

**Article: “Inclusion, Solidarity, and Social Movements: The Global Movement against Gender Violence”**

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# Inclusion, Solidarity, and Social Movements: The Global Movement against Gender Violence

S. Laurel Weldon

Women's movements are increasingly divided along lines of race, sexuality, ethnicity, and class. When such division obstructs cooperation, women lose their most effective advocates in the public sphere. How can movements overcome these divisions and improve their influence on policy and society? In some contexts, it seems that activists are able to overcome such divisions without denying politically salient conflicts. The transnational movement against gender violence, for example, mobilizes people not only across differences of race, class and sexuality but also across differences of language, national context, level of development, and the like. How do they do this? I argue that the movement against gender violence has achieved cooperation through the development of norms of inclusivity. Such norms include a commitment to descriptive representation, the facilitation of separate organization for disadvantaged social groups, and a commitment to building consensus *with* institutionalized dissent. Developing such norms is not the only possible path to cooperation, but it is an important and overlooked one. It illuminates a way of maintaining solidarity and improving policy influence without denying or sublimating the differences and conflicts among activists. Existing scholarship on social movements that attributes successful cooperation to shared interests, identities, or opportunities, is incomplete because it does not take account of relations of domination *among* activists who cooperate. Attending to the context of structural inequality in which social movements operate improves our understanding of social mobilization and illuminates overlooked paths to cooperation.

Women's movements have reshaped the world's democracies, demanding that governments and citizens pay attention to "women's issues" such as pay equity, violence, feminization of poverty, reproductive rights, and representation.<sup>1</sup> But women's movements, like many contemporary social movements, are increasingly divided along lines of race, sexuality, ethnicity, and class.<sup>2</sup> When such division obstructs cooperation, women lose their most effective advocates in the public sphere. With a renewed assault on women's reproductive rights, economic security, and freedom from violence in the United States and around the world, women need effective sources of policy influence more than ever.<sup>3</sup> It is critical, then, that movements overcome these divisions and improve their influence on policy and society. But *can* they?

Some scholars argue that a return to universalism, a strategy of emphasizing commonalities rather than differences, will re-invigorate left movements and help them regain policy influence.<sup>4</sup> Others argue that the perception of a common identity (separate from that of all humankind) is critical to successful mobilization: Even essentialist identities that deny real differences can strengthen movements.<sup>5</sup>

In some contexts, however, activists are able to overcome such divisions without denying politically salient conflicts and differences. The transnational movement against gender violence, for example, mobilizes people not only across differences of race, class, and sexuality but also across differences of language, national context, level of development, and the like.<sup>6</sup> Though initially hobbled by internal division, activists have united over two decades, successfully promoting a number of international agreements.<sup>7</sup> Violence against women has by no means been eliminated, but activists have succeeded in dramatically increasing the awareness of and resources devoted to combating violence against women around the globe. How did they do this? I use a case study of this movement over more than two decades to answer this question.<sup>8</sup>

The success of transnational organizing on gender violence has previously been attributed to processes of strategic issue-framing or changes in the political opportunity structure.<sup>9</sup> But here I argue that the movement against

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gender violence has achieved cooperation through the development of norms of inclusivity. Such norms include a commitment to descriptive representation, the facilitation of separate organization for disadvantaged social groups, and a commitment to building consensus *with* institutionalized dissent. Developing such norms is not the only possible path to cooperation, but it is an important and overlooked one. It illuminates a way of maintaining solidarity and improving policy influence without denying or sublimating the differences and conflicts among activists.

Existing scholarship on social movements that attributes successful cooperation to shared interests, identities, or opportunities, is incomplete because it does not take account of relations of domination *among* activists who cooperate.<sup>10</sup> Activists need to communicate and coordinate their actions, but in contexts where some social groups dominate others, the relations of domination distort communication, making misunderstanding and conflict more common.<sup>11</sup> Such relations obstruct the development of shared identities. Attending to the context of structural inequality in which social movements operate improves our understanding of social mobilization and illuminates overlooked paths to cooperation.

### Inclusive Procedures Facilitate Cooperation

The same divisions and conflicts that permeate society also affect social movements: Activists must construct coalitions across these divisions in order to command public attention and influence. In addition to the sheer difficulty of communicating with others from different cultural backgrounds, power imbalances among activists distort and impede communication.<sup>12</sup> Historically marginalized groups or constituencies, even when they are nominally included, often perceive more privileged groups as dominating activist decision-making.<sup>13</sup> Frequently, activists from the more privileged group do not perceive or understand the problems. Relations of mistrust between such groups poison relations between activists, make communication difficult, and ultimately can lead to the fragmentation and subsequent decline of the movement.<sup>14</sup> One way to solve at least some of these problems would be to eliminate the broader conflict, to redress longstanding relations of social inequality. But to directly solve these problems *before* organizing is usually not an option. If such social cleavages cannot be eliminated, how can activists cooperate in their midst?

Democratic theorists argue that procedural mechanisms that are more *inclusive*, especially those that give marginalized groups a stronger voice in deliberative proceedings, will create greater trust and improve communication among the participants, by countering the distorting influence of power-differentials on discussion, and help-

ing activists to move to discussion of possible common ground.<sup>15</sup> Measures that aim at securing a voice for marginalized sub-groups in group deliberations let marginalized sub-groups rest assured that privileged members of the group will not entirely dominate deliberations.<sup>16</sup> They can then spend less time struggling against other activists and more time working to develop a common plan of action. Below, I specify three features of such inclusive political communication: a commitment to work towards agreement on specific issues while expecting dissent; descriptive representation; and self-organization of marginalized groups.

#### *Self-organization*

The most effective way to ensure that marginalized sub-groups or “internal minorities” have the opportunity to develop and voice their distinctive perspectives is to ensure that they have the opportunity for self-organization. Feminist theorists have stressed the importance of autonomous organization by women, that is, organization under conditions where women have the opportunity to set the agenda and rules of engagement.<sup>17</sup> Democratic theorists have argued that when dominated groups form a “counter-public” or separate discussion among themselves, they are better able to counter their marginalization in the broader public sphere.<sup>18</sup> Such counter-publics function as “bases and training grounds for agitational activities,” and provide a mechanism whereby marginalized groups can develop and disseminate new concepts and ideas to the dominant public sphere.<sup>19</sup> Self-organization permits groups to speak *as a group* to some degree, and this gives their statements more weight. This helps to put interlocutors on a more equal footing.

#### *Descriptive representation*

Without descriptive representation (the physical presence of members of marginalized groups) there are no members of the group who can self-organize, develop, and articulate the minority group perspectives. Descriptive representation, or the bodily presence of members of marginalized groups helps to ensure that the final product reflects the perspective of the marginalized group, while also conferring legitimacy on the proceedings: Symbolically, the visible participation of members of marginalized groups in deliberations increases the trust in the process by other members of the group.<sup>20</sup>

In order to overcome mistrust and include marginalized groups in discussions, descriptive representation must not be tokenism, but involve members of marginalized groups in such numbers and contexts that they can discuss issues among themselves, set an independent agenda, and present a perspective critical of the dominant group if necessary. Although such measures will not solve all conflicts among activists or guarantee solidarity, they can build

trust and improve communication even in the context of severe social inequality.

### *Search for agreement and institutionalized dissent*

Inclusive political communication requires a spirit of openness, where all parties both genuinely listen to others and seek to advance others' understanding of their positions and perspectives. In conditions of social inequality and difference, truly open deliberations are likely to be characterized by conflict. In such a context, institutionalizing dissent is important to ensure that a search for agreement does not silence weaker parties. Without such procedures, the assumption of homogeneity of points of view tends to reinforce dominant group positions and makes it harder for marginalized groups to disagree.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, without any commitment to a common project, dominant groups easily ignore marginalized groups to pursue their own interests, claiming they have agreed to disagree. By contrast, deliberations can be made more inclusive by retaining a goal of some degree of agreement, undertaking consensus-building on specific questions or contexts, but expecting disagreement (even fundamental disagreement) as part of the process.<sup>22</sup>

### *Defining norms*

When these principles of inclusive political practice become *norms* for movement activists, they will improve movement deliberations. Norms are standards of behavior, ranging from standards of mere appropriateness to standards delineating rights and obligations.<sup>23</sup> Actors "use norms as reference points in their communication and interaction."<sup>24</sup> Actors arrive at new norms or reinforce existing ones by acknowledging one another's full or partial compliance with norms. We would know that activists are using norms when they behave in ways that reflect these principles and refer to them in their deliberations.

