

IDENTITY, EMOTION, AND FEMINIST COLLECTIVE ACTION

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This article explores the relationship between identity, emotion, and feminist collective action. Based on interview research, the analysis confirms the central importance of anger in collective action and its particular significance for feminist identity and activism. As an emotion thought deviant for women, the anger inherent in feminist collective action frames created problems for participants in terms of relationships with partners, friends, and work colleagues. Participants performed emotion work to deal with negative responses to their feminist identity, but this depleted emotional energy and created stress. Participation in movement events provided much-needed emotional support and an outlet for deviant emotions.

The dominant theoretical perspective in the field of social movements throughout the 1970s and 1980s was resource mobilization theory (RMT), which developed in opposition to the earlier collective behavior approach that viewed social movements as the irrational and emotional response of marginalized individuals to structural strain (Smelser 1962). Rational choice assumptions were introduced to the study of collective action and movement organizations and their strategies became the focus of attention (Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1977). Individuals who became involved in social movements were viewed as rational agents who weighed the costs and benefits before choosing to participate (Buechler 1993). By emphasizing instrumental rationality, RMT perpetuated a false dichotomy between reason and emotion, which has been extensively criticized by feminist scholars both inside and outside the social movements field (Marx Ferree 1992; Jay 1991; Taylor 1995; Thiele 1986).

Recently, the dominance of the resource mobilization approach has waned. Cultural and social psychological dimensions of collective action, including emotion, have found their way back into the study of social movements under the combined

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influence of new social movements theory, social constructionism, and feminist scholarship (Buechler 1995; Marx Ferree 1992; Gamson 1992; Johnston and Klantnermans 1995; McClurg Mueller 1992; Taylor 1995). New social movements theory (an approach initially associated with European scholars but increasingly influential beyond that sphere) questions the resource mobilization emphasis on rationality, strategy, and organization, instead focusing on questions of meaning, identity, and cultural production in collective action (Cohen 1985; Melucci 1988; Taylor and Whittier 1992; Touraine 1985).

The analysis presented in this article builds on the growing body of literature on emotion and collective action to examine the relationship between emotions and feminist activism. In particular, it aims to increase understanding of the emotional experiences of women as they alternate between participation in feminist organizations and events and interaction in nonmovement settings. Researchers have recognized the significance of feminist movement communities in terms of providing support for feminist consciousness and identity (Buechler 1993; Marx Ferree and Hess 1994, 213; Taylor and Whittier 1992). Few feminists, however, live their lives entirely within such communities. As workers, friends, family members, and participants in local communities, they spend much of their time outside an environment supportive of feminist identity. How do women negotiate and manage feminist identity and the emotions associated with that identity in such situations? How does this affect their emotional well-being? And, what impact does participation in feminist activities have on emotions? This article addresses these issues through a study of feminist activism in North Queensland, Australia.

EMOTION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Emotion and Collective Action Frames

Since David Snow and his colleagues introduced the concept of framing to the study of social movement participation, the framing activity of movement organizations has received considerable attention in the movements literature (Benford 1993; Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994; Snow and Benford 1988, 1992; Snow et al. 1986). Collective action frames mobilize collective action by diagnosing an aspect of social life as problematic, outlining a proposed solution, and providing a rationale for action (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994). Achieving frame alignment or frame resonance in relation to these three components is a core mobilization task facing social movements (Snow and Benford 1988). Extensive research into frames and framing processes has contributed significantly to the understanding of ideological factors in movement participation; here too, however, a cognitive bias has meant that until recently the emotional dimension of frames has not been directly addressed.

When emotion is recognized as integral to framing processes, anger emerges as particularly significant. According to William Gamson, a central component of any

collective action frame is a sense of injustice, which is not merely a cognitive or intellectual judgment about what is equitable but is what cognitive psychologists call a “‘hot cognition’—one that is laden with emotion” (1995, 90). Thus, collective action frames not only provide an intellectual account of the injustice of certain situations but they also legitimate the expression of moral indignation and righteous anger directed toward the source of injustice.

The centrality of anger to collective action stems from its link with action. Randall Collins states that “the core of anger is the mobilization of energy to overcome an obstacle” (1990, 43). In an analysis of class passivity, Lee Harrington and William Flint concur, suggesting that anger, as the most agentic emotion, is an essential component of efficacy. They argue that for efficacy—a belief in the possibility of change—to be achieved, one “must ‘know,’ one must ‘feel,’ and one must be aware of the relationship between the two” (1997, 19).

The same is certainly true for feminist collective action. In an article on working with survivors of sexual violence, Skye Fraser discusses the energizing, mobilizing nature of anger, which makes it fundamental to achieving social change, and suggests that “working with sexual violence involves mobilising the force of survivors’ untapped anger and assisting them to direct it where it belongs, on the perpetrator(s) of sexual violence and on the social forces which shape the existence of perpetrators” (1996, 167). Similarly, in research on the postpartum depression self-help movement, Verta Taylor (1996) found that movement organizations work to transform destructive emotions such as shame, fear, and depression into anger. By articulating a link between gender inequality and women’s experiences of mothering, the postpartum depression movement provides members with a way of dealing with emotional deviance. It encourages women to direct their feelings of anger and hostility toward the unjust social and cultural practices surrounding motherhood. For the women that Taylor interviewed, the channeling of anger in this way led to action that included “attempts to challenge physician authority” and “to restructure their marriages and partnerships in ways that undermine . . . dominant ideology” (1996, 146).

