organizational crisis that is not yet resolved: its membership, and thus its revenues, declined in the 1990s. Attempts to gain new activists through organizing specialized conferences for youth and other groups drew many participants but few new members. Membership drives at the chapter level similarly proved unable to stem the decline. Problems with membership rolls are not limited to NOW: other national organizations including the NAACP, the Christian Coalition and the YWCA report similar contractions in the 1990s. However, if Bush's presidency proves to

⁴⁵⁴ "Dissenting Dulles Chapter Wages High-Profile Battle With NOW," Justin Blum, *Washington Post*, June 1, 1998.

threaten the basic tenets of *Roe v. Wade*, it is likely that NOW will enjoy an influx of donations and new members.

NOW did not attempt to attract new members by adopting the more pragmatic tactics of other progressive organizations during this period, however. The analysis of the National Organization for Women in the 1990s shows a remarkable continuity in the topics of its intraorganizational debate. Members commonly expressed their insistence that NOW remain true to the organization's founding ideals. For their part, NOW leaders showed themselves to support these ideals in a variety of ways. NOW's continued emphasis on leading the feminist vanguard is evident by their increasing consciousness of the importance of diversity and inclusiveness, as shown by Patricia Ireland's attempts to build bridges to the National Welfare Rights Organization, the organization's support for the rights of the transgendered and for the Constitutional Equality Amendment. NOW's continuing role, since 1971, as the radical flank of national feminist organizations (and its political independence) is evident by the group's interest in a feminist third party in addition to its willingness to criticize President Clinton early on in his first and second terms. Each of these positions drew considerable scorn from more mainstream feminist organizations.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION: MOBILIZING AND SUSTAINING GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION IN NOW, 1966-2000

The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to understand how the National Organization for Women managed to navigate crises it experienced over time, and second, to discover whether the organization's principles remain fundamentally the same today as they were articulated by 1971, the end of NOW's formative period. This approach, which focuses on periods of organizational crisis, permits evaluation of NOW's vitality as a social movement group. How NOW's leadership responds to challenges provides a window into evaluating a groups stability, strength and its propensity for future mobilization. In the final section, I speculate about NOW's future, given what we have learned about its past.

MANAGING CRISES

Chapter Two argues that six factors are commonly considered to affect the fortunes of groups as they form and organize. I address the findings of this study with respect to each of these in turn.

Organizational Structure

NOW's professionalization proceeded slowly. This is in part because of a paucity of resources initially, and later because of a hesitation to strengthen the national office at the expense of the

grassroots base. NOW's federalization was not instituted until the mid-1970s, thus these two factors gave the organization little advantage during its first ten years or so. However, the addition of a handful of paid staff (and today dozens of college interns) and the addition of a funded state level in 1976 helped ease the persistent communication problems NOW suffered.

The campaign to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, with its emphasis on organizing vast numbers of men and women and on aggressive state-level lobbying and election work, pushed NOW's professionalization and strengthened its nascent federal structure. Federalization, which grassroots members themselves insisted upon, assisted NOW in the aftermath of the ERA in at least two ways. The first is that the extra organizational layer increased information flow both to members and to national leaders. Fewer complaints about communication are noted after the federalization - although they did not completely disappear. Second, I theorize that adding this new layer of the organization also opened up more leadership positions, which likely provided more incentives to members interested in the power, solidarity, and even the salary occasionally available to state presidents to stay with the organization through critical periods.

NOW's organizational structure also constrains leaders. NOW's organizational culture emphasizes the grassroots, giving local chapters, states and even regions a great deal of autonomy. Factions within NOW who disagree with some part of its leadership frequently use NOW's own organizational infrastructure and the very

political skills they learned through NOW to organize themselves. National leaders cannot credibly claim a mass base if membership decreases too much, if chapters dwindle or publicly defy them, or if no one shows up at their demonstrations. Finally, national leaders regularly face contested elections.

The Assistance of Patrons and the Role of Leaders

Patrons have not played a significant role in NOW's origination or sustenance over time. Instead of one or a handful of very supportive individuals or institutions, in the beginning, NOW sustained itself on borrowed (offices) or stolen (copying facilities) resources and the small contributions of many, many people. Other, non-monetary contributions were inestimably important. The ability of Betty Friedan and others to court the media early on substituted handily for cash. As noted below, the richness of mobilizable networks - for their people, connections, experience, and ideas - also proved critical to NOW's formation.

Leaders like Alice Rossi and Kay Clarenbach foresaw the need for NOW to expand, recruit members and encourage the formation of chapters. Friedan's willingness to take positions on risky issues like abortion rights and the Equal Rights Amendment helped attract many members. Her focus on networking with even the most radical of civil rights organizations - in spite of her disagreement with them in some areas and the chaos some of these meetings caused - helped NOW carry through on the tenets of its Statement of Purpose. For

her part, Eleanor Smeal's financial assistance to NOW in the mid-1980s saved the organization from its debtors.

More generally, however, as we see throughout the narrative, leaders successfully managed the dual problems of implementing strategy choice and change on the one hand and in maintaining NOW members' faith in the group's collective belief system on the other. They managed this both through their discourse in which, for example, they framed the goal of the ratification of the ERA and the tactic of participation in electoral campaigns in terms consonant with NOW's founding principles. They invested funds in increased interaction and communication between local, state, and national levels and maintained consciousness-raising as a fundamental tool for education and organizational integration. In his last book, Martin Luther King wrote: "...[T]o move to higher levels of progress we will have to emerge from crises with more than agreements and laws. We shall have to have people tied together in a long-term relationship instead of evanescent enthusiasts who lose their experience, spirit and unity because they have no mechanism that directs them to new tasks."⁴⁵⁵ The "mechanism" that NOW has possessed is its leaders' ability to move its members toward new goals and tactics.

To discuss the importance of leaders does not suggest that charismatic or unusually talented leaders are the main reason NOW survived the challenges it faced. The federal structure demanded by

⁴⁵⁵ Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1968, pp. 158-9.

the members themselves greatly aided leaders, as did the integration of women's liberation ideas and tactics - also a membership innovation.

The Role of the State

While it is likely that NOW endured its share of FBI infiltrations, by and large the organization did not have to cope with the repressive tactics of the state that helped undermine the stability of other social movement organizations in the 1960s and 1970s.

On the other hand, it is wrong to point to the State and Federal Government's Status of Women Commissions as the match that set the second wave of the women's movement afire. As I show in Chapter Three, the legacy of first wave women's organizations and new networks of professional and academic women with feminist interests were already working and connecting on these issues, providing fertile ground for a new organization dedicated to the advancement of women.

Mobilizing Structures: Social Networks

The role of social networks were especially critical during NOW's origination. As noted above, social networks formed a web connecting women with a variety of resources to provide to NOW, supporting its initial establishment. Additionally, however, women's liberation movement groups in the late 1960s provided another mobilizable network for NOW. Their people and ideas

strengthened NOW as other left organizations were losing cohesiveness and power, helping solidify NOW's organizational culture.

The Management of Strategic and Tactical Change

Organizations see their tactical options and goals through the lens of their group's collective values and belief system.⁴⁵⁶ In NOW, internal debate and conflict accompanied the increasing use of protest politics in the late 1960s, a heavier investment in legislative/lobbying-oriented strategies in the mid-1970s and electoral politics in the mid to late 1980s.⁴⁵⁷ Any change in strategy is likely to cause some friction in a mass membership organization.⁴⁵⁸ Strategy changes must be legitimate in the eyes of

⁴⁵⁶ Bert Klandermans, "Mobilization and Participation: Social Psychological Expansions of Resource Mobilization Theory," *American Sociological Review*, 1984, Vol. 49, pp. 583-600; Debra Friedman and Doug McAdam, "Collective Identity and Activism: Networks, Choices, and the Life of a Social Movement," in Aldon Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds. *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992; William A. Gamson, "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," in Morris and Mueller, eds. *Frontiers*; Lee Ann Banaszak, *Why Movements Succeed or Fail: Opportunity, Culture, and the Struggle for Woman Suffrage*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1996.

