In Defense of Institutionalization: A Rape Crisis Center as a Case Study

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Recommended Citation

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ABSTRACT

The prevailing wisdom of both the social science literature
and of social movement activists postulates that the institutional-
ization of social movements is a conservatizing tendency. "The
iron law of oligarchy," Robert Michels' concept, is invoked as the
rule of thumb for social movement transformation.

From my participant observation study of STOP, an urban
rape crisis center, I have drawn different conclusions. In that
case study, it appears that institutionalization undermines
oligarchy and conservatism, rather than contributing to them.

Employing Oberschall's resource mobilization theory of social
movement development, I suggest that institutionalization fosters
social change efforts at STOP by ensuring organizational stability
and resource availability. Second, I propose that institutional-
ization enables STOP to resist co-optation by providing its
participants with material, symbolic, and emotional rewards for
organizational loyalty. Finally, I conclude that at STOP institu-
tionalization has inhibited the formation of informal elites, or
what Jo Freeman has termed the "tyranny of structurelessness."

As the New Right waxes powerful, the women's movement,
among many others, faces direct and indirect threats to its very
existence. To survive economic, political, and cultural attack,
feminism, I suggest, must become a complex of institutions with
multiple and deep roots. That long-maligned organizational form,
the institution, will yet prove to be a source of stability,
integrity, and democracy for the women's movement.

The radical wing of the United States'women's movement,
since 1965, has generally focused on the negative dimensions of
institutions. For many socialist feminists and radical feminists,
institutions are suspect creations of an oppressive patriarchal
and capitalist society. The empowering and connective functions
are either overlooked or underestimated. As a consequence of this
selective perception, we have failed to explore the opportunities
for feminist expression, critique, and construction within existing
institutions. At the same time, we have, on the whole, failed to

make institutions of our own projects and networks.

Why have feminists responded in this way? One obvious reason is that women have held little formal power historically within the multiple institutions in which we have found ourselves. As a result, our experience of institutions is a skewed one. The barriers which institutions present have been much more apparent than the potentialities which they promise. Many women infer from their experience that most people, or at least most women, are disempowered by institutions. Species is confused with genus. Feminists misconstrue capitalist and patriarchal institutions as being representative of institutions as a whole.

Another part of the explanation for the women's movement's disregard for institutional possibilities has been its unwitting internalization of the individualism embedded in the American ethos. Protecting and enhancing the freedom and power of individuals has been the central concern of most feminist organizations since 1965, with some radical feminist and socialist feminist exceptions. Fears of collective tyranny and of the submergence of the individual within institutions direct feminist attention to the restrictive and inhibiting dimensions of institutionalization.

STOP, AN URBAN RAPE CRISIS CENTER

STOP is a fictitious name for an urban rape crisis center which I have worked with and observed over an eight-year period. During 1979 and 1980, I carried out a ten-month participant observation study of STOP. Employing a case study approach, I derived from this one example a set of observations concerning the impact of institutionalization on STOP, the anti-rape movement, and feminism in the United States. Like all case study conclusions, my speculations require the corroboration of many other examples before they can take on the authority of reliable generalizations.

Pioneer Period: 1972-1974

Organized in the fall of 1972, STOP was the first U.S. rape crisis center to provide services to rape victims "above ground" in a city hospital. Other anti-rape groups founded in the early years of this movement, from 1971-1973, chose to assist victims using underground strategies which did not involve reporting rape to the police or cooperating with the city hospital and district attorney's office, as STOP's approach did.

STOP mushroomed quickly in size and reputation. Partly due to the charismatic force of its founder and partly a circumstance of its historical moment, STOP attracted more than seventy regular

volunteers in its first year. Eight work committees were formed, each with a cluster of subcommittees. By early 1973, a steering committee of the eight committee heads was created. This met weekly in sessions open to all members. No votes were taken as the group was run by consensus. Few people other than the eight committee heads spoke up in policy debates in this early period.

By August, 1974, the original core of eight leaders was exhausted from the intensity of the demands of the first two years. En masse, the eight left active membership at that point, leaving a serious leadership vacuum in their wake. For seven months, STOP struggled to find their replacements.