Recent research indicates that the emotional dimension of framing is as important as the cognitive dimension. It is also evident that anger is a central emotion for collective action. How emotional framing is actually achieved, however, is still unclear. The role of ritual in the process of emotional framing provides a focus for continuing research in this area (Taylor 1995; Taylor and Whittier 1995).

Emotional Deviance and Emotion Work

The concepts of emotional deviance and emotion work provide additional tools for examining the relationship between emotion and collective action. A central insight of the sociology of emotions is that emotions and emotional display are governed by “feeling rules,” which guide appropriate feelings in a given situation (Hochschild 1979). The existence of such rules implies the possibility of emotional deviance. Furthermore, feeling rules are gendered and, therefore, so is the experi-

ence of emotional deviance. Due to women's lesser power and status, a gender division of emotion exists that, among other things, requires women, more than men, to suppress anger (Hochschild 1983, 163; Taylor 1996, 51). When women express anger they engage in emotional deviance. As Fraser claims, not "only are women discouraged from feeling and expressing their discontent and anger, they may be punished if they dare to do so" (1996, 167).

The concept of emotional deviance is central to Julian McAllister Groves's discussion of "the emotional aspects of becoming and being an animal rights activist" (1995, 438). Groves argues that the expression of empathy for animals as the victims of human cruelty is considered emotionally deviant in many social settings. The activists that he interviewed reported accusations from friends, colleagues, and strangers of irrationality and of excessively emotional and sentimental attitudes toward animals. Furthermore, many of Groves's respondents believed women to be more emotional and less rational than men. Based on these experiences and beliefs, activists dealt with emotional deviance by developing a vocabulary of emotions that emphasized rights and justice over compassion and care. They also promoted male activists as leaders and spokespersons, believing that their supposedly less emotional stance would increase movement credibility.

The concepts of emotional deviance and emotion work are also used by Judith Dilorio and Michael Nusbaumer (1993) in a study of anger management among abortion escorts. Central to their thesis is the observation that, within contemporary American society, anger is typically defined as negative and deviant. Consequently, it becomes problematic to movement activists both in terms of their identity as moral agents and as a strategic issue in promoting a favorable public image. Anger toward antiabortion activists generated through participation in abortion escorting must be managed in such a way as to avoid the possibility of violence in this emotionally charged environment. Dilorio and Nusbaumer outline a variety of collective strategies developed by participants in their study through which "anger was justified while normative boundaries for its expression were established" (1993, 434).

The argument developed in this article builds on a number of points that arise from this brief review of the literature on emotion and collective action: first, the centrality of anger and other deviant emotions to collective action; second, the gendered nature of, and response to, emotional deviance; and third, the need for activists to engage in emotion work to deal with emotional deviance. Following a description of the research setting and methods, data are presented concerning the mobilization of anger through feminist collective action. The response that expressed and implied anger elicits in others is also described. The next section of the article details the emotion work that respondents engaged in, in defense of feminist identity. This is analyzed in terms of strategies of self-restraint and self-assertion and is followed by discussion of the costs associated with emotion work. Finally, the emotional consequences of participation in feminist events are addressed.

SETTING AND METHOD

In 1989, the Winter Institute for Women, an annual program of feminist lectures, workshops, and cultural events, was established in Townsville, a regional center within North Queensland. A feature of each Winter Institute is a weekend workshop where feminist issues and concerns are discussed in an environment of mutual support. Prominent feminist researchers and writers facilitate the weekends and participation is open to a broad range of women.

The data on which this article is based were collected for a larger study on the processes of becoming involved in feminist collective action. It consists primarily of in-depth, semistructured interviews with 45 women who attended the 1991 Winter Institute Weekend Workshop (only one participant in the workshop declined to be interviewed). Titled *Laughing and Singing at the Revolution*, the 1991 workshop was facilitated by a well-known Australian feminist researcher and writer, Dale Spender. It was described in the Winter Institute program as

an opportunity for feminist women to get together to examine the present status of the revolution we call the Women's Movement. We will look again at what male-dominated, western societies have done over the years in their determination to "make invisible" anything women have attempted to do to bring about a more equal and just society.

The pleasures of the workshop were also emphasized:

Changing the world is a serious business, but the emphasis during this workshop will be on the need for feminists to enjoy ourselves—to laugh and sing and dance—as we go about the important work of the revolution. (Personal Growth Centre, 1991)

Workshop activities included a session on humor as a way of dealing with sexism and another session on the issue of political and ideological differences within feminism. Dale Spender presented and discussed material related to her research and writing. On Saturday night, everyone joined in for a lively feminist concert that included poetry reading, singing, chanting, and tap dancing.

Each participant was interviewed twice, first between September and December 1991 and again approximately 12 months later. The initial interview covered a range of topics, including the interviewee's experience of attending the workshop, her identification with feminism and prior involvement in feminist activism, any obstacles she faced in terms of feminist involvement, and discussions with significant others prior to and following the workshop. Demographic data were also collected. The follow-up interviews were more highly structured. They explored the extent and nature of feminist involvement and any changes in thoughts and feelings about feminism during the period between interviews. Participant observation of the Winter Institute Workshop and other feminist events during the study period supplement the interview data.

