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" As conflict escalates, individual misgivings and ambivalences give way to a public culture of contention that spills over from context to context."

EMOTIONALITY AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM
A Case Study of a Community
Development Effort to Establish
a Shelter for Women in Ontario

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This article addresses the dynamics and consequences of emotionality in social movement activity through a case study of a community development effort to establish a shelter for women in a small Ontario community in the early 1990s. From the perspective of involved actors, the shelter-building initiative took on "a life of its own," producing outcomes that contravened their goals and values, as community workers and as feminists. These included two eventualities that shelter activists were particularly anxious to avoid—an "us-against-them" vilification of a male "opposition" and the stigmatization of abused women as a "problem population." Theoretical work on the interplay of social structures, cultural repertoires, and the emotionality of the self provides insight into how and why such seemingly "irrational" processes evolve.

This article addresses the dynamics and consequences of emotionality in social activism through a case study of a community development effort to establish a shelter for women in a southern Ontario municipality in the early 1990s, here called the Township. My aim is to account for outcomes that were contrary to the goals and values of participants on the Domestic Abuse Committee, the grassroots agency responsible for the shelter's development. These included an "us-against-them" vilification of males as "the opposition" during the transition from mobilization to implementation, which contradicted widely expressed determination to avoid a "male against female sort of thing in our community," and the stigmatization of abused women as a "problem population" during the first few months of the shelter's operation, which contravened the committee's core goal of empowering abused women.[1]

Three Domestic Abuse Committee participants commented on these developments several years after their involvement in the "shelter fray" (Mann 2000).[2] Kathryn, a community worker who was among those nominated to the initial shelter board, stated that the process of setting up the shelter facility got "terribly out of hand" and that it took on "a life of its own" as she and other committee members became "caught up in the emotionality of the issue" and "forgot" the values guiding their activism. Lisa, an abuse survivor who served on the initial shelter staff,

maintained that it was "power-hungry people that wanted to control and manipulate their place of power" who "ruined" the shelter and "turned it into a living hell." Charles, the coordinator of the multiagency facility that hosted the Domestic Abuse Committee, declined to offer an explanation but stated he regretted being "pulled" into the position of a "partisan" in a process that, in Kathryn's words, "seemed to tear our community apart, pitting groups against one another."[3]

From the perspectives of Kathryn, Lisa, Charles, and other Domestic Abuse Committee participants, the shelter initiative became mired in emotionality. It was emotionally held beliefs about what was right and necessary that led people to become involved in the shelter development process in the first place (see Oberschall 1993; Jasper 1997, 1998). During the course of action, however, emotions led them to forget about why they were involved. Negative emotions, and talk legitimizing these emotions, led them "to do things they normally would not do and [did] not 'really' want to do" (Jasper 1998, 421), things that violated the moral principles guiding their activism.

Recent scholarly efforts to incorporate theorizing on emotions into analyses of social movement processes shed light on these seemingly "irrational" processes—processes that transformed the goals, the strategies, and indeed the very culture of the Township shelter initiative.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF EMOTIONS
AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

The sociology of emotions is a body of work concerned with articulations among cultural ideals, social structures, and feelings (Hochschild 1990, 117), which has brought the embodied, flesh and blood "self" of social interaction back into the center of sociological analysis (McCaffrey and Keys 2000). This reflexive, identity-conscious, status-obsessed and volatile complex of overlapping and contradictory subjectivities displays a number of disquieting characteristics (Mead 1934; Goffman 1956, 1967, 1969; Kemper 1981, 1990; Cahill 1995; Scheff 1990, 1997; Scheff and Retzinger 1991; Lupton 1998). Among these is a culturally recognized or even a culturally legitimized vulnerability to "lapses of reflexivity" (Mills and Kleinman 1988), during which individuals and collectivities become, believe themselves to become, or allow themselves to become "swept away"

(Douglas 1977; Mills and Kleinman 1988) by anger and other "deviant emotions" (Hochschild 1979, 1983, 1990), including needs or, in Lisa's terminology, "hungers" for power and control (see also Douglas 1977; Barber 1983; Denzin 1984; Warner 1986; Thoits 1990).

A primary theoretical concern in the sociology of emotions is the role of culture or discourse in constituting and managing these emotional processes. Theorists characteristically address this issue from "strong" and "weak" constructionist standpoints (Franks 1987; Thoits 1989; Lupton 1998). In strong formulations, emotion is "irreducibly" sociocultural or cognition based (Armon-Jones 1986), scripting even "gut feelings" (Warner 1986; see also Jasper 1997, 1998), while in weak formulations emotion is a bodily reaction to external stimuli to which culture or cognition responds (Kemper 1981). Midway along this continuum is the social interactionist stance, first advanced by Hochschild (1979) and Shott (1979), that treats emotions as "paradoxically" (Hochschild 1990) both what we feel at the level of the sentient self, immediately and viscerally, and as the culturally and structurally situated work we do to define, elicit, manage, and manipulate our own and others' feelings. From this perspective, emotions are outcomes of cultures and the structural arrangements in which cultures are anchored, but so are cultures outcomes of emotions. Neither is sovereign (see also Denzin 1984; Swidler 1986, 1995; Mills and Kleinman 1988; Thoits 1990; Scheff 1990, 1997; Oberschall 1993; Lupton 1998).

Social movement theorists who have been working to integrate the "rediscovery of emotions" into social movement discourse have tended to opt for a strong reading of the emotion/culture matrix (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2000). This preference, a carryover from the rational choice tradition that has dominated social movement theory since the late 1960s, is marked by an overprioritization of cognitive dimensions of social action. In Jasper's (1997, 1998) exceptionally strong "cultural constructionist" account, for example, emotion is reduced to a "subcomponent" of culture, itself defined in highly cognitive terms— as "mental worlds of users and their physical embodiments" (Jasper 1997, 12). From this perspective, emotions or "passions" rarely, if ever, operate as independent or even as semi-independent sources of action. Rather, in the course of action people "actively and collectively reframe and re-think their beliefs and passions," simultaneously (Jasper 1998, 421). It is through this culturally constituted process that emotion influences action.

This "overextended," as Jasper (1997, 30) himself described it, conceptualization of culture and its relationship to emotion hold "the specter of irrationality" at bay, something contemporary social movement theorists are generally keen to do (see, for example, Oberschall 1978, 1993; Benford 1997; Jasper 1997, 1998; Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2000; McCaffrey and Keys 2000). It leaves scant room, however, as Benford (1997) observed, for analyses of the dynamics of conflict, and especially the interplay of rationality and irrationality in these dynamics.