⁴⁵⁷ Anne N. Costain and W. Douglas Costain "Strategy and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States: The Role of Political Parties" in Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1987, p. 198. See also Anne N. Costain, "Representing Women: The Transition from Social Movement to Interest Group." *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 34, 1981.

⁴⁵⁸ Michael Schwartz, *Radical Protest and Social Structure: The Southern Farmer's Alliance and Cotton Tenancy, 1880-1890*, New York, Academic Press, pp. 136-137; Suzanne Staggenborg, *The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 145.

group members, that is, they must conform to the group's belief system.

Toward the deadline for ratification of the ERA, for example, NOW leaders emphasized the legitimacy of electoral activism, preparing the organization for a new strategic turn. Legitimization is the process of ensuring that strategies conform to the organization's goals and values. An important role of a grassroots based social movement organization's leadership is to justify the use of new strategies in these terms, allaying member fears that the strategy will adversely affect the structure, principles or goals of the organization.

The Development and Maintenance of Collective Identity

This study supports those who argue that collective identity can help explain the survival or failure of voluntary organizations. Collective identity provides both a solidary incentive to participate as well as a potential obstacle to the strategic flexibility that can sustain organizations.

This research examines 1) how NOW's identity developed; and 2) the significance of collective identity in NOW's history. NOW's collective identity was initially defined by both the sentiments expressed in the organization's founding documents and by what Breines calls the "prefigurative politics" that the organization practiced beginning in 1971. This interpretation of the content of NOW's identity is confirmed by the fact that these principles surfaced in countless debates that took place since NOW's inception.

NOW's founding documents insist upon its being on the vanguard of women's rights, upon the need for action, a multiplicity of issues and tactics and independence from partisan or governmental bodies. By 1971, the ideas (as well as the activists) of the radical women's liberation movement infiltrated the organization, extending NOW's principles to include a "prefigurative" element. Breines describes the prefigurative politics practiced by the New Left this way:

The term...is used to designate an essentially anti-organizational politics characteristic of the movement, as well as parts of the new left leadership, and may be recognized in counter institutions, demonstrations and the attempt to embody personal and anti-hierarchical values in politics. Participatory democracy was central to prefigurative politics... The crux of prefigurative politics imposed substantial tasks, the central one being to create and sustain within the live practice of the movement, relationships and political forms that "prefigured" and embodied the desired society.⁴⁵⁹

The resulting organizational value system consistently expressed itself in NOW's discourse and actions. For example, controversies regularly involved accusations of elitism, the abandonment of grassroots activists and grassroots politics and the under-representation of certain groups of oppressed women.

EFFECTS OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION ON NOW

This research also sheds light on questions regarding the effects of longevity on an organization's original vision. The evidence here clearly shows the resilience of NOW's founding

⁴⁵⁹ Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left: 1962-1968*, South Hadley, Mass., J.F. Bergin Publishers, Inc., 1982, p. 6.

principles over time. NOW may be seen by outside observers as an interest group no different from the AARP or the AMA. NOW member and leaders, however, are not only concerned with obtaining favorable legislation on abortion and reproductive rights but with fundamental social change. One way the organization signals this goal is by rarely compromising its vanguard feminist vision in legislative battles or in coalitions, although such compromises may be politically pragmatic.

NOW never felt the education of members to be a critical task. However, the influx of members and the growth of chapters beginning in the late 1960s demanded NOW invest resources in training the grassroots. The use of and investment in the spread of consciousness-raising groups and workshops, in addition to regular workshops at the state, regional and national levels all contributed to NOW's ability to inculcate its founding principles in new recruits. In return, members and local leaders who learned these principles then insisted the organization's leaders then uphold them.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The Future of Electoral Activism in NOW

In the early 1990s (as in each of the three previous decades), feminists regularly saw headlines in periodicals and newspapers including *Newsweek*, *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, which predicted the end of their movement. Susan Faludi's 1991 book, *Backlash: the Undeclared War against American Women* documented

increasing attacks against feminists and the erosion of the previous gains of women's rights advocates. The 1990s was indeed a difficult decade for the National Organization for Women in terms of the paltry support the parties showed for the feminist agenda, not to mention NOW's weak responses to the allegations against President Clinton. Supreme Court decisions such as *Webster* and *Casey* clearly undermined the broadest interpretations of *Roe v. Wade* and anti-abortion protesters employed increasingly emotional and disturbing tactics to make their point.

In spite of NOW's enthusiasm for electoral activism in this period, this route to power is not a magic bullet. For example, while it does appear clear that women are more likely to approve of and vote for an active government than are men, what is less clear is how feminists can use the gender gap to win the attention of political candidates. This is because it is equally possible to frame the gender gap in terms of the fact that men have become more likely to vote Republican. In addition, a unified "women's vote" does not exist; in fact this vote is fractured by class and race. These differences have yet to be fully dealt with by feminist organizations, including NOW.⁴⁶⁰ In addition, the activity of women's organizations involved in recruiting and funding women candidates for office since the 1970s, while impressive, has nevertheless had a limited effect on redressing the gender

⁴⁶⁰ Anna Greenberg, "Deconstructing the Gender Gap," John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 1998.
<<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/prg/greenb/gengap.htm>>.

inequities at the state and national levels: the electoral strategy is not a rapid road to success for women or for the feminist agenda.

However, groups like NOW retain advantages accrued by long experience and by a political opportunity structure that provides multiple points of access and influence by the organized in spite of its current conservative tilt. Berry argues that the citizen groups emerging from the 1970s capitalized on structural changes within government institutions that encouraged their growth and power in addition to technological changes, such as sophisticated direct mail techniques, which gave citizen groups access to resources normally reserved for business interests or unions.⁴⁶¹ He notes that while these groups suffered plenty of defeats, they remain mobilized and continue to play an important role in politics. I suspect that in spite of NOW's defeats, and their latest missteps, they too will continue to wield influence and remain mobilized.⁴⁶²

For example, the current structure of candidate-centered campaigns and of campaign financing suggests continuing successes and growth for feminists in the future. Important gains have been made in organizing the funding of feminist candidates for all levels of political office since the 1970s. The Center for Responsive

⁴⁶¹ Jeffrey Berry, *The New Liberalism*, The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 1999.

⁴⁶² NOW and other feminist groups like the Feminist Majority have also responded to the challenging political atmosphere of the 1990s by attempting to relate American women's concerns with those of women around the globe. For example, these groups have achieved some success at publicizing the fate of women under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. This activity has proved to be successful in fundraising and it may help raise the consciousness of more complacent American women to the continuing problem of gender discrimination.

Politics reports that two studies conducted in 1999, one headed by Paul Herrnson and the other by the Center itself, both found that "the role of women as political contributors has grown some 35 percent over the past 18 years, from approximately 17 percent of large individual donors in 1978..."⁴⁶³ In addition, both studies identified a gender gap in campaign donations, finding that "women donors tend to give to female candidates and Democrats at higher rates than men and that women donors are more likely to contribute to challengers."⁴⁶⁴

NOW is also well situated to extend its participation in electoral activism as a result of its solid organizational base. It maintains cadres of committed activists who have learned sophisticated political techniques, who know how to run a large voluntary organization, who can use Robert's Rules to good effect and who insist on teaching them to new members. NOW has created and entered many political networks over time and have earned the respect and perhaps even the allegiance of those current, former and future candidates for office whom NOW activists have contributed money and time. NOW's Foundation allows NOW to prime the pump of mobilization by educating interested members of the public on issues and organizing strategies and recruiting young feminists of the next generation. NOW similarly profits from its relationship with the

⁴⁶³ Herrnson's study can be found at www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/herrnson/women.html; the Center for Responsive Politics' study is at www.opensecrets.org.