The women included in the study did not form a homogeneous group in terms of age, lifestyle, or life experience. When the study commenced, 17 were living with a male partner, 13 lived alone, 7 were lone parents, and 8 lived in shared households or with a female partner. In terms of sexual identification, 24 percent self-identified as lesbians. In age they ranged from early 20s to older than 60 years. The majority (82 percent) fell between the ages of 31 and 50, with a mean age of 41. The sample was highly educated relative to the general population. Fifty-one percent held degrees or equivalent and a further 13 percent had completed certificate or diploma qualifications. Eighty-nine percent were in some form of paid employment, with a significant proportion occupying mid- to high-level professional and white-collar positions in the community service sector. Previous identification with feminism and involvement in feminist activities ranged from those who could be described as highly committed activists (33 percent) to a small number of women (16 percent) who had virtually no contact with feminist activism or ideology prior to participation in the 1991 workshop. The majority of participants (51 percent) fell between these extremes; they identified with feminism and participated in feminist activities, but feminism was not as central to their lives as it was for the highly committed group.

Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were chosen due to their consistency with feminist principles and their appropriateness for understanding the dynamic and interactive dimensions of collective action (Kendrick 1991; Reinharz 1992). In-depth interviews and participant observation were particularly useful for gathering data on the emotional aspects of movement involvement addressed here. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed with the aid of a computer-based qualitative data analysis program. Consistent with a grounded theory approach, themes and patterns were sought within the data, with minimal prior structure being imposed on the analysis (Strauss 1987). Pseudonyms have been used in the presentation of findings.

FINDINGS

Feminism and the Mobilization of Anger

My findings support the observation that anger is a common response to the framing of issues and experiences in feminist terms. Forty percent of interviewees talked about the anger they felt as they became increasingly aware of patriarchal oppression. Participation in movement events, including workshops, seminars, and rallies, provided one avenue of access to this awareness; another was through reading feminist literature. Anger resulted not only from feminist framings of personal experience but also in response to examples of sexist oppression that affect women generally.

Jacqui described the anger she felt as a result of attending the weekend workshop, "I've been very angry since I've come back really, and I feel it just sharpened

my edges. . . . I think it's just sharpened up what I already believed so that it's a more living thing now." Similarly, Joyce said she felt "a lot of anger about how women are treated." For some, the institutionalized church was the target of anger. Vicki said, "The church as an institution is what I have the biggest anger against. It, as an institution, is one of the biggest oppressors of women."

Sarah and Nicole described historical examples of male domination and the oppression of women, which they said had generated feelings of anger. Sarah talked about being angered by revelations concerning the witch craze and the persecution of "the wise women of the world . . . five hundred years ago." In a similar vein, Nicole became angry reading about women's spirituality, "I've been feeling very angry about the way men have kind of stolen the spiritual realm and made it a patriarchal thing so that it's not attractive, and, for me, not a possible option." In this example, anger is linked to a feeling of loss that is only comprehensible in terms of a feminist framing of the issue. It is because Nicole frames the lack of spirituality in her life in terms of patriarchal oppression that she feels angry.

A sense of lost opportunities, defined in light of feminist discourse, is also behind the anger expressed by Louise and Marilyn concerning childhood experiences. They both talked about restricted educational opportunities available to them as girls. Louise explained, "I have three sisters. Two of us are teachers and two of us are nurses, and I think that's why, because they were the classical type of jobs that women did, and I can get quite angry about that when I think about it." In a similar vein, Marilyn commented,

My biggest anger is to realize that the books had been around for 200 years. They were not in [my town], they were not in the school, they were not in the [town] library. I was a compulsive reader. . . . But the crap that we were given—now I'm very angry about that.

For Joyce, current restrictions in her personal life led to involvement in feminist workshops and subsequent feelings of anger.

It was like a squeeze and a pressure that was being put more and more on me and I found I didn't know what to do and I was really confused about what was my role in life, and so that's when I first began doing various courses and becoming very angry with that sort of thing.

For Anne, feelings of anger were related to a perceived lack of progress for women generally and, more specifically, to the way in which her daughter's life is still "controlled by the male perspective of what a woman should be."

Anger is a motivating emotion that leads to action. As Barbara said, "It's my anger that often gives me energy." But what type of action does it provide energy for? The actions of interviewees were diverse. They included the usual forms of movement participation, such as attendance at protest events (61 percent attended at least one such event during 1992) and membership in feminist organizations (64

percent were either members, employees, or members of management collectives of women's centers or services). However, action associated directly with movement organizations constituted only a portion of the activism in which they engaged. On a daily basis—at work, at home, in community organizations, and in social situations with friends—they engaged in political activism that was based on feminist identity but often involved individual acts. They challenged male power and authority in the workplace and in personal relationships, they refused to play a supportive role in relation to men, and they consciously supported other women and encouraged them to also challenge male power.

The Sanctioning of Feminist Identity

Feminist activism, whatever form it takes, signifies anger and reveals a deviant identity. As such, it becomes subject to attempts at social control. Ann Swidler (1995) suggests that, at the macrolevel, opponents of feminism engage in a battle for symbolic coding using publicity that defines feminists as man haters. At the microlevel, similar processes occur. The vast majority of interviewees (82 percent) recounted some form of social control in relation to their involvement or interest in feminism. Direct attempts to control behavior were rare, with sanctions more commonly targeted at identity. Joking, teasing, and the questioning of a woman's integrity were prevalent. Coworkers, friends, partners, children, and members of the extended family all at times acted as agents of social control.

The voicing of feminist opinions or the display of feminist emotions elicited reactions ranging from defensiveness to open aggression. Kerrie told me that members of her extended family accused her of being “one-eyed” and of engaging in “discriminatory thinking” when she expressed feminist views. Respondents who were married or living with men also talked about a range of responses in relation to feminism, from mild questioning to open hostility. Sandra said the following of her partner:

He tends to be a little bit dismissive sometimes of feminist arguments about things. As a scientist, for him, having a scientific background, he will often kind of butt in and say “well, where's the proof for that, where's the research, where's the ___?”