Oberschall (1978, 1979, 1993), Swidler (1986, 1995), and Benford (1997) are among those who drew on a weaker reading of the culture/emotion matrix, allowing more space for structural and emotional determinates of action. Swidler and Benford each urged social movement theorists to recognize that culture is an ongoing production, as opposed to a "thing" or force, shaped by the emotionally mediated activities of human subjects. In Swidler's (1986, 273) formulation, this production operates as a "tool kit" or repertoire of contradictory stories and worldviews, "which people use in varying configurations to solve problems," including problems of social standing, social power, and social influence. She insisted that this tool kit does not reside in the confused and ambivalent beliefs and motives of individuals, as Jasper (1997, 1998) and Oberschall (1993), among others, implied. Rather, the cultures of groups, organizations, and movements are produced in the structurally situated and publicly accessible face-to-face contexts of collective social life: in the workshops, staff meetings, committee meetings, board meetings, classrooms, hallways, luncheon dates, retreats, public hearings, media presentations, and related sites in which and through which emergent, hazardous, and fragile deployments of power, resistance, and conciliation are produced, displayed, and legitimized (Swidler 1995, 39; see also Oberschall 1993; Taylor and Whittier 1995; Snow and Benford 1992; Benford 1997).

Swidler (1986, 1995) argued that during "unsettled times," when social statuses and organizational roles are most dramatically "in flux," ideologies or discourses can seem to take on a power of their own; they can seem to drive action.[4] She insisted, however, that it is not cultural resources that structure ideological debate but rather the emotional tone of interaction, "conflict itself, the need to separate allies from foes and the need to turn general predispositions into specific decisions" (Swidler 1995, 35). According to Swidler, cultures crystallize in and

through these conflictually constituted and structurally situated inter-active processes.

Oberschall (1993) conceived of culture in less fluid terms, as rela-tively stable designs for social organization and conduct "encoded in the human brain and its extensions" (p. 201). He reminded us that these designs render life meaningful and that they are consequently "worth fighting for" (see Jasper 1997 for a near identical argument). Oberschall's primary concern, however, is with conflict itself, specifi-cally with processes of escalation, conciliation, and vilification and their effects on contending groups and society at large. Drawing on an integrated rational choice/social psychological perspective, he explored the interplay of feelings of resentment, manipulation, and dis-trust engendered by perceived threats to culture and the self; the struc-tural inequalities that anchor cultures and identities; and the emergent "concurrence-seeking" properties of groups (Oberschall 1978, 1979, 1993; see also Mansbridge 1973; Mills and Kleinman 1988; Swidler 1995).

It is this emergent concurrence-seeking property of groups that is particularly important in protracted conflict, a condition in which pro-cesses of mutual vilification take root and escalate (Oberschall 1978, 1979, 1993; see also Goffman 1969). During the reciprocal spirals of insult, shame, and anger that typically fuel such developments (Scheff 1990, 1997), moral, emotional, and cognitive judgments deteriorate; a phenomenon that Oberschall called "group think" sets in; and the boundary between rational and irrational action blurs (see also Janis 1972). This does not mean that group members start thinking identi-cally or that people stop making conscious choices, though as Mansbridge (1986) noted, choices may seem less than carefully thought out. Rather, the moral, cognitive, and emotional perceptions surrounding choices become increasingly distorted. Individual differ-ences and misgivings give way to a collective sense (or at least a public sense, as Swidler asserted) of what an increasingly dehumanized enemy is trying to do and of what must be done in return.[5]

For both Oberschall and Swidler, conflict is rooted in the emotional-ity of the self and the structural and organizational contexts that frame and constrain the activities of interacting selves. In contrast to theorists who treat mutual vilifications and related processes as culturally scripted, by emotion discourses, for instance (see review by Hercus 1999), or as entirely or almost entirely intentional or rational, which is

to say strategic (see Marx 1979; Zald and Useem 1987; Vanderford 1989), they remind us of a point made by Goffman (1969) more than three decades ago: strategic interaction entails unwitting and naive moves that even the most sophisticated actors engage in. These moves have the potential to initiate cascades of distrust, suspiciousness, and anger that can alter, in some instances irrevocably, the rules of social engagement, transforming collaborative endeavors into zero-sum struggles between progressively vilified adversaries (see also Mansbridge 1973, 1986; Kemper 1981, 1990; Scheff 1990, 1997; Scheff and Retzinger 1991; Freidkin 1999).

RESEARCH METHOD

The account of the shelter-building initiative that follows is based on data that I gathered during two years of ethnographic research (roughly January 1991 through January 1993) into the problem of *domestic abuse* and collective efforts to intervene into this problem in a small-town southern Ontario community that I call the Township. The data were collected through a triangulation of research strategies, namely (1) participant observation in Domestic Abuse Committee meetings, workshops, fund-raising activities, and social events; (2) face-to-face interviews with individuals involved in these shelter-building activities as community workers, professionals, and interested residents; (3) a small-scale telephone survey of 132 randomly contacted women and men, designed to assess abuse-related experiences and attitudes in the community at large; and (4) content analysis of agency literature, promotional material, and media reports.

In all research contexts, formal and informal, I identified myself as a University of Toronto doctoral student conducting a study on domestic violence or woman abuse and collective efforts to address this problem in the Township. As required by the Human Subjects Review Committee of the University of Toronto, I requested and received permission to take notes or to make audiotapes in all formal research contexts, including the Domestic Abuse Committee's meetings and workshops. In informal discussions, captured in field notes, and in 46 face-to-face audiotaped interviews, I encouraged participating women and men to take the lead in a "creative" dialogue (Douglas 1985) on the nature and causes of abuse and the challenges of developing and implementing

interventions. While I characteristically identified myself both as a researcher and as a feminist, I emphasized that I was interested in the opinions and perspectives of people across the community, those involved in Domestic Abuse Committee activities and those not involved, whether female or male, feminist or nonfeminist.

People in the Township were remarkably receptive to research and highly supportive of the shelter effort. None of the individuals who participated in formal interviews during the spring and summer of 1991 appeared to anticipate how very polarized the shelter effort would become. As events unfolded, many expressed dismay at what was happening and hope that my study might help elucidate how and why things evolved as they did.[6]

THE TOWNSHIP SHELTER
PROJECT—VISIONS AND STRUCTURES

The Township shelter project first came to my attention in November 1990 via a radio interview with Township Resource Centre coordinator Charles, abuse survivor Lisa, and Lisa's husband Bob, a recovering perpetrator who participated in counseling through a Resource Centre–affiliated abuse intervention program. These three individuals described their personal and collective struggles to confront the problem of abuse in their families, in their housing cooperative, and in the Township. They and Kathryn, another housing co-op resident, introduced me to their friends and colleagues at the Resource Centre. Kathryn, one of several community workers who were direct employees of the center, introduced me to the Domestic Abuse Committee, a grassroots initiative born of the center's outreach activity.[7]

Through the spring and summer of 1991, Domestic Abuse Committee participants enthusiastically shared their visions of what the Township shelter would or should be, an "empowering," "community-inclusive" response to the problem of *domestic abuse*, a term used by the committee to refer to an empirically interrelated set of phenomena—woman abuse or spousal violence, child abuse, and, more contentiously, alcoholism and drug abuse. The committee's "plan," as Kathryn and other participants described it, was to avoid "radicalism," defined as an intolerant, separatist antimale stance; "victim blaming"; and other "pitfalls"

of shelter activism through a judicious application of community development principles.