⁴⁶⁴ Center for Responsive Politics, 1999, http://www.opensecrets.org/pressreleases/june9_99_release.htm

well-funded Feminist Majority, who's President, Eleanor Smeal, is a former president of NOW. In addition, since the failure of the ERA, NOW has improved its ability to work in coalitions, as it did with pro-choice groups in maintaining clinic access.

Future Cycles of Mobilization

NOW's ability to uphold its founding principles means that the organization retains an identity that encourages activists to join and to stay involved, regardless of the political opportunity structure. NOW's most active members seem generally satisfied with NOW's direction. For example, the group held a Vision Summit in 1998 and spent time at the next annual conference developing a variety of alternatives to its Statement of Purpose, only to reject any changes at its 2000 conference. Apparently, NOW members believe their Statement has served them well.

In spite of this positive outlook, one important caveat is in order for those who ask whether and how the National Organization for Women can succeed in recreating the kind of massive mobilization of the ERA years.

NOW's continued adherence to an outsider status and vanguard image may actually limit the organization's future mobilizing capacity. Veteran feminist Betty Friedan spoke at the recent enormous gathering of feminists at the Feminist Majority sponsored "Feminist Expo," arguing as she has for years that the movement must move forward and take up the issues of the family. In fact, although childcare figured in NOW's original Bill of Rights, the

provision of childcare is an area in which feminists have made no progress.

However, even if NOW members and leaders decided to mobilize around an issue with a mainstream, family-oriented appeal such as universal childcare, NOW is unlikely to successfully hold a leadership position in such a campaign. NOW may represent the philosophical vanguard of the feminist movement, but it is unlikely to be the leader of another mass mobilization of women.

This is because of both changes in the political environment since the beginning of the ERA campaign in 1972 as well as the maturation of NOW's progressive vision since then. The political environment now includes a phalanx of well-funded and well-organized groups vehemently opposed to the feminist agenda. These groups would take advantage of the fact that since 1971, NOW has increasingly committed itself to a progressive and even radically egalitarian agenda which calls for, among other things, the constitutional equality of lesbian women and the inclusion of women in combat duty. NOW is consequently a vulnerable target for the barbs of conservative groups who would seek to emphasize NOW's radicalism to the average American, a tactic honed during the ratification drive for the ERA. This eventuality thus undermines NOW's ability to successfully lead another broad-based mobilization of women similar to that achieved by the campaign to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

Future Research

Finally, this study suggests new directions for researchers examining the decline of civic engagement in America. The case of the National Organization for Women provides information relevant to those concerned about the health of American civic culture, especially with respect to political education and the development of a set of coherent political ideas. NOW at all levels invests a great deal in the formal and informal transmission of knowledge about the state of the political environment and the mechanisms to effect political change to its members. Future research should examine not only the changing demographics of voluntary organizations, but should also seek empirical data on the extent of political training members receive and the character of the organization's internal governance structures (How democratic are they? How porous to grassroots influence?). Without such information, analyses of declining civic participation cannot capture what has been lost since the peak of grassroots political involvement in the late 19th-early 20th centuries, nor what remains to build upon.

Appendix A: Methodological Notes

In all, 65 sets of NOW national board meeting minutes were coded (spanning the years 1966 through 1983), 63 of which were actually used in this study (1969 through 1983). Each year is represented by at least three and at most six sets of minutes.

All minutes coded were the final, approved versions except for five sets of the 63 included minutes that were included although they were the unproved versions.⁴⁶⁵ Approved versions of these five sets of minutes could not be located. It is my opinion that the unapproved minutes are substantially similar to the approved versions.

Minutes for 1968 could not be located. Finally, approximately seven national board meeting minutes between 1969 and 1983 could not be located and are thus absent from this analysis.⁴⁶⁶ Data for the years 1976 and 1982 are the most affected by these gaps, but in each case at least half of all meeting minutes for the year were available for coding and inclusion in the analysis.

Only those statements submitted as formal motions are included. Only positive, or passing motions were coded in order to limit the analysis to strategies around which the board reached consensus. (Motions were passed by majority vote.) The only

⁴⁶⁵ Unapproved minutes included the following dates: July 1979, December 1981, January 1982, January 1983 and September 1983.

⁴⁶⁶ June, October and December 1976, October 1977, April and July 1982 and December 1983.

exception to this rule is that NOW President's reports of actions she took in the name of NOW, such as meeting with representatives of other social movement groups, were included because they represented significant actions taken by the group early in its development. These presidential reports were more common in the early years of the analysis. Resolutions such as those commending board members, approving board or committee appointments, involving meeting dates or moving to adjourn were not coded. Passing motions to divide the question were not coded.

Occasionally one resolution would be categorized as involving two or more distinctive strategies or actions, or it would receive two codes for one action if two distinct actions were approved, for example. A resolution calling for financing a march on Washington, therefore, would be coded as both an 'influence' activity, because it involved financing an activity, and as a protest/grass-roots activity.

When passed budget resolutions and entire reports had subheadings, each subheading was coded as a separate motion passed. For example, if the budget resolution comprised two subheadings - one for expenditures and one for income - it would be coded as two finance matters. The logic behind this is that each of these categories was subject to modification or rejection, and as they involve substantively different issues they should be coded individually. In addition, it captures, to some extent, the amount of time spent on a particular action or strategy more accurately

than if all passed resolutions were coded singly regardless of the amount of discussion they required.

Appendix B: Coding Categories for NOW Board Resolutions

1. Organizational Maintenance Activities

- fundraising
- NOW financial matters⁴⁶⁷
- direct mailing campaigns
- hiring staff
- paying NOW leaders
- recruiting project leaders
- general organizational/procedural⁴⁶⁸
- writing guidelines⁴⁶⁹

A. Member-benefits

-outreach-related activities

- insurance benefits to members
- member training⁴⁷⁰
- membership services⁴⁷¹
- outreach to membership
- publications⁴⁷²
- questionnaire⁴⁷³
- retreats
- workshop/conferences⁴⁷⁴
- NOW products⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁶⁷ Includes budget resolutions.

⁴⁶⁸ Does not include: resolutions to change meeting dates or resolutions approving appointments to committees.

⁴⁶⁹ Includes resolutions on proper supply acquisition procedures, guidelines on conflict of interest, or on addressing racism, sexism and heterosexism in NOW.

⁴⁷⁰ Includes training for new Board members and for special projects.

⁴⁷¹ Includes membership drives.

⁴⁷² Includes a wide variety of NOW publications on NOW's principles, organizational structure, as well as specific areas of interest such as family policy or reproductive rights information. Many of these are freely available on request from NOW National by chapters, or with a small fee. This category is the only one duplicated in the coding: It also appears in the External Relations/Outreach and Education category because of the obvious overlap.

⁴⁷³ Generally used to solicit information about NOW member demographics or to gauge interest in projects such as the provision of insurance or pension plans by NOW.

⁴⁷⁴ Often the Board would attempt to educate members on a substantive issue or strategy by resolving to include the topic as one of the annual national conference workshops.

⁴⁷⁵ Use of the NOW logo, t-shirts, etc.