And Liz said, “I still sometimes get comments like ‘don't come up with that feminist bullshit!’”

As with family interactions, social occasions with friends were likely to become tense and uncomfortable if feminist issues arose. Anne suggested that sometimes she felt that she had been deliberately invited to social occasions as the “entertainment” because of her feminist identity.

I think they all tend to know me as a feminist. Sometimes, actually, they try to goad me because of that. I have been invited to new friend's places and it seems to me that I've been invited specifically to be attacked in a way.

Carol recounted an unpleasant argument that occurred when feminist issues arose during a night out with a group of women friends. "It was awful. We just argued and it didn't stop, it got aggressive and angry. . . . I came away feeling that there's only a few of us in the world that sort of feel this way." Liz described a similar episode that occurred during a social drink with friends. Liz was cast as a representative of feminism and held accountable for the perceived grievances of her attacker.

I had this guy just really verbally attack me the other day . . . and every time I tried to change the subject he'd just bring it back to it. . . . It started on politics and then we got onto women's rights and things like that, and this guy just felt that—well he was blaming feminism for his 26-year-old marriage breakdown. And that all these feminists had filled his wife's head with all this "crap." And that women were actually inferior to men.

The reactions described so far relate primarily to the open verbal expression of feminist views. However, "inappropriate" displays of emotion, or their absence, similarly drew reactions from others. Carol's husband complained that she had lost her sense of humor since becoming involved in feminism. It was no longer possible for them to enjoy simple pleasures such as watching a movie together.

He always says now that I've lost my sense of humor, which I'm sure a lot of men say about women that are still sort of angry about feminist stuff. I can't laugh at the same sort of things, I can't watch movies anymore, you know, I'd sooner not bother if there's one skerrick of sexism or if the women are portrayed badly, and I know that we just can't sit down and relax and watch any old tripe any more.

Carol, in this passage, links her changed sense of humor to anger she feels as a result of feminist understandings. It is interesting that although her behavior could not be described as aggressive, it was still seen by herself and her husband as signifying anger. As such, it is commented on and is a source of conflict in her marriage. Emma also had difficulty responding "appropriately" to movies.

I went to a movie soon after the workshop, and it was amazing—what was it called?—some romantic movie—it's about this guy who's got cancer and Julia Roberts is looking after him. It was just all this romantic stuff and the woman's a good woman, and I just ended up laughing half the way through it. Normally, I wouldn't laugh that much, you know, it was just that it was just too over-the-top, and some of the people I was with—there was a whole group of us—and someone said, "Oh, what's Emma laughing about? This is really sad!" you know. But I can still see how ridiculous it was.

By laughing at the image of the ideal, self-sacrificing woman when those around her felt like crying, Emma flouted the feeling rules accepted by her companions. Arlie Hochschild (1983, 30-1) suggests that the display of emotion can perform a signal function, reflecting buried perspectives and providing clues to how a person

might act. In Emma's case, her laughter indicated to her companions something about her view of the world. She did not need to vocalize a feminist interpretation of the movie to reveal her deviant identity; the display of emotion was sufficient.

Interviewees faced similar negative reactions in the workplace. Eighteen women described employment situations in which they experienced ridicule or ostracism for expressing feminist views or behaving in a manner that identified them as feminists. For example, Sandra said she felt typecast when she began working for a family planning organization.

You know—"you've got hairy legs, therefore, this means you're one of those, and that means that you don't like men, and you do this, and you do that" and they've got this whole picture ready built for you. It's all a bit much.

Louise talked about being ridiculed when she attended a Workplace Health and Safety course.

And the fellow who led it, he set the scene so his sexist remarks permeated through to the rest of us and I was appalled by it. And I stood up to him, and of course what was interesting about that—I mean, I'm old enough and big enough to be able to cope with that, but you know, you wouldn't do it if you were perhaps a young girl because then you'd, well, I was subjected to ridicule. Jokes, like "here she goes again, we'd better be careful what we say," "that's what women are like, aren't they," "you've got to watch them, you know"—that sort of thing.

After organizing and running a domestic violence workshop, Barbara, a religious sister in the Catholic church, was ridiculed by being publicly labeled a "militant feminist" in a widely distributed diocesan document. She commented, "That label was put on me as a derogatory term in church circles."

For many of the women in this study, living and working as a feminist required a frequent input of energy into what Hochschild (1979, 1983) has labeled emotion work or emotion management. Emotion work, according to Hochschild (1979, 561-62), refers broadly "to the act of evoking or shaping, as well as suppressing, feeling" and "can be done by the self upon the self, by the self upon others, and by others upon oneself." It is this emotion work, done in defense of feminist identity, that I will now consider.

Emotion Work and the Defense of Feminist Identity

The most common form of emotion work described by the women in this study involved self-restraint, whereby feminist views and deviant emotions were kept in check in an attempt to manage the emotional response of others and avoid conflict. It was used as a form of self-protection by approximately half of the women in this study. A less common but still significant form of emotion work was based on an assertive expression of feminist views. This approach was used both in an attempt to educate others and as a strategy of self-defense.