Agency Years: 1975-1977

A new steering committee congealed by March, 1975. These volunteers secured STOP's first Law Enforcement Assistance Administration grant, with which they hired a director and five other full-time staff members. This director was a social worker with administrative experience in mainstream social service agencies. She quickly established systematic procedures for staff operations and lobbied successfully for the replacement of the collectivist steering committee with a more formally elected and representative board of directors. The next year, in the spring of 1976, a second Law Enforcement Assistance Administration grant enabled STOP to hire six additional staff people. At this time, more than one hundred volunteers worked regularly with the staff in providing a twenty-four-hour-a-day hotline, emergency room accompaniment for rape victims, courtroom accompaniment, advocacy, and public education.

The Anti-Agency Years: 1977-1978

After two years of highly organized and director-dominated administration, the staff mutinied and asked the director to resign. She did so.

She was replaced by a woman with diverse experiences with radical feminist groups and with a deep commitment to egalitarianism and direct democracy. Unfortunately, this director did not have the administrative, supervisory, diplomatic, and fiscal skills required by someone responsible for a staff of, by now, twelve people and coordinating interorganizational relationships with the police department, two hospitals, the city administration, the district attorney's office, state legislators, federal bureaucrats, several foundations, and a broad range of community and feminist groups. As a result, this director was forced to resign by the volunteers who constituted the elected board of directors.

The Charismatic Bureaucracy: 1978-1980

     Following a year of very problematic top leadership at STOP,
a director was hired who brought feminist and socialist principles,
administrative competence, and inspirational talent to the organi-
zation. Interviews with all twelve staff members and seventy-five
of the approximately one hundred active volunteers in 1979 revealed
a broad consensus that this new director stabilized, ordered, and
aroused STOP in the years between 1978 and 1980.

     Her administration, indeed, constituted a "charismatization
of routine" at STOP, the inverse of the organizational process
Weber first identified,(Gerth and Mills, 1946:253) the routinization
of charisma. She appears to have maintained and expanded STOP's
daily routines and systems while concomitantly bringing magnetism,
vision, and accessibility to the organization's leadership.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

     The term, "institutionalization," has long been a contemptible
concept to proponents of social change. The word is commonly
understood to be identical in meaning to co-optation, accommodation,
and conservatization. This is a confusion, I suggest, that is more
than a definitional error. It is an ideologic and strategic mistake,
with grave implications for the strength and stability of the women's
movement and organized Left in the United States. The institutional-
ization of a social movement organization should actually be considered
a necessity by advocates of basic transformation in America's economy,
political order, and social system.

     Drawing from Blumer's (1969:103) and Selznick's (1957:17)
ideas, I define institutionalization as the process of formalizing
a social movement organization's structure and leadership and of
solidifying participants' identification with the group. It is,
furthermore, the process by which a social movement organization
becomes a potent, visible, flexible, and durable body, a force to
be reckoned with by dominant institutions of social control and of
dissent.

     My concept of institutionalization differs significantly from
that of the dominant model of organizational theory, the Weber-Michels'
model (Gerth and Mills, 1946:23-25). This model postulates that
organizations, as they age, become routinized and change in three
basic ways. They demonstrate: goal transformation in the direction
of conservatization, a growing preoccupation with organizational
maintenance at the expense of initial goals, and an increasing
concentration of power in the hands of a few (oligarchization).
For Weber and Michels, organizational structures and goals inevitably

and linearly grow more conservative over time. Organizations become less confrontational and more accommodating toward the prevailing order.

Two of the three predictions of the Weber-Michels' paradigm do not apply to the subject of my ten-month case study. Goal transformation did not occur. The original goals - to abolish rape, to provide services to rape victims, to transform the institutional treatment of rape victims, and to empower women - remain central. STOP's current literature, its budget allocations, and staff assignments demonstrate the organization's allegiance to these goals.

Goal expansion, nonetheless,did take place. New social change goals have been added to the organization's 1972 conceptions of its purpose. For example, work with child sexual abuse has become a major new dimension of the organization. This involves STOP with intrafamilial relationships and child welfare systems,which work with rape did not.

