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“BUT PERHAPS WE SPEAK FOR YOU”: ANTIFEMINIST WOMEN’S
ORGANIZATIONS AND THE REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL INTERESTS

by

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A Dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School-New Brunswick
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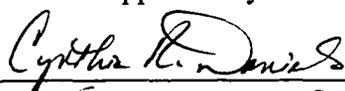
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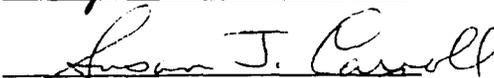
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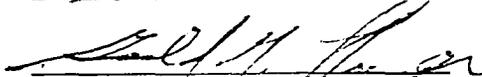
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“But Perhaps We Speak for You”: Antifeminist Women’s Organizations and the

Representation of Political Interests

by RHONDA DAWN SCHREIBER

Dissertation Directors:

Susan J. Carroll and Cynthia R. Daniels

“Antifeminist” women’s groups present a substantial threat to the feminist movement -- like feminists they claim to represent women’s interests. And, like feminist interest groups, they are well-established, nationally prominent and politically connected. Yet, despite their influence and significant potential to challenge feminism, we know very little about antifeminist women’s organizations and their political strategies. This study, an examination of two prominent, national antifeminist women’s organizations -- the Concerned Women for America (CWA) and the Independent Women’s Forum (IWF) -- fills this gap.

Most interest groups, including the two under study here, engage in a number of common strategies to seek influence among policymakers, the media and the public. However, the literature on interest group strategies fails to account for organizations like the CWA and IWF whose status as *identity-based* and *countermovement* organizations should shape the particular strategies they choose to establish themselves as legitimate political actors and influence the policymaking process. In addition, this project addresses my conviction that to fully understand women’s policy activism, one must investigate the efforts and strategies of organized antifeminist women. Based on

unprecedented interviews with antifeminist women leaders, extensive textual analysis and participant observation, this study asks: what strategies do the CWA and IWF employ to establish themselves as legitimate representatives of women's interests? As organizations vying with feminists over the right to make representational claims about women, these two groups must engage in activities that position them as the more credible (as compared with feminists) arbiters of women's concerns. How do they accomplish this goal? Generally my findings suggest that to best understand these organizations, we must focus on how factors associated with being both countermovement and women's organizations influence their strategies. As such, we gain a clearer understanding of their strategic choices and better insights into their sometimes paradoxical behaviors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Much of this project happened in isolation. Innumerable hours spent alone, analyzing data, writing, re-writing, staring at the computer. Such isolation, however, belies the importance of my interactions and relationships with others as I produced this dissertation. First, I would like to thank the women who gave me their time, assistance and trust -- the staff and Board of the CWA and IWF who allowed me to interview them. Their names are listed in Appendix A. Without their interviews and other assistance there would be no study. In this regard, I also offer a special thanks to the CWA's Darlene Nelson, who arranged so many of my interviews and took so many of my phone calls. For the IWF, my thanks goes to Ivy McClure Stewart who never let me down. Linda Phillips did a great job transcribing these interviews for me. I also extend my thanks to the library staff at the People for the American Way. They tolerated many days of my perusing through their files and monopolizing their copying machines.

One wonderful thing about Rutgers' Political Science Department is its Women and Politics students and faculty. I continue to miss my great conversations and cups of coffee with KC, Susana and Cristina -- my trusted friends and inspiring dissertation group members. My acknowledgments would be woefully incomplete without a special thanks to my buddy Deb Liebowitz -- I am sure future acknowledgments will contain her name. Karen Zivi was an especially helpful confidante as I tried to meet my finishing deadline. And, of course, this project would never have come to fruition without my incredibly supportive and wise dissertation advisors -- Sue Carroll, Cyndi Daniels, Gerry Pomper and Anne Costain. I am especially thankful to Sue for working so hard to get me to come

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While some may consider family life to be a hindrance to productivity and workplace progress, I believe that these experiences allow me to lead a balanced, healthy and more fulfilling existence. My partner in life, John Evans, is not only an intellectual inspiration, but is a great friend and good person. He makes me want to turn off my computer at the end of the day. And, for infectious smiles, comforting hugs and inevitable laughs, there is nothing better than spending time with my 3 year old daughter, Dani. She was an excellent distraction as I wrote these pages.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my parents Louise and George Schreiber. They not only gave me great siblings, support and boundless love, but continue to remind me of what is truly important in life. This dissertation is for mom and dad, for teaching me to make lemonade.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Why Study Antifeminist Women's Organizations?

“Concerned Women for America (CWA) is here in Washington to end the monopoly of feminists who claim to speak for all women” proclaimed Beverly LaHaye, just prior to the opening of CWA’s national office in 1985 (LaHaye 1984, 122). On its website, the Independent Women’s Forum (IWF) poses a similar challenge to feminism: “[w]e don’t pretend to speak for all women, but perhaps we speak for you.” These “antifeminist” women’s groups present a substantial threat to the feminist movement -- like feminists they claim to represent women’s interests in general. And, like feminist interest groups, they are well-established, nationally prominent and politically connected. Yet despite their influence and significant potential to challenge feminism, we know very little about antifeminist women’s organizations. This project, a study of the CWA and IWF -- two national antifeminist women’s organizations -- grew out of the conviction that to fully understand women’s political activism, one must investigate the efforts and strategies of organized antifeminist women. In so doing, it fills a gap in both interest group and women and politics literatures, where research on antifeminist women’s organizations is all but absent.

As I detail below, through interviews with organizational leaders, content analysis and participant observation, I explore the strategies that the CWA and

IWF use to establish themselves as legitimate representatives of women's interests. Despite that scholars have investigated interest group strategies (Heinz, et al. 1993; Walker 1991; Schlozman and Tierney 1986), women's organizations (Ferree and Martin 1995; Costain 1988; Freeman 1976), and women's policy activism (Boneparth and Stoper 1988; Bookman and Morgen 1988; Gelb and Palley 1987), almost no research exists on how antifeminist women's organizations act to make representational claims in the policymaking process (for an exception see Marshall 1985; 1995; 1996). Perhaps because some scholars have perceived these organizations to be inaccessible, or, perhaps because some feminists have criticized and dismissed antifeminist women for being co-opted by conservative men (Dworkin 1983), no one has conducted a systematic investigation into these groups. It is my goal that this study, based partly on unprecedented personal interviews with antifeminist women's leaders, will demonstrate the relative accessibility of these political actors and indicate the importance of taking antifeminist women's organizations seriously as political players and subjects of study.

Studying the political participation of antifeminist women organized into interest groups has significant consequences. First, as I discuss in more detail later in this chapter, what is lacking from our understanding of interest groups are insights into the relationship between identity and organizational strategy: we know why organizations choose certain strategies and, in some, cases, what

influences these strategies have (see Baumgartner and Leech (1998) for a thorough summary of these studies), but we lack information about how being identity-based organizations -- e.g. women's groups -- may relate to how organizations choose their strategies and legitimate their representational claims. Investigating antifeminist women's organizations' strategies provides important information on the relationship between identity, in this case gender identity, and organizational strategies, an area we know little about. In this way it provides us with insights into the relative merits of interest groups engaged in identity-based organizing.

Second, because much of the literature on women's activism focuses on, or assumes that, actors are feminists, there is a tendency to conflate women's with feminist interests thus limiting how we conceptualize women's interests and understand the relationship between gender identity and public policymaking. As I show throughout this study, both the CWA and IWF have the potential to transform the meaning of women's interests and link women to other conservative causes. In addition, when antifeminist women leaders act as women to make claims for women, they can undermine feminist claims to knowing and representing women's interests. Thus, by acknowledging and investigating the role of the CWA and IWF in public and legislative debates about women, this study contests the notion that women's interests are homogenous and broadens our understanding of women's policy activism as well.

Research Questions

The central question that guides my work is: what strategies do the CWA and IWF employ to establish themselves as legitimate representatives of women's interests? As organizations vying with feminists over the right to make representational claims about women, these two groups must engage in activities that position them as the more credible (as compared with feminists) arbiters of women's concerns. How do they accomplish this goal?

To address this broad question, I argue that being countermovement *and* women's organizations will influence and structure the strategies these groups use to establish themselves as legitimate representatives of women. Specifically I examine two sets of strategies -- "representational" and "issue framing" -- described below, strategies that relate to who speaks for these organizations and what narratives they use to influence policymakers and mobilize members and the public. Most interest groups, including the two under study here, engage in a number of common strategies to seek influence among policymakers, the media and the public. These strategies include contacting legislators, testifying before congressional committees and gaining access to media outlets (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). However, as I describe in more detail below, the literature on interest group strategies fails to account for organizations like the CWA and IWF - *countermovement women's organizations* -- whose status as such, may shape the

particular strategies they choose to establish themselves as legitimate political actors.

First, as I will discuss, although the IWF is critical of identity-based political organizing and the CWA encourages women to prioritize their private roles as wives and mothers, I expect that both organizations will consider it critical to position women publicly to make claims for women and women's issues and interests. In this way, as countermovement *and* women's organizations, they should co-opt feminist strategies of acting collectively as women to promote women's issues and interests to directly contest feminist claims to speak for all women. Thus, I expect that *gender identity* will be salient to these organizations and influence their strategies. In focusing on gender identity as a variable in influencing organizational strategy, I am concerned with the relationship between identity and activism, or when and how antifeminist women's organizations see their identities as *women's* groups central to their political actions. In Chapter Two I explore in more detail why I expect gender identity to matter to these organizations. Below I present the research questions that guide my assessment of this claim.

Second, while I expect gender identity to matter to these organizations, I also expect that as *countermovement* women's organizations, there will be competing influences that mediate the extent to which, and form in which, their strategies take shape (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Zald and Useem 1987).

Specifically, while these groups must adopt some of the successful strategies of their opponents -- in this case feminists -- by invoking gender identity and making universal claims about women, they must simultaneously refute feminist claims to speak as and for women (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Marshall 1995; Zald and Useem 1987). In addition, while both groups must appeal to their conservative constituencies and allies, each must also mobilize women who are not yet aligned with them or their specific conservative views and who may have benefitted from feminist-inspired political and social changes. Since these antifeminist organizations are trying to appeal to a broad range of women and bridge women to conservative causes, their specific conservative ideologies should also influence the strategies they choose. As I show throughout this study, and briefly discuss below, the influence of these competing factors can result in a number of paradoxes and contradictions. In Chapter Two, I present a more in-depth discussion of countermovement strategies to explore these assertions.

To measure the relative influence of being countermovement women's organizations on the CWA's and IWF's strategies, I pose a series of research questions. The first two sets of questions are related to "representational" strategies and the third set refers to "issue framing" strategies.

First, why have these antifeminist women activists formed into women's organizations? As countermovement activists opposed to the goals of feminist organizations, it seems reasonable that these women leaders should respond by

establishing *women's* groups to oppose feminist activism. But the IWF, with its conservative emphasis on individualism, often speaks critically of politics based on group-based identity claims. And, while evangelical Protestant women like those of the CWA, have a history of identity-based activism (Marshall 1995; Ginsburg 1989; Luker 1984), their organizing into a professional, well-staffed, national women's organization, belies their call for women to prioritize their traditional roles as stay-at-home mothers and wives. In addition, as I will show, both groups criticize feminists for acting as women to make claims for women: that is these organizations disparage feminists for engaging in the same form of identity-based organizing they use. Finally, there are other conservative organizations, like the Christian Coalition, Family Research Council and the American Enterprise Institute, that tackle many of the same issues as these two organizations. So why have these women organized into professional, national *women's* organizations? What advantages and/or disadvantages do being a gender-identified groups give them?

Second, do the CWA and IWF engage in the strategy of positioning women in key leadership roles? As I will show, scholarship on gender identity and representation suggests this may help women achieve certain goals. That is, some feminists and other proponents of descriptive representation argue that having women speak for other women -- as lobbyists, media spokespeople and elected officials -- not only affords women political legitimacy (Mansbridge 1999:

Kymlicka 1995; Phillips 1995). but can translate into substantive policy effects as well (Dodson, et al. 1995; Dodson and Carroll 1991). There are others, however, who argue that assuming a relationship between descriptive and substantive representation elides differences within a particular group (e.g. among women, African-Americans) and assumes that people cannot be well represented by delegates who are unlike them (Swain 1993; Butler 1992; Pitkin 1967). So where do the CWA and IWF stand on the issue of descriptive and substantive representation? Presumably, as women organized to make claims as and for women, they should support and invoke descriptive representation and also assume a relationship between descriptive and substantive representation. However, the IWF at least, is also critical of identity-based political claims, so they may find fault with these forms of representational strategies. Thus, a question central to this research is: do the CWA and IWF work to put women in public leadership positions to stand and act for women? If so, how do they explain their reasons for doing so? What can we learn in general about the strategy of using descriptive and/or substantive representation by examining the details of these cases?

Third, how do these organizations frame their policy goals? While we might expect these countermovement women's organizations to engage in strategies of promoting women's issues and framing issues in terms of women's interests, as I will show, both organizations castigate feminists for making broad-based policy claims in the name of women. And, the IWF and its conservative

allies. frequently criticize identity politics. So how do these groups frame their issues? Do they promote women's issues? How do the CWA and IWF negotiate their need to make issue-based claims as and for women with their simultaneous critique of feminist identity politics? What issue framing strategies might the IWF use to arbitrate between its conflicting goal of representing women, while also being critical of this identity-based strategy? Finally, how might these countermovement women's organizations negotiate between the need to frame issues in ways that appeal to their conservative constituencies and allies while simultaneously seeking to mobilize a broad spectrum of women?

While I expect factors associated with being countermovement women's organizations to matter to these groups in terms of their organizational strategies, I also expect that the *specific* and *differing* conservative ideologies between the two groups will also shape their strategies. To assess this claim I ask throughout this study: what are the differences and similarities between these two organizations? While both organizations formed specifically as countermovement women's organizations to challenge feminist activism, they have different constituencies and there are ideological variations between them. As I describe in detail later, the CWA is a socially conservative organization, mostly comprised of Evangelical Protestant women. As such, it is concerned with public and private morality, and opposes such issues as abortion and homosexuality (Klatch 1987). The IWF, however, more closely matches the description of a *laissez-faire* conservative

group, with its call for self-sufficiency, limited government social programs and increased private sector involvement (Klatch 1987). Klatch and others who document conservative political activism (Hardisty 1999; Dunn and Woodard 1996; Lipset and Raab 1970) draw distinctions between these two strands of conservatives, despite that there is often some overlap and cooperation between them. Indeed, Diamond argues that the “New Right,” or the more laissez-faire faction of conservatives, have worked closely with the social conservatives of the Christian Right on some issues. This “fusionism,” as Diamond calls it, helped conservatives (and continues to help them) form a strong political base and mobilize more activists (1995). For example, she notes that New Right leader Paul Weyrich was responsible for suggesting the use of the phrase “pro-family” (Diamond 1995, 171) that so many socially conservative organizations have adopted. By contrasting the CWA and IWF, I explore the relative influence of their divergent ideologies on their strategic choices, but also complicate Klatch’s two ideal types by showing the many moments where the CWA and IWF express comparable beliefs and goals and behave in similar ways.

In asking this series of questions about the CWA and IWF, I aim to uncover the specific strategies these interest groups invoke to contest feminist political activism. In the following chapter (Two), I present a more in-depth discussion of the central questions posed here, engaging the literature on gender identity.

countermovement organizations, representation and issue framing to detail my exploratory framework and analyses.

In the rest of this chapter I turn to a more thorough review of the interest group and women and politics literature, noting their lack of attention to gender identity and antifeminist women's organizations respectively. In so doing I highlight the specific contributions my work makes to these areas of research. Second, since political terms are unstable and can have multiple meanings, I define some of the terms, such as "feminist," that I use throughout this study. Finally, I describe the organizations, my methodology, data and present an overview of the rest of the study.

Interest Groups and Women and Politics: Where Do Antifeminist Women's Organizations Fit?

Interest Groups and Identity Politics

The "advocacy explosion of the 1970s and early 1980s was followed by a burst of scholarly research on the interest group system." (Petraicca 1992, 11) characterized mostly by large-scale survey data analyses and efforts to reconceptualize the role of interest groups in the political process in relation to the classic works of Olson (1965), Truman (1951) and Salisbury (1969). This growing scholarship on interest groups focuses on the role of interest groups in a democracy, mostly supporting or contesting pluralist models (Lowi 1979) and

competing theories about the mobilization and organization of interest groups.¹ More recent analyses include large-scale surveys and case studies to investigate interest group tactics and strategies (Cigler and Loomis 1998; Petracca 1992; Walker 1991; Schlozman and Tierney 1986).

Typically, political scientists who study interest group strategies ask what tactics organizations employ (Heinz, et al. 1993; Walker 1991; Schlozman and Tierney 1986), specifically seeking to connect these actions to political influence. Their findings tend to be consistent: among other activities, organizations lobby and testify before Congress, contact legislators and other officials, seek media attention, and work in coalitions (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). Indeed, Baumgartner and Leech note that "the most striking aspect of these data is how similar they are" (1998, 151). While some of these scholars attend to variables like organizational structure and available resources (Walker 1991; Schlozman and Tierney 1986), none specifically address the class of interest groups that engage in "identity politics" and how being identity-based organizations may influence their strategies. That is, none look beyond the influence of structure and resources as variables that relate to how organizations can influence legislators and the public.

Identity politics refers to the "tendency to base one's politics on a sense of personal identity -- as gay, as Jewish, as Black, as female" (Fuss 1989, 97). There

¹ See Baumgartner and Leech (1998) for a thorough review and analysis of interest group scholarship.

are myriad interest groups that have organized around this principle. many of which are well-institutionalized and working among the thousands of other groups in Washington, D.C. The organizations under study here -- the CWA and IWF -- are women's groups, and as such, fall into the category of identity-based political organizations. Interest group scholars categorize these groups as "citizen" groups, along with other non-profit advocacy organizations (Schlozman and Tierney 1986), thus obscuring how identity may factor into their strategies, often in critical ways.

In addition, interest group scholars fail to contextualize organizations and their strategic decisions (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). My study overcomes this limitation by directing attention to the context in which these organizations act. Since both groups are countermovement women's organizations, their interactions with allies and opponents significantly affect their activities: thus exploring political context is critical to understanding these groups.

Finally, while a sizeable volume of literature exists on conservative and right-wing movements and interest groups in the U.S. (Edwards 1999; Diamond 1995; Green, et al. 1996; Rozell and Wilcox 1995; Moen 1992; Hertzke 1988; Conover and Gray 1983; Crawford 1980; Lipset and Raab 1970), little of it addresses the specific participation of women and women's organizations (for exceptions see Hardisty, 1999; Marshall, 1995; Klatch, 1987). Although some observers of Christian Right groups such as Hertzke (1988) and Moen (1992)

provide cursory analyses of CWA, they do not offer any insights into the role gender plays in this antifeminist women's organization. Thus, this research also fills a gap in literature on conservative movements and organizations.

Women and Political Activism

A turn to the women and politics literature reveals that this body of work focuses no more attention on antifeminist women's organizations than do other areas of political science. In addition, as I show, some of the scholarship addresses the nature of identity and politics, but little of it explores the relationship between gender identity and political strategies.

Notwithstanding the successes and importance of feminist organizations, many scholars and activists have challenged their claims of representing all women. These debates focus primarily on the need for more careful attention to the diversity among women based on race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation (Phelan 1993; Mohanty 1991; hooks 1990; Collins 1990; Lefkowitz and Withorn 1986) challenging feminists and feminist organizations to be more critical in their deployment of the category "woman" (Butler 1992, 15). Far less attention, however, has been paid to the differences among women based on ideology (for exceptions see Marshall, 1995; 1985; 1984; and Klatch, 1987) and the challenges that antifeminist women's organizations pose to feminists' claims of representing women's interests in the policymaking process. In addition, most research on the emergence and influence of women's organizations (Ferree and Martin 1995:

Costain 1988; Costain and Costain 1987; Gelb and Palley 1987; Freeman 1976) puts feminist or liberal women's organizations at the center of their analyses, offering a limited assessment of women's policy activism.