2. Influential Activities

-Activities that rely primarily on the inherent moral or financial power of the organization

censoring
commendation
conference sponsoring
debate issues
general action resolved
make organizational priority
take position
urge action
urge chapter projects
urge members to write congress
vote of approval
appoint or refer to NOW committee
accept report
study
write report
call emergency meeting of board
declare state of emergency
finance activity
lobby stockholders of other organizations
monitor President's administration
negotiate with businesses or bureaucracies

3. External Relations

-Involvement with other organizations

form coalitions
cooperate with other organizations
international organizations - censor
international organizations - commend
international organizations - create
international organizations - join
international Organizations - support
outside organizations - ask for their support
outside organizations - commend
outside organizations - contact
outside organizations - create
outside organizations - join
outside organizations - support
share mailing list with outside organizations
act as consultants⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁶ To business and bureaucracies.

commemorate women
educate bureaucracy/elite
educate public
media directed
publications
speaker's bureau⁴⁷⁷
teach-in
talent bank

4. Protest/Grass-roots Activities

marches
declaring a national day, month or year
picketing
protest/demonstrations
rally
boycott
petition
refusal to pay taxes
Armbands
blood for money campaign
phonebank
walkathon

5. Legal Activities

join lawsuit
file a formal legal complaint
demand compliance with law
refer to NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDEF)

6. Legislative/Lobbying Activities

appointment recommendations
testify
pursue legislative strategy
lobby bureaucracy
lobby Congress
lobby corporation⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁷ Similar to the talent bank in that it gathered competent speakers for women's rights issues as a resource when media, business interests, NOW chapters or other organizations requested them.

⁴⁷⁸ This belongs under this otherwise 'political' heading because 1. The skills necessary and the general strategy are similar to state legislative or congressional lobbying, 2. Often there is overlap between lobbying corporations, bureaucracies and government legislatures.

lobby other
lobby President

7. Electoral Activity

supporting candidates who are pro-NOW
political platforms
women candidate support
recruiting candidates
financial support for candidates
candidate censoring
lobbying at political conventions

NOW Documents Cited

All documents, unless noted otherwise, are archived at
Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Harvard University,
National Organization for Women Collection

"1980 Conference Resolutions, 1980 Presidential Elections," *National NOW Times*, October/November 1980, p. 6.

"1980 Conference Resolutions, Equal Division," *National NOW Times*, October/November 1980, p. 6.

"1981 Conference Resolutions, ERA," *National NOW Times*, October 1981, p. 6.

"1981 Conference Resolutions, Political Action for Reproductive Rights," October 1981, p. 6.

"1982 Conference Resolutions, Feminist Consciousness Raising Resolution," *National NOW Times*, October 1982, p. 4.

1995 National NOW Conference Resolutions,
<<http://www.now.org/organiza/conferen/1995/resoluti.html>>.

1997 Budget, <<http://www.now.org/nnt/05-97/budget.html>>.

"About the NOW Foundation."
<<http://www.nowfoundation.org/about.html>>.

Dolores Alexander, "The Women's Movement: a Unique Revolution Demanding a Unique Ideology for NOW," *NOW ACTS*, January 1970.

Annual Report, National Organization for Women Foundation, 1994,
<http://www.nowfoundation.org/board94.html>.

"Chapter News," *NOW ACTS*. ~May 1968

"Congressional Sponsors Take New Initiative in Campaign,"
National NOW Times, April 1982, p. 1.

"Connecting Grassroots Activists and NOW Action Center a Priority,"
National NOW Times, Winter 1999. <<http://www.now.org/nnt/winter-99/activists.html>>.

Karen DeCrow, "Call to Philadelphia Conference," *DO IT NOW*, May/June 1975.

Karen DeCrow, "The First Women's State of the Union Address," delivered by NOW President Karen DeCrow on January 13, 1977 at George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

"Democratic Rules Committee to Offer Strong 'Equal Division' Proposals," *National NOW Times*, August 1980, p. 4.

DO IT NOW, January/February 1975.

DO IT NOW, March/April 1975.

"Dollars and Sense of Revolution," *NOW ACTS*. Vol. 3 No. 1: Winter 1970.

"ERA Countdown Ends: Spurs Renewed Fight for Equality," *National NOW Times*, August 1982, p. 1.

"ERA Supporters Win Major Victories in NC Primaries," *National NOW Times*, August 1982, p. 4.

"Feminists Display Clout at Democratic Convention," *National NOW Times*, September 1980, p. 1, p. 4.

Judy Goldsmith, "PAC/Woman Walk to Raise Funds for Feminist Candidates," *National NOW Times*, August 1982, p. 5.

"Goldsmith Speech to 1982 NOW Conference," *National NOW Times*, October 1982, p. 2.

Ellen Goodman, "At Large," *National NOW Times*, November 1981, p. 5.

"Highlights of NOW's National Membership Conference, December 7-8, 1968 in Atlanta," *NOW ACTS*, 1969.

Patricia Ireland, "Clinton, Our Option, Not Our Answer," *National NOW Times*, November 1996.

Patricia Ireland, "Letter from Patricia Ireland to the Media About Portrayal of NOW," April 1998. <<http://www.now.org/press/04-98/letter-ed.html>>

Letter, Betty Friedan to Alice Rossi, March 1, 1967.

Letter, Betty Friedan to Alice Rossi, October 12, 1966.

Letter, Betty Friedan to Alice Rossi, October 20, 1967.

Letter, Betty Friedan to Alice Rossi, September 20, 1967.

Letter, Jo Ann Evans Gardner to Gene Kolb from December 11, 1973.

Letter, Fran Kolb to Wilma Scott Heide, Dec. 11, 1973.

Letter, Alice Rossi to Betty Friedan, August 23, 1966.

Letter, Alice Rossi to potential members, September 1, 1966

Letter, Alice S. Rossi to Dr. Kathryn F. Clarenbach, December 13, 1966.

Letter, Alice S. Rossi to Dr. Kathryn F. Clarenbach, October 4, 1966.

Letter, Alice S. Rossi to Kathryn Clarenbach, November 9, 1966.

Letter, Seattle Ad Hoc Committee to National Board, March 13, 1975.

Letter, Eleanor Smeal to attendees, National NOW Conference Book, 1980.

Louis Harris, "ERA Support Soars As Deadline Nears," *National NOW Times*, June/July 1982, p. 3.

"Mega-Membership Drive Amplifies NOW's Voice; Payoff Includes Prizes - And New Members," *National NOW Times*, March 1997.

"Membership Contest Increases Activist Ranks," *National NOW Times*, October, 1997. <http://www.now.org/nnt/10-97/memb.html>.

Memo, "An Invitation to Join," National Organization for Women, August 1966.

Memo, Legislative Task Force, Florida State Legislative Coordinator to NOW Board Members, March 8, 1976.

Memo, "Memorandum to All Political Parties", January 17, 1974.

Memo, Betty Friedan to all board members, January 24, 1967.

Memo, Beverly Jones, Chair of Board Organization Committee, to National Board, January 1976.

Memo, Charlene Suneson to Board of Directors, October 12, 1973.

Memo, Chris Guerrero to National Board Members, April 3, 1976.

Memo, Esther Kaw, Vice-President of Public Relations to National NOW Board of Directors, April 3, 1976.

Memo, Jan Pittman-Liebman, Legislative Vice President and Casey Hughes, Director of Legislative Office, to NOW National Board of Directors, July 23, 1975.

Memo, Kathryn F. Clarenbach to board of directors, June 14, 1967.

Memo, Kathryn F. Clarenbach, to NOW Chapter Conveners and Presidents, re: Legal Defense, May 23, 1968.

Memo, Karen DeCrow to Politics Task Force, National Officers and Board Members, Chapter Presidents and Conveners, June 26, 1972.

Memo, Martha Buck and Mary Anne Sedey to National NOW officers and Board Members, March 22 1976.

Minutes of the Organizing Conference, National Organization for Women (NOW), Saturday, October 29, 1966.

Minutes, National NOW Board Meeting, February 1974.

Minutes, National NOW Board Meeting, February 1983.

Minutes, NOW National Board Meeting, December 6, 1969.

Minutes, NOW National Board Meeting, April 1976.

Minutes, NOW National Board Meeting, February 1978.

Minutes, NOW National Board Meeting, February 1983.

Minutes, NOW National Board Meeting, July 1975.

Minutes, NOW National Board Meeting, March 29-30, 1969.

Minutes, NOW National Board Meeting, May 2-3, 1970.

Minutes, NOW National Board Meeting, November 27-28, 1968.