Such norms of inclusivity produce decisions and issue-frames that more constituencies can support, help movements avoid foundering on the shoals of internal conflict, and ultimately improve the policy influence of movements. But norms of inclusivity are not necessary for cooperation; one can imagine other paths to agreement.

## **Competing Explanations**

Below I consider other possible explanations for the emergence of cooperation, suggesting that these accounts of the emergence of cooperation overlook the importance of intra-group relations of domination and the inclusive procedures that helped activists overcome these divisions. Other explanations for successful cooperation include common material interests, shared identities, and political opportunities.

### *Common material interests*

Some expect cooperation to emerge most effectively where activists share common material interests, or at least do not have to overcome material conflicts of interest. O'Brien et al. (2000) argue that the movement against gender violence has been successful while women's international movements for economic justice have failed because in the justice movement women are divided by conflicts of *economic* interest while in the movement against violence case no such conflict arises. On this view, violence against women is a non-zero-sum issue, an "issue which united women across a vast ideological spectrum, and where gains in the physical security and human rights of particular groups of women are seen as gains for all, not as potentially detracting from the opportunities of others."<sup>25</sup>

On this account, then, it is the type of interest that matters; some *types* of conflict of interest (for example, economic, zero-sum) are less amenable to resolution than others. But it is often difficult to separate interests, even economic interests, from the way they are framed. Reframing an issue can transform what seemed like a zero-sum conflict to a "win-win" situation. Middle class and working class women have opposing interests in relation to child care, because higher wages for child care workers drive up the cost of child care (that middle class women pay). But women are confronted with these seeming conflicts of interests only because women are still doing the majority of paid and unpaid childcare work. If men were to take more responsibility for childcare, and if workplaces were to be reformed (shorter workdays, cooperative daycare arrangements, paid maternity and parental leave, pay equity for women so they could afford to pay the higher wages for child care, etc.) so that all workers could more easily be parents, all women would benefit. Some common set of policy proposals could address the inequitable distribution of childcare responsibilities that is at the root of this conflict, and could be said to be in the interest of both groups of women. Framing the conflict in terms of the need for such policies could transform and largely eliminate what seems like a conflict of interest.

Conflicting economic interests arise because "cheap female labour in the South can draw jobs away from women in the North"<sup>26</sup>, but both Southern and Northern share a common interest in establishing better living standards and wages for all women. Although even slight improvements in wages and labor rights for workers in Mexico have probably resulted in losing of jobs to locations in Asia that can offer even lower wages, women in the global South *have* been able to organize around common economic interests in spite of these differences. Transnational organizing has also been successful on other economic issues: In the anti-sweatshop, anti-free trade, and anti-globalization movements, northern trade unionists have allied with third world workers to promote tougher labor standards in free trade agreements and in third world

industries. The nature of the interest in itself does not seem to explain the success of a global movement.

Economic conflicts are not uniquely fundamental, immutable, or even separable from, conflicts based on class, gender, sexuality and the like.<sup>27</sup> Nor need one take the status quo as the only frame of reference within which to establish interests. Because interests can be redefined by taking a different frame of reference, whether conflicts of interest (economic or otherwise) politically divide a group depends in part on how those interests are perceived and framed.

If shared interests translated directly into cooperation, we would expect there to be little lag time between activists discussing an issue or problem and acting collectively to address the problem. If (as seems more likely) shared interests merely *enable* cooperation (as necessary but not sufficient), then cooperation might emerge slowly until activists can devise shared interest frames, often after inclusive deliberations. Sorting out the sequencing of events would help decide which theoretical account best describes the causal chain: Did activists perceive their shared interests prior to achieving success at cooperation, or did the reframing of interests emerge from more inclusive deliberations? I argue it is the latter.

### **Collective identity**

Perceiving one's interests as those of a woman or worker depends on one's self-identification as such.<sup>28</sup> This activation or salience of an identity is central to many theories of political mobilization in social movements. People are called into action when they identify with (or want to identify with) a group, role, or value they associate with a movement. The assertion of a common identity as women probably has underlain the success of women's international organizing, at least in the early period at the turn of the century.<sup>29</sup> The development of a common identity has made cooperation among women possible across borders, classes, ethnicities, and sexualities.

Although social movement scholars agree that the construction of a common identity is critical for mobilizing a constituency,<sup>30</sup> such scholars do not claim that social movements draw on pre-existing, primordial identities. Such a claim essentializes social groups, falsely attributing a similar underlying essence or fundamental nature to a group that is actually diverse. Because the social groups around which movements mobilize (such as "women", "people of color", "the working class", or "lesbians") are themselves riven by social cleavages that mirror society at large, social movement scholars focus on how groups construct a common identity as part of the process of mobilization, rather than simply expressing underlying similarities or shared experiences.<sup>31</sup>

But if collective identities are produced *in the process of collective action*, then it is harder to argue that these iden-

ties are the basis for political mobilization in the first place. If such identities must be constructed in ways that suppress difference in order to enhance political mobilization, this suggests that cooperation requires sublimating or obscuring some politically relevant differences. What motivates those activists from groups whose core affiliations are *suppressed* to join the movement? The intuitive appeal of the concept of identity as a mobilizing tool is greatly diminished if one argues, as most social movement scholars do, and as I do here, that collective identities are produced by movements as well as causes of them. Again, the sequencing of events helps sort out which explanation best captures social movement dynamics: do activists first forge a common identity and then cooperate, or do common identities emerge from cooperative contexts?

### **Framing processes**

The *framing* of issues also affects the mobilization of social movements. Collective action frames are ways of understanding and presenting the world that emphasize the injustice of social conditions that may not otherwise be recognized as unfair. Through emotional and cognitive appeals, these frames convince participants that their cause is pressing and legitimate, and mobilize them to action.<sup>32</sup>

Changing issue-frames facilitates cooperation: "Activists frame issues by identifying and providing convincing explanations for powerful symbolic events, which in turn become catalysts for the growth of [transnational] networks. Symbolic interpretation is part of the process of persuasion by which networks create awareness and expand their constituencies".<sup>33</sup>

If frames cause cooperation, they must *precede* it. Disputants cannot jointly agree on a shared frame since they are not yet cooperating. One party to a dispute must thus invent or adopt the frame and propose it to the other, who (confronted with a new interpretation of the issue) agrees to cooperate. But accounts of actual movements suggest that these new frames are on-going interpretations that emerge from activists' interactions.<sup>34</sup> Thus, they *emerge* from cooperation rather than facilitate it. If the frames are in fact a symptom of cooperation rather than a cause, the order in which events occur should reveal that relationship; cooperation should precede the emergence of new issue-frames.

### **Political opportunities, institutions, and powerful states**

In international affairs, the actions of powerful states determine many outcomes of political significance.<sup>35</sup> The changing fortunes of transnational social movements may therefore only reflect changes in the degree of support they receive from powerful states. Relatedly, Georgia Duerst-Lahti has argued that the U.S. women's movement was really a collection of fragmented local and regional

movements until President Kennedy stimulated the establishment of a network of women's commissions throughout the United States.<sup>36</sup> By creating this network, the government actually helped build the strong, independent national women's movement that is so active today. Did governments or international organizations play a similarly important role in facilitating cooperation among activists on violence against women?

State institutions and international organizations can play an important role in strengthening cooperation by providing the opportunities and resources needed for dialogue. Intergovernmental meetings bring activists together and provide a platform from which they can spread their message. Governments and international organizations also provide funding for organizing and research, which particularly facilitates the mobilization of economically disadvantaged groups. State or institutional support also creates more favorable political opportunities.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, movements can arise in response to new openings provided by political institutions.