Goals concerning organizational maintenance have also been added to original aims. Each year, for instance, the board of directors and staff attempt to recruit a certain number of new volunteers and to attract a certain level of private foundation support.

The third prediction, the Weber-Michels' prophecy concerning oligarchization, does apply to the STOP example, yet in a much more ambiguous fashion than their projection suggests. The organization has increased the degree of internal democracy during its history by formalizing procedures and processes of decision making and task allocation and by creating additional checks and balances on staff authority. For example, since 1978, the board of directors, made up of volunteers elected for staggered, limited terms, makes all budgetary decisions and reviews staff activities on a monthly basis. Prior to 1978, paid staff had much freer rein to spend money and decide on organizational priorities.

However, the significant expansion of the central staff figure's responsibilites and power since 1972 does pose an ongoing structural threat to the democratic processes of STOP. The crux of the organization's current decision making dilemma is the challenge of preventing oligarchical build-up without inhibiting effective staff leadership. This challenge, I believe, is an inherent and constant one in any social movement organization which commits itself to democratic principles.

Influenced by my observations at STOP and by Zald and Ash's perspective (1973:97-99) on social movement organizations' transformation, I question the Weber-Michels' assumption that institutionalization is, necessarily, a conservatizing process. At STOP, for example,

the twelve members of the staff are each responsible to a particular
work committee of elected volunteers, in addition to being accountable
to the board of directors. These work committees conduct a formal
evaluation of the quality and direction of its staff member quarterly.
Such an evaluation process spreads the power to shape organizational
priorities to many more volunteers than in the earlier periods of
STOP's history, when either a small steering committee (1972-1974)
or paid staff (1976-1977) made crucial policy decisions.

Furthermore, I wish to extend the argument that institutional-
ization is not necessarily conservatizing and suggest that institu-
tionalization is a process contributory to its resisting conservatism
and to its becoming a significant agent of fundamental social change,
provided that organizational leaders retain an egalitarian and
democratic ideology.

IN DEFENSE OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Why is institutionalization crucial for a social movement
organization working to effect radical change? Indeed, are not
radicalization and institutionalization oppositional tendencies?

I define radicalization as a process of democratizing decision
making and of equalizing opportunities, wealth, power, and status
within a society or an institution. Can an institution be an arena
for democratic and egalitarian developments? Or are institutions
inherently elitist and inequitable, as the conventional wisdom of
the anti-institutional countercultures of the 1960's suggested?

An institution is a phenomenon molded by its environment,
time period in history, and its participants. There is nothing
inherent to an institution that is democratic or undemocratic,
egalitarian or inegalitarian. Radicals, liberals, and conservatives
can each build, maintain, take over, and destroy institutions. In
short, I conceive of an institution as an historically specific and
malleable cluster of values, rules, traditions, and actors, the
dynamics and structure of which may range widely on the political
spectrum. Therefore, a radical institution is not a contradiction
in terms, but one possibility, contingent upon the designs, dreams,
and actions of its participants.

The question of whether institutionalization and radicalization
are antithetical stems in part from the blurring of a Weberian
distinction that Richard Sennett (1980:20-26) has recently re-inves-
tigated, the distinction between authority and authoritarianism.
The former is leadership which a ruler derives from negotiations
with followers. The latter is leadership which a ruler presumes
without consulting the wishes of the governed. All institutions
create internal authorities. All do not, however, create internal
authoritarianism.

For example, the four times in STOP's history (1975,1976, 1977, and 1979) when complaints about staff usurpation of volunteer power surfaced in the organizational newsletter or in committee proceedings, formal inquiries were conducted by a team of staff and volunteers. In three of the four cases, the staff person was fired and replaced with someone more committed to democratic control of the organization. In the fourth case, the staff person agreed to refrain from policy making on her own.

Having suggested that institutionalization and radicalization are not necessarily mutually exclusive, I will present my case for institutionalization as an important condition of organizational and societal radicalization. My argument has three parts. First, institutionalization fosters social change by buttressing organizational stability and resource availability for social movement organizations. Second, institutionalization enables STOP and feminism to resist co-optation by providing its participants with material, symbolic, and emotional rewards for organizational loyalty. Finally, institutionalization inhibits the formation of informal elites.