This community development master frame (Snow and Benford 1992) was enshrined in the Resource Centre's mission statement and reiterated in committee meetings, community workshops, and outreach activities. Its spirit is captured in the dual assertion that, in Charles's words, "people are the owners of their own experience," and "community problems can only be solved through community ownership." As outlined in the Resource Centre literature that he coauthored, it was the job of the center's staff and affiliated professionals to share their expertise and knowledge, to facilitate the establishment of programs that met the needs of the community as residents themselves defined them. And it was the job of the coordinator and a volunteer board of directors to oversee, but not to direct, this process.

Community worker Janet served as interim coordinator while Charles was on leave through the summer of 1991.[8] As she explained, community development entails "educating the community" through "needs studies" and other outreach activities aimed at "raising awareness" of the gendered nature of abuse, for instance, but it also entails respecting "the sensibilities of the community." Practically, this meant naming the problem of male-perpetrated abuse of women *domestic abuse*, not woman abuse, as she and other "profeminists" on the Domestic Abuse Committee would have preferred, and it meant including men as well as women in shelter-building activities and, eventually, on the new shelter board. As Janet stated, and Canadian and American researchers concur (see Schechter 1982; Beaudry 1985; MacLeod 1987; Wharton 1987, 1989), to be accepted "in a small and more rural community," you "have to" include men.[9]

> Especially in a small and more rural community, it's important to realize where women are really at. And that they aren't at, you know, men are horrible, and they basically want their relationship. . . . It's not the same as an urban environment. You have to talk about it as a family issue. It's not just a woman's issue. . . . And personally, I mean I consider myself a fairly strong feminist but I think it's a matter of pragmatics. . . . In a small community I think that for a number of reasons you have to, for instance, have men on shelter boards. You know, you have to be accepted by the community. (Janet, acting Resource Centre coordinator, July 1991)

Julia, an abuse survivor who, like Lisa, was to serve on the initial shelter staff, was less defensive. As she saw it, "you have to include men" if you want to "avoid an us-against-them sort of thing," implying men are "a bunch of monsters."

> If you exclude men you are telling them you think they are all a bunch of monsters. And you can't do that. We wanted to include men because we didn't want to have an us-against-them sort of thing. . . . You can't handle hate with hate. (Julia, abuse survivor and future shelter staff member, July 1991)

The Domestic Abuse Committee's informal or "loose" membership structure (Oberschall 1979, 1993) reflected these community development ideals. To count as a committee member, a resident needed only to attend two consecutive meetings and pay a twenty-five-cent membership fee, and everyone, member or not, was welcome to attend meetings and participate in committee outreach and fund-raising activities. In practice, many more people were "listed" as committee members than were active. Among those listed but not typically present at meetings were several abuse survivors whom I interviewed, Lisa and Julia among them. Also listed but not typically present were the police inspector, the mayor, and several businesspeople, some of whom I interviewed. Regardless of whether a resident was able to attend any or all of the regularly scheduled Thursday morning meetings, and many, Charles for example, could not because of work or family responsibilities, she or he was "always welcome," as Kathryn stated in a May 1991 outreach initiative that she and Charles cofacilitated, "to take the risk and get involved."[10]

As is common in voluntary organizations that attempt to implement ideals of participatory democracy (Mansbridge 1973), committee members were officially equal—no one was leader or chair. Out of necessity and choice, however, the twenty or so individuals who regularly attended Thursday morning meetings assumed a leadership role by serving on and informally directing, for instance, the work of outreach, fund-raising, publicity, and shelter site subcommittees. With the exception of accountant Paul, the only male to be nominated to the shelter board, participants on these subcommittees tended to be both female and feminist, or at least profeminist, which is to say most sought to incorporate feminist influences into their professional and political

activities (Dobash and Dobash 1992). Most had established or developing careers as professionals, in community development, social work, counseling, health, journalism, law, corrections, and the like. Most, moreover, were relative "newcomers" to the Township. That is, committee regulars, Kathryn and Janet among them, tended to be among the approximate one-third of Township residents who had moved into the area over the previous five to ten years.

THE SHELTER SITE CONTROVERSY

When I began attending Thursday morning meetings in June 1991, I immediately discovered that two local businessmen who were among the listed but, in practice, inactive committee members had made a "move" (Goffman 1967, 1969) for significant involvement that committee regulars were in the midst of resisting, igniting conflict that was to fracture the committee. As has been the case in other communities working to address social issues through broad-based coalitions, conflict erupted over a detail that no one anticipated would be problematic but that took on symbolic significance (see Arnold 1995; Whittier 1995): the detail of where to locate the shelter facility. The "real" issues, as several committee regulars acknowledged, were who would make this decision and who would receive recognition (Oberschall 1979, 1993). These underlying concerns initiated chains of Scheff's (1990, 1997) triple spiral of insult, shame, and anger, followed in predictable fashion by counterinsult, righteous indignation, and a series of attempted, and failed, degradation ceremonials (Garfinkel 1956; Clark 1990; Scheff 1990, 1997; Scheff and Retzinger 1991).

As reported by numerous participants who were present at the set of meetings that initiated these spirals, the two "old boys" or "big men," as committee regulars called them, "stepped in" with a "gift" of a shelter site donation, which they offered on behalf of a local land developer who was not a formal committee member. The two men presented this offer just as the site selection subcommittee was finalizing its plan to purchase a large Victorian lakeside cottage in one of the Township's outlying villages. In the view of Kathryn and other committee regulars, the subcommittee's "place of peace and beauty" was ideal; it would help promote feminist goals of healing and empowerment "in and of itself." In contrast, the men's proposed site donation was a vacant

cornfield across from a shopping mall, which included a beer store among its retail shops. This cornfield was a ten-to-fifteen-minute walk from the Resource Centre, which provided counseling, housing, child care, and legal-aid services. It was also within walking distance of a new subdivision where two of five highly publicized domestic homicides occurred, and was adjacent to a subsidized housing development that had a reputation for high rates of domestic abuse.[11]

As Janet, Kathryn, and others described it, the committee at large rejected the men's proposal, in the words of social worker Denise, "pretty much on the spot." This rejection was accompanied by three key objections. One, the site was "inherently stigmatizing" due to its proximity to the subsidized housing development, which committee regulars argued implied abuse is a problem only, or primarily, of poor people. Two, abusive men could, and committee regulars maintained therefore would, stalk shelter residents from the beer store parking lot. And last, consideration of this site would slow the shelter process since town council approval was required to rezone the property and extend water, sewage, and electrical services.

The two men responded to these objections at the meeting and in subsequent lobbying. They pointed out that none of the five domestic homicides occurred in the subsidized housing development, proving *domestic abuse* is not simply a poverty issue. They reminded the committee that the police inspector was a strong supporter of the shelter, who could be depended on to enforce restraining orders. They informed the committee that several town council members had assured them in advance that the council would do everything in its power to expedite the rezonings. Finally, they argued that the proximity of the Resource Centre with its many services would be beneficial to abused women. Committee regulars held fast, however, to their "gut" feeling (as Kathryn phrased it) that consideration of the site donation would be a mistake and that, in fact, this "gift" was no less than "a takeover bid."