However, such opportunities will not usually result in activists cooperating across deep divisions. Many social movements have squandered political opportunities by being disorganized or divided among themselves. Windows of opportunity are open only briefly, and political actors must be skilled and ready to act.<sup>38</sup> More resources or opportunities enable activists and amplify their actions, but do not generate any new solutions or ideas. So strong state or institutional support may facilitate cooperation but is not sufficient to produce it.

Many feminist state theorists are skeptical of the emancipatory potential of state support for women's rights, worrying that any such support co-opts key activists and blunts the critical edge of feminist analysis.<sup>39</sup> These scholars would anticipate that state support for women's activism on violence would weaken the movement in the long run.

Does state support undermine, enable, or ensure cooperation? The causal story here depends on whether state support precedes or coincides with the emergence of cooperation, or whether state support seems to contribute to greater division. If state support seems to bring on greater division or demobilization, we can conclude that feminist skeptics are correct. If state support is present for a long period and cooperation does not emerge, we can conclude that state support is not sufficient to produce cooperation. Finally, if cooperation emerges soon after institutional support is put in place, and if key actors report that this support was important, state support is likely to be a more important part of the causal story.

## **The Global Movement against Gender Violence**

Which explanation best characterizes the process by which the participants in the global movement against gender

violence overcame division to coordinate their actions? Did recognition of common material interests spur activists to work together? Did activists respond when presented with a particular collective identity or issue frame? Did they cooperate when presented with the political opportunity to do so? Or did the development of inclusivity make the difference?<sup>40</sup> The timeline of the movement provides clues; violence against women was firmly on the agenda of the transnational women's movement by the mid-1970s, but did not appear on the intergovernmental agenda until nearly a decade later. By then, at least fifteen national governments were taking measures to address rape and woman-battering and some (including powerful states like the U.S.) were pushing for international attention to violence against women. Yet these efforts were resisted throughout the late 1980s, and the most intense period of international policy development on violence was the mid-1990s. Why did it take nearly two-decades for governments to agree that wife-battering should be a criminal act, or that rape was a violation of women's human rights? In this era, violence against women was marginal even to those intergovernmental discussions that focused on women's status. Why did governments finally agree to take collective measures to address violence against women in the 1990s? I argue that international activism against violence did not have a policy impact earlier because activists could not overcome relations of inequality within the movement until they developed norms of inclusivity. The impact of material common interests, issue-frames, identities, and the support of powerful states all were contingent upon the movement's developing these norms.

### *A sketch of the movement*

Although women have long experienced and criticized rape, wife abuse, and the like, it was not until the mid-1970s that activists began using the term "violence against women" in international discussions.<sup>41</sup> The issue was raised at the First World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975 and at an independent meeting of activists in Brussels the following year focused entirely on "crimes against women".<sup>42</sup> In spite of this growing awareness among activists, however, governments were silent on the issue of violence against women.

Activists at these early meetings were divided over what the most important women's issues were, how to define these issues, how and whether activists ought to pursue policy change, and how discussions ought to be organized. At the meeting in Mexico, divisions along these lines partially mirrored the political conflicts in the broader international system—the North-South conflict over how to approach "development," the cold war, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>43</sup> UN officials reportedly worried about how the disorder at the NGO Tribune in Mexico reflected

on the UN.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, in spite of unifying theme of crimes against women, the meeting in Brussels was also characterized by conflict and considerable disarray.<sup>45</sup> Such conflicts continued to disrupt the second world conference on women and the parallel NGO forum in Copenhagen.<sup>46</sup>

In the mid-eighties, activists sought to overcome these divisions. Southern women developed independent fora for discussing issues as women. The first feminist *Encuentro* in Bogota sparked a series of conferences among Latin American feminists.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, African NGOs began to organize separately, meeting in Senegal and Tanzania to prepare for the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi. At the same time, women of color and Third World women advanced arguments provoking a shift in feminist organizational practice away from emphasizing common experience towards addressing inequalities among women.<sup>48</sup> These ideas likely influenced key activists from the North and South.<sup>49</sup>

Still, organizing *across* the North-South division continued to be a challenge, even at conferences focused on violence against women or its specific forms. In 1983, activists organized a Global Feminist Workshop to Organize Against Traffic in Women in Rotterdam. But the conference was beset with conflicts between North and South, and plans to develop an international activist network were derailed because Southern feminists did not want the network based in the North, but did not have the resources to host it themselves.<sup>50</sup>

The turning point came in 1985 at the Third World Conference on Women and the parallel NGO Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, where activists made significant headway. The inclusion of violence against women as a priority in the final intergovernmental document, the *Forward Looking Strategies*, solidly established the issue on the international agenda.<sup>51</sup> After Nairobi, activists were able to use the *Forward Looking Strategies* to press the UN's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to consider violence against women.

In 1991 the UN's CSW convened an Expert Group Meeting on Violence Against Women in All its Forms in Vienna.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, anti-violence activists were developing a new global campaign. From 1990 to 1993, the U.S.-based Campaign for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) convened women from 20 (mostly Southern) countries in Leadership Institutes.<sup>53</sup> At these institutes, activists planned a three-year campaign linking women's and human rights, focusing on the UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. Activists circulated a global petition against gender violence, which was translated into 24 languages, sponsored by over a thousand groups, and signed by nearly half a million people from 124 countries.

As a result, the issue of violence against women, previously thought of as a private issue of little relevance for human rights organizations, dominated the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.<sup>54</sup> CWGL orga-

nized a day-long Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights, asked delegates to observe a minute of silence for all women who had died or were badly injured by domestic violence, and delivered the global petition to the conference floor.<sup>55</sup> The Vienna Conference produced the 1993 *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, the first statement by a worldwide organization that violence against women constituted a violation of human rights.<sup>56</sup> The Declaration stated that

Gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation, including those resulting from cultural prejudice and international trafficking, are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person, and must be eliminated.<sup>57</sup>

Further, a Special Rapporteur on violence was appointed, and work was begun on an optional protocol to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW.

Gender-based violence continued to be a salient issue at the NGO Forum accompanying the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.<sup>58</sup> In Beijing, governments agreed to address violence against women as a critical area of concern in the Platform for Action.<sup>59</sup> Afterwards, activists continued to work for improvements in international agreements on violence against women and international organizations expanded their response to violence.<sup>60</sup> Most importantly, in 1999 an Optional Protocol to CEDAW, intended to give the Convention more powers of enforcement, was adopted. The Protocol permits complaints to be made on behalf of individuals who have exhausted remedies available in their countries. CEDAW reviews the complaint, and at the end of a consultative process renders a judgment. This may permit individuals to obtain redress for human rights violations that their governments are reluctant to address.<sup>61</sup>

How did a movement initially unable to cooperate on the issue of violence against women come to have such tremendous coordination and policy influence?<sup>62</sup> It was at Nairobi that activists were able to overcome division, agree on recommendations for action, and put violence against women on the international agenda for the first time.<sup>63</sup> What was different at Nairobi and afterwards? Below, I argue that the development of norms of inclusivity in the global movement on gender violence was critical for the movement's success.

### *The development of norms of inclusivity*

After the 1975 and 1980 World Conferences on women, activists recognized that their divisions had severely weakened them. Thus, women from both the North and the South resolved to make finding some common ground a priority. In addition, a broader shift in feminist organizational practice (partly inspired by critiques of women's movements by women of color and Third World women) moved towards explicit, formal efforts to ensure effective

representation of marginalized groups of women. These efforts at inclusive deliberation facilitated cooperation among activists. Specifically, activists sought to ensure that Southern women were present, especially among the leadership (descriptive representation), that Southern women had the opportunity to articulate an independent agenda (self-organization), and that activists worked to build an agenda all could support, while expecting disagreement about priorities (consensus with institutionalized dissent).