Self-Restraint

Self-restraint involved being selective in talking about feminist ideas or beliefs and, in certain situations, refraining from expressing opinions. Kate told me that feminism is a "closed topic" in her relationship, Jacqui admitted that she does not "say everything [she] thinks," and Margaret said she had reservations about mentioning feminist activities at work "because it's met with ridicule or you know that you're going to be talked about as soon as you leave the room." Others noted that people are easily threatened by feminism and it is not worth raising issues that could begin an argument. Some described situations in which, not always successfully, they attempted to change the topic of conversation when feminist issues arose.

Kerrie, who was mentioned above in relation to anger and defensiveness from family members, recalled that "often discussions start where I make my views known, but, yeah I do a lot of weighing up about it—'Is it worth it this time to get into that discussion?'—and often opt not to." Similarly, Sarah commented, "I've found it easier not to discuss material. I keep myself with a supportive group of people. I'm using my brain a bit. I just think it's fruitless because people are different." Nicole described a situation in which she was talking with a feminist friend at a social gathering: "One of the men came and joined us. It was obvious he felt quite uncomfortable and a bit negative about it. We just made some kind of joke and changed to talking about sausages or something." Nicole also talked about the risk of exposing feminist ideas to the critical appraisal of her partner and her decision, on a number of occasions, not to raise issues.

My image of it is that I've just laid a new concrete floor, and I'm admiring how beautiful it is, and he comes across and marches across it with boots and scuffs it. So because that's happened in the past, sometimes I'm a bit reticent when I do feel particularly excited and sensitive and new about something. I don't want to expose it to that risk. . . . That fear in me is still there, so I often just kind of let things slide a bit and bring up things later, when I'm more confident or have had more time to think about it or have talked it over with other women friends.

Nicole is not unwilling to look critically at feminist ideas herself; however, she finds her partner's defensive emotional responses destructive and hurtful. His critical questioning of feminist ideas is experienced as a questioning of her as a person. To avoid such situations, Nicole suppresses her own excitement and keeps her thoughts to herself.

Jocelyn also talked about keeping her feminism subdued within the family/household environment. At the time of the follow-up interview, Jocelyn was living in an extended family household with her husband, adult children, and their partners. She commented,

As I said in the first interview, I tend to be very quiet about it. Because there's been young men living with me there's been lots of jokes—you know—about feminists and dykes and jokes like that. My serious feminism wouldn't be up front in the family at

all, except with my daughters. They respect it and they discuss it and believe it too, but they don't perhaps feel it as emotionally as I do.

Kathleen stated that she refrained from raising feminist issues with older friends whom she had known for years. During the two years prior to the interview, feminism had become an important part of her life and identity, but she was willing to keep her feminism separate from other areas of her life in the interests of avoiding misunderstanding and conflict. In each of the cases described above, restraint was exercised as a way of managing the emotional response of others to feminist identity.

Self-Assertion

The second form of emotion work used by the women in this study involved expressing feminist views assertively and with confidence. Louise (as described earlier) asserted herself on the Workplace Health and Safety course, but at the same time, she recognized the price she paid for doing so. Denise talked about encountering "a lot of misplaced anger in some people," but rather than not express feminist views, her approach was to "work through" the anger before discussing issues. Although Denise considered the anger to be "misplaced," she nonetheless performs the emotion work required to defuse it, seeing her role as one of educator.

Similarly, Lisa talked about educating others about feminist issues. On one occasion, two or three men intruded on a women's conversation about a recent Reclaim the Night march, adding antagonistic comments. Lisa responded assertively to their taunts.

One guy said "you don't look like the type that would have gone to Reclaim the Night." . . . What they were saying is that the women who were going on the demonstration, really all they want is to have a good fuck. And I said to the men who were saying that "look I don't find that really funny because I have worked in the area where I've seen a lot of violation going on against women and I think it's really important."

Lisa's assertive response allowed her to maintain a position of equality in this interaction. In an analysis of the micropolitics of emotions, Candace Clark identified five emotional strategies people use to "get and keep place in face-to-face interactions" (1990, 316). Lisa's response to her antagonists can be understood as an example of the third strategy, what Clark calls controlling the balance of emotional energy. This strategy involves gaining place by "evoking another's anger, ridicule, or other negative emotions. In general, those who can elicit more emotion from others than they invest exercise control over the interaction" (1990, 322). Lisa's discussion of the march, whether she intended it so, provoked the men's insults. By "keeping her cool" and responding assertively but not aggressively, Lisa gave no ground to her attackers and, in fact, enhanced her own standing in the situation. It is interesting, however, that in this example, Lisa asserted herself and backed up her position by drawing on the authority of professional knowledge rather than feminist

understandings of the issues. This may tell us something about the power of professional discourses vis-à-vis feminist discourse.

The previously described situation in which Liz found herself being verbally attacked as a representative of feminism was also finally resolved through self-assertion. Being physically unable to remove herself, Liz tried several times to change the topic of conversation. Finally, she defended herself assertively.

In the end I just said, "look we're from a different background and culture, I will discuss it with you but I will not be your point of anger" . . . I was so upset when I got home. . . . I was just so angry. . . . I thought "I don't have to put up with that."

Even though assertive strategies may be effective in dealing with such situations, the very fact of their occurrence can leave a lingering feeling of anger for those who are forced to respond. When Liz says, "I don't have to put up with that," she really means, "I shouldn't have to put up with that." As Liz said, "you get sick of that all the time. It would be nice to have someone else outnumbered by three feminists." To respond assertively is hard work, is wearing, and leaves unresolved feelings of anger. While Lisa's assertive approach was more successful than Liz's, it is possible that she also was left with unresolved feelings.