From a sociology of emotions perspective, and apparently as viewed by the men, the committee's rejection of the shelter site donation was as much about "face" as it was about where to locate the shelter (Goffman 1956, 1967, 1969). Regardless of whether committee regulars intended to insult them, the "old boys" took offense, as they made clear in an official letter of resignation that they copied to the Resource Centre board. This letter, which was entered into the public record of the committee

and Resource Centre, ended with the provocative question, "Is this the way the Domestic Abuse Committee treats a volunteer?" When this letter was read at a Thursday morning meeting, two weeks prior to the first one I attended, committee regulars reportedly commented that the "gift" seemed "less than disinterested." Rumor of this "insult" resulted in a second letter, also copied to the Resource Centre board, in which the two men threatened to sue for slander unless the committee issued a public apology.[12]

As was also apparently the case of the decision to reject the land developer's site donation, the possibility of honoring the men's demand for an apology was never seriously discussed. Rather, as Mansbridge (1986) suggested is common, committee regulars simply assumed they were in agreement that the committee had nothing to apologize for (though in interviews several people expressed misgivings). Regardless, the de facto decision to *not* apologize operated as a "choice shift" (Freidkin 1999) away from collaboration that was at least as salient as the rejection of the site donation itself. From that point forward, it became increasingly obvious to both sides that a battle was taking place (Zald and Useem 1987). Aspects of Oberschall's "groupthink" began setting in, and with this a "deterioration of moral judgments," "over optimism about possibilities of winning" (or conversely dread of losing), and "sloganistic thinking" about an enemy—processes that Oberschall (1978, 293-94) and others reported are characteristic of mutual vilifications across social movement contexts (see also Janis 1972; Marx 1979; Mansbridge 1986; Vanderford 1989; Steuter 1992; Oberschall 1993; McCaffrey and Keys 2000).

COLLABORATION AND INCIVILITY

Janet, Kathryn, and other committee regulars participated in a profeminist "political generation" (Whittier 1995, 180-81) that views radical rhetoric and community polarization as counterproductive. As community workers, and as feminists, they recognized the importance of collaborating with people from across the community, including those whose views and interests differed from their own, so long as they shared in the goal of alleviating or ending violence against women and children (see Schechter 1982; Wharton 1987; Dobash and Dobash

1992; Arnold 1995; Staggenborg 1998). As Goffman (1969) observed, collaborative efforts such as this are impeded if either party engages in perceived or intended "moves" that convey contempt either for the other's analysis of the problem or for the other's motives. Such moves lead to "counter control moves" and a "degeneration of expression and assessment" (pp. 58-62) that undermine, and ultimately destroy, the tenuous trust necessary for collaborative action (see also Goffman 1967; Oberschall 1978, 1979, 1993; Barber 1983; Caringella-MacDonald and Humphries 1991; Arnold 1995).

A March 1991 newspaper article demonstrated that a degeneration of expression and assessment between committee regulars and the local male establishment was underway prior to the emergence of the shelter site controversy. This article contrasted various residents' perspectives on the causes of the "dangerously high rates of domestic violence" that lay behind the recent spate of domestic homicides. Several women identified as Domestic Abuse Committee participants presented their views. Susan, a nurse, attributed the problem to "antiquated sexist attitudes," as did future shelter board member, MPP (Member of Provincial Parliament) assistant Louise, who described these attitudes as "there from the municipal politicians on down." Another future board member, attorney Harriet, stated, "Violence of one kind or the other is part of almost everything that comes through my family law practice. . . . It's like going back in time, like to the 1950s." Community worker Janet reinforced these views in her concluding statement, "It's a matter of education." In contrast, males identified as businessmen and town council members attributed the Township's "questionably high rates of abuse" to a "variety of social factors." One supporter of the soon-to-emerge opposition blamed the problem on "newcomers" who "over the past few years brought a lot of problems with them." Another alluded to "people on welfare."

Janet was among those who subsequently expressed concern that the interviewed men were reducing abuse to a poverty issue, while other committee regulars, Resource Centre board member Frances, for instance, maintained it was inappropriate to target either established residents or newcomers (July 1991 interviews). In fact, opinions on the causes of abuse appeared to differ as much among committee regulars as between the committee and the "old boys." Regardless, in the news article, representatives of these emergent camps voiced polarized

opinions, each targeting the other. This uncivil display helped crystallize distrust, resentment, and antagonism between female shelter activists, who as feminists, professionals, and newcomers insisted on their right to assume a leading role in community affairs, and established male community leaders, who expected the deference, which is to say the respect, recognition, and appreciation, to which they were accustomed (see Kemper 1990, 236).

Neither in the "naïve moves" (Goffman 1969) captured in the news article (neither side could have planned or scripted the media display, which took place in a national rather than a local paper) nor in subsequent dealings over the location of the shelter site did committee regulars or the men who came to oppose them appear cognizant of the advisability or indeed the possibility of "symmetrical deference" (Goffman 1967, 60). Neither side, moreover, appeared to anticipate the negative consequences that befall both those who experience public degradation and those who allow this to occur (Garfinkel 1956; Goffman 1956; Clark 1990). Consequently, neither side took care to honor and respect the "face" of all involved in what was purportedly a collaborative community response to a community-identified social problem.

ESCALATION

At a July Domestic Abuse Committee meeting that I attended, committee regulars framed their previous and continuing refusal to seriously consider the site donation, or apologize for their "less than disinterested" insult, in terms of a need to "resist the opposition's abusive bullying tactics." The women in attendance assured each other that the fact that they felt abused was itself proof that the "old boys" were behaving abusively. This assertion reflects a central tenant of profeminist abuse counseling as practiced in the Township. As numerous researchers have documented is common in feminist services, the abuse intervention counselors who worked out of the Resource Centre routinely encouraged women to "get in touch with their anger" and "resist abuse."[13] Committee regulars drew on this rhetoric to nurture the "appropriate anger" that abuse counselors Fiona, Alice, and Kay; social worker Denise; and community workers Kathryn, Janet, and Andrea now assured all of us in attendance we rightfully felt.

The following quotation from an interview with attorney Harriet exemplifies the way influential committee regulars tended to view "the opposition" in July 1991:

> You've got to understand the nature of these big men. If they can't get what they want they will hurt people that are up against them. Even if it's a fait accompli, they're going to strike out. And ah, I just can't believe them; they're too much to be true. . . . They say that what they want is the best for [the Township], but I really have to doubt that.

As Harriet had predicted would be the case, the two "old boys" did not follow through with their threat of face-saving legal action. Instead, the men initiated an ultimately ineffective but nevertheless destructive drive to discredit committee regulars in the local press. Drawing on community development rhetoric that communities "own their own problems," the men or some of their supporters utilized anonymous letters to the editor to denounce "a radical feminist takeover" of the Domestic Abuse Committee. At the same time, this opposition began openly lobbying the town council to not approve the lakeside site, maintaining that it was unsuitable due to its relative isolation from social services, proximity to residential cottages, and inadequate parking.