Some scholars and activists, especially women of color, however, have broadened analyses of women's organizations and women's political participation. They point to the differing material, economic and social realities that exist among women and how these factors help construct women's interests and women's abilities to organize politically (Barnett 1995; Chow 1994; Garcia 1990; Giddings 1984). This call for diversity is especially prominent in the bodies of work that attend to organizing around welfare and economic policies (Childers 1997; Gordon 1990; Bookman and Morgen 1988) and reproductive health (Davis 1990; Flores, et al. 1990; Smith 1990). But despite that these writers have enriched our understanding of women's interests by attending to racial and class differences, much of their work also assumes a feminist model of women's empowerment and emancipation. None talk about poor women and women of color involved in conservative political movements.²

A few scholars have examined antifeminist women's efforts to oppose the Equal Rights Amendment (Mansbridge 1986; Brady and Tedin 1976) and abortion (Ginsburg 1989; Luker 1984), while others have studied conservative Evangelical

²As I discuss in Chapter Six, some African-Americans and Latinos have joined conservative political organizing efforts, like working to oppose affirmative action, but few have organized into national interest groups.

and fundamentalist women's organizations within their congregations or denominations (Brasher 1998; Griffith 1997). Almost none, however, explore antifeminist women organized as a countermovement to challenge the myriad goals of the feminist movement (for an exception see Marshall 1995).

When feminists and other political observers do write about antifeminist women, they often portray these advocates as extremist and thus outside the mainstream of political activity.³ Sara Diamond (1995) suggests that marking conservative groups as extreme obscures the ways many right-wing activities are "system-supported" and thus profoundly affect policymaking. Her findings are supported by Guth and his colleagues (1995) who note the increasing politicization of Evangelical Protestant groups and their heightened willingness to use traditional lobbying and educational strategies to challenge government policies. While feminists and other liberals have not denied the impact of right-wing movements on feminist goals and activities (see e.g., Conover and Gray, 1983), many characterize antifeminist women as victims of false consciousness or pawns of conservative men, diminishing the attention and serious consideration antifeminist women's organizations deserve. For example, on the subject of "right-wing" women feminist Andrea Dworkin laments:

The tragedy is that women so committed to survival cannot recognize that they are committing suicide. The danger is that self-sacrificing women are

³For exceptions see Marshall (1995), Ginsburg (1989), Klatch (1987), Mansbridge (1986), Luker (1984).

perfect foot soldiers who obey orders, no matter how criminal those orders are. The hope is that these women, upset by internal conflicts that cannot be stilled by manipulation . . . will be forced to articulate the realities of their own experiences as women subject to the will of men (1983, 35).

In addition, writer and critic Wendy Kaminer sardonically refers to the IWF as "the women's auxiliary of the conservative elite" (Kaminer 1996, 45) and gay rights advocate Steven Gardiner writes that the

CWA activists, though they may appear to be showing dangerous signs of independence, are in fact doing the will of their husbands and their Christian duty to promote pro-family values (1998).

Antifeminist women's organizations do take on feminist successes and goals, often with a vengeance, but relegating these conservative advocates to such second-rate subservient status greatly downplays their influence and agency. In addition, it obscures the efforts of a large and important group of advocates, thus limiting our understanding of women's political activism.

Although interest group scholars do not talk about identity politics, there is a rich body of feminist scholarship that raises important questions about type of political activism (Dill 1995; Phelan 1993; Butler 1992; Fuss 1989). These women argue that assuming a correlation between identity and interests elides differences among those within a group. Identity politics, they contend, runs the risk of assuming all women have a "true essence -- that which is most irreducible, unchanging, and therefore constitutive of a given person or thing" (Fuss 1989, 2); that is, that such politics are "essentialist." Nonetheless, both Phelan (1993) and

Fuss (1989) want to retain some version of identity politics. but call for more careful attention to its effects, purposes and processes. In this spirit, my research addresses questions about the processes and purposes (and theorizes the effects) of identity politics within a particular context, by specific actors, in the hopes of learning more about its relative strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, I consider the importance of ideological differences among women leaders to how they conduct interests group strategies. a factor missing from most feminist analyses.

Definitions

The feminist movement in the United States is diverse⁴ and far-reaching, and includes national organizations, community groups, direct service providers, campus-based groups and, more recently, websites and list servers (Ferree and Martin 1995; Martin 1990; Bookman and Morgen 1988; Katzenstein and Mueller 1987). When the CWA and IWF talk about the feminist movement, however, they are mostly referring to nationally organized interest groups, especially the National Organization for Women (NOW), National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARRAL), the Planned Parenthood Federation of American (PPFA), the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and the

⁴Over the past two decades, women have criticized feminists and feminist organizations for not being more attentive to the ways race, class and sexuality intersect with gender (Dill 1995; Zinn and Dill 1994; Collins 1990; Bookman and Morgen 1988; Spelman 1988; Moraga and Anzaldua 1983; Reagon 1983; Smith 1983). As a result, many of the feminist organizations cited have made some progress in addressing the diversity among women and working more closely in coalitions with women's groups that are specifically organized around issues of race, class and sexuality.

Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF). As Martin notes, these feminist organizations are “relatively enduring [groups] of people that [are] structured to pursue goals that are collectively identified” (1990). While some are single-issue and others have multiple policy goals, all of these feminist groups generally agree that

women, compared to men, are an oppressed group and that women’s problems are a result of discrimination. Women’s status is shaped by processes of structural inequality, not individual actions or circumstances (Martin 1990, 184).

Both antifeminist women’s organizations consider such feminist groups to be their opponents and view them as dangerous and powerful. Indeed, Ferree and Martin point out that

a measure of the effectiveness of feminist organizations is the vehemence of the countermovements they have generated, evident in the mobilization of antifeminist organizations such as Eagle Forum, the National Association of Scholars and Operation Rescue (1995, 4).

The CWA and IWF identify specific targets for opposition and are explicit in naming these organizations and their activities as proxies for the entire feminist movement. When I talk about feminists, therefore, I too, am referring to these institutionalized political actors unless otherwise stated.

I use the term “antifeminist” in this study to reflect the founding missions of the CWA and IWF. While feminists are clearly not monolithic, the CWA and IWF characterize them as such. Each explicitly challenges the role of feminist organizations as representatives of women generally, as well as the goals of these

organizations, as previously discussed. Since their opposition to feminism helps shape their political rhetoric and organizational strategies, the phrase "antifeminism" accurately describes these groups. It is not just the tenets of feminism that concern them, however, but organized feminism's presence in political institutions and the media as well.

Methodology and Data

To investigate the questions posed earlier, I use a case study method. Unlike methods such as survey research, case study research allows for an examination of contextual variables and provides a more nuanced assessment of these organizations (Yin 1984). Since I am looking for the sometimes subtle, specific and often divergent ways gender identity, countermovement status and conservative ideology factor into these organizations' strategies, data gathered from interviews, content analysis and participant observation -- all methods that allow for a detailed analysis of variations, similarities and distinctions -- are most valuable in these cases.

There are two reasons that I chose to study two different organizations. First, having two cases provides me with more instances to test my hypothesis about the relationship between being countermovement women's organizations and political strategies, giving me more confidence in my conclusions. At the same time, however, analyzing two organizations with distinctions between their ideologies enables me to assess the extent to which variations on conservative

ideology affect these organizations' work. Since the universe of national antifeminist women's organizations is small, and these two organizations are the most prominent, well-established and prolific, these two case studies provide sufficient data to make claims about antifeminist women's nationally organized activism.

Data for this study were gathered from three methods: interviews with organizational leaders and professional staff, analyses of archival and current organizational literature and participant observation. I provide a detailed account of these three approaches following an in-depth discussion of the two organizations under study here.

The Organizations

I chose to study the CWA and IWF because both decidedly oppose the goals of the contemporary feminist movement,⁵ yet each embodies a distinct philosophy consistent with Klatch's distinction among women active in conservative interest groups (1987). Despite some variations from Klatch's ideal types, which I discuss below, these two organizations do nicely represent the range of institutionalized antifeminist women activists in the United States.

Like feminists, however, antifeminist women leaders are not monolithic. Klatch categorizes them as either "social conservatives" or "laissez-faire

⁵ From the perspective of the CWA and IWF, the feminist movement's main legislative goals are to support women's rights, abortion rights, pay equity, and government-funded family leave and child care policies.

conservatives." each representing a different worldview with regard to gender, religion, economics and the role of government (1987). "Social conservatives" are deeply religious.⁶ see the traditional heterosexual family as the core of society and root social problems in the moral realm. "Laissez-faire" conservatives point to the economic realm as the source of problems and emphasize individuality and the desire for freedom from government intrusion (Klatch 1987). My description of the specific organizations below will show how they fit into these categories.

Klatch also argues that socially conservative women tend to be gender identified, while laissez-faire conservative women do not recognize their "collective interests as women" (1987, 10) and are not necessarily antifeminist. While the organizations I have chosen generally represent women from these perspectives, with the CWA being comprised of socially conservative women and the IWF of laissez-faire conservatives, I do find that the laissez-faire conservatives of the IWF also express the need to act collectively as women and thus have formed into a women's organization. Unlike the laissez-faire women that Klatch interviews, this group of laissez-faire conservatives does believe that feminism is, at least, partly to blame for many social and economic problems. As I discuss, its reasons for turning to collective action are mostly strategic, but it does cite gender identity as an important factor in their potential for success. That these laissez-

⁶ Most of the members of the CWA identify as Evangelical or fundamentalist Protestants (Guth, et al. 1995).

faire conservatives have chosen to organize as women produces paradoxes and tensions that are explored throughout this study.

One important commonality between the two groups is that both profess that biological differences between men and women translate into gender differences. That is, each argues that women and men behave differently and have different concerns because they are physically different; each group assures, however, that these differences should not be the basis for gender *discrimination*. As I show, both reference these naturalized gender differences to ground their claims about women's interests and subsequent policy solutions.

Concerned Women for America

The foundings of the CWA and IWF coincided with two distinct periods of intense right-wing mobilization and political power. The Concerned Women for America (CWA), founded in 1979 by Beverly LaHaye, boasts 500,000 members.⁷ about 30 national staff and a \$10 million annual budget. Its founding, initially spurred by LaHaye's desire to oppose the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), and its subsequent growth, coincided with the politicization of the Christian Right in the late 1970's and early 1980's (Green, et al. 1996). At that time, Christian Right and New Right activists were also avidly mobilizing to oppose legalized abortion.

⁷ This figure comes from the CWA and is said to represent the number of people on their mailing list. However, Matthew Moen argues that this is a cumulative count of all individuals who have ever joined the organization at one time or another, rather than a current count of the membership. He surmises that the membership is less than this figure and may even be half that size (1992, 60).

homosexuality, Communism and promote school prayer. Through leaders like Jerry Falwell, Richard Viguerie and Paul Weyrich, conservatives developed a tight and effective infrastructure, including the establishment of several media outlets, and became a formidable political movement of which the CWA was, and is, a major player (Edwards 1999; Diamond 1995; Green 1995).

CWA, originally located in San Diego, CA, started with local prayer chapters that mobilized around socially conservative issues like opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and legalized abortion. Their membership packet tells this about their founding:

LaHaye watched a television interview with Betty Friedan, founder of the National Organization for Women. Realizing that Betty claimed to speak for the women of America, Mrs. LaHaye was stirred to action. She knew the feminists' anti-God, anti-family rhetoric did not represent her beliefs, or those of the vast majority of women (Concerned Women for America 1995).⁸

In 1985, the CWA relocated to Washington, D.C., establishing a national office and a national presence. Beverly LaHaye, a white middle class mother of four, whose previous work included running "family life" seminars with her husband, is closely tied to the broader Christian Right movement (her husband, Tim LaHaye, was on the Moral Majority's first Board of Directors). Given her ability to mobilize women through churches, mass mailings and radio,⁹ she has

⁸ Almost every CWA interviewee related this story to me, indicating its importance as organizational lore.

⁹ CWA broadcasts *Beverly LaHaye Today*, a regularly aired radio show.

successfully made a name for herself and her large grassroots women's organization. Indeed, Moen argues that the CWA has "emerged as a key Christian-Right organization of the post-Reagan era" (1992, 53) and journalists Cone and Scheer note that

LaHaye is a ranking member of the new cadre of Christian leaders who rose to power after the implosion of Reagan-era televangelists like Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggert (1993).

It is important to note the central role religion plays in this organization: on its website and in its periodicals the organization declares that it seeks to "protect and promote Biblical values among all citizens -- first through prayer, then education and finally by influencing our society -- thereby reversing the decline in moral values in our nation."¹⁰ Although conservative religious beliefs clearly unite and mobilize many of the organization's members and leaders,¹¹ the CWA, like so many other Christian Rights groups, has tailored many of its policy debates to reflect more mainstream concerns and rhetoric (Moen 1992; Hertzke 1988). As I demonstrate in this study, one way the CWA broadens its appeal is to co-opt

¹⁰ This statement can found at www.cwfa.org.

¹¹ John Green notes that white Evangelicals, such as those who comprise the CWA, account for about 25 percent of the adult American population. He argues that their high degree of religious commitment allows for effective mobilization on the basis of moral and religious appeals (1995, 5). In addition, others have shown that conservative religious women are especially motivated to political action through their religious beliefs. For example, a survey conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Center for Gender Equality, found that forty percent of "born again women" say religion has influenced their political activism as compared to only twenty-eight percent of women who attend religious services but do not identify with this traditionally conservative label (Princeton Survey Research Associates 1999).

feminist strategies and frame its issues more generally in terms of women's interests. This is not to say that the organization's spiritual convictions are fully obscured or hidden, but rather to note that in many cases these convictions are discursively transformed to soften their moralistic and religious inferences. Chapters Four and Five offer specific examples of this strategy.

Today the CWA has a professionally staffed office in Washington, D.C., claims members in all fifty states and professes itself to be the largest women's organization in the United States.¹² Locally, its mostly white¹³ female members gather in prayer chapters (650 throughout the United States) to pray about and take action on CWA's political agenda. Through e-mail updates, a monthly magazine, a website and phone calls, its national staff work closely with local grassroots members to update them on legislative affairs and train them to be effective activists. Its website allows members and other interested people to contact directly their members of Congress, and their national office coordinates volunteers for their "535 Program" -- a group of Washington, D.C. area activists who lobby monthly on issues of concern to the organization (the number refers to the total members of the U.S. Congress).

¹² As I noted earlier, some contest the membership count given by the CWA. On their website, www.now.org, the National Organization for Women (NOW) -- a feminist women's group -- also claims to have 500,000 members, although the CWA says that NOW really has less than 100,000.

¹³ Neither the CWA nor the IWF have official data on the race of their members. However, when I asked them about their constituents' demographics, interviewees noted that most of their members or associates were white women.

Its multi-issue policy agenda covers issues ranging from defending “family values” to opposing pornography to supporting religious freedom.¹⁴ Through advocacy on these issues, the CWA works in coalition with such conservative organizations as the Christian Coalition, the American Family Association, the Family Research Council and several pro-life groups. In sum, as a religiously based organization concerned with issues like abortion, homosexuality and family values, the CWA represents “socially conservative” women as defined by Klatch (1987).

The Independent Women’s Forum

In July 1991, President George Bush nominated Judge Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court. Partly because of his conservatism and partly because he was accused of sexual harassment by colleague Anita Hill, this nominee -- a conservative African-American man -- sparked a nasty and prolonged national debate about judicial activism, racism and sexism (Morrison 1992). The coalition to oppose his nomination included many feminist organizations, including NOW, AAUW and the National Women’s Law Center. But on the other side stood a group of women rallying behind him. Former Thomas colleague, friend, and IWF Board President, Ricky Silberman, related this story to me about her role in the process: a process that helped trigger the IWF’s founding:

¹⁴ Chapter Four provides an extensive discussion of their policy agenda and specific goals.

So we devised a strategy . . . whereby we brought together this group of women from all over the country. And we were the Women for Judge Thomas. What we were going to do, and what we did do, was whenever there was a break in the hearings, and remember Anita Hill had not been heard of at this time. But whenever there was a break in the hearings, we would go out and grab the microphone, and we would put our spin on things . . . It was incredibly successful in the first set of hearings. The fact that Anita Hill surfaced, I believe, was a result of the fact that Clarence was absolutely on his way to being overwhelmingly approved. There are many people who say part of the reason that was true is we had these women out there saying this guy was the father of sexual harassment law at the EEOC. There are all of these things that he did for women, and he is terrific . . . it was important that women were saying it, because the fight was going to come primarily from women (Silberman 1998).

Although Women for Judge Thomas disbanded after his successful appointment, its leaders were energized by their collective activism against feminism and eventually organized together with another group, WIN, or the Women's Information Network, to found the IWF in 1992.

In 1992, the year the IWF came to be, conservative Congressional Representative Newt Gingrich (R-GA) was also gaining political prominence and power. In 1989, Gingrich spearheaded the removal of Democratic House Speaker Jim Wright on ethics charges (Edwards 1999). Continuing his ardent fight against Democrats and liberals, he eventually became House Speaker when Republicans took control of the U.S. Congress in 1994. In this capacity, he fervently pushed his conservative manifesto -- the Contract with America -- creating a climate conducive for the growth, efficacy and credibility of the fledgling IWF.

As compared to the CWA, the Independent Women's Forum is a much younger and smaller organization, but one that has garnered considerable attention and clout over the past seven years. Ricky Silberman shared this story about the group's origins:

Basically, they were a networking organization. They were a bunch of women who were not radical feminists, who didn't want to belong to NOW, because that was so liberal and Democratic. But they also didn't want to belong to CWA, because they were not, for them abortion was not the single overriding issue. Some of them were pro-life, some pro-choice, they were conservative but were not, what we like to call or what I like to call, red meat conservatives. In other words, I think and I continue to think that this was a very mainstream group, but it was a right center as opposed to left center group . . . but it was very definitely a centrist group of women who didn't belong in NOW and who had no home (1998).

These antifeminist women leaders are well-connected to, or are in themselves, key policy and opinion makers.¹⁵ Resembling more of a think tank than a grassroots organization, it was founded to take on the "old feminist establishment" (Independent Women's Forum 1996). In the classical liberal,¹⁶ or "laissez-faire" conservative tradition, the organization claims to provide a "voice for American women who believe in individual freedom and personal

¹⁵ For example, founding Board member Wendy Gramm was the Chair of the Commodities Futures Trading Commission and is married to Senator Phil Gramm (R-TX). The President of their Board, Ricky Silberman, worked for, and has a close relationship with, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. I note these connections not to downplay the success and political agency of these antifeminist women, but to denote their political contacts and help situate them within the conservative movement.

¹⁶ I use this term as defined by Jean Hardisty: "classical liberalism, as distinct from New Deal liberalism, believes first and foremost in individual freedom. Like libertarianism, it is opposed to 'big government' and supports the economic and political freedom of the individual above all" (1999, 90).

responsibility . . . the voice of reasonable women with important ideas who embrace common sense over divisive ideology” (Independent Women's Forum 1996). On their website,¹⁷ the organizational mission also notes that the IWF believes in “individual liberty and responsibility for self-governance, the superiority of the market economy, and the imperative of equal opportunity for all.” Unlike the CWA, the IWF does not have a grassroots membership, but does employ about 10 professional staff members who are housed in Washington, D.C. and Virginia offices and who operate on an approximately \$1 million yearly budget.

Comprised of white professional women, the IWF targets other women who feel disillusioned and stressed about conflicting work and family needs: unlike women's groups like NOW and AAUW, however, the IWF blames feminism, not capitalism or corporate policies, for women's dissatisfaction. For example, the organization argues that feminists have made women feel guilty and unworthy if they choose to forgo paid employment to be stay-at-home mothers.

The IWF delights in caricaturing feminists and contesting the need for such things as the Equal Rights Amendment and pay equity policies.¹⁸ issues that the

¹⁷ www.iwf.org (2000)

¹⁸ For example, in conjunction with the conservative American Enterprise Institute they published *Women's Figures: An Illustrated Guide to the Economic Progress of Women in America* that aims to discredit the “familiar feminist tropes about women in the workplace -- the glass ceiling, the wage gap, [and] the pink ghetto” (Furchtgott-Roth and Stolba 1999, ix).