Minutes, NOW National Board Meeting, October 29, 1966.

Minutes, NOW National Board Minutes, July 30-31, 1977.

National Conference Book, 1983.

"National Organization for Women Policy Manual: Administration," 1979.

"National Organization for Women Policy Manual: Issues," 1979.

"NOW Conferences Make History," 1979 National NOW Conference Book.

"NOW PACs Seek \$3 Million to Fight Right Wing Assault," *National NOW Times*, September 1982, 2.

"NOW Politics Task Force Report," October 1972.

"NOW Statements and Articles on Allegations against President Clinton," <<http://www.now.org/issues/harass/clinton.html>>.

26. "NOW Statements and Articles on Jones vs. Clinton," <<http://www.now.org/issues/harass/jones.html>>.

"NOW Vows New Campaign to Win ERA," *National NOW Times*, March 1983, p. 1.

NOW ACTS, March 1969.

NOW Bylaws as amended 1996.

NOW, "Technological Equipment and Service Needs,"

NOW, <<http://www.now.org/nnt/fall-99/pac.html>>.

NOW, <http://www.now.org/nnt/11-96/elex.html>.

NOW, <http://www.now.org/nnt/11-96/elex.html>.

NOW, <http://www.now.org/nnt/fall-98/elect.html>.

NOW, <http://www.now.org/nnt/fall-98/elect.html>.

NOW, <http://www.now.org/nnt/winter-99/electns.html>.

NOW, <http://www.now.org/nnt/winter-99/electns.html>.

NOW, <<http://www.now.org.nnt.03-97/mega.html>>.

NOW, <<http://www.now.org/nnt/05-97/megamemb.html>>.

NOW, <<http://www.now.org/organiza/computer.html>>

Pamphlet, "NOW, It's Money." No date.

"A President with a Pragmatic Approach," *National NOW Times*, October 1982, p. 3.

"Prizes Added to Mega-Membership Drive: Extra Incentives Boost Participation," *National NOW Times*, May 1997.

"Pro Statement, Proposed NOW Bylaws" by Sandy Roth and Lillian Waugh, October 17, 1976.

"Report of Informal Meeting of NOW Members from Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin, Illinois," January 21, 1967.

Report of Informal Meeting of NOW members from Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin, Saturday, January 21, 1967.

Report of the Legal Committee to Board and Members of NOW at First Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., November 18-19, 1967.

Report, Betty Friedan, NOW National Board Meeting Minutes, June 28-29 1969.

Report, Betty Friedan, NOW National Board Meeting Minutes, December 6, 1969.

Clay F. Richards, "Women Seen as Major Political Force," *National NOW Times*, April 1982, p. 1,6.

"Republicans Block Equality for Women," *National NOW Times*, March 1982.

"Revolution: Tomorrow is NOW." No date. 1973?

"Right-Wing Victory Claims Distorted," *National NOW Times*, December/January 1980-1981, p. 1, 5.

Edna Saffy, *DO IT NOW*, January/February 1975.

"The Significance of the Democratic Convention," *National NOW Times*, September 1980, p. 7.

"Statement of NOW President Patricia Ireland Calling for Fair Treatment of Jones' Suit, Questioning Right Wing's Disingenuous Fervor," May 6, 1994.

<http://www.now.org/issues/harass/jones.html>.

"Summary of National Board Meeting, December 4-5, 1982," *National NOW Times*, November/December 1982, p. 11.

"Summary of National Board Meeting, December 4-5, 1982," *National NOW Times*, November/December 1982, p. 11.

"Summary of National Board Meeting: April 24-26, 1981," *National NOW Times*, September 1981, p. 15.

"Summary of National Board Meetings: October 2, 1980," *National NOW Times*, October/November 1980, p. 23.

"Summary of Questionnaire for NOW," 1974.

Paul Taylor, "NOW Seeking \$3 Million War Chest to Oust ERA Foes, Fight New Right," *National NOW Times*, September 1982, p. 6.

"Teams Come Forward for 1993 Election," *National NOW Times*, June 1993.

Transcript, National NOW Conference, 1978.

Transcript, National NOW Conference, April 22-24 1977, Sunday, April 24, A.M. and P.M. Sessions.

"Unprecedented Numbers of Women File in Florida State Races Post-ERA," *National NOW Times*, August 1982, p. 1.

Jane Wells-Schooley, "Reagan Leads Republican Assault on Abortion, Birth Control," *National NOW Times*, August 1982, p. 1.

"Window on Washington," *National NOW Times*, September 1982, p. 2.

"Women Vote Differently than Men: Feminist Bloc Emerges in 1980

"Women Weren't Born Democrat, Republican, or Yesterday," *National NOW Times*, October 1982, p. 7.

"Yes, Ronnie, There Really is a Gender Gap!" *National NOW Times*, November/December 1982, p. 7.

Bibliography

Ainsworth, Scott. "The Maintenance and Governance of Interest Groups," <http://www.arches.uga.edu/~sainswor/CHAP4dsV1.pdf>.

Albert, Judith Clavir and Stewart Edward Albert, *The Sixties Papers: Documents of a Rebellious Decade*, New York, Praeger, 1984.

Arnold, Gretchen. "Dilemmas of Feminist Coalitions: Collective Identity and Strategic Effectiveness in the Battered Women's Movement," in Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin, eds., *Feminist Organizations*, 1995.

Ash, Roberta Garner and Mayer N. Zald. "The Political Economy of Social Movement Sectors." In Gerald Suttles and Mayer N. Zald, eds. *The Challenge of Social Control: Citizenship and Institution Building in Modern Society. Essays in Honor of Morris Janowitz*, Norwood, N. J.: ABLEX, 1985, pp.199-45.

Bachrach, Peter and Morton Baratz, "The Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 56, 1962.

Banaszak, Lee Ann. *Why Movements Succeed or Fail: Opportunity, Culture, and the Struggle for Woman Suffrage*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1996.

Bauer, Raymond A., Ithiel de Sola Pool, and Lewis Anthony Dexter, *American Business and Public Policy: The Politics of Foreign Trade*, 2nd ed., Chicago, Aldine-Atherton, 1972.

Baumgartner, Frank and Beth Leech, *Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and Political Science*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998.

Baxter, Sandra and Marjorie Lansing. *Women and Politics: The Invisible Majority*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1980.
Bentley, Arthur. *The Process of Government*, Evanston Ill, Principia Press, 1949.

Berry, Jeffrey. *Lobbying for the People*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977.

Berry, Jeffrey. *The Interest Group Society*, 2nd ed., Glenview, Ill., Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown, 1989.

Berry, Jeffrey. *The New Liberalism: The Rising Power of Interest Groups*, Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 1999.

Berry, Jeffrey. "An Agenda for Research on Interest Groups," in William Crotty, Mildred A. Schwartz and John C. Green, eds.,

Representing Interests and Interest Group Representation, Lanham, MD, University Press of America, 1994.

Berry, Mary Frances. *Why the ERA Failed: Women's Rights and the Amending Process of the Constitution*, Bloomington, Indiana University, 1986.

Blum, Justin. "Dissenting Dulles Chapter Wages High-Profile Battle Within NOW," *Washington Post*, June 1, 1998.

Breines, Wini. *Community and Organization in the New Left: 1962-1968*, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1982.

Broder, David S. and Kenneth J. Cooper, "Revolt Brewing for NOW Election," *Washington Post*, June 20, 1993.

Brownmiller, Susan. *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution*, The Dial Press, New York, 1999.

Buechler, Steven M. *Women's Movements in the United States: Women's Suffrage, Equal Rights, and Beyond*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 1990.

Burns, Stewart. *Social Movements of the 1960s: Searching for Democracy*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1990.

Carabillo, Toni, Judith Meuli and June Bundy Csida. *Feminist Chronicles*, Los Angeles, Women's Graphics, 1993.

Carden, Maren Lockwood. *The New Feminist Movement*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1974.