To committee regulars' relief, most residents who attended public meetings, and more important most town council members, failed to see why the location of the shelter had become an issue. Most, that is, appeared to share attorney Harriet's opinion that it was doubtful that what the opposition wanted was "the best for the community."[14] In September, after weeks of public meetings, a committee of adjustment appeal, and some minor compromises, the town council approved the lakeside site.[15]

Immediately after this victory, the shelter achieved formal autonomy from the Resource Centre through an act of incorporation and the appointment of a "strongly feminist" (though a few members resisted this label) shelter board, moves "the opposition" denounced as further evidence of radicalism, again in anonymous letters to the editor. With a few exceptions, committee regulars who had been active on various subcommittees were nominated to this board, which included community worker Kathryn (the only Resource Centre employee to serve on the board), social worker Denise, attorney Harriet, MPP assistant Louise,

freelance journalist Elaine, probation officer Mary, Resource Centre board member Frances, businesswoman Edna, homemaker Leslie, and the board's "token male," accountant Paul. The board then hired Nancy, a profeminist community health professional to oversee the shelter renovations and, ultimately, to direct the shelter.

A mutually destructive degeneration of expression and assessment between the new shelter board and some of the Township's socially prominent men continued into an acrimonious winter and spring. During this period, Kathryn and other board members adopted what a number of people on and off the now redundant Domestic Abuse Committee characterized as an increasingly "defensive" and "insular" stance. As described by Kathryn in November 1991, this stance was accompanied by an escalating "sense of dread" of "what the opposition would try next." As Oberschall (1978, 1979, 1993) observed, a sense of dread is a signal that interaction has become mired in protracted conflict, during which distorted perceptions are the norm. This conflict dynamic appears to have contributed to shelter board members' seemingly "irrational" (Oberschall 1978, 1993; Jasper 1997, 1998) response to an alleged sexual assault of a Resource Centre clerical employee by a member of the Resource Centre board in the early spring of 1992.

In brief, the new shelter director and a group of increasingly "radicalized" women on the board, Kathryn, Denise, and Elaine among them, blamed the assault not on the alleged assailant but on Charles, who had resumed his position as Resource Centre coordinator. As Kathryn stated in a March 1992 interview, everyone "knew" that the charged (and subsequently acquitted) man was a "sexist and a racist," and given this, Charles should long ago have demanded his resignation. Since Charles had not done so, Charles was, in Kathryn's words, "personally responsible" for the assault.

Charles, an employee of the Resource Centre, not its employer, was informed of the shelter board members' allegation by community worker Andrea, to whom Kathryn and others had vented. Charles was outraged by the assertion that he was "in any way responsible." As he pointed out to me in an April 1992 interview, and as shelter board members reported he had previously pointed out to them, he had no authority to demand that a Resource Centre board member resign prior to the commission of an actual offense. Moreover, it was Charles who had convinced the assaulted woman to lay a charge, and as she confirmed,

he had driven her to the police station to lay this charge. Finally, he had insisted that the charged man resign immediately after the charge was laid. In view of these "facts," Charles demanded an apology. As with the "less than disinterested" comment on the proposed site donation, however, the women at the center of decision making maintained they had nothing to apologize for, and Charles retaliated with the shelter initiative's second, also eventually empty, threat of a slander suit.

This sexual assault incident was the last in a series of events in which shelter board members and an increasingly abstract opposition engaged in actions that propelled the shelter process along a course of mutual vilification that no one appeared to want or intend and that Kathryn, Charles, and others were to regret. In the process, the new shelter board assumed an increasingly radical identity, while Charles, one of the Township's most prominent profeminists, found himself "pulled," through an escalating series of all but spontaneous "choice shifts," into the enemy camp, inescapably part of what Kathryn and other shelter board members were now calling "the male hierarchy."

THE SHELTER OPENING

It was in the context of the shelter opening in June 1992 that the construct "male hierarchy" entered into my field notes, when Kathryn called to invite me to the daylong opening ceremonies. At this time, she informed me the shelter board had decided to refrain from issuing formal invitations so as to avoid "any show of deference to the male hierarchy." Instead, she reported that the board was inviting the community at large through flyers, posters, and media announcements. My notes from this telephone conversation record the second time Kathryn commented on a "sense of dread" that she and other board members felt (other board members were to use this same phrase on opening day itself). In the telephone conversation, Kathryn described these feelings as "bordering on paranoia."

The opening ceremonies began at 10 A.M. on a beautiful June morning in the backyard of the shelter facility, which was packed with interested Township residents, provincial politicians, journalists, and activists. Director Nancy and various female shelter board members opened the ceremonies by taking turns in acknowledging the contributions of some of "the many women who had helped to make the shelter

possible." No one, however, offered thanks to the men who had contributed to shelter development. Among those present and *not* thanked were several town council members who had lobbied on behalf of the site selection subcommittee's lakeside site; businessmen who had donated cash, furnishings, and plumbing fixtures; the mayor (who left before noon, reportedly with a $5,000 check from the town council still in his pocket); and Lisa's and Julia's husbands Bob and Jim, reformed perpetrators who had played a prominent role in early phases of mobilization. Charles, who had influenced many of these men to "take the risk and get involved," did not attend.

In one of the last speeches of the morning, freelance journalist Elaine issued what might be interpreted as an intentional insult: "One male in three is an abuser," Elaine admonished us, "look around you, one male in three." A few hours later, in a radio interview aired at the shelter, Elaine publicly proclaimed her own, and by implication the shelter board's, embrace of radical feminism:

> Before, I don't think that I would ever had any occasion to say that I was a feminist or ever thought that it was necessary to say it. But ah, after what we've been through . . . if they think that some of us are radical now, they better look out. (shelter opening, June 1992)

At the conclusion of the evening ceremonies, with the shelter facility still overflowing with residents, politicians, journalists, and activists, the "token male" on the shelter board, accountant Paul, "commandeered the microphone," as Kathryn subsequently termed it, and personally thanked the mayor, Charles, and the many other men in the community who had supported the shelter. Shortly thereafter, Paul resigned, and the remaining board members passed a resolution to categorically exclude men from future shelter board participation. As social worker Denise stated in a July 1992 interview, under the circumstances the shelter board really had "no choice"; they had to protect the interests of abused women, interests that a "sexist male establishment" had made clear it neither understood nor respected.

The antimale, "us against them sort of thing" that Julia, Kathryn, Janet, Denise, Lisa, Andrea, Charles, and virtually all the other people I interviewed had been so hopeful to avoid was now publicly, officially, shelter policy.

INSIDE THE SHELTER

The intense "emotional arousal" and "combat-oriented climate" (Mueller 1995, 269) that seemed to "take over" during shelter development almost immediately spilled over into internal conflict, resulting within a few months in a stigmatization and disempowerment of the Township's purported "true experts on abuse," women fleeing abusive relationships. As during shelter development, conflict was rooted in organizational and structural conditions, the cultural or ideological resources that informed efforts to deal with these conditions, and actors' discursively mediated emotional responses to what Kathryn, Lisa, Julia, and others experienced as a progressively "out of control" and progressively destructive flow of events.