IWF views as evidence of feminists' desire to make government more intrusive into social and economic affairs. Hardisty keenly describes the IWF's style as "in-your-face . . . that rests on an assumption of a very smart and competent "us" sticking it to the feminists" (1999, 91). The IWF's policy programs, which reflect its explicit desire to challenge feminists, range from projects to dispute feminist claims about women's pay differentials from men to advocating for gender-segregated military training.¹⁹ To advocate for these issues, the IWF has collaborated with other conservative organizations such as the American Enterprise Institute, the Center for Equal Opportunity and the Foundation for Academic Standards and Tradition. In addition, the IWF has gained public attention by aligning themselves with other prominent women, some self-proclaimed feminists, who have maligned the feminist movement for allegedly conceptualizing women as victims and turning educational institutions into hotbeds of radicalism (Fox-Genovese 1995; Sommers 1994; Patai and Koertge 1994; Roiphe 1993).

Many of the IWF's policy goals, including its opposition to pay equity policies and federal funding for domestic violence programs, reflect its desire for limited public social services and freedom for businesses and individuals from

¹⁹ Chapter Four provides a thorough discussion and analysis of their policy platform and goals.

government interference. As such, the IWF represents the "laissez-faire" contingent of conservative women (Klatch 1987).

The Interviews

For this study I conducted 17 semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews with leaders and professional staff of the CWA and IWF (see Appendices A and B for list of interviewees and sample interview questions, respectively). Since my research concerns organizational strategies, I pursued and completed interviews with those women most likely to be responsible for such duties: the organizations' Presidents, Executive Directors, lobbyists, public relations directors and editors. As I was able to secure interviews with the top level staff first, the rest of the interviews were easily obtained as these leaders allowed me to use their names for references. The interviews mostly took place in person (see Appendix A) and lasted an average of 1.5 hours each. A few interviews went longer, with one taking up to four hours to complete. A systematic analysis of these interviews was conducted using a qualitative data analysis program -- NUDIST -- that enables interviews to be organized, coded and compared.

Initially, because I am a feminist and was a graduate student, I was concerned about these organizations taking me seriously and trusting my methods. I overcame this dilemma by noting the CWA's and IWF's lack of representation in the political science literature and my desire to remedy this omission in my letters

requesting the interviews. Only two requests for interviews were denied. It is important to add that my interviewees were extremely gracious, accessible and eager to help me with my project. While only a few inquired about my ideological beliefs, all trusted me to record their on-the-record interviews and spent as much time with me as I needed. Both of these organizations do believe that the “academy” denies them a fair hearing and both articulate concerns about feminism and liberalism infiltrating college classrooms. As such, I believe that part of their willingness to work with me stemmed from their desires to have their voices heard in an institution where they believe they have been silenced. Whatever their motivations, I am grateful to these activists for their assistance.

In the end, the interviews proved to be a critical part of this study as they gave me a much better understanding of the motivations of these particular antifeminist women. Written documents, especially those produced by national interest groups, tend to be less nuanced and more linear in presenting organizational goals and philosophies. Through my interviews, however, I got beyond some of the rhetoric and “party lines” to probe the complexities of women organizing as women, many of whom would rather eschew identity politics and others of whom advocate for women to prioritize their roles as homemakers. In addition, having personal conversations with these activists helped me overcome any preconceived ideas and really learn what inspires them to act politically.

Written Documents

Like most interest groups, both organizations produce volumes of written materials. The CWA and the IWF express themselves through periodicals, monographs, pamphlets, Congressional testimonies, amicus curiae, press releases, policy statements and websites and I analyze many of these documents for this study.²⁰

The CWA puts out its *Family Voice* on a monthly basis and the IWF publishes a quarterly journal entitled *The Women's Quarterly* and a quarterly newsletter called *Ex Femina*. The CWA's *Family Voice* is circulated to all of its members. This glossy and colorful periodical contains articles written by staff, Board members, an occasional guest (e.g. Florida's Governor Jeb Bush (R)), a regular column by founder Beverly LaHaye, updates on congressional legislation, field activities and advertisements for CWA's books and other products. It averages about forty pages an issue. The IWF's magazine, *The Woman's Quarterly* is less slick, contains more in-depth articles per issue and tends to be about 20-25 pages long, but with larger pages and more text per page than the CWA's *Family Voice*. The publication comes out four times a year and is written by staff, Board members and guests. The IWF's *Ex Femina* provides "chit chat" about the organizations latest activities, summaries of conferences and seminars

²⁰ Chapters Three, Four and Five specify the particular documents examined for each section.

and opinion pieces by staff and guest writers. While the IWF declares in its periodicals that not all its contributors reflect its views, the articles are ideologically consistent and mostly written by those closely affiliated with the organization.²¹ As such, I regard its content as organizational rhetoric and argue that all of these publications convey messages that can influence policymakers and the media, challenge feminists and mobilize members.

For Chapter Four of this study I analyze the 1997 editions of both organizations' periodicals, relevant pages from their websites, policy documents that elaborate upon the issues presented in the 1997 texts²² and interviews with organizational leaders. Since Chapter Four explores a range of issues, and since in 1997 both organizations' periodicals alone totaled about 500 pages and covered a broad spectrum of issues, one year's worth of data provides sufficient and substantial material for my analysis. For Chapter Five, however, where I hone in on one issue -- child care -- data come from articles in the 1994-1999 editions of both organizations' periodicals (with other relevant data coming from websites, policy documents, other publications and interviews as noted in the chapter). Since child care may only be mentioned once or twice a year in an organization's

²¹ For example, many contributors are IWF Board members or on the organization's National Advisory Board.

²² These documents include Congressional testimonies, amicus curiae briefs, books and pamphlets, fact sheets and position papers. I chose 1997 because at the time of the analysis it was the most recent year of data available and since IWF, founded in 1992, has become more organized, well-staffed and prolific since its inception, I chose to examine data that reflect this more "mature" and prominent status.

periodical. examining several years worth of data allows me to make more substantive claims.

Participant Observation

While much of my data come from interviews and written materials. supplemental information comes from participant observation. Richard Fenno's *Home Style* (1978). exemplifies the importance of participant observation. or what he calls "soaking and poking." In his study he traveled with members of Congress to their home districts to see how they acted with their specific constituencies. Among other things, he concludes that constituencies are not monolithic. as they are often represented in political science literature. Fenno contends that his findings could not be obtained only through one-on-one interviews or by observing members of Congress in more formal contexts and thus ably argues for use of the participant observation method. In her study of "women of the new right." Klatch also remarks on the value of participant observation (1987):

Participant observation adds a further dimension to the perceptions gained through the interviews. Surrounded by their peers. those attending meetings and conferences often express themselves in a freer and heartier manner than in a one-to-one situation. This allows another view of the central symbols and beliefs valued by groups of people who share a political ideology (1987. 15).

Using this method, I was able to observe antifeminist women's behavior in a less constrained and more comfortable context and see how they interacted with one another as well.

The CWA holds annual national conventions and the IWF sponsors regular luncheons and one day colloquia. I attended two CWA national conventions -- September 19-21, 1996 at the Sheraton Washington Hotel in Washington, D.C. and September 24-27, 1998 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Alexandria, VA. I also attended a day-long IWF conference entitled "Scared Sick?" at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on February 17, 1999. In addition, I was an invited participant at the "Core Connections: Women, Religion and Public Policy" symposium, held October 8-9, 1999 at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; associates from both organizations were present and participated in this conference. In all of these public gatherings I socialized with members and associates, ate meals with them, and in many circumstances, told them I was doing a study of their organizations. As with the interview process, all of my interactions were amicable: most of the women seemed quite pleased that I was conducting this study and surprisingly none asked me to detail to my research questions or what I expected to find. While the specific data analyzed for this project come from interviews and organizational literature, this method of participant observation afforded me a greater ability to understand and interact with antifeminist women leaders and broadened my general understanding about how the organizations work.

Overview of the Chapters

The remainder of this study is divided into five chapters. By elaborating on the research questions posed earlier, Chapter Two presents the framework I use to explore these organizations' strategies. As such, I position myself theoretically within writings on interest group strategies, gender identity and countermovements. In so doing I offer a substantive discussion of the relationship between gender identity and representation and what this might mean in terms of the CWA's and IWF's strategic choices. In addition, given the conflicting influences on countermovement organizations, I discuss the expectation that the CWA and IWF will need to mediate between a range of influences -- co-opting feminist strategies while criticizing them and speaking to conservative allies while seeking to mobilize a broader range of women.

Chapter Three describes the specific representational strategies antifeminist women's organizations employ due to their identity-based status and assesses the link between gender identity and representational strategies. I evaluate the degree to which different forms of representation -- descriptive, substantive and what I call descriptive-substantive (assuming a correlation between the two) -- are invoked by these groups to establish themselves as legitimate representatives of women's interests. Specifically I ask if the CWA and the IWF consider the presence of women in positions of political leadership integral to the process of having their interests represented. In addition, I explore why these antifeminist

activists have formed into women's organizations. I find that these groups are acutely aware of the political salience of gender identity and deploy their "womanhood" selectively and strategically to contest feminist claims of representation and give conservative interests more legitimacy.

In the following section, Chapter Four, I survey and analyze a range of CWA's and IWF's policy goals, consider how they frame issues and how this framing is the result of the particular tensions of being countermovement women's organizations. While I find that the CWA and IWF promote a range of conservative political causes, I also show that, like feminists, these groups claim to be representing women's issues and interests universally. Thus, to enhance these organizations' credibility as political representatives of women, each must engage in a number of issue framing strategies that reflect the influence and successes of feminists but are also mediated through their own conservative ideologies and values.

Building on the previous chapter, Chapter Five provides an in-depth analysis of a political issue common to both organizations -- child care -- and examines how an idealized conception of motherhood is constructed through their framing of this public policy. I show how as countermovement women's organizations these groups transform feminist inspired messages about motherhood and child care to better fit their conservative values. As I also show,

motherhood is a key category of contestation for both feminists and antifeminists. as each seeks the right to represent women's interests.

In each of the empirical chapters -- Three, Four and Five -- I also compare and contrast the two organizations, indicating the moments where the CWA and IWF act in divergent, as well as in similar ways.

In Chapter Six, the conclusion, I consider what this study has shown us about the influence of being countermovement women's organizations on groups' strategies. In addition, I note that the particular confluence of strategies and influences (i.e. representation, issue framing, gender identity, conservative ideology) allows me to address literatures outside of the specific interest group scholarship. As such, I argue that this study points to implications for thinking about interest groups, theories of representation, identity politics, conservative politics and feminist activism and discuss the particular ways that it may bear on our understanding of these issues.

Chapter Two: Exploring Organizational Strategies

Introduction

This chapter details the primary concepts and framework that guide my analysis of the strategies antifeminist women's organizations use to act as legitimate representatives of women's interests. Specifically, I explore in more depth the research questions raised in Chapter One, providing justification for my hypotheses that being both *countermovement* and *women's* organizations will influence the CWA's and IWF's strategies. First, I argue that gender identity should influence the strategies of these organizations. As such, I explore previous findings indicating the relevance of gender identity in politics and argue for applying these conclusions to the CWA and IWF. I follow with a discussion of the significance of understanding these groups as countermovement organizations, highlighting the tensions groups like these encounter as they strive to persuade others of the rightness of their views, while acknowledging the successes and influence of their opponents. These explorations are followed by a detailed discussion of the research questions posed in Chapter One, including an explanation of the two specific areas of organizational strategies that I analyze -- representational and issue framing -- and the specific concepts I use to measure the

influence of being both a countermovement and a women's organization on these two sets of strategies.

Gender Identity and Political Action

In focusing on "gender identity" as a variable in influencing organizational strategy, I am concerned with the relationship between identity and activism, or when and how antifeminist women's organizations see their identities as *women's* groups as central to their political actions. As noted, most interest groups, including the two under study here, engage in a number of common strategies. But, as groups seeking to claim legitimacy as representatives of women's interests, I expect that some of the CWA's and IWF's strategies will be shaped in ways related to their being countermovement *women's* organizations. Thus, I explore the relationship between gender identity and organizational strategies.

As I demonstrate below, there are myriad cases that indicate the value of acting collectively as women to achieve political gains and influence. Despite that the laissez-faire leaders of the IWF should be unlikely to act "in the collective interests of gender" (Klatch 1987, 153) and that socially conservative women like those who comprise the CWA prioritize women's private roles as wives and mothers (Klatch 1987), the CWA and IWF are well aware of the salience of organizing professionally as women and do indeed engage in strategies that highlight their identities as national *women's* organizations. For both groups, this should be an effective way to contest feminist assertions that they represent

women. In Chapter Three I demonstrate this claim. In this section I explore the relationship between gender identity and politics and why gender identity should matter to both the CWA and IWF.

Empirically, many scholars have tested the presumed correlation between gender identity and political activism. Some argue that gender consciousness may be the important link between gender identity and political interests and action (Tolleson-Rinehart 1992; Miller, Hildreth, and Simmons 1988; Conover 1988; Gurin 1985; Klein 1984). These researchers suggest that gender conscious women are those who identify with women as a group, feel affected by the social conditions under which that group lives (Tolleson-Rinehart 1992) and "view the social situation of their group in political terms" (Miller, Hildreth, and Simmons 1988, 107). Their measures of gender consciousness include some sense of discontentment with women's social and political status -- measures such as views about gender roles, feelings of relative deprivation, and/or support for the women's movement. These analyses ultimately explain feminist political behavior and often leave the impression that "nonfeminist" women behave like men, and thus warrant no further analysis. Consequently, antifeminist women's different or unique political contributions and actions are never fully considered. In addition, it appears from this research that only feminist policy preferences and political action are motivated by gender identity, despite that these researchers note an increase in the number of women who do identify with their gender, but do not

support feminist goals (Tolleson-Rinehart 1992; Miller, Hildreth, and Simmons 1988)²³.

While this literature lacks in its explanation of antifeminist women's political activities, it does suggest an important relationship between gender identity and political attitudes and actions. Thus, gender identity should be central to the political mobilization of both feminist and antifeminist women alike, who feel some connection to women as a "group" even if they view their political interests differently.

Another group of scholars has looked at the relationship between gender identity and political action by studying women elected officials. The impetus for this body of work derives from the expectation that women in elected office will act differently from their male colleagues. These studies assume that the gender of elected officials will correlate to policy priorities and goals and that women can better represent other women. Most studies of women elected officials support this hypothesis.

²³A different way to conceptualize identity politics among antifeminist women is offered by Temma Kaplan who observes "female consciousness" among Spanish women. She finds these women motivated to political action in defense of the "rights due them according to the [traditional] division of labor" (Kaplan 1982, 551). These women, she argues, "accept the gender system of their society" (545), but disrupt the "public" sphere by making political claims. Kaplan finds women who fight for the rights associated with the sexual division of labor, and indeed antifeminist women make similarly gendered or essentialist claims. However, the antifeminist women leaders in my study go beyond advocating for what she calls "everyday" or material concerns to fighting for the maintenance of traditional gender differences -- an ideological battle as well.

Studies of women state legislators, for example, find that women uniquely contribute to the political process and tend to be more supportive of women's issues (Thomas 1994; Kathleen 1994; Reingold 1992; Dodson and Carroll 1991; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1987). They also find that within their respective parties, women place a higher priority and spend more time on equity issues, especially on women's right issues, and give higher priority to policies related to women's traditional roles as nurturers and caregivers.

While early studies of women in Congress found that women tended to be more liberal than men, these researchers also found other factors such as party affiliation to be a stronger predictor of voting behavior (Leader 1977; Gehlen 1977; Welch 1985). More recent studies, however, find gender to be a salient factor in determining legislative actions. Thomas suggests that this shift reflects women's increasing willingness to "embrace new possibilities for participation and contribution" (1994). That is, as societal views about women's roles have changed, so too have ideas about women's political roles and priorities. For example, Dodson et al. (1995) find that women in the 103rd Congress vote differently than their male colleagues, feel a special responsibility to represent women and work together to advance a collective agenda. Tamerius finds that women are considerably more likely to introduce feminist legislation into congressional deliberation, and cosponsor and make floor statements in support of them (1995). And, in another recent study, Swers finds that "while ideology is

the strongest predictor of voting for women's issues. congresswomen are more likely to vote for women's issues bills than their male colleagues even when one controls for ideological, partisan and district factors" (1998, 445).

Although the findings on women legislators are a bit mixed, they do offer evidence that women legislators tend to be strong advocates for women's issues. usually more so than their male counterparts. That is, women elected officials are willing to "expend more political capital" (Mezey 1994, 266) in securing the passage of "women's issues" legislation and count "women" as a group among their lists of particular constituencies.

Studies of women's activism historically and in contemporary contexts also point to the significance of gender identity in mobilizing women to act politically. For example, women were motivated to act *as* women, for and against women's suffrage (Marshall 1985; Flexner 1975) while gender-based separatism and "female institution building" laid the groundwork for the rise of the women's club movement (Freedman 1995). Echols also documents the political activism of "cultural feminists," in the 1960s and 1970s. According to her, these "essentialists . . . sought to celebrate femaleness" (Echols 1989, 6). As such, this group of activists were not only drawn to political action by their gender, but by a desire to politicize gender identity. Finally, there is a rich and growing body of literature that chronicles the efforts and institutionalization of the "second wave" of the women's movement. Through this research, scholars highlight the myriad

and broad-reaching policy changes brought about by women's organizations. pointing to the importance of collective action, group identity and the gender gap among women activists and voters (Ferree and Martin 1995; Costain 1988; Gelb and Palley 1987; Klein 1984).

These bodies of work demonstrate that gender identity has political significance. That is, that many politically active women, both feminist and nonfeminist, consider their identities as women to be relevant to their actions and goals. As such, despite that the CWA and IWF criticize feminists for making universal claims about women's interests, and despite that the IWF critiques identity-based political organizing, I expect that for both the CWA and IWF, organizations comprised of antifeminist women leaders and activists, gender identity should be central to the strategies they choose to challenge feminist political activism. And, as countermovement organizations formed directly to confront the feminist movement, acting as women and for women, is a strategy that should enable them to better contest feminist claims of representing women. As Zald and Useem argue, a movement's success (in this case, the feminist movement), demonstrates the benefits of collective action to countermovements (1987). As I discuss, feminist successes clearly affect the CWA and IWF and push them to adopt identity-based activism and speak to women's interests even when they may simultaneously disparage feminists for doing the same.

The Political Context: CWA and IWF as Countermovement Organizations

A “countermovement” organization is a movement [organization] that “makes contrary claims simultaneously to those of the original movement” (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996, 1631). The interactionist approach to understanding these political organizations regards countermovements as dynamic and interactive (Lo 1982; Marshall 1995; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). This countermovement literature, which mostly centers on the role of conservative and anti-abortion movements,²⁴ argues against the conceptualization of countermovement organizations as purely reactionary and static (Marshall 1995) and focuses instead on countermovement organizations’ engagement and sustained interaction with both opponents and supporters (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). In this way, scholars draw attention to how these relationships affect organizational actions (Lo 1982), or, how groups or movements respond “not only to policy, but to each other” (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996, 1645).

Both the CWA and IWF must “convince bystanders and authorities about the rightness of their views” (Zald and Useem 1987, 270). For countermovement organizations, this process happens under particular political conditions. As noted in the Introduction (Chapter One) to this study, the CWA and IWF were born

²⁴ While Meyer and Staggenborg (1996) refer to several political movements, they mostly draw on examples from the abortion conflict in the United States. Marshall (1995) examines the rhetoric of two antifeminist women’s organizations -- the CWA and the Eagle Forum. Lo (1982) analyzes the right-to-life, stop-ERA and anti-busing movements.

during periods of significant growth and popularity for conservative movements and political actors. While each of these groups is effective and influential in their own right, each also works closely with other conservative organizations, coalitions, institutions, individuals and policymakers. As I argue throughout this study, these organizations help legitimate conservative causes and draw women into the conservative movement (see Marshall 1996, for a related argument). In addition, each group seeks to maintain and mobilize its conservative constituencies and allies. These are especially important considerations for a movement that supports candidates who suffer from electoral gender gaps and is prone to public perceptions of hostility to women's interests (Norrander 1999; Mueller 1988).