Carson, Clayborne. *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Cassell, Joan. *A Group Called Women: Sisterhood and Symbolism in the Feminist Movement*, Prospect Heights, Ill., Waveland Press, 1977.

Center for American Women in Politics. *News and Notes*, July 1983.
Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, MA, Addison-Wesley, 1978.

Chong, Dennis. *Collective Action in the Civil Rights Movement*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Clark, Peter B. and James Q. Wilson, "Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 6, pp. 129-66.

Coglianesse, Cary. "Unequal Representation: Membership Input and Interest Group Decision-Making,"

<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/prg/cary/unequal.htm>.

Cohen, Joshua and Joel Rogers, *Associations and Democracy*, London, Verso, 1995.

Cohen, Marcia. *The Sisterhood: The True Story of the Women who Changed the World*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1988.

The Combahee River Collective Statement: Black Feminist Organizing in the Seventies and Eighties, New York, Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1985.

Costain, Anne N. "Representing Women: The Transition from Social Movement to Interest Group." *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 34, 1981.

Costain, Anne N. and W. Douglas Costain, "Strategy and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States: The Role of Political Parties" in Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1987.

Costain, Anne N. *Inviting Women's Rebellion: A Political Process Interpretation of the Women's Movement*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.

Davis, Flora. *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1999.

De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*, New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1904/1899.

Democratic Party Platform, 1996.

"Documents from the Black Women's Liberation Movement," in Documents from the Women's Liberation Movement, an On-Line Archival Collection, Duke University.

DuPlessis, Rachel Blau and Ann Snitow, eds., *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices from Women's Liberation*, New York, Three Rivers Press, 1998.

Echols, Alice. *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Eder, Klaus. "The New Social Movements: Moral Crusades, Political Pressure Groups, or Social Movements?," *Social Research*, Vol. 52, no. 4, 1985, pp. 869-890.

Edsall, Thomas B. "Ireland Wins Bitter Battle for NOW Post; Challenger Alleged Racism and Elitism," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1993.

Edsall, Thomas B. "Show of Party Unity Masks Scars of Ideological Battle: Center Wins Day in Democrats' Tug of War," *Washington Post*, July 13, 1992.

Eisenstein, Zillah. *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1981/1993.

Eisinger, Peter K. "The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 67, March 1973.

EMILY's List. <<http://emilyslist.com/el-newsstand/pr/1999/990729-nrcc.asp>>

Evans, Sara. *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, New York, Random House, 1979.

Farber, David. *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1994.

Ferguson, Kathy E. *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1984.

Ferree, Myra Marx and Beth B. Hess, *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1985.

Ferree, Myra Marx and Frederick Miller, "Mobilization and Meaning: Some Social-Psychological Contributions to the Resource Mobilization Perspective on Social Movements," *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 55, 1985, pp. 38-61.

Flammang, Janet A. *Women's Political Voice: How Women are Transforming the Practice and Study of Politics*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1997.

Freeman, Jo. "A Model for Analyzing the Strategic Options of Social Movement Organizations" in Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson, eds., *Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the 1960s*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999.

Freeman, Jo. "Feminism vs. Family Values: Women at the 1992 Democratic and Republican Conventions," *P.S.: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 26, no. 1, March 1993, pp. 21-28.

Freeman, Jo. "Political Culture of the Democratic and Republican Parties," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 101, no. 3, Fall 1986, pp. 327-356.

Freeman, Jo. "Who You Know Vs. Who You Represent: Feminist Influence in the Democratic and Republican Parties," in Mary Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Feminist Consciousness*,

Political Opportunity and Public Policy, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, pp. 215-44.

Freeman, Jo. "From Seed to Harvest: Transformations of Feminist Organizations and Scholarship," in Ferree and Martin, eds. *Feminist Organizations*.

Freeman, Jo. "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," in Jane Jaquette, ed., *Women and Politics*, New York, Wiley, 1974.

Freeman, Jo. *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process*, New York, David McKay, 1975.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminist Mystique*, New York, W.W. Norton, 1963.

Friedan, Betty. *Life so Far*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 2000.

Friedman, Debra and Doug McAdam, "Collective Identity and Activism: Networks, Choices and the life of a Social Movement," Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992.

Gais, Thomas L. and Jack L. Walker, Jr., "Pathways to Influence in American Politics," Jack L. Walker, Jr., *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*.

Gallman, Vanessa. "President Signs New Welfare Deal But Ally Calls It 'Moment of Shame,'" *Detroit Free Press*, August 23, 1996.

Gamson, William A. *The Strategy of Social Protest*, Belmont, CA, Wadsworth, 1975/1990.

Gamson, William. *The Strategy of Social Protest*, Homewood, ILL, Dorsey Press, 1975/1990.

Gelb, Joyce and Marion Leaf Palley, *Women and Public Policies*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

Gelb, Joyce. "Feminist Organizational Success," in Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin eds., *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1995.

George, Alexander L. and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decisionmaking," *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations*, Vol. 2, 1985.

Gerlach, Luther P. and Virginia H. Hine. *People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation*, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1970.

- Gilbert, Jennifer. *Diversity, Difference and Power: The National Organization for Women and the Politics of Identity, 1966-1976*, Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1988.
- Gitlin, Todd. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, New York, Bantam books, 1987/1993.
- Goldfield, Michael. *The Decline of Organized Labor in the United States*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Goldstein, Kenneth M. *Interest Groups, Lobbying and Participation in America*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Gordon, Linda ed., *Women, the State and Welfare*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.
- Greenberg, Anna. "Deconstructing the Gender Gap," John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 1998.
<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/prg/greenb/gengap.htm>.
- Halci, Abigail. "AIDs, Anger and Activism: ACT UP as a Social Movement Organization," in Freeman and Johnson, eds. *Waves of Protest*.
- Hansen, John Mark. *Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919-1981*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Hardin, Russell. *Collective Action*, Baltimore, Resources for the Future, 1982.
- Hartmann, Susan. *From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics since 1960*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.
- Herrnson, Paul S., Ronald G. Shaiko, Clyde Wilcox, eds., *The Interest Group Connection*, New Jersey, Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1998.
- Hole, Judith and Ellen Levine, *Rebirth of Feminism*, New York, Quadrangle Books, 1971.
- hooks, bell. *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, Boston, South End Press, 1989.
- Hrebenar, Ronald. *Interest Group Politics in America*, 3rd Ed., M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1997.
- Hyde, Cheryl. "Did the New Right Radicalize the Women's Movement? A Study of Change in Feminist Social Movement Organizations, 1977-1987," Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 1991.
- Hyde, Cheryl. "Feminist Social Movement Organizations Survive the New Right," in Ferree and Martin, eds., *Feminist Organizations*.

Imig, Douglas R. and Jeffrey M. Berry, "Patrons and Entrepreneurs: A Response to "Public Interest Group Entrepreneurship and Theories of Group Mobilization," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 49, no. 1, March 1996, pp. 147-154.

Ireland, Patricia. *What Women Want*, New York, Penguin Books USA Inc., 1996.

Jay, Karla. *Tales of the Lavender Menace: A Memoir of Liberation*, New York, Basic Books, 1999.

Jenkins, Craig J. "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 9, 1983, pp. 527-53.

Jenkins, Craig. "Farm Worker Organizing in California," in Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson, eds., *Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the 1960s*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999.

Johnson, Paul. "Interest Group Recruiting: Finding Members and Keeping Them," A.J. Cigler and B.A. Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics*, 5th ed., Washington, D.C., Congressional Quarterly Press, 1998, pp. 35-62.

Joreen (Jo Freeman), "The Tyranny of Structurelessness;" in Anne Koedt, E. Levine and A. Rapone, eds., *Radical Feminism*, New York, Quadrangle Books, 1973, pp. 285-299.