Three explicit ideologies shaped perceptions and justified responses to events during the first six months of the shelter's operation. The first two, community development and feminism, also influenced efforts to establish the shelter. The third, professionalism, emerged, at an ideological level, once the shelter opened.

During this implementation phase, community development influenced staffing decisions, specifically, the decision to recruit local abuse survivors as shelter workers. These survivors, Lisa and Julia included, tended to be among the listed but not regularly active members of the Domestic Abuse Committee (no self-identified survivor, during the time of my participation, attended regularly scheduled meetings, though several participated in fund-raising and outreach activities). All had sought refuge in a shelter at some time in the past, but none had worked in a shelter. Lisa and Julia were enrolled in a profeminist community college certification program for shelter workers, however, and at the time of their hiring had completed one year of the two-year program. In a December 1992 interview, social worker Denise told me that she, and by implication the shelter board in general, "felt good" about giving local women, some of whom had "never worked outside the home before," "opportunities."

Feminism and the "empowering" and "women-centered" practices implied in this perspective (from the shelter mission statement) also influenced hiring decisions, specifically the decision to hire Nancy as shelter director, whom I unfortunately did not manage to interview (she seemed unable to find the time). According to shelter board members whom I did interview (seven of the nine), Nancy had served on a shelter board in a nearby community along with a committee regular who

recommended her "as a colleague and a feminist." Like the junior staff she was hired to supervise, however, Nancy had never actually worked in a shelter. Indeed, Nancy's field of expertise was troubled adolescents, not abused women. In September 1991, when the shelter board hired Nancy, board members were in agreement, or so influential members of this board stated, that it was Nancy's position as a "strong feminist" that was most important.

Finally, professionalism influenced an emergent "professionalist" contingent on the shelter board to support Nancy when she insisted it was necessary to take a "firm hand" with the shelter's "problem population," including junior staff. These "professionalists," as Kathryn called them, maintained that fellow board members who were critical of Nancy's "directive stance" were wearing, or refusing to take off, "rose-colored glasses." The following quotation is from a December 1992 interview with social worker Denise, conducted six months after the shelter opening. It is noteworthy that during shelter development, Denise was among those who presented herself as a "strong feminist." Along with other profeminists on the committee, she had argued that it was imperative to resist tendencies to "pathologize abuse" or "stigmatize abused women."

> The economic and social reality of the Township is such that we have had the most incredible number of crises just since the shelter opened just six months ago. We've had sexual abuse by a resident on a child. We've had a number of women with serious substance problems. What we are realizing is that most of the women who come have real substance issues and problems. So we're not dealing with the sort of nice middle-class woman who ends up in this horrible relationship. We are dealing with women who have alcohol problems, women who are not nice to deal with, women who lie and do all different kinds of stuff. . . . Many have had to take off their rose-colored glasses.

Julia, Lisa, and the other abuse survivors hired to implement shelter practices were aware of the salience of substance problems and cognizant of the "fact" that "women can also be abusive." From their perspective, the problems that the shelter confronted had nothing to do with the characteristics of shelter residents or fellow staff, some of whom admittedly still struggled with addictions and related issues. No one, as far as they were concerned, was wearing "rose-colored glasses." Rather, the problems in the shelter were rooted in director Nancy's "authoritarian,

hierarchical management style"; "middle-class snootiness"; and "abusive control," exemplified in her insistence, for instance, that residents not leave beds unmade, that teacups be scoured until they were stain free; that children be put to bed hours before the summer sun set, and most notoriously, that the shelter provide block rather than sliced cheese, regardless of the "fact," as shelter residents and sympathetic staff asserted, that "kids like sliced cheese."[16]

What junior staff resented at least as much as director Nancy's seeming rigidity on these day-to-day issues, however, was her official position that junior staff collectively lacked the "sophistication" necessary to correctly read what was going on and participate in decision making. As Julia and Lisa "knew" from the community college shelter worker certification program, this was not the way a feminist shelter should be run. Rather, as people on the Domestic Abuse Committee had taken care to assure each other would be the case (in public meetings and outreach activities), everyone should be treated with respect; everyone should be empowered. Staff meetings, therefore, should not operate as educational seminars but as opportunities to discuss problems and develop strategies, consensually.

For Julia, Lisa, and other junior staff, the most distressing development of all was Nancy's last-minute insistence that junior staff be excluded from what became an executive retreat on shelter dynamics, conducted three months after the shelter opening. Junior staff experienced the shelter board's compliance with Nancy's insistence that they be excluded as deeply disappointing and deeply humiliating. Such retreats may or may not alleviate tensions in feminist or other organizations (Morgen 1995). This issue aside, the shelter board's (decidedly ambivalent) decision to exclude junior staff signaled a withdrawal of the "equality of respect" (Mansbridge 1973) that the Domestic Abuse Committee officially accorded abuse survivors. This withdrawal of respect served as yet another "choice shift" (Freidkin 1999), which took the shelter into another phase of protracted conflict. Subsequent to the retreat, participants on the shelter board and the now disbanded Domestic Abuse Committee were compelled to choose between the shelter's "clients" and the junior staff who claimed to champion their interests (and those of feminism) and director Nancy and those members of the shelter board who insisted her professional opinion be respected.

The professionalists sought to silence the increasingly public discontent of "some" shelter clients, junior staff, and fellow board

members. In December 1992, Denise reported that she found it "unprofessional" and "unconscionable" that staff and board members had discussed shelter issues with "clients" or with Resource Centre employees and affiliated professionals, including abuse-intervention counselors Alice and Kay and women's outreach worker Andrea. As Denise saw it, the "very real problems and issues" that the shelter faced (a substance abuse relapse by a staff member, for instance, or, more generally, staff inexperience in managing women and children in crisis) must be kept "in the shelter." She maintained that taking these issues "outside" jeopardized the integrity not only of the Township shelter but of shelters generally and that this "played into the hands of the opposition."

Kathryn and Andrea were among those who believed that the shelter was falling into the "dread trap" that a consultant from the nearby regional shelter had warned the Domestic Abuse Committee about: "the trap of taking on the role of the abuser in the name of saving the women." As Andrea stated in an October 1992 interview, what was happening in the shelter was "no different than power dynamics going on in an abusive relationship." Outraged by the notion that questioning or criticism of shelter practices was paramount to disloyalty, and bolstered by the disbanded Domestic Abuse Committee's official (profeminist) position that anger is a legitimate response to abuse, Andrea and other dissenters began asserting that they, and the community at large, had worked to establish the shelter and that they "had both a right and a responsibility to monitor it."

Regardless of what was *really* going on in the shelter, the professionalists' for-or-against construction of participation produced personal outrage, resistance, defensiveness, and rancor, the same emotions that seemed to drive shelter development after the emergence of the shelter site controversy. Both during shelter development and during this initial period of shelter operation, factionalizing camps displayed an escalating disrespect, even contempt, for those with whom they formally collaborated. In both phases, an escalating degeneration of expression and assessment coincided with a failure to honor and protect the face of all involved.