And, while each group works with and seeks acceptance from other conservatives, as countermovement women's organizations, each must also keep its opponents well in mind. The CWA and IWF not only connect their members and associates to other conservative causes and organizations (Marshall 1996), but they also seek to attract and mobilize women not affiliated with their organizations. In so doing, they must challenge feminist organizations' claims to representing women. Given that feminists have had decades to stake their claims to women's interests and have had a significant impact on women's lives, these antifeminist women's organizations must carefully craft their messages and policy goals to take women's attitudes and feminism's influence into account.

Although feminists have suffered many political losses over the past two decades, they have also transformed the social, economic and political landscape for women by helping to increase the number of women in public office.²⁵ change beliefs about gender roles and pass legislation aimed at improving women's lives. For example, in both the legislative and judicial arenas, feminist accomplishments include *Roe v. Wade* which legalized abortion in 1973, Title IX that promotes equity for women in federally funded institutions, the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 which guarantees unpaid leave to new parents and the procurement of funding for women's health issues, especially breast cancer (Dodson, et al. 1995; Conway, Ahern, and Steuernagel 1995; Ferree and Martin 1995; Fried 1990; Gelb and Palley 1987; Boneparth and Stoper 1988). The CWA and IWF oppose much of these specific policy achievements, but do operate in a context where both they and many other women have benefitted from feminist strategies that helped open up career and political opportunities for women and make women's interests relevant in politics. As such, these ardent opponents to feminism must make sense of feminist accomplishments, while simultaneously discrediting them as representatives of women's interests. As I show, these challenges, stemming from

²⁵ For example, in 1980 there were 908 women state legislators (12.1%); in 2000 there were 1670 (22.5%). In the U.S. Congress the number has risen from 17 women in the House and Senate in 1980 (3.2%) to 65 or 12.1% of all Members in 2000 (these figures come from personal communication with Gilda Morales at the Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. Its fact sheets on women in public office can be found at www.cawp.rutgers.edu).

their being countermovement women's organizations. are always prevalent and shape the strategic choices of both groups.

While feminists have altered the social and political environment, many women still shy from the movement and its call for re-evaluating women's roles. Despite that a majority of women support the "women's movement," many are ambivalent about "feminism," and decidedly torn between negotiating their roles as mothers with their needs or desires to be in the paid workforce (Hays 1996).²⁶ The CWA and IWF expertly exploit these tensions and uncertainties, calling on their members and other women to join them in making women's lives more meaningful by turning back or turning over feminist gains. As the term "feminism" itself has negative connotations, these organizations wisely and judiciously invoke the phrase in criticizing public policies and liberal ideologies, often making the term even more unappealing by adding "radical" as an adjective.

As countermovement women's organizations formed specifically to oppose feminists, these two groups operate in a political context rife with competing values and audiences: feminist activists, the conservative groups with which they

²⁶For example, seventy-four percent of women do not consider themselves to be feminists, while sixty-six percent of that same group has a favorable impression of the women's movement (CBS New Poll 1999). In addition, in another public opinion poll asking women's impression of feminism, researchers found that thirty-two percent responded favorably, forty-three had an unfavorable opinion, twelve had a mixed impression and thirteen percent were unsure (CNN/Time Poll 1998). Moreover, sixty-eight percent of women polled nationally say it would be better if women could stay home with their children and not work if they could afford to; thirty-eight percent of women polled disagreed with this statement (Washington Post Poll 1997).

coalesce. their members. potential participants. the media and policy makers (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Because of this political environment. there are myriad factors that could mediate what strategies they choose. as these two countermovement women's organizations seek to establish their own legitimacy as women's groups while discrediting feminists for doing the same. In addition. as women's organizations. each group must speak to its own conservative constituencies and allies. but also appeal to a broader range of women. many of whom have benefitted from. and support the goals of. the feminist movement. As such. I argue that their sometimes contradictory and paradoxical strategies stem from their having to respond to these conflicting goals.

Organizational Actions: Representational and Issue Framing Strategies

As outlined in Chapter One. I explore the influence of being both countermovement and women's organizations on the CWA's and IWF's political strategies in two specific areas: their representational and issue framing strategies.

For organizations like the CWA and the IWF. the question of representation is central. These antifeminist women's organizations consider it their mission to challenge biases brought about by what they see as feminists' unfettered access to government institutions. and unfair. liberal. media coverage. In this way. they vie for representation among the myriad national women's organizations. To do so. they must not only oppose the policy goals of feminist organizations. but the right of those groups to speak for women. Thus I explore if and why these antifeminist

women leaders have organized *as* women and if they consider it important to position women in key public leadership roles.

Second, I analyze the relationship between issue framing and political legitimacy, examining how these groups construct women's interests and frame women's issues and the extent to which their narratives about women's interests factor into their building credibility as policy advocates. Since the framing of issues can produce meanings about women and help establish the CWA and IWF as the legitimate representatives of women's interests, I look specifically at how these organizations talk about their policy goals and how being countermovement women's organizations could shape what issues they support and how they frame these issues.

Representational Strategies

The question of representation has been raised by interest group scholars in debates over pluralism, bias, and the extent to which interest groups adequately and fairly represent the range of interests among a country's citizenship (Cigler and Loomis 1998; Lowi 1979; Truman 1951). "Pluralists" argue that competition among the range of interest groups will produce policies that basically represent the interests of the general public (Truman 1951). This view has been broadly criticized by scholars such as Schattschneider (1960), Olson (1965) and Lowi (1969) who argue that some interests get systematically recognized in the policy making process, while others consistently lose. They cite access to resources and

power as factors that facilitate or impede a particular group's success. Lowi goes further to critique the nature of interest group politics by suggesting that only group-supported, "special interests," will be considered by the government, while those favoring the public interest will be ignored (1969).

For organizations like the CWA and the IWF, questions of representation and the role of interest groups are salient, but the interest group literature does not really address the specific concerns of these antifeminist women's groups. As countermovement women's organizations, a primary goal of both the CWA and IWF is to construct themselves as the legitimate representatives of women's interests. They not only oppose the policy goals of feminist organizations, but the right of those groups to speak for women. Thus, they are concerned not only with bias and access, but with which women have the right to speak for, or represent, other women in the policymaking process. In this way, gender identity should be central to the representational concerns of the CWA and the IWF.

Because the interest group literature does not address the questions of representation which are so significant to the CWA and IWF, I have turned to literature on descriptive and substantive representation and elected officials to analyze the relationship between gender identity and representational strategies as highlighted in Chapter Three. While representation has typically been discussed in terms of elected officials (Mansbridge 1999; Phillips 1995; Kymlicka 1995; Pitkin 1967), interest groups also represent constituents' ideas and interests in the

policy making process. And, broadly speaking, debates about descriptive and substantive representation reflect the politicization of identity in American politics. In these ways, this scholarship offers valuable concepts to help us think about interest group strategies, gender identity and representation in these two antifeminist women's organizations.

In one of the most important works on representation and elected officials. *The Concept of Representation* (1967), Hanna Pitkin reflects on the political problems of representation and the "mandate-independence" dilemma. In so doing, she explores several forms of representation, including "descriptive" and "substantive" -- the ones most relevant to this research. Pitkin argues that descriptive representation depends on a

representative's characteristics, on what he is or is like, on being something rather than doing something. The representative does not act for the other: he "stands for" them by virtue of a correspondence or connection between them a resemblance or reflection (1967, 61).

In essence, descriptive representation is mostly symbolic and, when an elected body more closely resembles that of the constituencies it is supposed to represent, descriptive representation is considered a move towards fairness and justice (Mansbridge 1999; Kymlicka 1995; Phillips 1995). Pitkin, however, criticizes proponents of descriptive representation for being too focused on the composition of legislative bodies and not enough on what they are actually doing:

Finally, the view of representation we have been discussing does not allow for an activity of representing, except in the special and restricted sense of "making representations," giving information. It has no room for any kind

of representing as acting for, or on behalf of others . . . [T]he descriptive view is not irrelevant . . . it is irrelevant insofar as representing involves no action at all but only characteristics (1967, 90).

In contrast, substantive representation is the notion that representatives need not share an identity with those they represent; instead representation is based on the content or guiding principle of a person's actions or what the representative "acts for" regardless of who s/he is (Pitkin, 1967:118). While Pitkin distinguishes between these conceptualizations, some proponents of descriptive representation keep the substantive well in mind: they argue that there can be a direct relationship between the two and that "acting for" can follow from "standing for" (Mansbridge 1999; Kymlicka 1995).²⁷ This relationship, which I call "descriptive-substantive representation," is based on the assumption that a person who shares experiences and/or social locations with another is more likely to understand and support that person's interests and act accordingly. Claims proffering a relationship between descriptive and substantive representation are also epistemological ones: they suggest that people with like identities are better able to represent the interests of people like themselves because they have had similar experiences and know the interests of those they claim to represent. Efforts to increase women and people of color in elected office reflect this belief.

²⁷Pitkin also critiques this relationship, arguing that it is nearly impossible to determine which characteristics of a representative are relevant and responsible for her/his actions as a representative.

Aside from Pitkin's critiques, there are other important arguments made against descriptive and descriptive-substantive representation. As many feminist theorists have argued, assuming a direct correlation between identity and interests elides differences among those within a group. Such essentialism, as it has often been called, suggests a homogeneity of interests and experiences that usually reflects white middle class women's backgrounds or those with more access to power and resources. Some feminists have also contested the notion that experience should be the basis for common knowledge and understanding (Bar On 1993; Scott 1992; Collins 1990). Other critics, like Swain, argue that encouraging representation based on racial identity (in her study, African-Americans) may lead to the disqualification of supportive but "dissimilar" representatives (1993). Additionally, some political conservatives, especially those influenced by libertarian and neoconservative thinking, criticize identity politics because of its supposed conflict with more democratic values of individualism, freedom and self-expression (Dunn and Woodard 1996).

The critiques of descriptive-substantive representation notwithstanding, several scholars have also convincingly argued that there are merits to both descriptive and descriptive-substantive representation (Mansbridge 1999; Kymlicka 1995; Phillips 1995). Answering a "contingent" yes to the question of whether Blacks should represent Blacks and women represent women, Mansbridge, argues that descriptive representation can give a group "de facto

legitimacy” by “making citizens, and particularly members of historically under-represented groups feel as if they themselves were present in the deliberations” (1996, 23). Similarly, Kymlicka (1995) argues that politics in the U.S. and Canada has never been based on purely individualistic conception of the franchise, and that group representation as a response to systemic disadvantage in the political process is justifiable (1995, 144). Descriptive representation, they argue, is not only a means to ensuring substantive representation, but in itself can be a symbolic act that lends legitimacy and political efficacy to a particular group -- an outcome that could produce the laudable goal of greater political participation. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, scholars who have empirically evaluated the association between gender identity and political action among women legislators have found a positive relationship between descriptive and substantive representation (Swers 1998; Tamerius 1995; Thomas 1994; Dodson and Carroll 1991).

The fact that the CWA and IWF are *women's* organizations that make claims *as women* to represent women's interests, suggests the need to investigate the extent to which descriptive, substantive or descriptive-substantive representation is evident in their political strategies. Moreover, I pursue answers as to why these groups may choose to invoke these somewhat contested forms of political action. To evaluate their actions, I use the following concepts, derived from Pitkin's work, to categorize the form in which antifeminist women's

representational strategies emerge: descriptive (gender matters symbolically: as such, women can stand for other women just by virtue of their gender), purely substantive (gender does not matter) or as a direct relationship between the two or descriptive-substantive (gender matters because women have different policy priorities and goals than men).

To determine the scope and importance of these representational strategies for the CWA and IWF, and the influence of being countermovement women's organizations on these strategies, I explore two facets. First, I ask why have antifeminist women leaders formed into *women's* groups? Second, I pursue a question related to a more external form of representation: do they consider the presence of women in positions of political leadership integral to the process of having their interests represented? And, as countermovement women's organizations, I examine the degree to which any or all of these identity-based representational approaches are shaped by these groups' having to negotiate between adopting feminist strategies and attending to their sometimes conflicting conservative ideologies and constituencies. Finally, I compare the strategies of both organizations, indicating the reasons for differences or similarities between the two.

Asking these questions about antifeminist women's organizations' representational strategies also broadens our understanding of the relationship between identity and political representation more generally. How may descriptive

representation. for example, further the goals of interest groups? Despite critiques of identity-based politics (Phelan 1993; Butler 1992), there may be valid reasons for interest groups to rely on such a strategy. On the one hand, antifeminist women's groups' challenges to feminist claims of knowing what women need, throw into question the value of this representational strategy. On the other hand, antifeminist women organized into *women's* groups reinforces this political strategy, since they too are making political interest claims as women. So how do the CWA and IWF legitimate these seemingly contradictory political goals? And to what end?

Issue Framing Strategies

A critical aspect of interest group strategy is the framing of policy problems.²⁸ assigning blame for them and offering solutions based upon those conceptualizations (Snow and Benford 1988). These "causal stories" (Stone 1989) have symbolic importance (Conover and Gray 1983; Edelman 1964) that not only shape political outcomes, but enter into public discourse and help mold meaning and the patterns of ideas we have about the particular communities under discussion. Such "discursive" politics (Katzenstein 1998) is circular as well: as Mansbridge reminds us, organizations shape discourse and discourse shapes organizations (Mansbridge 1995, 31). As I will show, for organizations such as

²⁸Baumgartner and Leech (1998) show, however, that large-scale studies of organizational activities fail to examine issue definition as an organizational strategy.

the CWA and IWF. narratives about political issues serve to ground their organizational identities and claims to legitimacy. In addition, as antifeminist women's organizations make interest claims in the political process they recreate to policymakers and the public ideas about what women want and need. Through this process, what it means to be a "woman," is produced. In this way, the CWA and IWF can be formidable opponents for feminist organizations who make similar claims about who women are and what policy issues they care about.

Both the CWA and the IWF have multi-issue policy agendas, which I describe in Chapter Four. While we might expect that as women's organizations, their platforms would include women's issues and the framing of issues in terms of women's interests, there are reasons to suggest that this may not be the case.²⁹ As I show throughout this project, both the CWA and IWF explicitly criticize feminist organizations for making policy claims for all women and for suggesting that women have the same perspectives on political issues. As the IWF's membership literature quips: "join a group of women who enjoy lively conversation and debate, and who balk at the idea that there is ever just one

²⁹ Among the issues on the organizations' agendas that I consider to be women's issues are women's health, reproductive health, pay equity, child care, the ERA, violence against women and pornography. Nontraditional women's issues include concerns about the United Nations, "junk" science and prayer in schools. The former are issues that many second wave feminist and other women's organizations have addressed for the past three decades and tend to be issues that predominantly affect women. The latter, however, can be also considered women's issues, but are often defined in terms broader than those having to do with their gendered implications.

“female” point of view” (Independent Women's Forum 1995). Thus, while both organizations may talk about women’s issues and interests, each should at least qualify that they are only referring to *conservative* women’s interests and viewpoints. In addition, the laissez-faire women leaders of the IWF critique identity-based political claims, suggesting that this group should be opposed to promoting women’s issues and framing issues in terms of women’s interests.

Yet despite these substantial reasons to the contrary, there are other compelling arguments that point to the likelihood that both groups would indeed speak to women’s issues and women’s interests. First, as articulated earlier, as countermovement women’s organizations seeking legitimacy as representatives of women’s interests, it benefits both groups to adopt the feminist movement’s successful strategies. Feminists have changed policies and attitudes by speaking to women’s interests and putting women’s issues on the national agenda (Ferree and Martin 1995; Boneparth and Stoper 1988; Gelb and Palley 1987). Second, as countermovement women’s organizations, it would serve these groups to directly refute feminist claims that they truly know women’s needs and concerns, as both the CWA and IWF believe that they really speak to the truth about women’s interests. As the CWA’s LaHaye argues about the need for her group’s newly organized Beverly LaHaye Center for Studies in Women’s Issues:

Most women know the feminist agenda has failed. They see our culture crumbling from its influence. In fact, feminism has harmed women and families worldwide as its proponents have used the United Nations to

spread their agenda. So now, American women and those around the world are searching for the *truth* about pertinent issues (LaHaye 1999, 5, emphasis added).

Thus, as I show, like feminists, these groups do promote women's issues and frame issues in terms of women's interests. However, they must also show why their version of this process differs from, and is more legitimate than, feminists. That is, the CWA and IWF need to construct themselves as having the "right" interpretation of the problem, but also offer narratives about feminists that position them as wrongfully speaking to and for women. In addition, as countermovement women's organizations, the CWA's and IWF's potential members -- women -- may overlap with those of feminist organizations, creating possible conflicts in how to frame messages that appeal to a range of women. And, given that the CWA and IWF often respond to feminist rhetoric and policy successes, we are likely to see the influence of feminist frames in antifeminist women's organizations' debates over their issues.

To best understand the IWF's and CWA's issue framing strategies I turn to the body of research on collective action framing and use this literature to interpret my data in Chapters Four and Five. This literature argues for directing attention to the myriad influences on an organization, including other groups, individuals and identity, and how groups may negotiate among these influences. As such, the literature provides a useful framework for seeking to understand how countermovement women's organizations engage in issue framing strategies.

As I noted, issue framing is an important strategy for interest groups in general. According to Tarrow, collective action frames are “purposively constructed guides to action created by existing or prospective movement organizers” (1992, 177). Snow and Benford argue that such frames accomplish three critical tasks: to provide a diagnosis of events and problems in need of alteration; to offer a proposed solution to the problem; and to elicit a call to arms or rationale for engaging in corrective action (1988). In this way, organizations and actors are “actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders and observers” (Snow and Benford Robert D. 1992, 136). Thus, framing is central to political mobilization as it connects people to a cause or ideology and provides them with reasons to take action. As Tarrow also observes, organizations not only produce meanings, but their meanings are constitutive of them. That is, new frames of meaning result from the struggles over values and beliefs within social movements and from their clash with their opponents. As such, the interactive nature of political struggles, as is especially true in the case of countermovement organizations (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Lo 1982), requires that we evaluate the influence of political context on how organizations frame their interests (1992).

In this study, I show that political context, or factors associated with being countermovement women’s organizations, influence their issue frames. Specifically I find that both groups attempt to negotiate among various

constituencies -- most notably conservatives, feminists and unaligned women -- as they frame their issues and seek to establish legitimacy as representatives of women's interests. Thus, for the CWA and IWF, like other organizations, how they frame issues relates to how well they can mobilize their members and appeal to potential members. That is, issue frames provide justification for people to seek political and social change.

Snow and his colleagues (1986) propose a useful framework, referred to as the "frame alignment process," for understanding the CWA's and IWF's specific issue framing strategies. According to Snow and his co-authors, frame alignment processes allow groups to link their values and beliefs to those of the individuals and other groups they are trying to mobilize. As such, the frame alignment process renders "events or occurrences [as] meaningful [and] frames function to organize experience and guide action, whether individual or collective" (Snow, et al. 1986, 464). The authors identify four variations of frame alignment strategies, two of which are relevant to my study: "frame bridging" and "frame transformation." Frame bridging refers to the "linkage of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames" (Snow, et al. 1986, 467) such that groups can link their ideas to other like-minded organizations or individuals. For the CWA and IWF, frame bridging would allow these groups to link other conservatives and members to their values and goals.

On the other end of the frame alignment spectrum is "frame transformation," a process that an organization can use when its values and goals "may not resonate with, and on occasion may even appear antithetical to. conventional lifestyles or rituals" (Snow, et al. 1986, 473). Frame transformation allows a group to reinterpret opposing or inconsistent values and beliefs through its own frames and thus transform the meaning of an issue to be more consistent with its views. As I will show, both the CWA and IWF use this strategy frequently to negotiate among the competing influences on them as countermovement women's organizations. For example, through issue framing the IWF seeks to transform the meaning of feminist issues through its laissez-faire ideology: as such it adjusts "apparently antithetical beliefs and values to better fit [its own]" (Marshall 1996, 68). Thus, frame transformation can help these two countermovement women's organizations negotiate their conservative beliefs with their need to appeal to women who have benefitted from the feminist movement and have a broad range of concerns.