*Descriptive representation.* The Nairobi Forum was the first meeting in which Southern women constituted a majority. The Mexico City and Copenhagen NGO Fora were dominated by Western women. American women dominated the Mexico City Forum and European women were more than 70 percent of the attendees at Copenhagen. Even the independent Tribunal on Crimes Against Women in Brussels was organized and attended by women who were mostly from developed countries: The organizers were Northern women and more than 80 percent of the witnesses giving testimony were from the North (table A1).

Why this change? After Copenhagen, activists began taking explicit measures to ensure that women from Southern organizations were present in significant numbers at meetings to work out strategy and were part of the leadership of the movement against violence. At Rotterdam, for example, half of the countries represented were developing countries, although the forum was still lead by Northern women. This improved representation of women was the result of conscious efforts by the organizers: Participation was by invitation only, and the organizers specifically sought to achieve cultural diversity and regional balance.<sup>64</sup> By the Nairobi Forum two years later, 60 percent of the participants were Southern women, partly because of funding and other specific efforts to ensure such women had access. The Leadership Institutes organized by CWGL were explicitly aimed at helping to develop Southern women's leadership of the Global Campaign, and the participants at these meetings were predominantly Southern.<sup>65</sup>

The presence of Southern women in such large numbers among the attendees and as the leadership of the NGO Forum at Nairobi and during the Global Campaign in the early 1990s helped ensure that the perspectives of Northern women did not dominate the agenda. Symbolically, the numerical and leadership preponderance of Southerners avoided the appearance of Northerners telling Third World women what to do. Substantively, the presence of so many Southern women made it possible for Southern women to organize their own workshops and highlight issues they thought important.

*Autonomous self-organization.* During the 1980s, Southern women were organizing among themselves to address violence against women. At the Bogota *Encuentro* in 1981 and the 1984 preparatory meeting of African NGOs in

Tanzania, women from developing countries *themselves* emphasized the importance of violence against women in their own terms. In addition, the creation of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) gave women in developing countries an organizational mechanism to address violence against women on their own terms.<sup>66</sup> When issues of *sati* (the ritual burning of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre), dowry deaths, and female genital mutilation emerged from discussions among Southern women, they were framed as instances of violence against women on the same level as domestic violence or rape, not as exotic practices signifying the primitive nature of national cultures.<sup>67</sup>

The CWGL leadership institutes used Northern resources to bring Southern activists together to plot strategy for a global campaign on women's rights. In addition, the CWGL consulted the grassroots of the women's movement as to what issues should be discussed at Beijing. The strategies adopted built on ideas that originated in the South. For example, the sixteen days of activism against gender violence, launched in 1991 and observed by women's movements around the world to this day, began with November 25, a day first observed by Latin American feminists.

When women from every region of the world spoke of their own experiences of violence, as they did at the Tribunal organized by NGOs at Vienna, governments had a more difficult time denying that violence was a widespread problem. Northern governments could not maintain that violence was a problem only in so-called "less civilized" countries, and Southern and Eastern countries had greater difficulty arguing that concern with violence was an issue cooked up by ethnocentric Western feminists. When these issues were raised at regional preparatory meetings entirely comprised of Southern representatives, they could not be dismissed so easily.

*Building consensus with institutionalized dissent.* The Nairobi NGO meeting was distinguished from the earlier meetings in Mexico City and Copenhagen by a "new respect for diversity."<sup>68</sup> Indeed, "a critical mass of women had decided that they could be feminists and disagree on certain issues."<sup>69</sup> Many workshops expected no consensus but aimed primarily at articulating different views or sharing information. The Peace Tent expressed the approach to discussion that dominated the conference. Opposing groups were invited to debate issues publicly, but were also encouraged to work to find common ground. Cooperative efforts were not premised on the expectation of a shared experience or natural agreement among women, but rather on the idea that with some work, areas of agreement among women could be identified.<sup>70</sup>

These changed tactics were the result of changing norms within the women's movement. Indeed, the organizers of these meetings specifically refer to their efforts to ensure

descriptive representation for marginalized groups of women and they intentionally worked to facilitate self-organization by Southern women. These norms were manifest both in the stated intentions of organizers and in changes in their actual behavior.

These efforts at inclusivity bore considerable fruit. The NGO forum at Nairobi was described as an “equalizing experience.” One newspaper reported that “as everyone who attended all three non-governmental decade meetings seems to feel, only at Nairobi did Western women depart from their previously dominating approach to ‘sharing’ information and resources with Third World women.”<sup>71</sup> As a result of measures to give Southern women a stronger voice, issues that had previously been very divisive became unifying issues. When Northern women raised the issue of FGM at earlier meetings, for example, many Southern women criticized the move as imperialistic. But at Nairobi, African women *themselves* organized discussions of FGM and African women’s strategies to address the issue. After Nairobi, activists were able to include FGM under the rubric of violence against women with little dissent.<sup>72</sup>

Women’s ability to agree on important issues made it easier for them to coordinate their actions and exert pressure on governments to come to an agreement.<sup>73</sup> Because they were able to cooperate on issues such as violence, movement activists were better positioned to influence the 1985 intergovernmental conference. Women’s organizations pressed the U.S. representative to push for a more difficult but more inclusive decision-making procedure, agreement by consensus instead of the usual two-thirds rule (already a high standard). This forced both Northern and Southern governments to consider each other’s position more carefully, and work harder for consensus.<sup>74</sup>

### ***Political opportunities, institutions, and state support***

It seems clear that the broader political context (the end of the Cold War, the series of UN conferences, etc.) contributed to the success of the movement against gender violence.<sup>75</sup> The series of UN Conferences provided a focus and a forum for women organizing across national borders. Indeed, the movement against gender violence began to crystallize after the first UN Conference on Women in Mexico City. Changing political conditions provided a favorable context within which the movement on gender violence could mount its claims.

Although this favorable context provided opportunities for policy influence, the mere presence of the political opportunity was not sufficient to ensure that activists would overcome the differences that divided them. If it were, activists would have been able to agree on an approach to the governmental conferences that preceded Nairobi. Instead, division prevented activists from being more effective

at both the Mexico and Copenhagen conferences. It took a decade for activists to arrive at an approach to organizing across borders that allowed them to cooperate across the many lines of conflict inside the movement. So although these political opportunities probably encouraged mobilization, opportunity itself was not sufficient for overcoming division.

After Nairobi, antiviolence activists were able to take advantage of arising political opportunities, having successfully developed agreement on a particular set of strategies and policy goals. Support from governments and international organizations was critical in providing resources for the meetings that developed this unity. The Canadian government, for example, supported a meeting of experts that helped to develop the Inter-American Convention on Violence Against Women. The strong support of the U.S. government, especially after 1992, was important in bringing other governments on board on women’s rights issues more generally. In addition, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) underwrote much of the work of the CWGL leading up to the Vienna conference. The inclusion of women’s movement activists in government delegations at the Vienna conference was also important in the success both of NGO organizing and intergovernmental negotiations. This provision of resources and political support facilitated women’s international organizing and strengthened their efforts to influence policy decisions.

However, although such support was an enabling factor, it was not *sufficient* to produce cooperation and policy influence. If government support *were* sufficient to do so, policy influence would have emerged much earlier. The U.S. and Canadian governments had been officially introducing resolutions on violence at every meeting of the CSW between 1985 and 1990.<sup>76</sup> Women’s movement activists had been present on a number of government delegations at all the international meetings starting with the 1975 Mexico City Conference. But major policy successes in the area of violence against women did not materialize until 1993. The timing suggests that not until Nairobi did women learn to communicate across their differences, thus it was not until the late eighties and early nineties that women could develop the frameworks and strategies that they implemented with such success.

### ***Common interests***

Women had been discussing violence against women in its various forms in international meetings in the first half of the twentieth century, but a global movement on gender violence did not emerge until the late seventies, and policy action did not emerge until the mid-1990s. A mere confluence of interests, which would have been constant over this period, cannot on its own explain this variation over time. Initially, activists were unable to perceive a shared

agenda or common interest because other divisions appeared more salient; not until the late 1980s and early 1990s did women perceive a common interest in the area of violence against women.