Judis, John B. "The Pressure Elite: Inside the Narrow World of Advocacy Group Politics," *American Prospect*, no. 9, 1992, pp. 15-29.

Kifner, John. "Finding a Common Foe, Fringe Groups Join Forces," *New York Times*, December 6, 1998.

King, David C. and Jack L. Walker, "The Provision of Benefits by Interest Groups in the United States," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 54, 1992, 394-426.

King, David C. and Jack L. Walker, "The Provision of Benefits by Interest Groups in the United States," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 54, 1992, 394-426.

King, David C. and Jack L. Walker, Jr., "An Ecology of Interest Groups in America," in Jack L. Walker, Jr., *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*, University of Michigan, 1991.

King, Deborah K. "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: the Context of a Black Feminist Ideology," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 14, no. 1, 1988, pp. 42-72.

- King, Martin Luther Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1968.
- Klandermans, Bert and Sidney Tarrow, "Mobilization into Social Movements: Synthesizing European and American Approaches," in Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi and Sidney Tarrow, eds. *From Structure to Action: Comparing Movement Participation across Cultures*, *International Social Movement Research* 1, 1988.
- Klandermans, Bert. "Mobilization and Participation: Social Psychological Expansions of Resource Mobilization Theory," *American Sociological Review*, 1984, Vol. 49, pp. 583-600.
- Klatch, Rebecca. *Women of the New Right*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1987.
- Klein, Ethel. *Gender Politics*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Knoke, David. "The Mobilization of Members in Women's Associations," Louise A. Tilly and Patricia Gurin, *Women, Politics and Change*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 383-410.
- Knoke, David. *Organizing for Collective Action: The Political Economies of Associations*, Hawthorne, NY, Aldine de Gruyter, 1990.
- Ladd, Everett. "Framing the Gender Gap," in Pippa Norris, ed. *Women, Media and Politics*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Levine, Art and Amy Cunningham, "Post-Triumph Trauma: For the Long-Suffering Left, Winning Can Feel Weird," *Washington Post*, November 29, 1992.
- Levine, Art and Amy Cunningham. "Post-Triumph Trauma: For the Long-Suffering Left, Winning Can Feel Weird," *Washington Post*, November 29, 1992.
- Linden-Ward, Blanche and Carol Hurd Green, *Changing the Future: American Women in the 1960s*, New York, Twayne Publishers, 1993.
- Lipset, Martin, M.A Trow and J.S. Coleman's *Union Democracy: The Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union*, Glencoe, Free Press, 1956.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin, M.A. Trow and J.S. Coleman, *Union Democracy: The Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union*, Glencoe, Free Press, 1956.
- Lipsky, Michael, "Protest as Political Resource," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 62, 1968, pp.1144-58.

Lofland, J., ed. *Protest: Studies of Collective Behavior and Social Movements*, New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction Books, 1985.

Luker, Kristin. *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984.

Mansbridge, Jane J., ed. *Beyond Self-Interest*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Mansbridge, Jane. "What is the Feminist Movement?," in Ferree and Martin, eds. *Feminist Organizations*.

Mansbridge, Jane. *Why We Lost the ERA*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1986.

Marcus, Ruth. "Clinton Berates Critics in Women's Groups," *Washington Post*, December 22, 1992.

Marx, Gary T. and J. L. Wood, "Strands of Theory and Research on Collective Behavior," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 1, 1976, pp. 368-428.

Mathews, Jane De Hart and Donald Mathews. "The Cultural Politics of ERA's Defeat," *Organization of American Historians Newsletter*, Vol. 10, no. 4, November 1982.

Mathews, Donald G. and Jane S. DeHart, *Sex, Gender and the Politics of the ERA: A State and the Nation*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1990.

McAdam, Douglas. "The Framing Function of Social Movement Tactics: Strategic Dramaturgy in the American Civil Rights Movement," in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

McAdam, Douglas. *Freedom Summer*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1988.

McAdam, Douglas, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald. "Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes - Toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements," in Douglas McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

McAdam, Douglas, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly. "To Map Contentious Politics," *Mobilization*, Vol. 1, 1996, pp.17-34.

- McAdam, Douglas. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency: 1930-1970*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- McAdam, Douglas. "Decline of the Civil Rights Movement," in Freeman and Johnson, eds. *Waves of Protest*.
- McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 82, 1977, pp.1212-41.
- McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald. *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*, New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction, 1987.
- McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald. *The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization*, Morristown, NJ, General Learning Press, 1973.
- McConnell, Grant. *Private Power and American Democracy*, Vintage Books, 1966.
- McFarland, Andrew S. *Common Cause: Lobbying in the Public Interest*, Chatham, N.J., Chatham House, 1984.
- Melucci, Alberto. *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989.
- Michels, Robert. *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, New York, Collier, 1962.
- Miller, Fredrick D. "The End of SDS and the Emergence of Weatherman: Demise through Success," in Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson, eds., *Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the 1960s*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999, pp. 323-324.
- Mills, C. Wright. *The Power Elite*, Oxford Press, 1956.
- Minkoff, Debra C. "Bending with the Wind: Strategic Change and Adaptation by Women's and Racial Minority Organizations," *The American Journal of Sociology*, May 1999.
- Moe, Terry M. "Toward a Broader View of Interest Groups," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 43, 1981, pp. 531-43.
- Moe, Terry M. *The Organization of Interests: Incentives and the Internal Dynamics of Political Interest Groups*, Chicago, University of Chicago press, 1980.
- Moraga, Cherrie and Gloria Anzaldua, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, New York, Kitchen Table Press, 1983.

Morris, Aldon and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds. *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992.

Morris, Aldon D. "Political Consciousness and Collective Action," in Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds. *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992.

Morris, Aldon D. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, New York, Free Press, 1984.

Mueller, Carol McClurg ed. *The Politics of the Gender Gap: The Social Construction of Political Influence*, California, Sage Publications, 1988.

Mueller, Carol McClurg. "The Organizational Basis of Conflict in Contemporary Feminism," in Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin, eds. *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1995.

Mueller, Carol McClurg. "Collective Consciousness, Identity Transformation and the Rise of Women in Public Office in the United States," in Mary Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds. *The Women's Movements in the United States and Western Europe*.

Mueller, Carol McClurg. "Ella Baker and the Origins of 'Participatory Democracy'," in Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse and Barbara Woods, eds. *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers & Torchbearers 1941-1965*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Neal, Terry M. and Thomas B. Edsall, "Allegations Against Clinton Leave Women's Groups Conflicted About Responding," *Washington Post*, January 30, 1988.

Norris, Pippa. "Gender in Political Science: Framing the Issues," presented at PSA Annual Conference Glasgow, April 11, 1996.

Nownes, Anthony and Allan J. Cigler. "Public Interest Groups and the Road to Survival," *Polity*, Vol. X, no. 3, spring 1995.

Nownes, Anthony J. *The Other Exchange: Public Interest Group Entrepreneurs and their Patrons*, PhD Dissertation, University of Kansas, 1993.

Nownes, Anthony J. "Response to Imig and Berry: Entrepreneurs, Patrons and Organization," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 49, no. 1, March 1996, pp. 155-162.

Nownes, Anthony J. and Grant Neeley. "Public Interest Group Entrepreneurship and Theories of Group Mobilization," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 49, no. 1, March 1996, pp. 119-146.