Finally, as countermovement women's organizations seeking legitimacy as representatives of women's interests, both the CWA and IWF must mark themselves as different from, and more credible than, their feminist opponents. Through the processes of issue framing, both groups engage in a third strategy -- what I call "identity construction." Hunt and his colleagues (1994) suggest that groups establish legitimacy and can appeal to range of constituencies, by linking

their issue frames to their own and other political actors' identities. That is, through the process of defining problems and proposing solutions, or issue framing, organizations also "locate themselves within a collective action field and make in-group/out-group distinctions" (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994, 194) that situate other political actors as "targets of strategic action" (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994, 192). Thus, the process of identity construction occurs through framing -- as organizations define problems, assign blame and suggest actions for remedy -- they also identify protagonists, antagonists and audiences (neutral parties) who become central to understanding why problems exist and how they can be remedied. Through this process, the organizations also cue members as to how they are different from nonmembers and opponents.³⁰ In so doing, they articulate identities about themselves while also defining others as outsiders, enemies or potential members.

Central to this issue framing/identity construction process is the avowal or imputation of characteristics to relevant sets of actors within a movement's orbit of operation (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994). These actors generally fall into three categories, or "identity fields" as Hunt and his colleagues (1994) call them -- protagonists, antagonists and audiences. Protagonists are "constellations of identity attributions about individuals and collectivities taken to be advocates of movement causes" (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994, 193). This often includes

³⁰See Taylor and Whittier (1992) for a related argument.

claims about the movement, allied organizations, leaders, staffers and aggrieved populations. For the antifeminist women's organizations in this study this field includes their own organizations, other conservative allies and "Christians" (for the CWA). Antagonists represent the identity attributions made about opponents: for antifeminist women's organizations this includes feminists and other liberals. Finally, audience identity fields are "constellations of identity attributions about individuals and collectivities imputed to be neutral or uncommitted observers who may react or report on movement activities" (1994, 199). As William P. Browne observes of this audience, or "public" as he calls it: "the public, though, is never composed only of members and ready sympathizers" (Browne 1998, 347)..

As Hunt and his colleagues demonstrate (1994), and as I show in the two cases under study here, the construction of protagonists, antagonists and audiences is inherent to the process of issue framing. Therefore, as I describe and analyze these groups' frame bridging and transformation processes, I will also specify how the CWA and IWF establish their own identities and those of feminists and unaligned women. And, in both Chapters Four and Five I also devote separate sections to the construction of antagonists, in these cases feminists, as the CWA and IWF each use explicit frames to mark themselves as different from, and produce disparaging narratives about their opponents. As I will show, as countermovement women's organizations, this framing strategy is one that helps

both groups establish themselves as legitimate representatives of women's interests.

To examine the CWA's and IWF's issue framing strategies. I pose the following series of questions: Do these organizations make universal claims about women's interests? How do these organizations frame issues in terms of women's interests? How do they negotiate the conflict between criticizing feminists for making identity-based issue and interest claims, while they engage in similar strategies? How might their narratives about women's interests help construct them as more legitimate representatives of women than feminists? In Chapter Four I examine the organizations' framing of several of its most prominent "women's issues." and in Chapter Five I explore an issue common to both organizations -- child care -- to provide a more in-depth analysis of the CWA's and IWF's issue framing strategies and how these strategies relate to the CWA's and IWF's being countermovement women's organizations.

Finally, throughout Chapters Four and Five, I also attend to the possible differences and similarities between the organizations, noting the factors that may account for my specific findings.

Conclusion

The goal of this research is to offer insights into the political strategies of two important antifeminist women's organizations. Through my analyses, I explain contradictions and paradoxes, arguing that these may be the result of

groups being countermovement women's organizations and should not be used to dismiss the validity and credibility of the CWA and IWF.

Inevitably, as I present my findings and their implications. I will also show how these antifeminist women's groups view women and womanhood. And, given that these narratives about women's lives have very real policy implications, the battle over their authenticity is quite valid. But this analysis is only part of my project. I see antifeminist women's organizations' attempts to represent women and their subsequent stories about women not just as outcomes of their political work, but as means to making these groups legitimate political actors. Consequently, I examine the politics that produce and invoke identity-based interest claims, not just the identity constructions themselves.

Finally, through my analyses, I pay careful attention to the myriad influences on antifeminist women and, the ways in which they may be influential, thus offering a comprehensive analysis of the implications of women contesting the political activism of other women. In so doing, I also evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of identity politics more generally in the Conclusion (Chapter Six) to this study.

Chapter Three: Playing “Femball”: Antifeminist Women’s Organizations’ Representational Strategies

Introduction

We traditional women are a tremendous power in this country, and if we don’t stand up to say who we are and what we want for our families, someone else will speak for us. Chances are, it will be a feminist (LaHaye 1993, 226).

As advocates opposed to the goals of feminist organizations, it seems reasonable that antifeminist women should respond by establishing *women’s* groups to oppose feminist activism. But the IWF, with its laissez-faire conservative emphasis on individualism, often speaks critically of politics based on group-based identity claims. And, while evangelical Protestant women like those of the CWA, have a history of identity-based activism (Marshall 1995; Ginsburg 1989; Luker 1984), their organizing into a professional, well-staffed, national women’s organization, belies their call for women to prioritize their traditional roles as stay-at-home mothers and wives. So why have these women organized *as* women? How might being identity-based organizations influence their representational strategies? With an eye to the contending influences on these two countermovement women’s organizations, this chapter explores why the CWA

and IWF are organized as national, professional women's groups and the relative significance of gender identity on their representational strategies.

As interest groups, the process of "representation" involves making political claims to policymakers, the media and the public for particular constituencies. The CWA has a grassroots membership on whose behalf the leaders and staff make interest claims. In this case, the CWA refers to its mostly conservative evangelical Protestant women members. And, while the IWF is not a grassroots organization, its leaders frequently mention the thousands of women who subscribe to its publications and send it letters of praise as evidence of women's desires to associate with their mostly laissez-faire political goals and activities. Indeed, during my visit to its offices, one interviewee eagerly showed me several pieces of mail from women expressing support for its work.

While speaking for members and associates clearly has political power, as I show, both of these organizations make representational claims that go beyond the scope of those affiliated with their groups, despite that they criticize feminists for doing so. Both claim to be speaking for those women who feminists do *not* represent: that is, according to them, a *majority* of women. The CWA's Franceski related to me the following about the representational role of her organization:

I think it's important that you have a woman's voice that is opposite from let's say NOW [the National Organization for Women], what they are saying; because a majority of women don't believe or espouse the values that NOW is purporting out in the media today (Franceski 1998).

An IWF Board member shared that she and other women founded the IWF “because it seemed to me that feminist groups by and large spoke to a very radicalized minority” (Anonymous 1999). Thus, she noted, the majority of women need an organization that speaks to their concerns and the IWF sees itself as fulfilling that role. According to these organizations, feminists represent a small, radical, misguided group of women and, as such, feminists’ claims are about political expediency and efficacy, not about truly speaking to and for most women’s interests.³¹ Indeed, CWA’s founder Beverly LaHaye says of feminists claims to representation:

We cannot and must not accept their overblown claims about what a woman should be. Today’s feminists are not honest about their beliefs or claims (LaHaye 1993, 183).

Thus, leaders and staff of the CWA and IWF see their organizations as the ones who truly speak to and for women. But, since the spokespeople for the CWA and IWF are not elected like most public officials, they need to establish their

³¹There have been other many challenges to feminist claims of representation, mostly arguing that feminists need to pay more careful attention to diversity among women based on race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation (see e.g. Mohanty, 1991; Phelan, 1994; Collins; 1990; Lefkowitz and Withorn; 1986) and that feminists need to be more critical in their deployment of the category “woman” (Butler, 1992). Generally, predominantly white feminist organizations have taken these critiques to heart, as such claims are about making white feminism more “inclusive” and do not fundamentally contradict most feminist organizations’ ideologies about women’s roles and values. Challenges from conservative or antifeminist women, however, have met with great opposition from feminist organizations, as their policy agendas often greatly contradict the goals of feminist organizations.

legitimacy as women's representatives in other ways. That is, they need effective representational strategies.

What becomes evident from investigating CWA's and IWF's representational strategies is the looming tension that exists between their critiques of identity politics and their simultaneous embracing of identity-based representational claims, an effect of their being countermovement women's organizations. Both the CWA and the IWF refer to themselves as "women's" organizations. And both repudiate the interests and goals brought forth by another group of women -- feminists. In so doing, these groups contest the validity of feminists to make identity-based political claims while simultaneously reinforcing the value of this practice. By disparaging feminists, the CWA and IWF challenge feminists' ability to fully know and represent the interests of all women, thus challenging the validity of a group to speak for all of its members. On the other hand, as women's organizations themselves, the CWA and IWF, like feminists, make gendered identity claims about their interests and goals. Similarly, like feminists, these organizations believe there are situations where it is better to have women present politically to represent other women.

As I will discuss, this tension is not ever actually "resolved," but reflects these countermovement women's organizations' attempts to negotiate the conflicting goals of their conservative ideologies and critiques of feminists, with the more practical need to engage in identity politics to counteract feminism. This

is especially true for the IWF who are more critical of identity politics than the CWA. As such, this tension reflects broader concerns about identity politics and political representation.

Gender Identity and Political Representation

As countermovement women's organizations, a primary goal of both the CWA and IWF is to construct themselves as the legitimate representatives of women's interests. They not only oppose such feminist policy goals as abortion, rights for gays and lesbians,³² government funding of day care, and affirmative action, they also contest feminist organizations claims to speak for all women. This chapter explores two sets of questions regarding these organizations' representational strategies. First, I ask why these organizations have chosen to organize as women. There are myriad other conservative organizations that advocate for goals similar to those of the CWA and IWF,³³ so why have these antifeminist women leaders formed into gender-identified interest groups to make political claims? What advantages do being women's organizations afford these groups? Second, do these organizations consider the presence of women in positions of public leadership integral to the process of having their interests

³² Unlike the CWA, the IWF does not take an official position on abortion or homosexuality.

³³For example, the Family Research Council, the Christian Coalition, the former Moral Majority (which existed when the CWA was founded), the American Enterprise Institute and the Center for Equal Opportunity.

represented? Why might having women as spokespeople afford these groups more credibility than having their male counterparts speak to their shared interests?

As discussed in Chapter Two, the form in which gender identity is expressed as relevant to their representational strategies can be best understood by using categories derived from Pitkin's work: descriptive (gender matters symbolically), substantive (gender does not matter), or as a direct relationship between the two: descriptive-substantive (gender influences the actions representatives take). With countermovement women's organizations like the CWA and IWF, the degree to which these groups engage in any or all of these representational approaches is influenced by their need to respond to both their constituencies and opponents, most notably conservative allies, members, potential members and feminist organizations and activists.

Acting As Women: Descriptive Representation as an Organizational Strategy

Antifeminist Women's Organizations Play "Femball"

The CWA and the IWF clearly consider themselves to be women's organizations. On their websites, the CWA refers to itself as the "nation's largest public policy women's organization" and the IWF proudly proclaims to be a "voice for reasonable women."³⁴ These organizations, of course, do not stand alone in categorizing themselves this way. Many feminist organizations, like the

³⁴ The CWA's website address is www.cwfa.org and the IWF's website address is www.iwf.org.

National Organization for Women (NOW) and the American Association for University Women (AAUW) also refer to themselves as women's organizations. So why have antifeminist women organized *as* women? What political advantage can it give these activists?

As discussed in Chapter Two, the success of a political movement can illustrate the value of collective action to opponents (Marshall 1995; Zald and Useem 1987). For the CWA and IWF, feminists have demonstrated not only the success of collective action, but the success of organizing as women to achieve political goals (Ferree and Martin 1995). As countermovement women's organizations, these antifeminist women's groups follow feminists' lead and argue that to successfully challenge feminists, they, too, must make claims as women who represent other women.

Anita Blair, Vice President of the IWF, acknowledged this strategic use of gender identity to counteract feminism with the ironic use of a sports metaphor: "we strongly believed and believe today that women are not a political interest group." but she also noted that "in this credentialist age . . . there's a game going on and the other side fielded a team and we didn't" (Blair 1998a). She argues that feminists are playing "femball" and in order for the IWF to compete, it has to act according to the terms established by the team that got there first -- feminists. The IWF's Sally Satel summarized this sentiment most succinctly: "I see IWF as

largely a reactive group. If it weren't for the feminists, it wouldn't exist" (Satel 1999b).

Like the IWF's claims about countering feminist organizations, CWA staffers and Board members noted that the CWA was born as an antidote to feminists generally and the National Organization for Women (NOW) specifically. Seriah Rein, CWA's New Jersey Area Representative, argued that "it is in the public's interest to maintain our identity as a women's organization and as a counterpoint to what NOW is doing specifically" (Rein 1998). Similarly, the CWA's Kenda Bartlett argues:

They hear the Patricia Irelands, the Eleanor Smeals, the Kate Michelmans, all of them saying we represent women in America, what American women think. And these women are saying this is not what I believe and not what I think . . . so they have looked for a place where they can get information that states their point of view, and they have found that in CWA (Bartlett 1998).³⁵

As countermovement women's organizations formed to challenge feminism, making representative claims as women is critical for these groups. According to organizational leaders, a significant reason for organizing as women is to challenge the conflation of women's activism with feminist activism. In this way, when antifeminist women's organizations act as women it has symbolic significance. As a form of descriptive representation, these organizations believe

³⁵ The women that Bartlett refers to are the President of the National Organization for Women, a founder of the Feminist Majority Foundation and the Executive Director of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, respectively. Each of these groups is a feminist organization.

that organizing as women will give them legitimacy to “stand for” (Pitkin 1967) other women, especially those who do not support feminism. Indeed, for the CWA and IWF, descriptive representation is a political strategy.

In addition, organizing as women could have an added mobilization effect - as *women's* organizations. these groups are not only able to fight feminists on their terms, but they may be better suited than male-led conservative organizations to appeal to other women who see their lives being represented by women like themselves. That is, being women's organizations can help them activate members and appeal to potential members. CWA founder Beverly LaHaye puts it this way:

We women need heroines. We want to see living examples of Christian women who stand against the immoral, godless, feminist teaching (LaHaye 1993, 80).

However, as I discuss later, their acting as women to challenge feminist claims about representing women also points to the weakness of descriptive and descriptive-substantive representation. If gender is truly the salient factor that allows advocates to stand for others like them, then it should not matter which women are acting as representatives. Indeed, ideology is a critical variable mediating the extent to which gender identity has significance in these cases. That is, these organizations do not believe that *feminist* women should be speaking for all women. Nonetheless, that the CWA and IWF seem to have achieved political status as advocates for women's interests, points to the viability of the rather

paradoxical representational strategy of invoking gender identity to counter its significance when used by opponents.

Aside from the more internal strategy of forming into women's organizations, both organizations also position women in leadership positions to make interest claims in the media and to policymakers. The next two sections analyze the CWA's and IWF's strategies in these cases.

A Media Voice for Women

Mass media are important targets and vehicles for movements and countermovements. Television, radio, print and the Internet enable organizations to articulate their missions and goals to members, potential participants and policymakers. But the media are also favorite targets of disdain for many conservatives, with critics claiming that liberals have a stronghold on this institution.³⁶ Not surprisingly, then, the CWA and the IWF express concern and anger because both believe that antifeminist women's political activism is dismissed by the media (LaHaye 1993). Like their conservative allies, these antifeminist women's groups have targeted the media to get publicity and enable "fair" reporting; but they also interact with the media *as* women to challenge both

³⁶ An excellent example of this argument is articulated by the conservative organization Accuracy in Media (AIM). According to its website (www.aim.org). "AIM is a non-profit, grassroots citizens watchdog of the news media that critiques botched and bungled news stories and sets the record straight on important issues that have received slanted coverage" (2000). It reports that since over 90 percent of reporters are Democrats, the "slant" is in a liberal direction.

feminist organizations and the media's representation of women's identities and interests.³⁷ Anita Blair says this of IWF's founding:

I think it was a reaction to particularly the media surrounding the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill and the Year of the Woman. At that time you couldn't pick up a newspaper or listen to a radio or television program without hearing women think this or women think that. And invariably, it was a left-wing women's perspective. And most of us in these alternative groups felt that it was not at all a women's perspective, because we were women and we had a different take on these things (Blair 1998a).

IWF Board member Wendy Gramm also related to me the logic behind the IWF's media strategy:

I always think it's great to have women as spokesmen. This is part of this group. Even though we believe that we are not crazy about having hyphenated Americans . . . But on the other hand we have found that for our organization that it has been helpful to have a woman going up there and saying something about this issue or that . . . people may be more receptive if they hear it from a woman (Gramm 1999).

Given these sentiments and goals, one of the IWF's first major projects was to publish a *Media Directory of Women Experts*. The directory, according to the IWF's website, lists 300 "knowledgeable women who can provide *balanced* commentary on timely subjects ranging from "Aviation" to "Workplace Issues." This publication appears to be having some impact: in the IWF's January 2000

³⁷ While both these organizations criticize the media for lack of representation, their claims are not necessarily well-founded. For example, the organization Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) cites that in 1995 "the *New York Times* published six opinion pieces by IWF leaders, the *Wall Street Journal* published five, the *Washington Post* three . . . [D]uring the same period those same papers chose to publish no commentary on any subject by anyone from NOW . . . or the Feminist Majority Foundation" (Flanders 1996).

edition of *Ex Femina*, staff member Ivy McClure Stewart reports that IWF leaders and associates appeared as guests on such major news outlets as HBO, NBC Nightly News, C-SPAN, CNN, Court TV and the Fox News Channel. In addition, she notes, leaders were quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* and *Investors Business Daily* (2000).

Like the IWF, the CWA considers the presence of women in mass media to be a critical aspect of its representational tactics. The organization created a more public and prominent role for its former President,³⁸ Carmen Pate, and decided not to replace its prominent outgoing male Chief Executive Officer. Several staff told me that the CWA decided to move Pate into the role of spokesperson to get a woman's face in the media to represent the organization. CWA Board member Jan Roberto shared that:

We are trying hard now with Carmen . . . to present that to the media, because we are not getting the media coverage that NOW gets. And we've got to stop that. We have 500,000 members, NOW has 60-70,000 and they get all the attention (1998).³⁹

And, CWA's former President Carmen Pate summarized their need for media representation this way:

Who represents me out there, is there a voice for women? . . . We are that voice . . . I think that probably the niche that we have is the fact that yes, we

³⁸ At the time of the interview in 1998, Pate was the President of the CWA. She resigned in 1999.

³⁹ By way of contrast, NOW actually claims to have 500,000 members, as reported on their website, www.now.org (April 12, 2000).

are pro-family, but we are *women* speaking out on those issues (1998c: emphasis added).

Finally, the CWA's Director of Publications and Research, Rosaline Bush also noted that "[w]e feel that women need spokesmen. We do not believe that NOW speaks for us." Indeed, the IWF's Gramm's and the CWA's Bush's use of the term "spokesmen" in their quotes points to the conservatism and traditionalism of the two groups, despite that they are making claims about the need for women to be active in the public sphere. For them, choosing the term "spokeswomen" would be a nod to feminists who have longed called for gender sensitive and inclusive language (Spender 1985; Lakoff 1976).

The CWA and IWF contend that having women speak for them publicly affords them the credibility, attention and legitimacy to challenge feminists and make representational claims. And, because these are groups of women challenging other women's political views, the media are eager to give them access; controversy generates interest and viewership (Huddy 1997). As such, having women speak for the CWA and IWF can be an effective organizational strategy.

Women as Policy Activists

Like the media, policymaking entities are important targets for antifeminist women, as these are also institutions through which women's identities and interests get constructed and defined. Both organizations articulate that having

women spokespeople and constituents lends legitimacy to the policies they advocate. It is more difficult for conservatives to be attacked as “anti-woman” if women are making the political claims. The CWA and the IWF are well-aware of the salience of gender identity in this context. When asked by a *Washington Post* reporter why “antifeminists” should form a women’s organization, IWF’s

Executive Director Barbara Ledeen said:

[Y]ou can’t have white guys saying you don’t need affirmative action. We feel we have credibility to say “not all women think the way you may expect” (Rosenfeld 1995).