Some might argue, nevertheless, that the continuing *underlying* common interest ultimately permitted cooperation when activists came to perceive their shared interest in the mid-to-late eighties. But the perception of a common interest emerged from, rather than preceded, discussions among activists of the North and South. Earlier efforts to frame violence against women as a common interest were unsuccessful. When activists sought to address the issue of violence against women at Copenhagen and Rotterdam, they were unable to overcome North-South divisions among women. Yet, after these meetings, norms of inclusivity helped to defuse these North-South conflicts. Because of these norms, more Southern women attended and held leadership positions in the activist discussions from the mid-1980s on. The broader framing of violence against women that informed activism on violence in the 1990s emerged from these discussions. Only when activists could meet in a less conflictual, more inclusive setting could they identify common areas of interest.

### *Collective identity*

How important was the development of an identity as “women” to the success of the international women’s movement? Certainly, a process of developing or constructing a sense of “we-ness” was an important part of the process of overcoming differences. Kathleen Barry’s opening comments at the Rotterdam conference stressed that violence against women must be addressed subject to subject, rather than subject to object.<sup>77</sup>

This change in orientation among key Northern activists understandably improved their ability to communicate with third world women. Still, this shift in orientation on the part of some Northern women was not sufficient, in itself, to overcome the divisions. At the Rotterdam conference, divisions between North and South continued to frustrate cooperation even though the subject (traffic in women) would seem to be one that all women have an interest in addressing. Moreover, although some participants were from developing countries, the conference was led by Northern women.

Not until women from developing countries were able to organize autonomously from women in the North, did a spirit of cooperation become possible. At Nairobi, women from the South led the conference, and raised violence against women as an issue of interest to women from *both* the North and the South. Third world women described the Nairobi meeting as the *first* time that Western women participated without dominating.<sup>78</sup> So although Northern women may have changed their view of global feminism at Rotterdam, not until Nairobi did

all parties feel that they were on equal footing. At Nairobi, the participants emphasized coordinating action in spite of fundamental differences: the search for a common identity or underlying experience was thoroughly abandoned. Activists also established norms of inclusivity that facilitated cooperation. This timing suggests that a commitment to inclusive procedures, rather than the emergence of a shared identity, contributed to success at Nairobi. A shared identity, approach, or experience may have emerged from cooperation, but was not necessary to produce it.<sup>79</sup>

### *Issue frames*

Framing violence against women as a human rights issue permitted activists to insert themselves into the political process surrounding UN Conferences and to demand that governments take notice of this important issue. But did this framing also facilitate cooperation among women? Keck and Sikkink argue that it did, altering the usual North-South dynamic by placing all societies equally under the human rights microscope.<sup>80</sup>

Although the human rights frame may partially account for the success of women’s movement advocates in the mid-nineties, the idea of women’s rights as human rights does not seem in practice to have acted as the basis for overcoming divisions among women. Northern women’s groups had pushed the notion of equality and human rights for women since the beginning of the movement, but because these rights tended to be viewed narrowly, as excluding social and economic rights, Southern women saw “rights-talk” as evading discussion of social and economic issues. Indeed, although in 1975 governments urged “women all over the world to unite to eliminate violations of human rights,” no such united front of women emerged for another decade.<sup>81</sup>

Until activists worked to transform the concept in the early 1990s, the human rights concept actually failed to capture most of the forms of violence against women with which activists were concerned.<sup>82</sup> Under this transformative work lay a broadened concept of “violence against women” that included a wide range of problems from poverty to female genital mutilation to rape. Although the idea of violence against women as including a continuum of violations from rape to mental harassment was discussed in transnational meetings from at least the mid-1970s, the conclusion that the continuum included violations of importance to Southern women (dowry deaths, female genital mutilation, state terrorism) emerged only from discussions among transnational activists in the mid-1980s. Before that time, many Northern activists tended to see these problems as representing particularly backward or primitive cultures rather than just another form of violence against women. Southern women argued for the latter framing.<sup>83</sup>

When work on violence against women was first attempted as work on particular issues, such as female genital mutilation, family violence, or *sati*, these separate campaigns had limited success and tended to draw support mainly from women in the North. In the mid-1980s, however, transnational activists began grouping diverse issues under the rubric of violence against women. This broader concept under-girded the later campaign to frame violence as a human rights issue. But the broader concept was the *result* of cooperation among women, rather than the *cause*.

### ***Norm violation: The example of the campaign for women's reproductive rights***

Similar norms of inclusivity emerged in various sites of women's organizing in the mid-1980s.<sup>84</sup> But while norms *affect* behavior, they do not *determine* it. Activists choose whether to adhere to such norms or violate them. Activists may also adhere to norms for a variety of reasons, including both the principled (for example, a commitment to justice) and the pragmatic (for example, a realization that adhering to norms advances other goals).<sup>85</sup> The transnational movement for women's reproductive rights, which did not so consistently adopt norms of inclusivity, suffered thereby. Initially, the elitist, policy-oriented wing of the movement simply tried to exclude those who disagreed with them, and they accordingly took no measures to ensure that Southern women were well represented in their deliberations. Yet these policy-oriented pragmatists were unable to unify the movement around a policy program. They eventually responded to criticism from Southern activists, organizing meetings that tried to be more inclusive. In Rio de Janeiro in 1993, women's health activists met with the goal of uniting women from the North and South: "Organizers seemed especially sensitive to ensuring diversity of participants and giving women from Southern countries an ample voice."<sup>86</sup> The effort was successful, with the Southern women reportedly taking the lead while Northern women kept a lower profile. At this five-day conference, activists drafted a twenty-one point statement in a process that was "remarkable for its democratic participation and for building solidarity among diversity."<sup>87</sup> The statement noted differences of opinion where they existed rather than trying to force a consensus. This conference "helped to produce cohesion in the movement" and produced a "sense of solidarity" that was "especially valuable for feminist lobbying efforts at the final meeting of the preparatory committee for the conference Prepcom."<sup>88</sup>

At Cairo, however, the pragmatists returned to the strategy of emphasizing their former elements of the agenda at the expense of the development-related points. It is for this reason that the final Plan of Action is silent on development-related issues. Divisions among women became increas-

ingly salient after the conference, probably weakening the movement.<sup>89</sup> Their "pragmatic" moves to accommodate government agendas produced short-term policy success but weakened the movement in the long term.<sup>90</sup>

This analysis suggests that when mobilizing groups are riven by relations of domination, inclusive procedures will facilitate cooperation. When activists choose to ignore such norms, trust and cooperation are undermined. When activists adhere to these norms, ensuring that marginalized groups have a voice, these measures help to overcome suspicion, build trust, and ease communication.<sup>91</sup> If inclusive procedures evolve into broader norms for decision-making, activists can turn their attention to developing a shared agenda and strategy rather than fighting for recognition from one another. Financial support from governments or international organizations can facilitate these efforts, but is not likely to produce cooperation on its own. Inclusive deliberations can produce, but do not require, shared identities or interests. Inclusive deliberations help to develop identities, interests, and issue frames that a broader, more unified constituency of activists can support, strengthening their movements and making them better able to influence policy.

## **Conclusion**

It is easy to forget that in the 1980s even mainstream human rights groups and international law did not consider rape, domestic violence, and other forms of violence against women to be violations of human rights unless they were perpetrated by the state. By the end of the 1990s, many of these human rights groups had made violence against women a priority area. More than 170 governments had signed a declaration against violence against women, and women in more than 20 countries won the right to seek redress for human rights violations in the international community (through the Optional Protocol to CEDAW).<sup>92</sup> In addition to formal legal rights, considerable governmental and intergovernmental resources have been dedicated to fighting violence against women in both developed and developing countries;<sup>93</sup> A UNIFEM initiative has funded anti-violence initiatives in more than 70 countries since 1997.<sup>94</sup>

A strong, united movement on gender violence had a major impact on bringing about these changes in civil society and policy. This global movement was able to maintain cooperation by developing inclusive procedures for intra-movement policy deliberations in which marginalized participants had a greater voice. This procedure produced policy decisions and political strategies that more members felt they could support. This put the movement in a position to lobby for and take advantage of the resources offered by governments and international institutions—all of which eventually contributed to the success in organizing and influencing policy.