Organizational Stability and Resource Management

Bringing about basic change - in personality, in consciousness, in relationships, in culture, in society, and in the economy - is a cumulative and lengthy process. The inertial power of established habits, customs, and attitudes ensures that social change is activity extended over time, even though it often appears to be otherwise in climactic periods of transformation.

To be a significant contributor to basic change, therefore, an organization must sustain its vitality over time, through multiple battles with prevailing institutions and ideas. Organizational stability is a requirement for a social movement organization which wants to make a serious dent in its surroundings. And organizational stability hinges on the viability of an organization's leaders, structures, ideology, membership, and resources. Institutionalization is the process of creating stable and viable organizational patterns, patterns needed for mounting long-term campaigns.

STOP provides examples of the interconnections among institutionalization , organizational stability, and organizational efficacy. From 1972-1975, STOP volunteers met with local police and city officials to urge them to transfer preliminary rape hearings from police precincts to courtrooms. It required three years, many meetings, and continuity on the STOP committee which works with the police to succeed in this mission. Had STOP not had the organizational wherewithal to maintain a stable police committee during this period, the subsequent success in gaining permission for STOP workers to train all new police trainees to respond to rape victims would not have occurred.

An organization's ability to mobilize resources determines its stability and strength. Anthony Oberschall (1973:27-29) suggests that social conflict can be conceptualized as the clash between discontented groups and ruling groups, each side acting as a mobilizer of resources in pursuit of its groups' goals. The social control activities of ruling elites are the same processes, structurally speaking, of assembling and investing resources as those which social movements use to overthrow the ruling elites. Both sides compete for many of the same material and moral resources.

An organization's attempts to bring about structural change are attempts to pool and allocate resources which formerly belonged to the structure it is challenging. For example, press coverage is one type of resource which peripheral groups and establishment forces frequently battle over. STOP began to get sympathetic and visible press coverage in 1975, only after several years of nurturing contacts with newspaper, radio, and television reporters. An institutionalized social movement organization, one with established patterns of making decisions and dividing labor, is structurally suited for the job of mobilizing such resources as press coverage, money, commitment, skills, and vision. Had STOP not had the organizational capacity to assign the same two people to build relationships with press people over a three year period and to develop cogent and appealing literature packets, the struggle to secure sympathetic news coverage would have taken much longer or failed. Success in the ongoing war between elites and the alienated falls to that side which attracts and manages human and material assets more skillfully. Institutions, therefore, are needed to mobilize resources within social movements committed to moving beyond positions of dissent to positions of power.

Oberschall (1973:162) proposes a "risk/reward ratio" for estimating the likelihood of attracting and keeping participants in a social movement organization. When a participant benefits as much or more than he/she risks by taking part in the organization, it is probable that he/she will remain active. However, if the balance shifts, leaving the costs or dangers greater than the rewards, the participant will disappear from organizational life. In situations in which institutionalization results in the reduction of informal exchange, negotiation, and recognition between line participants and leaders, then organizational formalization threatens to undermine organizational morale by creating emotional, physical, and procedural distance between top and bottom levels of the group.

Yet, despite this risk, institutionalized organizations are more able to assure participants of consistent rewards to offset the risks they take as organizational advocates than are organizations without routinized patterns of leadership selection, task distribution, and policy making. STOP, with its reasonably stable funding base,

good relations with the press, and relative longevity, offers
its staff competitive salaries and community visibility. To its
volunteers, it provides the prestige of working with a widely
respected organization and the opportunity to learn diverse skills
such as grantwriting, crisis counseling, and legal research.

Resisting Co-optation

Institutionalization is popularly assumed to be co-optation,
the process by which social movement organizations and their leaders
become neutralized as opponents through acceptance of material and
symbolic bribes from the ruling elites (see Ash,1972:23). It is
my observation that, in the case studied, the inverse is true, that
in fact institutionalization appears to be an important means of
resisting co-optation.

Perhaps the most commonly used way of co-opting a social
movement organization is to make it financially dependent on the
prevailing order. Government and corporate grants, loans, and
contracts, and private sector donations are mechanisms for both
funding and controlling a fiscally rickety organization. Financial
independence, then, is of overriding importance in maintaining the
integrity of an organization. But how, particularly in economically
hard times, can a social movement organization which advocates
fundamental transformation of the social order secure financial
autonomy?