By January 1993, these developments culminated in a rash of board resignations and staff dismissals, Kathryn, Elaine, Julia, and Lisa among them, leaving a professionalist contingent in control of a newly framed social problem, that of the Township's "problem population." At about this same time, Charles resigned as coordinator of the

Resource Centre and moved out of the Township, as had Janet before him and as Kathryn and Lisa were also soon to do. As Lisa, Kathryn, and Charles subsequently stated, "The emotionality of the issue," and the power hunger that seemed to "take over" as a cause or a consequence of this, had gotten "terribly out of hand." Friends had become "partisan" enemies. The shelter, or rather the Domestic Abuse Committee's collective vision of what the shelter could and would be, was "ruined"—it had "turned into a living hell."

MAKING SENSE

The developments summarized in this article raise the specter of irrationality that plagued pre-1970s social movement discourse (Oberschall 1978, 1993; Benford 1997; Jasper 1997, 1998; Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2000; McCaffrey and Keys 2000). People, individually and collectively, acted in ways that undermined their interests, goals, and values, transforming a community effort to support abused women into something no one seemed to want or intend.

Individuals involved in the shelter process characteristically blamed unintended developments on three interrelated processes. First, participants blamed developments on one or another of the many (other) players involved, that is, on people who acted inappropriately—by substituting their own agendas for that of the committee or community; by stepping beyond or conversely by failing to exercise their rightful authority; by failing to be respectful, appreciative, inclusive, loyal, or professional; or simply, by bullying or power tripping. Second, participants blamed developments on (other) people's ideological orientations to sexism or radicalism, for example, and, especially as the shelter process progressed, to betrayals, misinterpretations, or impositions of community development, feminist, or professionalist practices. Finally, people blamed developments on emotionality itself. Kathryn, among others, repeatedly alluded to the engulfing feelings of danger and dread that seemed to simultaneously guide and distort perceptions and responses not simply on an individual level but also at the level of the group.

These lay interpretations assign causal power to human agency, cultural resources, and the emotionality of the self, interactive processes that have recently moved into the center of social movement discourse

(Jasper 1997, 1998; Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2000; McCaffrey and Keys 2000). To adequately account for the protracted and contagious conflict that Township activists participated in, however, two additional levels of analysis are needed. These are the structural and organizational conditions that anchor agents, cultures, emotions, and the dynamics of conflict itself (Oberschall 1993; Swidler 1995; Benford 1997).

Three sets of structural contingencies are salient to the shelter process, each accompanied by ideological resources that simultaneously fueled and legitimized actors' emotionalized responses to the emergent and highly emotionalized "dance" in which they participated (McCaffrey and Keys 2000).

First and perhaps most important was the "unsettled" and shifting nature of power relations (Swidler 1986, 1995; Oberschall 1993). The shelter initiative pitted a group of profeminist women professionals who were generally new to the Township against what Harriet, Janet, Kathryn, and others pejoratively called "the old boys," "the big men," "the male hierarchy." As the uncivil display captured in the March 1991 news article demonstrates, participants in these camps were taking public stabs at each other prior to the emergence of the shelter site controversy. These naïve (as opposed to strategic) moves helped set the stage for the cascades of insult, shame, anger, counterinsult, and self-righteous indignation (Scheff 1990, 1997) that were shortly to "take over." As Goffman (1969) noted, unwitting moves can elicit or exacerbate a sense of insult, suspicion, defensiveness, and opposition and, with this, a perceived need to assert or resist control. It is in this guise that the March 1991 media display entered into the cultural repertoire produced by and through shelter activism (Swidler 1995). It helped shape people's perceptions of what others thought, crystallizing the distrust and resentment that each side assumedly felt, both intuitively in their "guts" and as scripted by cultural repertoires of feminist resistance and feminist backlash (see also Hochschild 1979, 1983, 1990; Mansbridge 1986; Thoits 1990; Faludi 1991; Steuter 1992; Oberschall 1993; Marshall 1995; Taylor 1995; Taylor and Whittier 1995; Lupton 1998; Hercus 1999).

The second structural contingency was the loose organizational structure (Oberschall 1979, 1993) of the Domestic Abuse Committee, which led to a blurring of boundaries between members who were and those who were not entitled, on an emotional level particularly, to

participate in the selection of the shelter site (see also Mansbridge 1973). This loose organizational structure did not "cause" conflict between the profeminist women professionals who assumed leadership in the shelter initiative and the "old boys" whose collaborative support these women officially welcomed. It did, however, foster this potentiality. When committee regulars rejected the offer of a shelter site donation "on the spot," they acted spontaneously, on the basis of "gut feelings" that their (feminist) vision of the shelter was in danger. Though the "old boys" took offence, this move was not intentionally insulting. The "less than disinterested" comment was, however, openly contemptuous, and the refusal to apologize was decidedly strategic, as was the men's letter of resignation and threat of a lawsuit. Collectively, these moves and countermoves constituted a "choice shift" (Freidkin 1999) away from collaboration that launched the shelter project into a phase of open warfare (Oberschall 1978, 1979, 1993). In the escalations that ensued, the "old boys" drew on community development rhetoric to denounce what they maintained was a "radical feminist takeover" of the shelter process, while the increasingly radicalized women at the center of shelter activism drew on feminist revalorizations of anger to justify their intransigence in the face of "male bullying" and, eventually, to justify their exclusion of men from the shelter board, a blatant reversal of what these activists had assured each other and the community at large would occur during shelter mobilization.

Once the shelter opened, the combat-oriented climate or culture produced through these processes appeared to "spill over" (Mueller 1995) into internal warfare. This warfare drew on the third set of structural contingencies—disparities and deficiencies in professional training and experience among members of the shelter board and staff, all of whom purported to embrace feminist or at least "women-centered" practices. No members of the board and none of the women hired to staff the shelter, director Nancy included, had practical experience in, or specialized credentials for, shelter work. However, the director and most board members did have professional training or even postgraduate degrees in social work, law, community health, and the like. This set them apart from junior staff, none of whom held a university degree or college certificate, some of whom had not completed high school, and some of whom had "never worked outside the home." As with structural contingencies in earlier phases of action, these educational and class differences did not "cause" conflict in the shelter, but they fostered this

potentiality. Specifically, educational and class differences undermined the likelihood that junior staff would be accorded the "equality of respect" (Mansbridge 1973) that they had come to expect as the Domestic Abuse Committee's "true experts on abuse." When these purported "experts" objected to practices that they believed demeaned shelter residents and excluded and disempowered them, ideologically charged battle broke out, leading to a collapse of the Domestic Abuse Committee's vision of the shelter.[17]

Operative across these three fields of action are the dynamics of conflict and especially the play of rationality and irrationality in these dynamics. As McCaffrey and Keys (2000) noted, polarizations and vilifications are strategic moves in a movement/countermovement dance, aimed at substantive and symbolic victories over "enemies" whose understanding of and interests in a problem are different and who, if allowed, would "take over." Polarizations and mutual vilifications are also, however, emergent developments, rooted in what Oberschall (1978, 1993) called the concurrence-seeking properties of groups and the distortions in moral, cognitive, and emotional processes that accompany cascades into protracted conflict (see also Goffman 1967, 1969; Janis 1972; Swidler 1986, 1995).