Previous studies have suggested that strategic issue-framing and the political opportunity structure accounted for the success of the movement against gender violence. But the opportunity structure, while important, provides an incomplete account of the development of the movement. The successful framing of violence against women as a human rights issue, which did contribute to the movement's success in influencing policy, resulted from cooperation among women rather than caused it. The emergence of norms of inclusivity among activists plays a major causal role in this process, allowing bitterly divided activists to come together to forge an influential transnational movement. Those seeking to develop cooperation probably can further this goal by adopting more inclusive decision-making procedures without worrying that movement adherents share no common identity.

More generally, this study suggests that our understanding of these phenomena is improved by attending to the context of structural inequality in which social movements operate. In this case, attending to power dynamics illuminates a previously overlooked path to cooperation. Norms of inclusivity proved important by helping to mitigate the divisions arising from relations of domination, divisions that challenge, even paralyze, many contemporary social movements.

Social movements comprise critical avenues of policy influence for women and other marginalized groups.<sup>95</sup> When movements are weak and fragmented, those groups lose their most effective means of influencing the public policy process. When inclusive norms allow movements to maintain solidarity and policy influence, those movements can articulate and advocate better for marginalized and politically excluded interests.

**Table A1**  
**Norms of Inclusivity, Movement Actions, and Policy Outcomes 1970–1998**

Year and Event	Descriptive Representation of Southern Women		Self-Organization of Southern women	Structure of Deliberations: Consensus with Institutionalized Dissent	Movement Actions on VAW*	Governmental/ Intergovernmental Response to VAW
	Leadership	Participants				
1975 Mexico Tribune	(Planning committee) Northern	5,000–6,000, majority from US and Mexico No measures to ensure Southern presence	No separate organization of Southern women	Formal program addresses government agenda Consciousness raising (C-R) model for other discussions**	No specific actions.	A few individual governments (e.g., Australia) make statements on violence; VAW is not on intergovernmental agenda
1976 Brussels	Northern	2000 women; Mostly Northern; 13/108 (12%) of those giving testimony are Southern	No separate organization of Southern women.	Anarchic organizational form (after first day). C-R model.	Many sessions focused on gender violence	No governments in attendance Support from some governments
1980 Copenhagen Forum	Northern	8,000; 68% European	No separate organization of Southern women	C-R model (e.g., <i>Vivencia!</i> Space)	Sessions on sex slavery, traffic in women, and sex tourism Discussion of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and FGM	Ratification of CEDAW (includes no mention of violence); FGM on international agenda First explicit mention of "violence against women."
1981 Bogota Encuentro	Southern organizers.	More than 200; about 92% Southern.	Conference constitutes self-organization of Latin American women	Informal workshops Final plenary session hears reports from smaller sessions, adopts resolutions	VAW not on official agenda Resolution to end VAW, declare Day against VAW (Nov. 25)	—
1983 Meeting on Traffic in Women, Rotterdam	Organizers are Northern; int'l. advisory group provides input from third world women	54% Southern; Concrete efforts to develop regional balance	No separate self-organization of Southern women, some independent organization by region begins	Networking approach Invitation-only workshop aimed at developing "actionable knowledge," not agreement	Publication of report on female sexual slavery (1984) Plans to work at organizing groups at local and regional level and to review progress at Nairobi	—
1983 Lima Encuentro	—	—	<i>Encuentro</i> constitutes self-organization by Southern women	Formal workshop structure; facilitators and paper givers; one workshop on racism. Many spontaneous workshops; widespread dissatisfaction with structure	VAW subject of one of 19 workshops	—

(continued)

Table A1 Continued

Year and Event	Descriptive Representation of Southern Women		Self-Organization of Southern women	Structure of Deliberations: Consensus with Institutionalized Dissent	Movement Actions on VAW*	Governmental/ Intergovernmental Response to VAW
	Leadership	Participants				
1984 Prep for Nairobi	Southern	Regionally comprised	Independent, organizations, meetings of Southern women (DAWN, WILDAF, Arusha)	No information	Arusha statement on VAW	—
1985 Nairobi Forum	Southern organizers and convenors	Predominantly Southern (60% of 13,504 registrants) Concrete efforts (including funding) to ensure presence of Southern women at conference	DAWN workshops; African-organized workshops on FGM and other topics	Focus on action in context of dissent Peace Tent	VAW is the subject of nearly a third of the 100 NGO workshops Establishment of women's rights networks (IWRRAW; CLADEM; APWLD; WILDAF)	Inclusion of the issue of VAW as a priority in the final document solidly established VAW as an issue on the international agenda
1990 San Bernardo Encuentro	More than 5,000 women attended; organized by Southern women	More than 5,000 women attended	Encuentro constitutes Southern self-organization Organization of lesbian, working class, and women of color expands	C-R form overwhelmed by large, diverse group; chaos prevails Controversy in Ber tioga and Taxco over accessibility for poor, working class women	Founding of Latin American and Caribbean Network against Sexual and Domestic Violence 5,000 women march through Buenos Aires on final day (Nov. 25) to protest VAW	—
1991 1992 CWGL Leadership Institutes	CWGL Center staff with International Advisory Committee select participants	<b>First:</b> 23; 65% Southern <b>Second:</b> 20; 85% Southern <b>Both Institutes:</b> Outreach focuses on South; Center staff with International Advisory Committee select participants	Institutes aimed at facilitating and supporting self-organization of Southern women	Focus on developing strategies for action Private and public meetings Areas of agreement identified	Launching of 16 Days of Activism; Petition campaign. Planning for Vienna Discussion of VAW; broadening of idea of women's human rights	CSW convenes Expert Group Meeting on Violence Against Women in All Its Forms (Vienna) VAW raised in preparatory conferences in North and South (as part of strategy developed at leadership institutes)
1993 Vienna	Southern delegation to Geneva Prep. Comm. International Coordinating Committee (mostly Southern) selects 33 speakers for Tribunal	83% of testimonials are by Southern women Region, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and ability also represented.	Regional preparatory conferences in North and South and increased organization of African women (FEMNET; Akina Mama wa Afrika; La Nuestra, WILDAF)	NGO Forum works on producing one document Working groups focused on particular topics Women's caucus at Geneva and Vienna included women from North and South	Prior to conference, activists held global campaign activities all over the world Women presented a united front at Geneva At Vienna—Tribunal; Delivery of Petition; lobbying	UNIFEM sponsors Southern delegation to Geneva 1993 <i>Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women</i> Special Rapporteur on violence appointed Work is begun on an optional protocol to CEDAW.
1995 Beijing—NGO Forum at Huairou	—	25,000 to 30,000; 60% Southern Scholarships for poor and working class women wanting to attend	Regional tents and "diversity tents" NGO caucuses for regions, topics and groups of women (women of color, lesbians, youth, etc.)	Women's linkage caucus (umbrella caucus linking all the other groups) Brought documents from preparatory meetings originally derived from regional meetings	VAW identified as a critical area for concern 20 events per day on VAW Well-attended protests Global Tribunal Sixteen Days promoted Demand for Optional Protocol	Governments agreed to include VAW as a critical area of concern in the Platform for Action Optional Protocol to CEDAW was adopted in 1999

\*VAW is an abbreviation for Violence against Women.

\*\*Consciousness-raising (C-R) model refers to measures such as confidentiality, emphasis on testimonials of first-hand experiences of women, emphasis on spontaneity as opposed to a planned program or agenda.

Sources: Bunch and Reilly 1994; Barry, Bunch, and Castley 1984; Fraser 1987; Joachim 1999, 2003; Riddell-Dixon 2001; Russell and Van de Ven 1976; Sternbach et al. 1992; Thompson 2002; Tripp 2003, 2004.