Multiple-source funding is a strategy for minimizing external
control of a social movement organization and for reducing the
probabilities of co-optation. An organization which cultivates many
contributors, none of whom is allowed to give, barter, or loan enough
to become a predominant influence in the organization, can avoid
the accommodation that accompanies monetary dependence.

STOP, in 1975, went through major organizational soul-searching
concerning the advisability and morality of accepting $75,000 of
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration funds. The volunteers
and staff voted at that point in time to take the money on the con-
dition that at least three other significant sources of funds be
obtained during the twelve subsequent months. A systematic search
for other funding resulted in the following income for fiscal 1976:

$78,000	Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
10,000	private foundation "A"
32,000	private foundation "B"
20,000	private foundation "C"
12,000	donations from individuals of $100 or less
5,000	sale of STOP literature
1,030	membership fees
2,500	speakers' fees
$160,530	TOTAL INCOME (STOP Annual Report, 1976:3)

The organization has continued this broad-based funding pattern from 1976 through 1982. In 1979, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration's funding ended. It was replaced by $50,000 of municipal money.

The task of creating and annually recreating funding from multiple sources is a highly demanding one. To appeal successfully and repeatedly to diverse contributors requires that an organization develop a noteworthy track record, promotional literature, reports, contract negotiations, grant applications, interorganizational alliances, press relations, and a staff (paid or volunteer) able to produce convinving oral and written justifications for its annual dunning campaign.

STOP mounts its annual fundraising campaign using many tools. It presents several years' worth of collected press clippings and sophisticated, computerized statistics which reflect in detail the amount of work accomplished by STOP and the number of women and children assisted by the organization. STOP produces an annual report, monthly newsletter, biannual report to donors, several brochures, and a large variety of specialized literature for victims and the public. Grant writing has become an integral part of the staff's and volunteer leadership's work. Much outreach is done with state, local, and federal officials; a state-wide anti-rape network of organizations; community organizations; and several professional organizations. Two staff people and six volunteers in 1976-1980 spent no less than half their organizational time on fund raising.

A sophisticated division of labor, administrative capacity, and committed membership enables an organization to produce all this work regularly. Within STOP, many parts of the organization are put into play in the annual search for money. The health and legal committees contribute statistics and anecdotal evidence of the scope and nature of STOP's services to rape victims and the city. The board of directors searches for large donors. Many members contribute small amounts of money. The press committee secures newspaper and radio coverage of the organization's financial imperatives. The two chief administrators write grants and negotiate contracts with city, state, and federal officials. And clerical staff produce and distribute grant applications, press releases, memos, and other communication necessary for the funding campaign. In other words, in order to accomplish the feat of sustaining financial autonomy through multi-based funding, STOP has to use all its institutional capacities.

Co-optation, of course, can be secured through other than financial means. Etzioni(1961:xvi,12) has postulated that there are three major sources of control in the social order: physical,

economic, and normative. Normative control is the power to
manipulate symbolic rewards such as acceptance, esteem, prestige,
and status.

A social movement organization, like all organizations, is
vulnerable to both material and symbolic co-optation. Its members
and leaders can be lured into accommodation to or even approval of
ruling elites by job offers and promotions; honorary positions, awards,
and degrees; memberships in prestigious clubs, boards, and societies;
favorable publicity; and inclusion in elite social circles.

STOP precludes such defection by employing a social movement
organization's best defense against this form of co-optation, the
creation of its own material and symbolic reward system. Materially,
STOP offers its staff salaries equivalent to those in mainstream
human service agencies. It provides members with marketable organiza-
tional and counseling skills. By now a well-known pillar of the
East Coast feminist community, STOP lends its participants significant
symbolic recognition at the local, regional, and sometimes national
level. Additionally, STOP provides its members with friendships,
intimacy, and community.