Ledeen also noted in our interview:

I think of [the IWF] as a women’s organization because of the way politics is run now. there is an interest group, there has been an identified interest group from the left . . . It might help Republican men to wake up and smell the coffee. So yeah, we do provide political cover for them. I mean, you can’t go and attack Patricia Ireland and be a man. But you can go and attack her and be a woman (Ledeen 1998).

CWA interviewees recited similar thoughts to Ledeen’s:

Whereas if the answer is coming from a woman, it is likely to carry more credibility, even though a man has a huge responsibility [in debates about the abortion issue] . . . In terms of credibility, I would think that coming from the mouth of a woman it would carry more weight (Arrington 1998).

And the CWA’s former lobbyist⁴⁰ Laurel MacLeod argued:

Sometimes it takes women to stand up and stomp their feet and say enough. This is affecting our home, this is affecting our children, and we want something changed. The Equal Rights Amendment was a perfect opportunity for that to happen; because that was so much perceived as a

⁴⁰ MacLeod was the CWA’s lobbyist in 1998, the time of the interview. She retired from that position in 1999.

woman's fight and a woman's battle. Men were so scared to speak out. they still are . . . But we are able to walk into an office and say we represent 500,000 women in this country. That rings a bell (MacLeod 1998).

As MacLeod notes, as a grassroots organization claiming 500,000 members. the CWA can also make claims on behalf of its large grassroots constituency of women. Kenda Bartlett, a former CWA state activist and current staff member discussed this strategy:

When our lobbyists go to Washington D.C. or our volunteers go up there. and they say they represent the largest women's public policy organization in the United States, that has clout to it. Because women are one of those groups that are really being focused on. when you look at the exit polls and all that kind of stuff. They are looking at how women are voting and the soccer moms of the last election and all those things (Bartlett 1998).

In addition, the CWA's Pate also noted the importance of having a predominantly female grassroots membership:

When we go up on Capitol Hill for example. one of the things we will find when we go into these meetings with legislators, and you have the pro-family groups represented often times it is men who are in the groups. And they look to us, what are the women thinking about this. I think a lot of our clout has to do with the fact that we are a women's organization. And the fact that when we ask our membership to call or write a letter. they bombard their offices with calls and letters (Pate 1998c).

Given the stereotype of feminist women as man-haters. it benefits feminist organizations to get public support from men for their policy concerns.

Antifeminist women's groups. however. rely on just the opposite approach to gain legitimacy as representatives of women's interests. For the CWA and IWF. organizations that advocate for policies that many feminists and liberals see as

“antiwoman,” having women speak in key leadership roles may give them broader appeal.⁴¹

For the CWA and IWF, descriptive representation is invoked as a viable political strategy for these countermovement women’s organizations. These groups have organized as women, to speak for a “majority” of women and to discredit feminist claims of representation. Women also represent the organization and its constituencies in political and social institutions that shape opinions and attitudes. In addition, organizing as women and having women speak for them, may have important policy implications for the CWA and IWF as well. I explore this concept in Chapter Six.

Is There A Distinct Woman’s Perspective?

Given that both organizations believe in biological differences between men and women, one would expect organizational strategies that reflect these values, with such claims that women’s organizations are necessary because women have different needs, perspectives and viewpoints than men. That is, that substantive will follow from descriptive representation. While this generally holds true for the CWA, it is not the case for the IWF. Why this difference in perspective between the two organizations?

⁴¹In Chapters Four and Five I also demonstrate how the strategic framing of policy debates is another means for these groups to garner credibility.

Despite their similarities in opinion about gender differences, the CWA and the IWF do represent different constituencies and seek out different potential participants. The CWA's base is religious, comprised mostly of "social conservatives" (Klatch 1987) -- evangelical Protestant women who are pro-life, favor traditional gender roles and see "raising moral standards" as a priority for the government (1995). The IWF's looser network of associates do not come to politics through religion, and instead are more activated by its libertarian or "laissez-faire" (Klatch 1987) views on economic and government policies (Hardisty 1999), as discussed in Chapter One. The IWF views the individual as most important and generally consider appeals to group-based interest claims as unproductive and antithetical to self-sufficiency and progress (Klatch 1987; Hardisty 1999).⁴² The fact that these organizations have differing constituencies and conservative guiding ideologies, mediates the extent to which they believe in the correlation between descriptive and substantive representation, or more specifically gender identity and women's interests.

⁴² While this is generally true of the IWF, especially in its claims about representational strategies, it also advocates for policies that call attention to gender-based differences. For example, as I discuss more thoroughly in Chapter Four, it argues against gender-integrated military training because of women's physical differences from men and the potential for sexual tension. While this contradicts its appeals to individuality, it also indicates that "laissez-faire" conservatives can overlap with "socially conservative" women and points to the fluidity of these categories as they play out in political life. I turn to this observation in more detail in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

The CWA believes that women's God-given differences and unique perspectives qualify them to make group-based political claims. On the differences between men and women, the CWA's LaHaye writes:

[T]here's no denying the fundamental differences between us. Woman, of course, is the only sex capable of giving birth and nursing a child. Our unique brain structure produces subtle and not-so subtle differences in the way we interpret our surrounding . . . men and women have different needs and experiences (LaHaye 1993, 65).

And one CWA staffer summed up the relationship between these gender differences and political action this way:

I think that the true woman, mother, family member's voice, needs to be heard more than it is . . . So I talk about women because I think that it is important, but we definitely view the family as why we're doing what we're doing, but with the woman's vantage point (Franceski 1998).

Both organizations believe that having women speak for them gives them credibility to speak on the range of issues they care about. It is entirely different, however, to say that women's messages are different from men's because of their biological differences and differing social locations as wives and mothers. While each organization favors a "messenger" who is female, or descriptive representation, only the CWA claims that its identity as a women's organization also hinges on women's differences from men. While the IWF does not disagree that women are different from men, it is careful to note that the only differences that justify its forming into a woman's organizations, are the differences *among*

women. not between women and men. That is, it formed into a *women's* organization to counter feminist political activism. As IWF's Anita Blair told me:

[W]e just simply wanted to show, to coin a phrase, that gender is not determinism. You know, your sex does not dictate your political views. So the IWF in particular wanted to present another voice. We wanted to be a voice for women who had different views (Blair 1998a).

In fact, using gender as a primary organizing principle clearly created tensions for the organization, as one IWF associate noted of the women involved with the group:

[T]hey come from a philosophical background that leads them to believe that they are interested in what the argument is, not who the deliverer of the argument is. So this ghettoization into a woman's issue is hard, and the challenge was finding people to actually run the organization, and in a sense limit themselves (Anonymous 1999).

Because of the IWF's strong belief in individualism and distaste for identity politics, it has to justify its organizing as a women's group. For the IWF, descriptive representation is often invoked, but not as a direct correlate with substantive representation. While this may seem paradoxical, it does exemplify the influence of conflicting constituencies and specific ideologies on these countermovement women's groups. Unlike the IWF's associates, the CWA's members embrace essentialist views of womanhood and thus are likely to support women organizing as women because of their different needs and values.

When Conservative Ideology Trumps Gender Identity

While gender identity matters to the CWA and the IWF in terms of their representational strategies, there are times when both groups are dismissive of its significance. For example, given findings that women in elected office prioritize women's interests (Swers 1998; Dodson, et al. 1995; Thomas 1994; Welch 1985) I expected that these antifeminist women's organizations would want to increase the number of women in political office to heighten attention to women's issues in general. Both groups, however, dismiss the idea that there is a correlation between descriptive and substantive representation in the case of women elected officials. And, neither organization devotes time nor resources to increasing the number of women in public office.

Given the IWF's dismissal of this notion in other contexts, its views about women in public office are not that surprising. But the CWA also denies that women elected officials would be more likely than men to bring different *policy* concerns to a legislative body's agenda. It argues for supporting candidates and elected officials based on issues, not identity. There are several possible reasons for this position.

First, consistent with general conservative ideology, the push to increase more women in office appears to be too similar to affirmative action -- a policy

that the CWA, and many other conservative organizations, oppose.⁴³ While proponents of affirmative action believe it helps mitigate discrimination based on (perceived) gender and racial differences, most conservatives do not. In this way, despite its embracing feminist inspired strategies, the CWA can also appeal to its conservative constituencies and allies. As the CWA's Seriah Rein noted:

I don't think you need to have cancer to be able to articulate how to prevent it and how to deal with it and how to treat it. I don't believe in quotas period. I know some men who can more effectively express the concerns of women than a lot of women I know. I'm totally gender unbiased on this. I don't think you should have a certain percentage of women for the sake of having women, I think that is the big disservice we did with Blacks in affirmative action . . . I feel the same way about women being represented in Congress (Rein 1998).

CWA's Carmen Pate articulated a similar concern:

I think it goes back to that having the best person in the job, a person who reflects our values, whether it be a man or a woman. I think it's important that we support the person. Our organization is a bipartisan organization, but we are always standing with those candidates who believe as we do. We are making sure that we are encouraging them in their stance for truth and in their boldness. Because it is difficult to stand for truth on Capitol Hill, it really is. To be bold, they are attacked from all sides. So if it takes a woman to do that, great. If it takes a man to do that, great. We just want the best person (Pate 1998c).

Second, as noted in Chapter Two, empirical studies of women elected officials suggest that women tend to be more liberal than men (Dodson and Carroll 1991; Thomas 1994). Given that, the CWA may not be in any hurry to call for the

⁴³ In addition to the IWF, these organizations include the Center for Equal Opportunity, the American Enterprise Institute and the Campaign for a Color-Blind America.

election of more women to elected office. There are already many men in public office who support its policy agendas.

Nonetheless, while the CWA does not embrace the idea of increasing women in office, its former lobbyist, Laurel MacLeod, did acknowledge that some women elected officials may have more credibility on its issues than men. Thus, the CWA may seek out like-minded women in office to speak on behalf of its issues at key times during a legislative contest. In the right climate, or under the right circumstances, the gender of an elected official could matter to the organization. As MacLeod confided:

If you had more women in Congress like Linda Smith and Helen Chenoweth who are pro-life and are willing to go down and speak out, and on some issues really give courage to the men, I would see that as an enormous and very positive change (MacLeod 1998).

Despite these organizations' decision not to push for more women in political office, it might be a worthwhile strategy for both of these groups. While the "impact on women in office" research suggests that women tend to be more liberal than their male counterparts (Dodson and Carroll 1991; Thomas 1994), it also finds that a range of women bring "women's traditional areas of concern" (such as education) to the policy making process (Dodson and Carroll 1991). Since the particulars of these "traditional areas of concern" were not defined by researchers, it is unclear exactly what policy *positions* elected women would take on them. For example, for an antifeminist woman legislator, "education" may

mean that they advocate prayer in the classroom or support government vouchers to pay for private schooling. For a feminist elected official, "education" may represent her efforts to increase gender equality in the classroom. While "education" may be a traditional area of concern for women, the precise policies can vary greatly depending on the woman. Thus antifeminist women could benefit from conservative women's election to office. The organizations' positions on this issue, however, indicate that as countermovement women's organizations, their conservative ideologies and need to appeal to conservative constituencies and allies, mediate the extent to which their beliefs in gender identity matter in this realm.

Conclusion

Both organizations consider gender identity to be an organizational resource relevant to their representational strategies. My research suggests that as countermovement women's organizations, having to mediate between adopting feminist strategies and appealing to their conservative constituencies help determine the form in, and extent to which, gender identity is invoked. As such, the socially conservative CWA holds a more essentialist view of women's identities and interests and promotes these beliefs not only by positioning women in key leadership positions, but by (mostly) advocating for a distinct woman's perspective. In so doing, it appeals to a "pure or original femininity, a female essence, outside the boundaries of the social order" (Fuss 1989, 2) that signifies

women as different from men. The antifeminist women leaders of the CWA, then, consistent with their socially conservative values about gender differences, position themselves as activists who speak to the “true” nature of women’s interests.

The IWF is less essentialist in its deployment of the category “woman.” and mostly invokes gender identity to raise the question of *which* women’s interests are getting represented. In its case, identity politics, and more specifically the use of descriptive representation, is a reactive gesture, one meant to counter feminist political actions. It emanates not from the notion that women are different from men and thus have particular interests, but on the need as a countermovement women’s organization to “risk” essentialism to achieve the political goal of proving feminists to be wrong in their claims about women’s interests.

To some extent, however, both organizations reify the problem of relying on descriptive and descriptive-substantive representation. As many feminist scholars have argued (Butler 1992; Mohanty 1991; Collins 1990; Lefkowitz and Withorn 1986), assuming a correlation between identity and interests elides differences among those within a group. When antifeminist women’s organizations make representational claims as women, whether to counter feminists and/or reveal women’s “true” nature, they suggest a homogeneity of

interests and experiences that may not exist even among conservative women.⁴⁴

This research also points to other important insights about descriptive and descriptive-substantive representation and the politicization of identity. While the IWF and CWA are critical of the concept of descriptive representation, particularly as it applies to elected officials, they are equally eager as countermovement women's organizations to recognize its value as a strategy to oppose feminist organizations. In this way, they show the problems of descriptive representation and the ways in which it helps them achieve their goals. While Pitkin critiques proponents of descriptive representation for focusing on presence, without attention to their actions, this research indicates that women's presence alone may have political appeal. For these antifeminist women's organizations, gender identity serves the purpose of "de facto legitimacy" as defined by Mansbridge (1996) and discussed in Chapter Two. Interviewees frequently used the word "niche" to describe the role played by their organizations. Filling a void in the interest group community purportedly gives antifeminist women's organizations a feeling of political inclusion and efficacy; it makes them present and hence legitimate, particularly among other conservative organizations. As such, their

⁴⁴ It is important to note that at least the national staff of these two organizations are very much bound by at least race and class and are mostly white professional women. While some of the issues on their policy agendas speak to the needs of poor women and women of color as they see it, most of the members and associates are white middle class women, and the CWA at least, also actively opposes homosexuality.

invocation of descriptive representation, that is, being women's organizations and positioning women in leadership roles, should give them clout among conservatives, allow them to stand for women and help to establish them as legitimate representatives of women's interests.

My research also indicates the need to think about descriptive and substantive representation more broadly. By examining interest groups we see how the question of representation comes up not only in studying elected officials, but in other contexts as well. The debate over the value and legitimacy of descriptive representation (as well as its relationship to substantive representation) can be broadened and thus even better understood when investigated within a variety of political institutions. For example, while supporters of descriptive representation argue for its use in connection with substantive outcomes in the legislative branch, this study shows how descriptive representation alone may also enhance a group's legitimacy and feelings of efficacy.⁴⁵ These are two important components of a group's willingness to participate politically.

⁴⁵ Antifeminist women's organizations' uses of descriptive representation can have substantive outcomes as well. If conservative issues are seen as more credible when women support them, more elected officials and the general public may be willing to support them too. In their view, efforts to construct political legitimacy are undoubtedly connected to policy outcomes, as I discuss in the following chapters.

Chapter Four: Speaking to the “Real Interests of American Women”: Issue Framing and the Construction of Political Legitimacy

Introduction

To act as representatives of women on public policies, the CWA and IWF engage in a number of strategies including lobbying elected officials, filing amicus curiae briefs, organizing grassroots members, calling for boycotts, publishing voting records, sending e-mail updates and alerts and sponsoring educational symposia. As interest groups seeking national prominence and legitimacy, one critical and fundamental aspect of this issue advocacy is issue framing. Through issue framing, groups cue members, potential members, policymakers, media and the public as to the nature of problems and potential solutions as defined by these groups (Snow, et al. 1986). As such, issue framing acts to compel people to mobilize around and/or think differently about public policies and thus has the potential to influence public discourse, values, beliefs and policy outcomes. This chapter explores how the CWA and IWF use the process of issue framing to establish themselves as legitimate representatives of women’s interests. Specifically, I evaluate the extent to which their being countermovement women’s organizations influences their issue framing strategies, specifying the particular issue framing strategies used by each organization.

As detailed in Chapter Two, as countermovement women's organizations seeking legitimacy as representatives of women's interests, both the CWA and IWF must contend with divergent influences and goals. First, both groups must negotiate between their engaging in feminist inspired strategies, in this case, promoting women's issues and interests, while at the same time refuting the credibility of the feminist movement. Second, the CWA and IWF must appeal to their respective conservative constituencies and allies, while seeking to mobilize a broad range of women, including women who have benefitted from feminist goals and achievements. As I show in this chapter, the CWA and IWF engage in a number of issue framing strategies, specifically "frame bridging," "frame transformation," and "identity construction," to help them arbitrate among the competing factors associated with being countermovement women's organizations.

As described in Chapter Two, frame bridging and transformation refer to frame alignment strategies that allow organizations to link their messages and values with individuals and other groups in an effort to mobilize them (Snow, et al. 1986). These strategies not only allow groups to use issues to mobilize people, but also result in organizations creating new meanings about policies and goals (Tarrow 1992). Briefly, as discussed, frame bridging refers to a strategy an organization uses to link ideologically "*congruent* but structurally unconnected frames" (Snow, et al. 1986, 467; emphasis added). Conversely, frame transformation involves an organization redefining the meaning of ideas or beliefs

to fit its own interpretations and ideas (Snow, et al. 1986). Finally, "identity construction" refers to the process that groups use to establish their identities and those of their opponents, through the process of framing issues.

As I demonstrate in this chapter, for the CWA and IWF, the processes of frame bridging and transformation and identity construction, help these organizations negotiate the tensions particular to their status as countermovement women's organizations. To demonstrate this claim I divide this chapter into four sections. The first shows how the CWA and IWF frame their concern for women's interests, noting that, like feminists, they do make universal claims about women's interests, but also transform the meaning of women's interests to be more consistent with their conservative ideologies.

Second, as I will show, the CWA and IWF do promote women's issues as part of their overall policy platforms despite that both organizations denounce feminists for making universal claims about women's issues and interests. the IWF disavows the use of identity-based organizing in general and, in an earlier study, Marshall (1996) found that the CWA does not focus on women's issues. Therefore, to address how these groups make sense of these tensions, I address how they frame women's issues, focusing on the women's issues featured most prominently in their periodicals and other publications.⁴⁶ Again, I show that both

⁴⁶ All of the women's issues examined here were featured as cover stories in the organizations' periodicals.

the CWA and IWF use frame transformation strategies to redefine women's issues in ways that enable them to make claims as legitimate representatives of women's interests and negotiate among the tensions described above.

The third and fourth sections examine two specific frames these groups use as they engage in debates about their issues. The invocation of the first, "gender difference," evokes a frame bridging strategy from the CWA and a frame transformation one from the IWF, but each strategy is meant to enable these groups to appeal to conservative constituencies and allies. Finally, in the fourth section, I highlight how these organizations frame "feminism," and how they use the construction of feminist identity to establish their own profiles and status. Throughout all of these sections, I attend to the similarities and differences between the organizations and argue that these strategies are meant to establish these groups as legitimate representatives of women's interests.

In the Interests of Women

In this section I show that despite both organizations' criticisms of feminists for making universal interest claims on behalf of women (see Chapter Three for more details of this critique), both the CWA and IWF engage in making broad-based identity claims as well. That is, each fashions itself as an organization that can and does appeal to, and thus represents, most women, not just its specific conservative constituencies.

For example, the IWF proclaims itself to be the “voice of *reasonable* women with important ideas who embrace common sense over divisive ideology”(emphasis added).⁴⁷ In this case, the adjective “reasonable” is loose and unspecific, suggesting that women can be construed quite broadly. In addition, showing that it thinks of itself as speaking to and for a majority of women, the IWF declares: “Who represents the real interests of American women? The IWF does, and here’s how.”⁴⁸ And, while the CWA very clearly talks about being comprised of, and speaking for, “Christian”⁴⁹ women, they also frequently assert that they are “mainstream” (Franceski 1998). Indeed, in speaking of which women the CWA’s goals appeal to, group founder LaHaye claims that: “the *vast majority* of women, thank God, want to raise children with integrity and strong character” (LaHaye 1993, 138: emphasis added).

Interviews with organizational leaders produced similar frames about women’s interests. That is, when queried about the role of her organization in representing women, antifeminist women leaders spoke of the need to address both women’s issues and interests in very general ways. First, respondents expressed firm commitments to helping women and examining issues as they affect women.