Notes

- 1 Weldon 2002, chap. 3.
- 2 Gitlin 1995; Tarrow 1998; Snow and McAdam 2000; Echols 1989; Beckwith 2000.
- 3 The past five years in the United States have seen an erosion of women's reproductive rights, government response to violence against women, and

women's ability to combat poverty. Specifically, the current administration has presided over the closure of the Violence Against Women Office, the reinstatement of the Mexico City rule (also known as the Global Gag rule), the so-called Partial Birth Abortion ban, and the weakening of Title IX, to name just a few of the initiatives. Current proposals aim to

- increase work requirements on welfare recipients, tie social security benefits to gender and to eliminate some important government data gathering on women's employment. Some of these measures have significant international ramifications (e.g. the global gag rule); Center for Reproductive Rights 2003, Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI) 2004. In addition, a recent effort to get the U.S. government to ratify CEDAW failed. Poverty is also a current and growing concern for women around the world (United Nations 1995 and 2003).
- 4 Gitlin 1995.
  - 5 Rupp and Taylor 1999.
  - 6 Other examples include the transnational social movements against sweatshops and globalization. In addition, Davis 1998 cites the example of women of color in the United States working across differences to form a women's health alliance. Blofeld 2003 argues that women in Spain were able to overcome class equality to a greater degree than were women activists in Chile.
  - 7 Note that this comparison over time means that this study involves many observations (more than 25 years' worth) and so is not based on a single observation (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 221).
  - 8 Like most cases (Ragin and Becker 1992), the "case" of women's transnational organizing on violence is embedded in larger entities (transnational women's organizing, global civil society, women's organizing in general). Delineating boundaries can at times be tricky. When is an event part of the story of the movement against violence, part of the women's movement more generally, or part of the story of the development of global civil society? Although these boundaries are fuzzy, the networks of activists and key events that are important for the issue of violence against women can for the most part be distinguished from the activists and events that worked on other issues, such as reproductive rights or global labor justice. So while there is some overlap, we can discern a distinct grouping of events and activists related to this policy issue.
  - 9 Keck and Sikkink 1998; Joachim 1999; Joachim 2003. It should be noted that although the issue of overcoming division in the movement is dealt with in these accounts, it is not in itself the central question they address.
  - 10 Here I trace the process by which cooperation unfolds to see which theoretical account best captures the dynamics I see, using traditional case study techniques of "process-tracing" and "pattern matching." Process-tracing, or identifying causal chains of events, is particularly well-suited to "finding plausible hypotheses about causal mechanisms" (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 228, 226–27; see also Collier and Mahoney 1996, 73–74; George 1979; George and McKeown 1985; for further discussion of the "plausibility probe" function of case studies, see Eckstein, 1975; Peters 1998, 150). Pattern matching is a procedure whereby counterfactuals implied by rival theories are compared and contrasted with actually occurring events (Yin 1994 106–10; compare King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 78). Applying multiple theories to a single case is rarely sufficiently convincing in itself to result in the rejection of an accepted theory, but where it *can* provide evidence that a theoretical innovation offers a concrete payoff, it can offer powerful support for efforts to build new theories.
  - 11 In defining relations of domination, I follow Young (2000, 32): "Persons live within structures of domination if other persons or groups can determine without reciprocation the conditions of their actions."
  - 12 Habermas 1987; Young 2000.
  - 13 I follow Williams (1998) here in defining marginalized groups as those groups for which social and political inequality is structured along the lines of group membership, for which group membership is not experienced as voluntary or mutable, and for which negative meanings are assigned to group identity (p. 16).
  - 14 On the relationship between group inequality, mistrust, and deliberation, see Williams 1998 and Mansbridge 1999. On social movement fragmentation and decline see Gitlin 1995; Tarrow 1998; Taylor and Whittier 1999; Echols 1989; Snow and McAdam 2000.
  - 15 Young 2000 defines inclusion as "the degree to which those affected by [a decision] have been included in the decision making processes and have had the opportunity to influence the outcomes" and argues that "systems of representation are most inclusive . . . when they encourage the particular perspectives of relatively marginalized or disadvantaged social groups to receive specific expression." (5–6, 8). Also see Habermas 1987.
  - 16 Hoffman 2005, especially chap. 3.
  - 17 Elman 1996; Molyneux 1998; Weldon 2002.
  - 18 Fraser 1992; Fraser 1995; Young 2000.
  - 19 Fraser 1992, 123–24
  - 20 Williams 1998; Young 2000; Mansbridge 1999.
  - 21 Mansbridge 1980; Young 1990, 2002; Williams 1998.
  - 22 Young 2000, 44.
  - 23 Krasner 1983, 2; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 891. See also Klotz 1995.
  - 24 Clark 2001, 30.
  - 25 O'Brien et al. 2000, 40.

- 26 O'Brien et al. 2000, 40. In this paper I follow the convention of employing the term "North" or "Global North" to refer to advanced industrial states (especially those in Western Europe and North America), while "South" or "Global South" is used to refer to developing countries.
- 27 Butler 1990; Epstein and Straub 1995; Hooks 1981; Hooks 2000; Nicholson 1990; Spelman 1988.
- 28 Practically, the difference between actual interests and the perceptions or construction of interests may seem slight, since it is a group's understanding of these interests in a particular case that matters for explaining behavior. But theoretically, this issue is a critical one since it reflects the difference between a fundamentally materialist approach (material factors are the most fundamental) and a fundamentally idealist approach (ideas or norms are the most fundamental) to analyzing politics. This is a major theoretical debate that has been particularly salient in discussions of international politics. Constructivists have argued that interests must be understood as *constructed*, that is, as largely constituted by the norms and linguistic and cultural practices that comprise the social context. Wendt 1999. See also Risse-Kappen 1994.
- 29 Rupp and Taylor 1999.
- 30 Marx 1998; Rupp and Taylor 1999; Tarrow 1998.
- 31 Rupp and Taylor 1999, 365.
- 32 Tarrow 1998.
- 33 Keck and Sikkink 1998, 22.
- 34 For an excellent review and discussion of the literature on collective action frames, see Benford and Snow 2000.
- 35 Waltz 1979; Krasner, 1976; Morgenthau 1967.
- 36 Duerst-Lahti 1989.
- 37 MacAdam et al. 1996. External threats can change the salience of different issues or affiliations. Marx 1998 argues that the establishment of Jim Crow laws in the American south made race more salient there, and facilitated mobilization among African Americans although there were many differences among them. But such external events are not necessary to overcome these internal divisions, and may not be sufficient for doing so.
- 38 Kingdon 1984.
- 39 Many feminist scholars see the state or bureaucracy in general as inimical to feminist concerns. See Brown 1979; Brown 1992; Busch 1992; Daniels 1997; Ferguson 1984; Fraser 1989; MacKinnon 1989; Abramovitz 1988; Borchorst and Siim 1987; Elshain 1981; Stivers 1993; Walker 1990. For critiques of this view see Gordon 1990; Skocpol 1992; Brush 1994.
- 40 O'Brien et al. (2000) define a global social movement as "groups of people around the world working on the transworld plane pursuing far reaching social change" (13; see also 12–16).
- 41 Brownmiller 1975; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Weldon 2002. Discussions of sexual violence in the international women's movement date to early 1900s; indeed, rape in war and in peacetime was presented by feminist activists as one of the reasons women should organize internationally (Rupp and Taylor 1999, 378).
- 42 On the Mexico City meeting see Statement by Ms. Elizabeth Reid, Leader of the Australian Delegation (excerpts) *Women's International Network News* 1 (1) October 1975 p. 5. On the Brussels conference see Russell and Van de Ven 1976. In 1974, ISIS, an international feminist network focusing on violence against women, was formed (Fraser 1987). In 1975, Fran Hoskin presented an argument in *Women's International News (WIN)* that domestic violence was a pressing international issue. See also Joachim 1999.
- 43 Fraser 1987.
- 44 Fraser 1987.
- 45 Russell and Van de Ven 1976.
- 46 Keck and Sikkink 1998.
- 47 Sternbach et al. 1992.
- 48 Burnham 2001; Crenshaw 1994; Davis 1998; Hooks 1981; Hooks 2000.
- 49 See Burnham 2001 and Nguyen 2001. Early reports on transnational organizing by anti-violence activists use the term "double" oppression to refer to the situation of women in marginalized sub-groups (immigrant women, third world women, women of religious minority groups. See, for example, Russell and Van de Ven 1984 [1976], while later reports emphasize "intersectionality" and "diversity" in discussing the differences among women (CWGL 1991). This use of language drawn directly from feminist theories advanced by women of color suggests that key organizers like Charlotte Bunch were influenced by the work of women of color. It should be noted that concern about representativeness and divisions among women was not only occurring in Northern feminism. As Sternbach et al. report, Latin American feminists were also wrestling with divisions of class, race, and the like in their independent feminist organizing.
- 50 Keck and Sikkink 1998. Barry, Bunch, and Castley 1984 do not mention any serious conflicts between Northern and Southern women in their report on the conference, mentioning only that there was a straightforward discussion of the issues that have divided First and Third world women.
- 51 In the final document, governments are exhorted to pay special attention to abused women, among others (paragraph 41), and gender-specific violence is identified as a priority (United Nations 1985,