For an organization which develops a   community for itself,
with the shared relationships, history, and meanings that a community
entails, is an organization which can sustain the loyalty of its
members long after their initial excitement and interest fade. Within
such a community, an elaborate system of symbolic reward distribution
can be established. Awards, titled positions of responsibility,
and rituals of celebration publicize throughout the organization the
importance of an individual or group.

For example, STOP holds an annual awards banquet for members
and staff. It also highlights the work of individuals in feature
articles in the monthly newsletter. At every staff and volunteer
committee meeting, time is devoted to reports from anyone who is
doing work. Special attention is paid to participants' birthdays,
anniversaries, pregnancies, and graduations.

An institutionalized social movement organization, I suggest,
is better able than a less structured organization to create and
preserve community and symbolic cohesion among large numbers of people.
For institutions provide collectivities with temporal and spatial
continuity and regularity. They anchor a community, systematize its
everyday operations, and thereby free members' energies for spontaneous
and creative informal activity within the organization.

The "Tyranny of Structurelessness"

Oligarchy in women's movement organizations stems in part

from the failure of the organizations to create <u>formal</u> structures
for authority delegation and distribution (Freeman,1972:151-164).
Organizations which do not designate formal structures are ruled
necessarily by informal structures based on friendship networks.
For no group can remain structureless. Therefore, that group which
chooses not to authorize leaders and structure in an official manner
inevitably creates informal and covert leaders and structures.
And generally this informal leadership is drawn from friendship circles
which are exclusive.

        STOP, for example, despite its formalized procedures and rules,
exhibited some tendencies toward rule by friendship cliques. In one
instance, three volunteers on the board of directors who had taken
office at the same time became close friends. They ate together
before board meetings and drank together afterwards. After joining
two of these informal gatherings, it became clear to me that much
negotiating and policy formulation took place before and after
board meetings, without the knowledge of other, newer board members.

        Often, in social movement organizations, **oligarchical**
clusters of friends are created, whose qualifications for inclusion
in the group elite are not necessarily relevant to group purposes.
For example, a woman's sexual orientation or class background
might determine her acceptability as a friend, and consequently,
as a leader. If the group's ideology and mission demand the
participation of women of varied sexual preferences and classes,
the informal leadership that has emerged will be unrepresentative
and undemocratic. At one point in STOP's history, for example,
certain committees were composed of heterosexual women, primarily.
Others committees were predominantly lesbian. Women from both
sexual orientations complained to me in interviews of their inability
to gain respect and clout in groups in which they were sexual
minorities. They charged that though they were part of all offical
meetings and communication, they nonetheless missed out on
unofficial telephone networks, parties, and discussions.

        Three conservatizing consequences flow from this "tyranny"
of informality. The leadership of the group is not accountable
to the entire group. Elevated by a subgroup within the whole,
leaders need not be responsible to the total group. The director
of STOP in 1976, for example, relied on her popularity with several
volunteers on the board of directors to gain the leeway required to
hire her friend as a staff member without advertising the position
in the manner stipulated by STOP's hiring guidelines. The director,
in this instance, was accountable only to three women on the board
who supported this act.

        A second consequence of structural informality is that power
within an organization becomes inaccessible to people excluded from

the group's informal friendship networks. This oligarchization
supplants the democratization intended by feminist principles.
At STOP, most Black volunteers reported that they did not feel
comfortable socializing with white volunteers. As a result, they
missed many social occasions at which I observed volunteers and staff
discussing issues such as the hiring of new staff, volunteer elections,
policy directions for the medical team, and interorganizational
alliances.

Finally, the absence of formal structures and leadership,
the absence of institutionalization, prevents the development of
a rational, democratic, and egalitarian division of labor. Instead
of assigning tasks by group consent on the basis of an individual's
competence, interests, and dependability, an informal elite assigns
tasks by subgroup consent on the basis of friendship bonds. That,
at times, may prove to be a rational process. Qualified people who
are also friends may well receive assignments which match their
interests and abilities. It cannot be, however, a democratic or
egaliatarian allocation process when a few carry it out without
the explicit knowledge or formal consent of the larger group.

Reviewing eight years of STOP's history revealed only a few
instances of irrational or undemocratic task assignment. On one
such occasion, a volunteer head of a work committee gave a photographic
assignment to her close friend on the committee who had recently
joined STOP and was learning photography. The committee head had
overlooked, in the process, a volunteer of four years who was a
professional photographer. This volunteer resigned from STOP over
this slight.