- Nownes, Anthony J. and Robert Cigler, "Public Interest Groups and the Road to Survival," *Polity*, Vol. 27, No. 3, Spring, 1995.
- Nownes, Anthony J. *The Other Exchange: Public Interest Group Entrepreneurs and their Patrons*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Kansas, 1993.
- Oberschall, Anthony. *Social Conflict and Social Movements*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1973.
- Olson, Mancur. *The Rise and Decline of Nations*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1982.
- Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action*, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1965.
- Paizis, Suzanne. *Getting Her Elected: A Political Woman's Handbook*, California, Creative Editions, 1977.
- Pearce, Diana. *The Feminization of Poverty*, Washington, D.C., Institute for Women's Policy Research, 1989.
- Petracca, Mark P. *The Politics of Interests: Interest Groups Transformed*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1992.
- Piven, Frances Fox and Richard Cloward. *Poor People's Movements: Why they Succeed, How they Fail*, New York, Vintage, 1977/1979.
- Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 2000.
- Rauch, Jonathan. *Demosclerosis: The Silent Killer of American Government*, New York, Times Books, 1994.
- Reckitt, Lois. Unpublished manuscript.
- Redstockings of the Women's Liberation Movement. *Feminist Revolution: An Abridged Edition with Additional Writings*; Random House, New York, 1975/1978.
- Reger, Jo. *Social Movement Culture and Organizational Survival in the National Organization for Women*, Ph.D. Diss., Ohio State University, 1997.
- Rosen, Ruth. *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*, New York, Viking, 2000.
- Rosenfeld, Megan. "The NOW and Future Feminist: New President Patricia Ireland, Taking a '90s Tack on Persistent Problems," *Washington Post*, January 11, 1992.

Rosenstone, Steven J. and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*, New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993.

Rothenberg, Lawrence S. "Organizational Maintenance and the Retention Decision in Groups," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, 1988, pp. 1129-52.

Rothenberg, Lawrence S. *From the Ground Up: Linking Citizens to Politics at Common Cause*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Rumph, Suzanne. "Black and White NOW Members Talk About the Racial Diversification of the National Organization for Women," Master's Thesis, Wayne State University, 2000.

Rupp, Leila J. and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1986.

Ryan, Barbara. "Ideological Purity and Feminism: The U.S. Women's Movement from 1966 to 1975," *Gender and Society*, Vol.3, 1989, pp.239-57.

Ryan, Barbara. *Feminism and the Women's Movement: Dynamics of Change in Social Movement Ideology and Activism*, New York, Routledge, 1992.

Salisbury, Robert H. "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13, 1969, pp. 1-13.

Salisbury, Robert H. "Are Interest Groups Morbific Forces?," Paper Presented to the Conference Group on the Political Economy of Advanced Industrial Societies, August 1980.

Sands, Kathleen Mullen and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds. *Making Face, Making Soul: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*, San Francisco, Aunt Lute Books, 1990.

Schlozman, Kay Lehman and John T. Tierney, *Organized Interests and American Democracy*, New York, Harper & Row, 1986.

Schlozman, Kay. "Representing Women in Washington: Sisterhood and Pressure Politics," in Louise A. Tilly and Patricia Gurin, eds., *Women, Politics and Change*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1990.

Schwartz, Michael. *Radical Protest and Social Structure: The Southern Farmer's Alliance and Cotton Tenancy, 1880-1890*, New York, Academic Press.

Selznick, Philip. *The TVA and the Grassroots: A Study of Politics and Organization*, Berkeley, University of Berkeley Press, 1949.

Sidel, Ruth. *Women and Children Last: The Plight of Poor Women in Affluent America*, New York, Viking, 1982.

Skocpol, Theda. "Advocates Without Members: The Recent Transformation of Associational life," in Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina, eds., *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*, Washington D.C. and New York, Brookings Institution Press and the Russell Sage Foundation, 1999, pp. 461-509.

Skocpol, Theda. "The Tocqueville Problem," *Social Science History*, Vol. 21, no.4, 1997.

Skocpol, Theda. "Unravelling from Above," *American Prospect*, Vol. 25, 1996, pp. 20-25.

Skocpol, Theda. *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Snow, David and Robert D. Benford. "Ideology, Frame Resonance and Participant Mobilization," in Bert Klandermans, Hans Kriesi and Sidney Tarrow, eds., *From Structure to Action: Comparing Social Movement Culture Across Cultures*, Greenwich, CT, JAI, 1988, 1992, pp. 197-217.

Snow, David. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociologist Review*, Vol. 51, pp. 464-81.

Spalter-Roth, Roberta and Ronnee Schreiber, "Outsider Issues and Insider Tactics: Strategic Tensions in the Women's Policy Network during the 1980s," in Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin, eds. *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1995.

Staggenborg, Suzanne. "Can Feminist Organizations Be Effective?" in Ferree and Martin, eds. *Feminist Organizations*.

Staggenborg, Suzanne. *The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991.

Staggenborg, Suzanne. "The Consequences of Professionalization and Formalization in the Pro-Choice Movement," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 53, 1988, pp. 585-605.

Swerdlow, Amy. *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Tarrow, Sidney. *Power in Movement: Collective action, Social Movements and Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Tarrow, Sidney. "Struggling to Reform: Social Movements and Policy Change During Cycles of Protest," Occasional Paper 15, Center for International Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 1983.

Taylor, Verta and Leila J. Rupp. "Women's Culture and Lesbian Feminist Activism: A Reconsideration of Cultural Feminism," *Signs*, Vol. 19, 1993, pp. 32-61.

Taylor, Verta and Nancy Whittier. "Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities: Lesbian Feminist Mobilization," in Morris and Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, pp. 104-132.

Taylor, Verta and Nancy Whittier, "The New Feminist Movement," in Laurel Richardson, Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier, eds. *Feminist Frontiers IV*, New York, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1997.

Taylor, Verta. "Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 54, 1989, pp. 761-75.

Tellis, Winston. "Application of a Case Study Methodology," *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September 1997.

Tilly, Charles. *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1978.

Tobias, Sheila. *Faces of Feminism: An Activist's Reflections on the Women's Movement*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1997.

Touraine, Alain. *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Touraine, Alain. *The Return of the Actor: Social Theory in Post-Industrial Society*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988.

Truman, David B. *The Governmental Process*, New York, Knopf, 1951.

Useem, Bert and Mayer N. Zald "From Pressure Group to Social Movement: Efforts to Promote the Use of Nuclear Power," in Zald and McCarthy, *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Voluntarism in American Politics*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995.

Viguerie, Richard. *The New Right: We're Ready to Lead*, Falls Church, Virginia, Viguerie Company, 1981.

Walker, Jack L. "The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups," and Walker, *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professions and Social Movements*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1991.

Walker, Jack L. Jr. *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professions, and Social Movements*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1991.

Washington Post. "FDA Again Delays Abortion Pill Approval," February 19, 2000.

Whittier, Nancy. *Feminist Generations: The Persistence of the Radical Women's Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1995.

Wilson, James Q. *Political Organizations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995/1974.

Wilson, Woodrow. *Congressional Government*, Cleveland, Ohio, 1885/1973.

Woods, Harriet. *Up to Power: The Political Journey of American Women*, Boulder, Westview Press, 2000.

Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 2nd Edition, London, Sage Publications, Inc., 1994.

Zald, Mayer N. "Looking Backward to Look Forward: Reflections on the Past and Future of Resource Mobilization Research," in Mayer M. Zald and John D. McCarthy, *Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Essays*, New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction Books, 1992.

Zald, Mayer N. "The Continuing Vitality of Resource Mobilization Theory: Response to Herbert Kitschelt's Critique," in D. Rucht, ed. *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1991, pp. 348-54.

Zald, Mayer N. "The Trajectory of Social Movements in America," In Louis Kriesberg, ed., *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change*, Vol. 10, Greenwich, Conn., JAI Press, 1988.

Zald, Mayer N. and Roberta Ash, "Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay and Change" in Joseph R. Gusfield, ed., *Protest, Reform and Revolt*, New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1970.

Ziegler, L. Harmon and G. Wayne Peak, *Interest Groups in American Politics*, 2nd ed., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1972.

Zurcher, Louis A., Jr. and David Snow, "Collective Behavior: Social Movements," in Morris Rosenberg and Ralph H. Turner, eds., *Social Psychology: Sociological Perspectives*, New York, Basic Books, 1981.