An assertive strategy was far less common than self-restraint as a means of managing others' negative emotional responses to feminist identity. Furthermore, although the examples given tend to present the "self-restraint" and the "assertive" strategies as alternatives used by different women, some used both options at different times. Nicole, for example, holds back when feeling "sensitive and new about something" but addresses issues assertively when feeling "more confident."

Women in this study were aware of the energy expended in both types of emotion work. They often made conscious decisions not to address feminist issues or respond to sexist remarks because of the emotionally draining effect of engaging in this work. When it was forced on them, they experienced a range of negative outcomes.

The Costs of Emotion Work

The costs associated with the emotion work required for the negotiation of feminist identity include emotional exhaustion, guilt, and self-estrangement. Interviewees talked about the energy required to control their anger or restrain themselves from expressing feminist views. Marie commented about the workshop: "It fired up my anger more, and . . . it's very difficult to contain that. It uses up a lot of energy of mine." Jacqui said, "I can't not be like that, I can't not say something. I'm finding it too frustrating." Nicole described the exhaustion involved in always being different.

If I say what I really think . . . everybody moves back an inch or two in their chairs and looks really shocked and not quite sure where to go next. I feel like I think really differently, and that's a bit wearing. . . . Sometimes I feel a bit tired of having that kind of

role, but I can't help it. And sometimes it just happens without me thinking about it. I think I'm being quite normal and then everyone looks at me as though I've jumped off the deep end.

For Judy, the emotional exhaustion was extreme and distressing. As a lesbian feminist, self-restraint at her workplace was linked to a fear of being dismissed if her sexual orientation became known to her employer. Expressing feminist views would make such a possibility more likely. She talked about the stress involved in not responding to sexist and homophobic jokes that were the currency of workplace banter. At the time of the interview, she was finding the suppressed anger and feelings of powerlessness intolerable.

The emotional exhaustion experienced by activists has been noted by movement researchers before. Turner and Killian have written about combat fatigue—"the wear and tear of participating in a continuing struggle" (1987, 363). Similarly, Richard Kendrick has described peace activists "running out of gas" and needing "something to rekindle their enthusiasm" (1991, 106). This experience of emotional exhaustion can be understood in terms of Randall Collins's (1990) theory of stratification and emotional energy. For Collins, "emotional energy" refers to the long-term emotional tones produced through interaction in power and status rituals. Emotional energy ranges "from a high end of confidence, enthusiasm, good self-feelings; down through a middle range of lesser states, and to a low end of depression, lack of initiative, and negative self-feelings" (1990, 32). In power rituals, order-givers gain emotional energy while those receiving orders lose it. Similarly, status enhancement increases emotional energy and lack of status lowers it. For many of the women in this study, the daily experience of suppressing anger, or of not doing so and being ridiculed and shamed, contributed to a lowered state of emotional energy.

Collins (1990) also suggests a link between emotional energy and moral feelings. This is reflected in the following excerpt in which Emma indicates feeling guilty over not upholding the feminist cause:

This is probably something I wouldn't say to a lot of people, but I am more aware of toning it down with lots of people now than what I have been in the past, and that's because—and I'm talking about males as well that I socialize with—I don't feel I want to get on the wrong side of them all the time. I don't really think it's the way that you're supposed to go, but it's just what I feel more comfortable doing.

Emma's admission of uneasiness reflects her sense that she is letting the movement down.

Suppressing anger and restraining expressions of feminist identity reduce emotional energy. As Dilorio and Nusbaumer suggest, "emotions play a critical role in the reflexive and intersubjective processes through which we create and sustain our selves" (1993, 411). When those emotions are suppressed and not allowed to enter into relationships, the self that they reflect is silenced (Crowley Jack 1991). Interviewees' descriptions of the emotional exhaustion and stress that resulted from the

self-censorship of feminist views and feelings demonstrate this alienation from the self. This aspect of self-restraint was made particularly explicit by Alex, who talked about her reluctance to express feminist views because of "the sort of attitude people have towards angry feminists and such like." She explained that her thoughts and feelings became "really personal" to her as she failed to communicate them to others.

Marilyn Waring (1997), in a moving account of the "emotional battery" that she endured through nine years as an outspoken feminist politician in the New Zealand Parliament described a similar experience of immense fatigue and loss of self as she learned to play the male game of politics. She wrote:

In the midst of this very serious game I hoped I was still surviving deep down inside, but I had no time to check "her" out. I had to hope that one day, when I went to retrieve "her," "she" might still be there. . . . I had begun my first term with the already edited use of the first person. I moved to the passive "one" when I meant "I." Next I used "you." . . . In the final years I spoke of myself in public, and to myself (although a different self) in private, in third person. (Waring 1997, 30)

Paradoxically, defense of the self contributed to alienation from the self.

The costs described here were reported by both highly committed and moderately committed feminists, with the more highly involved feminists tending to experience greater levels of frustration and exhaustion, probably because they were more often, and more acutely, aware of the myriad subtle forms of sexist oppression (Bartky 1990) and they more often faced the need to manage their own and others' emotions.

The Emotional Consequences of Participation in Feminist Events

In contrast to the emotional exhaustion, stress, and alienation described above, a significant proportion of interviewees (approximately 60 percent) said that they received an emotional boost from participating in feminist events. Participation in Reclaim the Night and International Women's Day marches, feminist workshops and seminars, and feminist cultural events replenished stores of emotional energy expended in being a feminist in a nonfeminist world. For most participants, these events affirmed feminist identity, provided strength for continuing the feminist struggle, and served as an outlet for the expression of deviant emotions. The significance of emotional benefits of feminist participation is supported by Taylor's (1989) work on abeyance processes within the American women's rights movement.