⁴⁷ This quote comes from homepage of the IWF’s website: www.iwf.org

⁴⁸ This quote comes from the homepage of the IWF’s website: www.iwf.org

⁴⁹ While the CWA uses the term “Christians,” they are specifically referring to Evangelical Protestant and fundamentalist Christians, the religious group that comprises most of their membership (Guth, et al. 1995)

Thus, women's *interests* are not just those associated with traditional women's *issues*, but are interests that should be considered when dealing with a range of public policies. While IWF Board member Wendy Gramm initially qualified that "the main mission [of IWF] is simply to again be a voice to educate others about how *this* group of women thinks," she added that the IWF also seeks to show

how issues affect women, what is the impact on women of different policy issues. So it really is an educational role, injecting *a woman's* voice into the policy debate (1999; emphasis added).

Her colleague Kimberly Schuld also noted that:

We talk about the impact on women, not women's issues. That is the way I see it. For instance, we could take a tax issue and say how does this impact women and where are you missing that in your communications to women (1998a).

The IWF's rationale for sponsoring a conference on "junk science"⁵⁰ speaks to this logic:

Those of us who follow the junk science debate know that scientific illiteracy is certainly not gender-specific. But survey data . . . do show that *women, as a group*, tend to be more risk-averse. That's why the IWF has chosen to explore the relationship between unjustified fears and health and science policy (Satel 1999a; emphasis added).

And, CWA's former President Pate notes this of her organization:

⁵⁰ "Junk science," according the IWF, is science motivated by politics and lacking solid empirical findings. An example of this is the case of silicone breast implants, where women were awarded damages by breast implant manufacturers based on claims that these implants caused connective tissue diseases and a host of other ailments. The IWF notes that there is little evidence to back up these claims, and that politics, not facts, led to the awarding of money.

With every issue, we can bring in why it should be of concern to women, and that is what we try to do: why mom should be concerned, why wives should be concerned, why you should be concerned about your daughters. That is the connection that we try to make. How will this impact women long term (1998c)?

Thus, despite that these organizations formed because they were critical of feminists making universal interest claims as and for “women,” both groups talk about their missions in ways that they criticize feminists for doing. However, both organizations also seek to address this contradiction by incorporating frames about men’s, children’s and familial interests into their rhetoric. Thus, they transform the meaning of women’s interests to be more consistent with conservative values about families and attempt to mark themselves as different from feminists. For example, the IWF’s Anita Blair told me:

[W]e don’t simply look at what is good for women, because that obviously puts you in opposition to men and children. So our principles are to try and get the facts to use common sense, and then to make public policy decisions based on what’s best for everybody, for a society, as a whole, not just women (1998a).

She added that “I believe that men and children are just as important in the world as women are” (Blair 1998a).

The CWA makes similar claims about men and children, but, consistent with many socially conservative organizations, emphasizes the word “family” to do so:

We see the woman in a broader context, the woman in the context of family and society. You can’t isolate women from their interactions with children, their interactions with men, their interactions with society. So we really

have to deal with more than just what politics or what the media typically call "women's issues" (MacLeod 1998).

And the CWA's Seriah Rein noted that the CWA's issues were "family issues. . . [w]omen impacting family issues. They are not all women's issues" (1998).

Finally, the CWA's LaHaye writes:

The pitfall of the feminist is the belief that the interests of men and women can ever be severed; that what brings suffering to the one can leave the other unscathed (LaHaye 1993, 186).

In commenting on their concerns for women, men, children and/or families, these countermovement women's organizations are not just articulating where they stand as representatives. They are transforming the meaning of women's interests to be more consistent with a socially conservative interpretation of the phrase, thus marking themselves as different from feminists and legitimating their strategy of making universal claims about women's interests. This frame transformation strategy should also enable the organizations to appeal to their conservative constituencies and allies. For the CWA, this invocation of socially conservative values is consistent with its specific ideology. For the IWF, however, it does represent the organization's adoption of a different strand of conservatism, perhaps because it helps them appeal to a wider range of conservatives. As such, it indicates the fluidity of the boundaries between the IWF's laissez-faire ideology and the CWA's socially conservative values, showing the ways in which conservatives may actually overlap.

The Policy Agendas: Women's Issues and Interests

Both organizations have multi-issue policy platforms. but since the CWA is a larger and more institutionalized organization. it covers more issues. The CWA's socially conservative agenda is delineated by the following topics: "Defense of the Family," which includes opposition to homosexuality and support for heterosexual marriage; "Sanctity of Human Life," a platform mostly dedicated to opposing legalized abortion in the U.S. and abroad; "Education," including supporting prayer in schools; "Pornography," which they adamantly oppose; support for "Religious Freedom," especially for "Christians persecuted throughout the world;" and "United Nations and National Sovereignty" that includes opposition to supporting and funding the U.N. because of its alleged threat to U.S. national sovereignty. A seventh "Miscellaneous" category exists to cover issues that do not neatly fall into the other six (such as taking a position in favor of impeaching President Clinton).

The IWF's policy programs reflect its explicit desire to challenge feminists and promote classical liberalism. Its programs generally fall into six categories: a "Women's Economic Project," which aims to challenge feminist claims about women's pay differentials from men and other workplace issues; the "Campus Guild," which is touted as a project that provides college women with an alternative to "rigid feminist orthodoxy;"⁵¹ "Gender Equity and Title IX," a

⁵¹ This quote is from the IWF's website: www.iwf.org.

program designed to eliminate government-enforced “quotas” that allegedly divert resources from men’s college sports to women’s: “Women’s Health and Junk Science.” that works to challenge such “myths” as the correlation between breast implants and connective tissues diseases; “Women in the Military.” whereby they advocate for gender segregation in military basic training; and “HIV/AIDS/STD Prevention” that supports mandatory HIV testing and disclosure of test results to those who may be infected.

While both advocate for a range of issues, this section examines the framing of several specific women’s issues,⁵² pointing to the various framing strategies the CWA and IWF employ to make women’s issues consistent with their organizational ideologies, appeal to a broad range of women, and, in effect, establish themselves as legitimate representatives of women’s interests. As defined in Chapter Two, “women’s issues” are issues that many second wave feminist and other women’s organizations have addressed for the past three decades and tend to be issues that predominantly affect women and are defined in terms that reference their gendered implications (see Table A).

⁵²Here I am specifically examining the content of organizational periodicals and other publications from 1997. See Chapter One for a further explanation of these data and why I chose to evaluate them.

In summarizing the content of the major issue-based articles⁵³ in each of the organization's periodicals, I find that of thirty-three pieces in the IWF's *The Women's Quarterly* and *Ex Femina*, thirty concern "women's issues" and/or includes some discussion of women's interests, as I will show in this chapter (see Table A). In the CWA's *Family Voice*, I counted thirty-eight issue-based articles, seventeen of which contained stories about women's issues or framed issues, at least in part, in terms of women's interests (see Table A).

Given the breadth of their multi-issue policy agendas, both organizations express concerns about a host of social, economic and political problems. And, as I show, these issues and analyses tend to reflect their specific conservative ideologies -- for the CWA, moral decline and familial discord are frequently cited, while the IWF objects to the intrusion of "big government" especially in relation to economic policies and an individual's free will.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, as I will show, both organizations promote women's issues and use the strategies of frame bridging and transformation and identity construction to legitimate their speaking

⁵³ By "major issue-based articles" I am referring to stories that provide some analysis of the organization's policy goals, including definitions of the problems, discussions of opponents' positions and, frequently, calls for action. As such, I exclude such things as short paragraphs or bulleted items that update readers on the status of a bill, court case or other policy concern.

⁵⁴ But, as I will discuss, their concerns are more fluid than the categorical distinctions of "socially conservative" and "laissez-faire;" these organizations frequently overlap in the issues they tackle.

Table A: Number of Articles per policy issue appearing in the 1997 editions of the CWA's *Family Voice* and the IWF's *Women's Quarterly* and *Ex Femina*

*denotes women's issue or issue framed in terms of women's interests

ISSUES	CWA	IWF	TOTALS
Child Care/Motherhood*	2	9	11
Children and Sex	2	0	2
Children and Gangs	2	0	2
Discrimination Law Suits*	0	1	1
Domestic Violence*	0	2	2
Environmentalism	1	0	1
Equal Rights Amendment*	0	1	1
Euthanasia	1	0	1
Feminism*	0	1	1
HIV/AIDS Testing*	0	2	2
Homosexuality	3	0	3
Judicial Activism	3	0	3
National Education Association (NEA)	1	0	1
Reforming the Orphanage System	0	1	1
Paula Jones' Sexual Harassment Suit Against Bill Clinton*	0	1	1
Pornography*	4	0	4
Privacy Rights	1	0	1
Religious Freedom	3	0	3
Repressed Memory Syndrome	0	1	1
Reproductive and Women's Health*	8	4	12
Sexual Revolution*	3	2	5
Tax Laws	1	0	1
Title IX*	0	1	1
United Nations	3	0	3
Violence	0	1	1
Women in the Military*	0	4	4
Women and Technology*	0	1	1
Workplace Discrimination*	0	1	1
TOTALS	38	33	71

as and for women and mediate the tensions consistent with their being countermovement women's organizations.

Despite the use of similar strategies, the organizations approach issue framing in slightly different ways. As the next section details, the CWA uses frame transformation, in effect, to co-opt *feminist ideology* to talk about its *conservative issues*. This strategy is most obviously used in the cases of pornography and reproductive health, and thus enables the CWA to transform the nature of its issues to make sense of feminist rhetoric and policy successes that are relevant to these cases. That is, the CWA uses language about women's empowerment and well-being to highlight the value of its policy positions and solutions (see Marshall 1995 and 1996 for other examples of how antifeminist women's organizations use frame transformation). On the other hand, while the IWF also uses a frame transformation strategy, it does so by transforming the meaning of *feminist issues* to be more consistent with its *laissez-faire ideology*, somewhat of a reverse strategy from the CWA. Through an analysis of their framing of their women's issues, I describe these strategies below.

CWA and Pornography

For the CWA, opposing pornography is one of its main policy priorities. The organization supports strict regulation of the pornography industry, successfully encouraged "7-Eleven" convenience stores to stop selling pornography and urges pornography "addicts" as it calls them, to seek counsel

through church-based programs. Consistent with its struggle to instill conservative morals and keep traditional heterosexual families intact, the CWA contends that pornography persuades men to hurt their wives and engage in illicit sexual behaviors. But, as I will show, its disdain for pornography, a position consistent with the organization's socially conservative views on sexuality and marriage, is frequently framed in terms of feminist-inspired rhetoric about women's interests. This frame transformation strategy, one that makes its socially conservative views more consistent with feminist achievements, helps to construct the CWA as an organization that can speak to and for a broad range of women.

In two separate issues of the 1997 *Family Voice*, the topic of pornography graced the periodical's cover.⁵⁵ While pornography was cited as being harmful to men who can become addicted to it,⁵⁶ the consequences of this addiction were frequently evaluated in terms of its effects on women. Aside from the expected discussion of familial discordance, pornography is also said to give men the negative impression that "all women are available for their pleasure as mere sex objects" (Hacker 1997, 6). A judge who ruled in favor of allowing pornography on military bases was chastised for abandoning "the interests of women and children" (Hacker 1997, 10), while Hugh Hefner, founder of *Playboy* magazine, is

⁵⁵ March 1997 and May 1997.

⁵⁶ Another concern about pornography cited by the CWA is that it can lead to pedophilia and cause men to hurt young boys. Its fear is consistent with its anti-homosexual beliefs.

described as the "man who preached hatred against women" (Concerned Women for America 1997a, 14) . According to the CWA, violent pornography also evokes two dangerous myths:

[that] violence is normal in male-female sexual relations -- and women enjoy rape. As a result, "not-guilty" verdicts for rapists are frequent, and rape victims are often blamed for the crime (Bush 1997c, 5).

In addition, the CWA chastises the pornography industry for exploiting and hurting women:

Porn producers would be the first to say that pornography is not a crime -- and it has no victims. They claim that porn actors -- performing everything from sadistic sex to bestiality -- are having the times of their lives. But women and children who have been forced to engage in these productions tell a different story . . . It should be evident to everyone that coercion -- used to humiliate, silence and blackmail women and children -- is the backbone of the pornography industry (Bush 1997c, 9-10).

Furthermore, according to the CWA, pornography not only wrecks marriages, but hurts women`s self-esteem as

women must always compete with fantasy women who look perfect and do anything and everything he demands. No matter how hard she tries, how much she loves him -- no matter how far she will go to please him -- it`s never enough (Bush 1997c, 4).

Finally, the CWA tells its readers that "[i]t`s important for a woman involved with a sex addict to know that this addiction is not her fault. And she should never stay in a marriage in which her husband sexually or physically abuses her" (Bush 1997b, 16). While such a statement could easily be found on the pages

of a feminist publication. coming from the CWA it signals this group's concern for women's interests as well.

CWA and Reproductive Health

For the socially conservative CWA, opposition to abortion and most forms of birth control⁵⁷ is central to its agenda. In general, the organization lobbies for legislation to limit and/or make abortion illegal and opposes federal funding of most domestic and international family planning programs. While its position on reproductive health issues is consistent with many other socially conservative organizations that oppose abortion because of conservative religious beliefs about the so-called sanctity of life (e.g. the Christian Coalition, the National Right to Life Committee), the CWA also frames its debates about abortion and family planning in terms of women's health. As many feminist and other advocates have sought to make women's health a national priority (Dodson, et al. 1995; Collins, et al. 1994; Schroeder and Snowe 1994), this framing strategy, like the one used for pornography, helps the CWA transform the meaning of its socially conservative views on abortion to be more appealing to a broader range of women, not just its members.

⁵⁷ The CWA refers to the Intra-uterine Device (IUD), Norplant, Depo-Provera, and the "Pill" as "abortifacients" on the grounds that each of these forms of birth control can prevent a fertilized egg, or embryo, from becoming implanted in a woman's uterus. Since, the CWA "recognizes the term 'human embryo' to be the same as 'unborn child,'" intentionally making the uterus "hostile" to the embryo is considered to be the same thing as having an abortion (Concerned Women for America 1998f).

For example, the CWA not only opposes abortion because of its support for “fetal life,” but also claims that “abortion can significantly increase a woman’s risk of getting breast cancer;”⁵⁸ therefore, “abortion is deadly -- not only for unborn children, but also for the women who abort them” (Wallace 1997, 11). In addition, the CWA writes about the health dangers of international family planning programs which provide women with Norplant, a form of birth control that can have adverse side-effects on the women who use them. The CWA refers to women in the U.S. and abroad who use Norplant as “human guinea pigs” (MacLeod 1997, 18) and worries that “today, the U.S. government is using our money to bruise and batter women and children around the world” (20). Thus the organization lobbies for abolition of federal funds to support domestic and international family planning programs, especially those that counsel for, or perform abortions and those that provide Norplant and other “abortifacients.”

⁵⁸ Its argument is based on a survey of research conducted by Dr. Joel Brind in which he argues that “early in her pregnancy, a woman experiences a major surge of estrogen that causes immature breast cell to multiply.” These cells are allegedly more susceptible to carcinogens, but are protected when a woman begins to lactate. If her pregnancy is aborted, however, the women’s breast cells are left in the vulnerable state, because they do not receive the benefit of lactation that comes from full-term pregnancies (Wallace 1997, 10). The pro-choice Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) notes, however, that in an analysis of the approximately 25 studies examining the link between breast cancer and abortion, cancer researchers at the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society found no conclusive relationship. It also asserts that Dr. Brind analyzed studies that contained faulty methods and inconclusive findings (Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2000b).

The CWA also raises similar concerns about the abortifacient RU-486.

“partial birth” abortion.⁵⁹ unlicensed abortion clinics and the after-effects of abortions (referred to as Post Abortion Syndrome or PAS). For example, in a *Family Voice* article entitled “RU-486: Killer Pills” Wallace warns women of the “dangerous” side effects of RU-486:

Women who took RU-486 in clinical trials experienced firsthand just how “easy” the abortion pill is. Common side effects included: painful contractions, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, pelvic pain and spasms, and headaches -- as well as the trauma of seeing their aborted baby . . . Chemical abortions like RU-486 will *not* advance women’s health (1997, 6; emphasis in original).

And, on the subject of “partial birth abortions,” the CWA writes that not only is the end result of a “purely elective” abortion a dead child, but:

[F]ew people realize the *danger to the mother*. Dr. Joseph DeCook of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology declares *PBA is riskier for the mother than any other type of abortion*: the opening of the cervix for a prolonged time involves a greater risk of infection (Wallace 1997.6; emphasis in original).

While these anti-abortion arguments serve to promote the CWA’s socially conservative pro-life stance, it is important to note that they are frequently framed in terms of women’s interests as well. Since some feminists and other

⁵⁹ This refers to an abortion procedure known as a “D and X” or dilation and extraction in which a fetus is removed whole from a woman. The procedure is most common in second and third trimester abortions (after 24 weeks) and usually performed when the fetus’ or woman’s life is endangered. According to the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (who cites the Centers for Disease Control) , in the U.S. only 1.5% of abortions are performed after 20 weeks of pregnancy (Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2000a).

reproductive rights activists have criticized pro-life groups for privileging fetal rights over women's lives (Daniels 1993; Pollitt 1994), the CWA's frame transformation strategy here, indicates not only its attempts to appeal to women, but the influence of feminist and pro-choice rhetoric on this organization as well. Thus, the CWA transforms its beliefs about abortion to be more consistent with those of feminists and other women's health advocates who have helped to change the nature of these debates to include women's interests. As the CWA both contests its opponents views while making sense of its opponents successes, we see the influence of being countermovement women's organizations on the CWA's issue frames in the cases of two prominent women's issues -- pornography and reproductive health.

Like the CWA, the IWF advocates for a range of women's issues. The following analyses examines the framing of three issues that are of primary concern to the IWF -- the ERA, domestic violence and Title IX. As I show, as a laissez-faire conservative organization, the IWF sees these three feminist policy goals as antithetical to women realizing their own potential free of government interference. As such, the organization acts to transform the meaning of these feminist issues to be consistent with its laissez-faire ideology.

The IWF and the ERA

While the IWF opposes the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)⁶⁰ on the grounds that it has the potential to negate “protective” legislation for women, a socially conservative argument⁶¹ it also bemoans that the intent of the ERA -- to make women and men equal -- has already been institutionalized via a series of federal court decisions. Thus it uses its position against the ERA to discuss its opposition to judicial activism -- a position consistent with its laissez-faire ideology. For example, Blair argues that the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to mandate that the all-male Virginia Military Institute (VMI) become co-ed as a condition of its accepting federal funds,⁶² “effectively enacts the ERA” (1997, 10). As such, Blair argues that the judiciary has disregarded the will of the majority of citizens; a majority who rejected the ratification of the ERA in 1982. Blair contends:

The interests of “women” are hardly advanced if they must live in a dysfunctional society. A society cannot function if it cannot make rules

⁶⁰The CWA also opposes the ERA. In fact, one of the issues that originally motivated Beverly LaHaye to organize women was the ERA ratification that was taking place in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. The IWF’s position on the ERA, as articulated in the Spring 1997 edition of *The Women’s Quarterly*, concerns state ERAs and current initiatives by some feminists to revive the federal ratification process.

⁶¹I discuss this particular frame in the next section on gender differences and show that the IWF uses the frame of “gender difference,” a socially conservative frame, to transform the meaning of feminist issues. As such, I argue that the IWF is less internally consistent than the CWA. In addition, I contend that the IWF’s invocation of socially conservative frames indicates the fluidity between these two strands of conservatism.

⁶²*U.S. v. Virginia*

based on reason, experience, and the collective wisdom of its people. Sound rules are exactly what America's founders intended to accomplish through majority rule in a free society. The Supreme Court does none of us a favor when it subverts this intent (1997, 11).

Thus, while the IWF frames its opposition to the ERA in part due to its ability to negate gender differences, it also links its concerns to laissez-faire ideology: a belief system that opposes judicial activism, government intervention and the subversion of free will. In so doing, the IWF transforms its opposition of a feminist policy goal, through its conservative ideology on the role of government, thereby reframing this women's issue as a conservative policy goal.