- paragraph 288). Specific measures to address violence are also recommended as actions to be taken in the area of social services (paragraph 231).
- 52 Joachim 1999; Keck and Sikkink 1998.
  - 53 Center for Women's Global Leadership 1991; Center for Women's Global Leadership 1992–93; Bunch and Reilly 1994; Joachim 1999; Keck and Sikkink 1998.
  - 54 Keck and Sikkink 1998; Joachim 1999; Cooper 1999; Friedman 1995. Prevailing human rights discourse restricted human rights work to violations by state agencies, and did not include actions by private individuals or actions taken in private. Also, there was the perception that violence against women occurred in isolated and discrete occurrences, and was not a phenomenon of sufficient significance, persistence and prevalence to require human rights work (Keck and Sikkink 1998).
  - 55 Friedman 1995; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Joachim 1999; Tinker 1999; Bunch and Reilly 1994.
  - 56 Although international conventions (such as the Geneva Convention) recognized wartime rape as a crime, these documents characterized rape as an attack against honor or dignity and not as torture or inhumane treatment causing great suffering or as causing serious injury to body or health (UN Agent 1998).
  - 57 The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from June 14–25, 1993.
  - 58 There were typically about 20 events each day focusing on violence against women, and protests against violence attracted hundreds of participants (Thompson 2002, 111).
  - 59 Cooper 1999; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Joachim 1999.
  - 60 In 1998 UNIFEM launched campaigns against gender violence in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia; UNDP claimed that it had allocated 20 percent of its resources for anti-violence campaigns; and the UN's Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee adopted a resolution designating November 25 as International Day for the Elimination of Violence (UNIFEM 1999; Fong 1999; Nzwili 1998; Xinhua News Agency). In 1999 UNIFEM held a global videoconference on violence against women, including domestic violence, rape, and female genital mutilation (Nzwili 1998; Deen 1999; UNIFEM 1999).
  - 61 United Nations 1999. The global movement against gender violence continues. In 1999, the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, organized a three-day conference on Sexual Exploitation in Bangladesh. The World March for Women 2000, involving 5,000 organizations in 157 countries, demanded that the UN and world governments focus on both poverty and violence (*Toronto Star*, October 7, 2000; *Ottawa Sun*, October 16, 2000).
  - 62 This is not to suggest that there are no longer any serious conflicts between women in the movement. Rather, the point is that cooperation and solidarity have been maintained in the face of such conflicts. Moreover, building solidarity is an on-going process that is never "finished" from the perspective of the larger movement.
  - 63 Keck and Sikkink 1998; Joachim 1999; Friedman 1995.
  - 64 Barry et al. 1984, 11.
  - 65 It is worth noting that this shift cannot be entirely attributed to changing alignments in the UN that produced greater representation of Southern women. First, activists made explicit efforts to ensure representativeness on more grounds than just the North-South division (including sexuality, sexual orientation, region, and so forth). This broader concern with representativeness reflects a more general trend in women's organizing that is evident in other contexts around the same time. Second, these changes were evident in meetings unconnected to the UN, such as the Rotterdam meeting in the early 1980s. Third, the timing and impact of changing alignments does not map well onto the patterns of changing representation for Southern women. The two big shifts in alignment that might have affected general norms about Southern representation were (1) the formation of the Group of 77 and efforts to organize developing countries into a voting bloc in 1973 lasting until 1988 or so and (2) the shift from a cold war (East-West) alignment to more of a North-South alignment in the early 1990s after the fall of the Berlin Wall. But as table A-1 suggests, the big change in women's representation began in the mid-1980s (leading up to and including Nairobi) and continued into the early 1990s (with the CWGL Leadership Institutes). This is too early for the end of the cold war to make a difference, and too late for the formation of the Group of 77 to have had a clear impact. (The impact of the Group of 77 was waning by the late 1980s.) See also Voeten 2000], who argues, based on analysis of voting patterns in the UN, that the shift away from east-west divisions did not actually occur.
  - 66 Tinker 1999.
  - 67 Ngara 1985; Kishwar and Vanita 1984; Narayan 1997.
  - 68 Fraser 1987, 210.
  - 69 Fraser 1987, 210.
  - 70 Fraser 1987, 210, 213–15.
  - 71 Chew 1985.
  - 72 Ngara 1985.

- 73 Chew 1985; Joachim 1999.
- 74 Sharma 1985a; Faul 1985, July 24; Gray 1985a. The United States made some important concessions in its opening speech as a signal that the administration was serious about building consensus. These concessions, especially the specific recognition of the Palestinian issue, may have been part of the reason that the Palestinian delegation agreed to the solution proposed by the Kenyan delegation, to substitute the wording regarding all forms of racism for wording that specifically singled out Zionism. It was also important that the host Kenyan delegation, a Southern country and one of the Group of 77, proposed the solution (Chew 1985).
- 75 Joachim 1999.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Kathleen Barry in Keck and Sikkink 1998.
- 78 Chew 1985; Ngara 1985.
- 79 Hooks (2000, 31) makes a similar point when she argues that one way of addressing the problems posed by women's differing definitions, experiences, and relationships to the concept of feminism is to avoid using the phrase "I am a feminist" and to say instead "I advocate feminism." Thanks to Anna Nelson for reminding me of this point.
- 80 Keck and Sikkink 1998.
- 81 United Nations 1975b, paragraph 28.
- 82 Bunch's influential article arguing that women's rights are human rights appeared in *Human Rights Quarterly* in 1990, and Carrillo's article arguing that Violence Against Women was an obstacle to development was published by UNIFEM in 1992.
- 83 See, for example, Kishwar and Vanita 1984 and Davis 1984.
- 84 Accounts of women's organizing in Canada, the United States, Australia, and Latin America note the emergence of organizations and caucuses devoted to particular sub-groups of women (such as women of color), concern with ensuring access and representation by these groups, as well as solidarity among women in spite of differences and inequalities among them (Burnham 2001; Combahee River Collective Statement 1977; Davis 1998; Weldon 2002; Matthews 1993; Minkoff 1997; Sternbach et al. 1992; Sawyer 1995).
- 85 Keck and Sikkink 1998 point out that it is possible for activists to be both principled and strategic. Adherence to norms need not be naïve or purely idealistic.
- 86 Higer 1999, 134.
- 87 Higer 1999, 134.
- 88 Ibid., 135.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Ibid., 139.
- 91 Hoffman 2005; Williams 1998.
- 92 Joachim 1999; for the text of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW see United Nations (1999), or see the extensive webpage provided by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) at the UN, which includes the text of the protocol and other helpful information (United Nations 2004).
- 93 Weldon 2002.
- 94 Heyzer 2003.
- 95 Rochon and Mazmanian 1993; Bystydzienski and Sekhon 1999; Costain and McFarland 1998; Dryzek 1990; Piven and Cloward 1993; Marx 1998; Weldon 2002.

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