Affirmation of Feminist Identity

Participation in feminist events provided interviewees with the opportunity to express their feminist identity in a supportive environment. Participating in protests or workshops with like-minded women served as a welcome relief from the emo-

tion management required in nonfeminist settings. Interviewees talked about having their views confirmed, clarified, and strengthened through involvement in feminist events and of coming away from these replenished, renewed, and energized.

Reflecting on the weekend workshop, Carmel said “The whole weekend was such a positive experience. [It] was a replenishing of my values. If you want to put a feeling on it, it was like reenergizing and remotivating me.” Stella “felt lots of personal power” following the workshop, and Vicki suggested,

Every time I go away for some serious feminist input like that, I do come away stronger. I never, ever doubt my feminist beliefs . . . but I do come back stronger and with more energy to pick up on some of the fights that I haven't been engaged in for a while.

Colleen made a similar observation:

I think it gives me a better perspective of *who I am*. It's like a drug, that I go along doubting for a long time, then I go to a workshop like that and I get a drug, another shot, and I think “oh yes, I am wonderful, I am great,” and that gives me strength to go on again 'till the next one. (emphasis added)

Margaret also talked about needing a periodical recharge—“a bit like a dose of medicine”—due to her employment situation and isolation from other feminist women.

An individual's store of emotional energy is increased through the dramatic, positive, short-term emotions—enthusiasm and joy—that are generated through the successful enactment of interaction rituals (Collins 1990). As membership rituals, movement events can generate these positive short-term emotions and increase emotional energy. A number of women commented on the positive emotions associated with participating in a march. For instance, “It's sort of an incredible feeling just being part of a group of people losing the feeling of being in a minority group and having so much support around you” (Rhonda) and, “It was brilliant. It was very liberating. I just felt so good afterwards” (Judy).

Gaining Strength from the Movement

The theme of gaining strength from the women's movement is evident in a number of the comments quoted above. Denise and Helen both addressed this dimension explicitly. Denise described helping a friend through a particularly difficult experience of recovering the memory of being gang raped 15 years earlier. For Denise, attending the 1991 workshop was a way of fortifying herself to deal with this situation.

I still work with her and listen to her. . . . But, not only was I doing the weekend for myself but I was trying to gain strength from the women's movement overall to get her through this, because of the usual amount of guilt the woman carries, the victim, the whole bit, and it wasn't so much what I said to her that helped her, but it was the listen-

ing. But even so, I knew that there was a lot of strength out there that could be gathered and that was one of the driving forces for me going.

As a public prosecutor, Helen works in a particularly male-dominated domain. As she describes it, she is "surrounded by the legal machine" in which support from male colleagues is contingent on "playing the game properly," and in which other women, if present at all, are generally "powerless." The emotional support that she receives from participating in feminist events is essential to her ability to survive as a feminist in this environment.

I was having a real hard time at work when Crystal Creek [the workshop] was on. Because I was coming down to do this trial that I was really anxious about . . . Crystal Creek helped me a lot, because I find that when you have a weekend of all women together, that one thing that always happens is that you feel positively charged up with all the energy from having that experience. I think that . . . women have a special ability to encourage and to make everybody feel welcome, being loved in a way. I felt really charged up when I went down to Brisbane.

In relation to gaining support from the women's movement, Marilyn Waring's account of her experiences as a politician again closely parallel those of my interviewees. She explained that it was women and women's groups from outside of the institution that sustained her.

Women like these would also invite me to be with them. Often I had to make some kind of presentation or speech, and it was always an emotional time for me. . . . It was experiences like these that gave me the strength to act from that core of being a woman, however alone I felt. These moments of "going home" gave me the courage to engage issues, whatever the consequences. (Waring 1997, 33-4)

An Outlet for Deviant Emotions

Facilitating the expression of deviant emotions, particularly anger, is another important dimension of participation in feminist events. In the first interview with Jacqui, she stated "I need an outlet for [the anger]—I don't know quite what to do with it." In the 12 months between then and the follow-up interview, Jacqui helped organize the first ever Reclaim the Night march in her town and, in the process, found an outlet for her anger.

This aspect of participation is graphically illustrated by the following incident described by Colleen. It occurred during the drive home from the weekend workshop.

Colleen: We abused men all the way home in the car. . . . As we were driving down, we started abusing every man we saw. We abused the hell out of him—if he was driving next to us, riding on a bike, walking, just standing on the side of the road. And as we

came along the road and there was this big crew of men that were working on the road—Oh, we had the windows all wound up.

Cheryl: So they couldn't actually hear you?

Colleen: No, no!

Cheryl: So, what did you do?

Colleen: Oh, we were just calling them all these horrible names. Every rotten name we could think of. We were trying to think of all the horrible names that are associated with men, like "you silly old coot," and throwing in a few really juicy swear words, and just getting right up them, and it was really good. And we'd say something and then we'd laugh and laugh and laugh. Especially if someone produced this really profound word. And we did that from Crystal Creek to Townsville, and we ran out a little bit after Townsville, *we sort of ran out of anger* (laughter). But it was, that was really interesting and every time after—Oh for about three or four weeks afterwards—someone would say something and we would just break out into laughter, 'cause it was just so, yeah, it just felt so good. (emphasis added)

The cathartic effect of abusing unsuspecting men as they drove home from the workshop is clearly evident in this story. Layers of anger, suppressed over many years, seem to be pouring out in one orgy of name calling. The anger is still expressed safely, however, with the windows wound up so no one can hear and in the car with a small, trusted, group of friends. The immense pleasure—"we'd laugh and laugh . . . it just felt so good"—is reminiscent of a comment made by one of the abortion escorts interviewed by Dilorio and Nusbaumer who said that the thing she missed most when the escorting was over "was having a place where it was OK to be angry" (1993, 435). In a world in which women have few outlets for anger, hostility, or aggression and yet so much to feel angry about, this is not such a surprising sentiment.