It is not a matter, from this perspective, of "society" needing "folk devils" (Marx 1979) and of vilification being a rhetorical strategy that meets this need. Power and moral depravity are assigned to opponents in vilification processes (Vanderford 1989), not typically to incite conflict but rather once things have "gotten out of hand." Polarizations and vilifications simultaneously feed on and exacerbate the seemingly spontaneous spirals of insult, shame, and anger (Scheff 1990, 1997) that ensue. These are instigated, as often as not, by unwitting moves that convey feelings of distrust and contempt. As conflict escalates, individual misgivings and ambivalences give way to a public culture of contention that spills over from context to context. People forget their values and goals. Winning becomes the only game conceivable, not because preexisting interests or ideologies demand this, and not because "society" or the group needs it, but because collaboration or conciliation become emotionally unthinkable (Oberschall 1978, 1993). Such developments produce feelings of dread that serve as powerful emotional signals (Hochschild 1990) that things have become mired in a "terrible loop" (Goffman 1969, 69) in which rationality and irrationality cooperate.

NOTES

1. Pseudonyms are assigned to all municipalities, agencies, and individuals, and minor factual details (occupation, for example) are modified to disguise identities. Unless attributed to a published text, quotation marks denote words and phrases captured in field notes, media reports, agency literature, and interview transcripts. For details of the methodology, see the discussion below.

2. These comments were provided in response to an early draft of my book on the Township shelter initiative (Mann 2000, appendix 8). This book addresses beliefs about the potential or necessary ownership of social issues and the effects of these beliefs on action. In this article, I draw on a different set of theoretical sources to address the dynamics of conflict itself.

3. These comments reflect several interrelated self-reflexive processes—"time traveling into a life that I had once lived so long ago" (Lisa), "trepidation that . . . on those pages I might find that I had done something wrong" (Kathryn), and "hope that our experiences . . . can help build a body of research in this area, and perhaps some other communities can learn from our successes and failures" (Charles).

4. "Times" are never entirely "settled," of course. Social change is not dependent on social breakdown. Nor, however, does change take place at a uniform rate. As Oberschall noted (1978, 1993), some times are more unsettled than others.

5. Swidler (1986, 1995) had no construct similar to Oberschall's (1978, 1993) or Janis's (1972) "group think." She did suggest, however, that the power of group processes lies not in the constitution of individual participants' thoughts and motives but in their (presumed) "knowledge of how others will interpret things, knowledge of what others expect and will accept" (Swidler 1995, 39).

6. For the social characteristics of the community, letters of introduction, consent forms, and other details of the research protocol, see Mann (2000, appendices and tables, 209-62).

7. The Resource Centre was a privately and publicly funded multiagency facility mandated to identify and solve community problems through outreach, education, and service development. It closed in 1995, a victim of cutbacks in federal transfer payments and the Ontario (Harris) government's "Common Sense Revolution." On similar developments in the United States, see Wharton (1987) and Staggenborg (1998).

8. During an approximate six-month period in 1991, Charles worked to help establish community development protocol at another agency.

9. Neither Charles, Janet, Kathryn, nor any of the other "professional activists" (McCarthy and Zald [1973] 1987; Kleidman 1994; Staggenborg 1998) at the Resource Centre seemed to see a contradiction in the notion of educating people who are "the experts of their own experience." See Dobash and Dobash (1992) for a discussion of the conflicts and contradictions associated with a profeminist stance. See Wharton (1987) for a discussion of the dynamics and consequences of efforts of grassroots activists to accommodate local sensitivities.

10. I was not able to determine how many people were actually "listed," partly because the twenty-five-cent fee was not an initial membership requirement. As Mansbridge (1973) and Oberschall (1979, 1993) both noted, this sort of loose

membership structure is common in voluntary organizations and serves as a foundation for both solidarity and conflict.

11. Three women were murdered by a spouse or ex-spouse, one of whom also committed suicide. Another man was assassinated by the police while in the act of shooting down his estranged girlfriend, who survived.

12. The two men's letter of resignation and the threatened slander suit were key concerns when the Domestic Abuse Committee welcomed me as participant observer. On the advice of colleagues at the University of Toronto, I decided not to invite these men to participate in a personal interview (the courts can subpoena research material, as was stated on my consent form). My reading of the men's perspectives is consequently based on their actions at public meetings and in the media and on the reports of people (sympathizers and critics) who had dealings with them.

13. The Township shelter initiative incorporated into its practices a feminist "politics of feeling" (Denzin 1990), marked by a revalorization and relegitimization of anger, an emotion long proscribed for women and proscribed for women and men alike through much of the twentieth century (Stearns 1992). As redefined by feminism, anger is no longer an inappropriate and potentially dangerous response to provocation. It is an indicator of injustice, an acknowledgment of oppression, and an instrument of personal empowerment and social transformation. See also Mansbridge (1973, 1986), Ferraro (1983), Wharton (1989), DiLorio and Nusbaumer (1993), Morgen (1995), Mueller (1995), Taylor (1995, 1999), Taylor and Whittier (1995), and Hercus (1999).

14. Garfinkel (1956) listed a number of requirements for a successful degradation: the denouncer must not be seen as acting out of personal unique experience but must draw on the values of the "tribe," must demonstrate his or her own right to speak in the name of these values, and must be defined by witnesses as a supporter of these values. Unless these and other conditions are present, denunciation ceremonials are likely to backfire. See also Clark (1990) and Williams (1995).

15. The major compromise was the substitution of a slightly larger but equally "charming" property for the committee's initial lakeside cottage, which was virtually next door, facing the same beautiful lake. This substitute property had more ample space for parking.

16. As several researchers have documented, these are the sorts of "power-tripping" (Whittier 1995, 196) and class-biased issues that commonly fuel conflict in women's shelters. See also Schechter (1982), Beaudry (1985), Davis (1988), Wharton (1989), Russell (1990), McDonald and Peressini (1991), Loseke (1992), and Baker (1996).

17. A number of researchers attribute the emotionally laden power struggles and conflict that "plague" feminist spheres of action to a revalorization of anger. In shelters and related contexts, anger mobilized for battle with external enemies is said to "spill over" into ideologically charged internecine battles that impede efforts to implement nonhierarchical, woman-centered practices and policies (Ferraro 1983; Beaudry 1985; Wharton 1989; DiLorio and Nusbaumer 1993; Morgen 1995; Mueller 1995; Taylor 1995; Taylor and Whittier 1995; Baker 1996; Hercus 1999), hinder the transmission of valuable knowledge to new and less experienced members (Whittier 1995), and undermine efforts to develop and implement policy through community coalitions (Mansbridge 1986; Staggenborg 1986, 1998; MacLeod 1987; Wharton 1987;

Caringella-MacDonald & Humphries 1991; Arnold 1995). These arguments have explanatory appeal, but they fail to account for the similarity of conflict dynamics across ideologically diverse sites, including New England town meetings (Mansbridge 1973) and the activities of the New Christian Right (Oberschall 1993).

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