                            QUALIFICATIONS

Ideology as Safeguard

The institutionalization of social movement organizations
is a necessary but insufficient condition of organizational and
societal radicalization. Without the presence of a democratic
and egalitarian ideology, institutionalization can become the
bureaucratic horror which Max Weber and Robert Michels predicted.
In other words, the routinization of organizational structure must
not be accompanied by the routinization of goals if an organization
is to escape the rule of the "iron law of oligarchy" and goal
displacement (Michels,1949:23-25).

How does radical ideology save a social movement organization
from a conservatized fate? Ideology is, according to Killian (1973:24-5),
a systematic scheme of values, principles, and visions. Radical
ideology emphasizes democracy and equality as central values around
which to create the present and future. Feminist versions of radical
ideology place particular stress on the importance of extending

democracy and equality into processes of everyday life and into
personal as well as occupational and public realms.

At STOP, commitment to abolishing racism within the organization
has led the group to establish a rule, since 1978, that no less
than one third of the staff positions and one third of elected
volunteer leadership posts must be held by Black members. This
policy, monitored by volunteers and staff members who sit on a
Task Force on Racism within STOP, has dramatically increased the
formal power of Blacks within the organization.

STOP's loyalty to democratic workings has encouraged it
to make all STOP's leaders, both paid and volunteer, accountable
to the entire membership. Every quarter, each staff person
is evaluated by both the volunteer board of directors and the
committee most relevant to her work. Annually, the board and
appropriate committee vote on whether to rehire each staff person
for the following year.

Volunteer leaders, on the board of directors and committees,
are each elected for annual terms by the overall membership. Formal
debates among candidates for volunteer leadership jobs are held
at election time. A recall provision is written into STOP's
constitution, which allows for the dismissal of both the paid
director and the volunteer president of the board.

Operationally, a relatively small number of staff and
volunteers - approximately 20 women out of an active membership of
100 - makes the central policy decisions for STOP. Is this
oligarchy? Or is it representative democracy? STOP, I suggest,
is a dialectical middle ground between the two. Oligarchical
and democratic imperatives press on it from each side. At times,
the paid staff shifts the organization away from the democratic
pole under the pressures of daily deadlines. This catalyzes
volunteer pressure to democratize STOP once again. Because of
STOP's institutionalized state, these shifts, tensions, and
struggles are primarily overt. They would likely be covert, and,
therefore, much more difficult to counterbalance in an organization
less formal in its accountability mechanisms.

Feminist ideologies in a social movement organization insist
on periodic reviews of the degree of democracy and equality present.
At STOP, as many volunteers and staff as possible go on an annual
retreat to explore such questions as: To what extent is leadership
shared and rotated? Do all participants in organizational life
have access to policy making considerations? Are skills transmitted
by "veterans" to "rookies?" Can women without professional or
political credentials earn positions of power within the organization?
Do people within the organization treat each other with respect?

How are minority individuals and subgroups regarded within the organization? Each committee, the board , and the staff present a written self-evaluation of progress made and backsliding noted in relation to the above questions.

Systematic evaluation or "self-criticism" of attitudes and behavior calls into question, embarrasses, and undermines oligarchical inclinations. For example, at the 1979 annual retreat, the health committee volunteers criticised harshly the staff person responsible to them. They presented to the whole membership multiple examples of her unwillingness to share information they needed from her to make policy recommendations and to evaluate her work. At first, she accused them of meddling with her work. She later resigned from the job.

What the presence of radical and feminist ideology serves to do in an organization is to require the frequent re-examination of structure, leadership, and the quality of organizational life in the light of original group and movement values and goals. Consciousness acts as the primary critic and conscience of institutionalized organizations.

Rule by Experts

Another persistent danger that accompanies institutionalization is the possibility that internal "experts" might capture and control organizational leadership. Since it is in the nature of institutions to create durable structures and leadership positions, the threat that an institutionalized organization will create a core of leaders who make careers of women's movement jobs and develop indispensable expertise is ever present. Rule by an oligarchy of homegrown experts has an impact on the democratization of an organization that is similar in its negativity to the consequences of rule by imported professionals, a tack which is consciously avoided and deeply feared by most feminist organizations.