An indication of the value that interviewees placed on the weekend workshops as a free space for the expression of feminist views and emotions was the resentment that a number of women expressed toward the participation of women whose "feminist consciousness" was not considered to be sufficiently developed. One aspect of this resentment is the emotion work required when "newcomers" are included. Vicki talked about working in situations in which she is "giving to other women" all the time, and on a feminist weekend she is seeking replenishment, not more work.

Having worked at the Women's Center for seven years, I've spent, I guess, most of my life being nice to other women, helping them, encouraging them, sharing information, supporting them. . . . I'm nice to women all of the time and encouraging and supporting, but when I want to go away for some feminist discussion now, I don't want to be explaining why men can't come to the camp, for want of a better way of putting it.

The emotion work involved in "educating" newcomers is tiring and Vicki does not expect to have to engage in this at a feminist workshop.

Feeling Let Down

Feeling let down or demotivated by participation in feminist activities was rare. A few women expressed mixed feelings. Helen, as quoted above, felt generally "charged up" following the workshop, but she did say that the large numbers had made it a less positive experience than the year before. One interviewee, Anne, talked specifically about being demotivated through participation in the workshop. She recognized that her response was different from the majority.

I have a different reaction to a lot of women at the weekend because a lot of women say that they feel really energized by the weekend. . . . I always had the idea that if one could get the education system revamped, that would at least be the beginning of improvements, but when she [Dale Spender] said, you know, it's worse now for girls than it was 10 years ago, you know, I don't get reenergized on that sort of information. I sort of think, "do I really want to come here and be with it again?" you know, because things don't seem to be improving.

Where others seemed to concentrate on the social aspect of being with like-minded women, Anne focused on the disheartening information provided at the workshop. After many years of fighting for change, the weariness she felt was difficult to overcome.

CONCLUSION

In keeping with the rationalist assumptions of RMT, social movements researchers for a long time ignored the role of emotion in movement participation. However, in the face of feminist criticism of a reason-emotion dualism in social movements theory (Marx Ferree 1992; Taylor 1995), and in line with an increasing interest in framing processes and the construction of collective identity, emotion is now being taken seriously in the study of collective action. This article builds on and extends work in this area. Through an analysis of what the women in this study said about their experiences of feminist involvement and identity, the article contributes to an understanding of the emotional dimension of collective action generally and of feminist collective action in particular.

The findings confirm the central importance of anger as a motivating force driving feminist collective action. They provide additional support for previous research, which has found that feminist organizations channel "passive," negative emotions, such as depression and shame, into "active" anger (Taylor 1995; Taylor and Whittier 1995). For the women in this study, the channeling of emotions occurred through a dual process of cognitive and emotional framing that not only provided an explanation for the oppression of women in patriarchal society but also legitimated anger as an appropriate emotional response.

Gamson (1995) suggests that anger, linked to a sense of injustice, is a feature of all collective action frames. Feminist scholars point out, however, that anger is

more problematic for women than for men (Fraser 1996, 167; Hochschild 1983, 163; Taylor 1996, 51). Consequently, as this study has demonstrated, the expression of anger takes on special significance in relation to feminist activism. Feminist framings create and legitimize anger for women who adopt such frames, but this does not necessarily make the expression of such anger any more acceptable in the wider community.

The process of changing societal conceptions of legitimate anger is slow and laborious. Even women who identify as radical feminists—as some of the women reported here do—often feel constrained to perform emotion work to ensure that their feminism does not “upset” anyone. If this work is not performed voluntarily, then partners, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances highlight the deviance of the offender and remind her to get her feelings into line. It is her duty to cry at the sad romantic movie and to laugh at the sexist jokes—in short, to accept the constant positioning of women as subordinate and inferior without comment or action. If she works in a male-dominated domain, she is required to deny her beliefs and her feelings and “play the game” by male rules. Western feminists can point to many achievements won over the past 20 years, in areas such as education, employment and child care, but it is still not acceptable for women to show anger.

Finally, the findings of this study support a broadened conception of the costs and rewards of collective action. As Marx Ferree (1992) has pointed out, the rational choice assumptions that have until recently underpinned much social movements research have contributed to a narrow, instrumental conception of such costs and rewards. Under the assumption of a pseudouniversal individual actor, analysis has typically focused on the time and money that participants devote to collective action and on the individual incentives that are needed to make sense of participation. When we begin, as Marx Ferree recommends, with the alternative assumption of socially embedded actors whose motivations are based on values and emotions as well as reason, the perception and interpretation of costs and rewards changes.

The costs experienced by the women in this study arose primarily as a result of the opposition that they faced as feminists and the emotion work that they were compelled to perform in defense of feminist identity. These costs are best measured in terms of emotional exhaustion and alienation rather than financial or time outlays. Likewise, the rewards gained from participation in movement events were primarily emotional. In the context of the daily battles faced in maintaining and defending feminist identity, the emotional boost provided by participation in movement events was highly valued and actively sought.

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