Appointed and elected leaders at institutions like STOP develop control over knowledge of organizational workings, control which becomes difficult to monitor and penetrate. For example, at STOP the co-director oversees the organization's fund raising and budgeting processes. Over a period of five years, she has developed close relationships with federal, state, and local government officials who dispense public funds. She has also built multiple contacts with private foundation representatives. As a result, she embodies a resource that is indispensable.

It is clear that the contributions of both internal experts and imported professionals are significant to the success of many

contemporary feminist organizations. It is equally clear that rule by internal or external experts quickly rots the democratic and egalitarian fiber of radical and feminist organizations. The participation of experts is essential; their hegemony is anathema to feminist and radical principles. To fight the hegemony of experts at STOP, all appointed or elected leaders are required to be part of a "buddy system" of knowledge dissemination. For example, the co-director is required to take an elected volunteer with her to all meetings with public and private funding sources. She also must share the content of all important fund raising phone calls and written communication with her "buddy." Similarly, each staff member and volunteer leader is assigned a "buddy" by the board to share vital information and expertise with. The aim is to minimize everyone's indispensability.

The articulateness, accumulated knowledge and skills, status, and confidence of experts make it difficult for non-experts to challenge an emergent or established regime of experts. Nonetheless, that challenge is a sine qua non of the feminist ethos. So also is the self-monitoring that feminist leaders must do as they attempt to apply their knowledge and skills to organizational problems, while, simultaneously, keeping their distance from dominance. At STOP, since January, 1979, staff leaders have been meeting quarterly among themselves to examine the degree to which they honor the democratic and egalitarian articles of faith of feminism and of STOP. This staff group, according to five of its current members, has been useful in identifying power monopolization problems before they become hardened into irreversible patterns.

Alienation

The dangers which institutionalization poses include the alienation of line workers and volunteers. Harry Braverman (1974:39) identifies the separation of conceptualization from implementation in the performance of tasks as the underlying cause of alienation from work. In many institutions, and STOP is among them, labor is divided in a way that isolates thinking and planning from execution. For example, STOP's board and staff do little direct service with rape victims in the hospital, courts, or on the hotline. As organizational leaders do less and less of it, direct service begins to be perceived as the menial "dirty work" of the group (Hughes, 1971:313).

CONCLUSION

Institutions, as Berger and Berger have pointed out (Berger and Berger, 1975:10), both constrain individuals and simultaneously connect them to universes larger than themselves. Institutions specify and delimit the boundaries of acceptable behavior. They

also transform the ideas and energies of individuals into traditions, movements, and social networks. In short, institutions regulate individuals while creating a social framework within which their words and actions are grounded and transmitted.

Yet these institutions,which create a stable context within which to promote social change, bring with them the triple dangers of oligarchy, conservatism, and goal transformation. What benefits does institutionalization offer to offset these risks? Institutions mobilize resources. They can, by means of formalized planning processes, explicit leadership patterns, and a community of followers, attract and manage the human time, talent, and energy and the material necessities crucial for survival and growth.

Because of its institutional properties, STOP, now in its tenth year, has weathered repeated funding crises, mayoral and police harassment, and physical dislocation. Organizational stability has enabled STOP to become a visible and respected advocacy and educational force in a decade during which many grassroots organizations have disintegrated. STOP's ongoing impact on the media's handling of rape; on police, hospital, and legal procedures; and on public perceptions of violence against women and children hinges upon its durability and vitality in hard times.

Second, institutionalization replaces rule by informal cliques with rule by elected and formally appointed leaders. Formal leadership brings with it the potential of accountability, and, therefore, the potential of democracy. In contrast, informal rule precludes accountability and ensures tyranny.

Finally, an institution is a community bound by material, symbolic, and emotional ties. It is, as a consequence, an entity resistant to co-optation, because it offers its adherents rewards equal to or greater than those of the surrounding environment. An institution like STOP has, in short, the material and normative powers to command loyalty and to punish betrayal.

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