The IWF and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

The IWF also opposes the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA), omnibus legislation, supported by a range of feminist and women's organizations, that funds services for victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence. It argues against the legislation on several laissez-faire conservative grounds, mostly that it constructs women as victims and thus at the mercy of the state, and burdens taxpayers by forcing them to support programs that promote feminist ideology. For example, the IWF's Satel contends that through VAWA, legislators and advocates

[A]re deciding that the perpetrators of domestic violence don't so much need to be punished, or even really counseled, but instead indoctrinated in what are called "profeminist" treatment programs. And they are spending tax dollars to pay for these programs (1997, 5).

For Satel, "profeminist" means that support groups and other programs for battered women, teach women to hate men, are too "ideological" and fail to acknowledge that women can also be aggressive. She further argues that there is no convincing evidence that such programs work and that most programs do not give men the skills to really change their behavior. In so doing, Satel frames her opposition as a taxpayer's issue, a position consistent with the IWF's laissez-faire conservative ideology:

Few taxpayers would begrudge this outlay (of \$1.6 billion) to fund VAWA if it actually resulted in the protection of women. But instead there is increasing evidence that the money is being used to further an ideological war against men -- one that puts many women at even greater risk (1997, 5).

The IWF instead calls for programs that try to keep marriages together and also offer help to men, who, it feels, are neglected.

In addition, the IWF sees federal funding of domestic violence programs as "paternalistic intrusion" (Satel 1997, 6) and argues:

[T]he implicit goal of feminist treatment and legal responses is to separate women from their abusive partners -- no matter what the circumstances, and no matter how fervently the women wish otherwise (Satel 1997, 6).

Such intrusion denies that violence is often an individual problem, "not a social defect expressed through the actions of men" (Satel 1997, 10) and interferes with a woman's free will and determination, another laissez-faire concern.

Finally, the IWF argues against VAWA because some of its provisions allow victims to make federal civil rights violation claims against abusers.

Consistent with its laissez-faire beliefs, the IWF considers this to be an unreasonable extension of federal powers and filed an amicus curiae brief in a United States Supreme Court (USSC) case -- *United States v. Morrison* -- that was directly related to this provision of VAWA. This case involved a woman who was allegedly assaulted by two men in her college dorm. She sought relief in federal court, as VAWA laid out federal civil remedies for such cases. A federal court dismissed her case saying that Congress lacks authority under the Commerce Clause to regulate conduct that is neither "interstate" nor "commerce." An Appeals court agreed, so the case went to the USSC. At issue in the case, according to the IWF, is whether or not the Constitution gives the federal government "general police power" to regulate activities that have any "arguable effect on commerce." In this brief, the IWF not only criticized the extension of government's role, but also argued that Congress was misled by advocacy research about domestic violence and that women are not the only victims of violence. In June, 2000, the USSC ruled in favor of IWF's position regarding the power of the federal government to regulate in these cases.

The IWF and Title IX

Tackling another prominent feminist achievement and seeking to transform its meaning through laissez-faire frames, the IWF instituted a program entitled "Play Fair," in which it takes a stand against the enforcement of Title IX. Title IX, a 1972 law that outlaws gender discrimination in federally-funded educational

institutions, has been used quite successfully to help increase attention to, and funding for, women's sports in colleges and universities.⁶³ The IWF argues that the unintended consequences of implementing Title IX have been quotas that allow schools, not only to increase their funding for women's sports, but to decrease support for men's teams to create equity with women. That is, it has the effect of affirmative action, a policy the IWF opposes.

Noting that women should be concerned about this legislation, it published a policy document entitled "Why Would a Women's Group Complain About Title IX?" (Schuld 1998b) in which it argues that educational quotas not only "demean the legitimate athletic accomplishments of women," but harm men, "especially minority men" (1998b, 1). Consistent with its laissez-faire conservative ideology, it contends that Title IX promotes reverse discrimination. Commenting on new rules that serve to enforce all provisions of Title IX, the IWF's Blair says:

This is mean-spirited, dog-in-the-manger feminism at its worst. Why deny men sports opportunities just because relatively fewer women are interested in athletics (Independent Women's Forum 1997b, 15)?

⁶³ In terms of athletics, Title IX states that 1) financial assistance must be awarded proportionately on the basis of number of male and female athletes, 2) that, where there are student athletic interests, institutions must accommodate them equally without regard to sex and, 3) that all other benefits afforded sports participants must be equivalent, but not necessarily identical (University of Iowa 2000). Gelb and Palley (1987) document the important role of feminists in influencing the writing of these regulations and enforcement of this law since its passage in 1972.

Further, because of the federal oversight necessary to monitor compliance with the law, the IWF contends that Title IX encourages governmental bureaucracies to “run amok” (Schuld 1998b).

Pornography, women’s health, the ERA, violence against women and Title IX are familiar bailiwicks of the feminist movement. Both the CWA and the IWF, however, have attempted to transform the meanings of these women’s issues by framing them in ways that link them to conservative values. More consistent with its beliefs that women should promote women’s issues (see Chapter Three for more discussion), the CWA transforms the meanings of its socially conservative values to take account of the fact that feminists have made women’s interests central to the debates over public policies. As for Marshall’s findings that the CWA does not focus on women’s issues, I contend that either my definition of “women’s issues” is either different from hers.⁶⁴ and/or other social and political factors account for the CWA’s increased attention to women’s issues since Marshall conducted her research (her data were gathered from the CWA’s periodicals published in 1992: mine were from its 1997 periodicals). I explore this potential for the organization’s over-time change in Chapter Six.

⁶⁴ Marshall (1996) does not provide the details of how she coded for “women’s issues.” For example, she finds that the CWA does focus on “pro-life” issues, issues I consider to be women’s issues. However, the CWA and other organizations also frame this issue in terms of “fetal rights” so perhaps Marshall was basing her definitions strictly on how this and other issues were framed.

As I have shown in Chapter Three, however, the IWF derides the notion that women as a group have interests that are distinct from men simply because they are women. Therefore, the group seeks to transform the meaning of its women's issues to be more consistent with laissez-faire ideology and thus its advocacy on these issues can be considered to be activism in the interests of laissez-faire conservatives. Either way, both groups offer their interpretations of policy problems, battle feminists for authority in the policymaking process and suggest that they are the more credible arbiters of women's interests in these cases.

Gender Difference and Political Legitimacy

The previous section demonstrated how the CWA and IWF use frame alignment strategies to transform the meaning of issues and help them to make sense of the competing influences that come from being countermovement women's organizations. This section, and the one that follows, focuses on two specific frames that the organizations use through their debates about women's issues. As I show in this section, both groups use a "gender difference" frame to help establish themselves as legitimate representatives of women's interests. In doing so, they accede to feminists the salience of gender identity in politics, but use frame alignment strategies that help them make sense of this nod to feminism while still appealing to their conservative constituencies and allies.

Feminist or gender conscious women strive to overcome traditional gender differences in the name of equality (Gelb and Palley 1987; Spalter-Roth and

Schreiber 1995) or argue for a valuing of women's differences from men, but in the name of equal or just outcomes (Eisenstein 1988). In either case, feminists have argued that how we construct and perceive gender differences has political significance. Antifeminist women's organizations also reference gender differences through policy debates about women's issues, as they seek to counter feminist claims of legitimacy as representatives of women's interests. As I show, how they frame gender differences in relation to their issues is premised on their need to negotiate the tensions that arise as countermovement women's organizations. While both groups highlight the salience of gender identity in politics by invoking gender differences, each must be careful not to alienate its conservative constituencies and allies. So how do they negotiate these conflicts?

As I will show, both organizations argue that public policies need to take into account gender differences and that these differences may translate into women having different needs and interests from men. For the CWA, taking gender differences into account as it frames its position on issues, is less paradoxical and complicated than it is for the IWF. As a socially conservative organization, the CWA's constituencies and allies believe that gender differences are biological and divinely ordained and that women as a group will have different interests from men because of their gender (see Chapter Three for a more in-depth discussion of this perspective). And, as I show, the CWA frames its discussion of gender differences in ways consistent with these beliefs. Thus, its need as a

countermovement women's organization to make gender salient. in this case framed as gender differences, can easily be bridged with its socially conservative ideology about gender differences (see Marshall 1996. for a related argument).

Conversely, as a laissez-faire organization that denies the relevance of gender identity in politics and promotes individualism. the IWF's framing of gender differences as natural and relevant to politics is somewhat more contradictory. To negotiate among these competing factors, the IWF mostly engages in frame transformation between socially conservative and laissez-faire conservative frames to legitimate its claims about gender differences. As I show. in some cases. it links the two strands of conservatism. by transforming the meaning of its laissez-faire values through socially conservative frames. In other cases. however. the organization merely adopts socially conservative frames to discuss gender differences, again indicating the fluidity between its laissez-faire and socially conservative views.

For the CWA. gender differences are naturally derived. And. while the CWA. like feminists. call for attention to gender differences in politics. the CWA distances itself from feminist views on the subject by arguing that:

[F]eminists want more than equality. They want sameness. To say that women are the same as men is dangerous. non-Biblical, and anti-woman. To enforce such an ideology would require denial of basic natural aspects of womanhood. We know that God created men and women equal. Thankfully, He also created us to be different in roles. That does not make us different in rank (Concerned Women for America 1998e)

Most often, to reference gender differences and indicate how its issues attend to these differences, the CWA invokes maternalism⁶⁵ and the moral superiority of women. For example, the CWA claims it was founded to "counter the lies of feminism and uphold the honor and dignity of motherhood . . . because protecting families and preserving the honor of motherhood is what we're all about" (LaHaye 1997, 21). Men are depicted as being more naturally vulnerable to sexual "perversions" such as homosexuality, pornography and pedophilia than women and thus the organization supports policies that promote abstinence, denies civil rights to gay men and lesbians and limits the pornography industry. Indeed, as noted earlier, an entire issue of *Family Voice* was devoted to the problems of men's "addiction" to pornography and what women should do if they are married to such men (May 1999). Thus, women are frequently characterized as the caretakers and moral guardians of their households because of their proclivity for nurturance. As the CWA's founder Beverly LaHaye writes:

Feminism . . . exists simply for self-advancement. This trend toward selfishness is, however, self-destructive rather than liberating . . . Selfishness goes against what I believe is the basic nature of a woman to care for others . . . I believe God gave women a natural tendency toward giving, nurturing, serving and comforting (1993, 77).

As such, members are also encouraged by organizational leaders to translate these mostly personal roles into political ones to restore the country's morality. As I

⁶⁵ See Chapter 5 of this study for an in-depth discussion of maternalism and the construction of mother's interests by these two organizations.

discuss in this study's conclusion (Chapter Six), this strategy can be quite effective in mobilizing conservative religious women by blurring the boundaries between the private and public.

In addition to women's moral differences, the CWA argues for attention to the physical differences between men and women. As such, the CWA opposes gender-integrated military basic training because of women's bodily differences from men. As one CWA staffer related:

Yes, women can serve in the military, but should they be forced into combat? I think this is outrageous. I mean men and women are created equal in many ways, but obviously different in others. For a purpose. I think a woman's body, her stature, has certain physical drawbacks on some jobs that to me it doesn't seem safe . . . we'll just use combat for an example (1998).

For the CWA, its framing of issues based on gender difference frames helps the group signal itself as being different from feminists. As CWA's former President Pate told me:

[O]ne of the things that feminists have tried to say is that women and men are absolutely the same. That they are equal in all ways. And I think that there is a difference in being equal and being the same physically, emotionally, there is a difference (1998c).

The CWA's socially conservative beliefs are consistent with its rhetoric about gender differences; as such it bridges its focus on women's issues with socially conservative beliefs about the divine nature of gender differences. Thus, while the organization accedes to feminists the salience of making gender-based claims, it does not conflict with the organization's specific conservative

ideology, making the invocation of gender in these cases consistent with one of the organization's goals -- appealing to its conservative members and allies.

Despite that the IWF disavows the need for gender identity-based claims, it is also quite explicit in making central the need to attend to gender differences when considering issues. And, while the IWF's laissez-faire ideology of individualism and opposition to identity-based claims may seem to contradict its claims about the importance of the differences between the sexes, in some cases the organization offers a very cogent defense, by using frame alignment strategies.

As I will show, as laissez-faire conservatives, the IWF argues for equal opportunity, free choice and limited government interference, but uses socially conservative frame to argue that gender differences will influence the choices women make and the abilities they have to achieve certain goals. In this way, an explicit invocation of the importance of traditional gender differences helps the IWF distance itself from the feminists that consider such traditional views of gender differences to be oppressive. In addition, this strategy enables the IWF to transform laissez-faire beliefs about freedom from government intervention through the naturalness of gender differences, thus allowing the organization to appeal to a broader group of conservative women as well as its own laissez-faire constituency. However, as I will also show, in other cases, the IWF's framing of gender differences as natural is identical to that of the CWA's. That is, the organization uses socially conservative frames to discuss gender differences. This

indicates some internal organizational inconsistencies and contradictions, but also points to the overlap between the CWA and IWF and their specific conservative ideologies.

A prime example of the IWF's transforming laissez-faire ideology through socially conservative frames can be found in the IWF's much-touted publication *Women's Figures: An Illustrated Guide to the Economic Progress of Women in America* (Furchtgott-Roth and Stolba 1999). This policy document aims to debunk "familiar feminist tropes about women in the workplace -- the glass ceiling, the wage gap, the pink ghetto" (1999, xi), by revealing faulty methodology of previous studies and highlighting women's gains in education, entrepreneurship and electoral politics. The authors' thesis is that women's differences in economic and job status can be attributed to women's different values and life choices from men: most notably that women *choose* to leave the workforce to have and raise their children because as women, they are inclined to do so. The authors write:

The personal choices women have made are perhaps the most important and least appreciated factor in women's economic progress over the years. Decisions to enter previously male-dominated fields of education and employment, to marry and bear children later in life, to join the work force, and to leave the work force to raise children have all had an enormous effect on whether women can achieve total parity with men (Furchtgott-Roth and Stolba 1999, 80).

In addition, the IWF's Anita Blair also noted this about feminists' support for pay equity:

If you have children and are lucky enough to have somebody else in your family that can earn money, and you wish to be with your children, that is a

perfectly reasonable decision and is certainly one that should not be discouraged. So to say there is something malicious at work that generates these differences in earnings over time, to the contrary. A lot of people might argue that the ability of a family to designate one bread winner and devote one of them to the home and children is a good thing (1998a).

Indeed, the socially conservative CWA makes a similar argument, indicating the similarity between these two organization in its framing of gender differences:

Women are concentrated in lower paying professions, but not because of rampant discrimination, as the feminists charge. Women voluntarily choose such professions for a variety of reasons. Women have the opportunity to earn as much as men but they often have different goals and values. They are much more likely to leave the work force to raise a family and therefore have less seniority. Also, the average man has been on the job much longer than the average woman (Concerned Women for America 1997b).

Examples of the IWF's *specifically* socially conservative frames about gender differences can be found throughout the pages of the *Woman's Quarterly*.

In an editorial on women in combat, Crittenden argues "that war simply isn't -- and -- never has been -- a place for women." (1997b, 2). She further contends, like the CWA, that what is really at stake in the battle over increasing women's active military role is the "future of sex roles" (2).

In addition, the IWF's opposition to the ERA hinges partly on its fear that the ERA will eradicate gender differences. As the IWF's Blair argues about why the ERA was not ratified:

Most people recognized that legally equating sex with race would inhibit states from making any distinctions, no matter how reasonable, based on sex, and discourage states from enacting laws helpful to women. For unlike skin color -- a superficial characteristic utterly irrelevant to merit or performance -- sex, when it does matter, matters a great deal. Men and women share many of the same human characteristics and in many ways are

equally capable, but they also differ in significant (and physically obvious) ways (1997, 7).

Finally, like the CWA, the IWF argues that denying gender-based differences, as they claim feminists have, has hurt women emotionally and sexually. In their special “post-sexual revolution issue,” entitled “Let’s Face it. Girls: The Sexual Revolution Was a Mistake” (August 1997), various contributors, claim that “[l]eft to their own devices, men apparently are programmed to prefer sex with as many women as possible” (Sidak 1997, 14). And women, swayed by the dominant rhetoric of a post-sexual revolution America, no longer feel capable or justified in stopping them. The IWF bemoans that “[t]he special province of women to civilize men and guard marriage” (15) has been discredited. Now, women, having “absorbed feminist teachings” have become “confused and diffident as to their right to control the nature and extent of premarital sexual activity” (Graglia 1997, 11). Subsequently, we have the “invention” of date rape and the burdensome expansion of sexual harassment laws since women alone can no longer control sexually aggressive men without government intervention.

The CWA’s and IWF’s gender difference frames can enable both groups to appeal to their members and other conservatives, despite that are acceding to feminists the salience of gender in politics. And, these gender difference frames also enable the organizations to discredit feminists. That is, when feminists frame interests in ways that challenge naturalized gender divisions, antifeminist women’s

organizations can charge them with being out of touch, too radical or inattentive to the forces of nature, and thus not being legitimate representatives of women's interests.

The invocation of conservative gender difference frames not only reflects the ideological foundation of these organizations, but serves rhetorically to promote their political goals. By advocating an essentialist or traditional view of womanhood and gender roles through gender difference frames, these organizations can appeal to women's desires to be good mothers, wives and moral reformers. Furthermore, as women's organizations promoting traditional gender differences, they may be perceived as more legitimate than conservative men who supposedly benefit from the institutionalization of gendered dichotomies. In this case, then, the gendered identities of these organizations could also help further the general goals of the conservative movement.

Framing Antagonists -- Antifeminist Women's Narratives About Feminism

Integral to establishing themselves as legitimate representatives of women's interests, are the identities and values the CWA and IWF attribute to feminists. Through issue framing and identity construction strategies, both groups talk about feminism in extremely negative and disparaging ways. As such, these antifeminist women's groups establish their own organizational profiles and offer themselves as the countervailing, and more rightful response to feminism. In distancing themselves from feminists, both the CWA and IWF legitimate their conservative

ideologies, reclaim traditional gender differences and speak to the true or majority interests of women, while still being able to act as identity-based organizations and co-opt feminist strategies. As such, they negotiate among the tensions inherent in being countermovement women's organizations.

Through their framing of issues, and in other articles or cartoons specifically devoted to criticizing feminists, both organizations present images of feminists based on a range of familiar stereotypes: feminists are unfeminine, lack a sense of humor, are promiscuous, sexually perverse or opposed to sexual pleasure, all lesbians and/or androgynous, careerist, elitist, anti-maternal and man-haters. For example, the IWF half-jokingly calls for submissions to their "10 Things a Feminist Might Actually Find Funny" column (Independent Women's Forum 1997a, 20), while the CWA laments that "30 years ago the modern feminist movement erupted in society and began preaching the "degradation" of motherhood" (LaHaye 1997, 3). A cartoon in the Summer 1997 issue of IWF's *The Women's Quarterly* depicts a woman yelling at NOW: "I'm lonely. I want a man, but you've made it virtually impossible for me to connect with one!" (10). Generally, both groups frame feminists as being out of touch with most women and too much like men; in this way feminists are ultimately incapable of representing the true interests of women and understanding the importance of traditional gender differences.

While feminists are portrayed as being too radical and out of touch, they are simultaneously criticized for having too much power and access to political institutions. The CWA's and IWF's articulating the threat of feminist hegemony is an excellent strategy to drive concerned women to political action. Both organizations warn that schools, the media and the government have institutionalized feminist ideology. Feminism has even influenced the fashion industry, claims the IWF, by convincing women not to please men with their dress, but instead to fashion themselves as "battered lesbians" (Crittenden 1997a, 2). Feminist views also "pervade the bureaucracy" (Satel 1997, 5), says the IWF, in criticizing the use of tax dollars to fund domestic violence programs conceived of by feminists. And, because of their political access, feminists have managed to dupe policymakers and the public with their "Super Bowl Sneak," a term the IWF uses to refer to the unsubstantiated claim that battering against women increases during the Super Bowl. The IWF argues that feminists used this and other spurious claims to help get VAWA passed (Blair and Yoest 2000).

Feminism is also portrayed as intricately connected to other liberal policies and social agendas that cause familial breakdown, teen pregnancy, and challenges to parental authority. The CWA raises concerns with what it calls post-Kinseyan⁶⁶ values about sexuality and initiated a grassroots educational campaign

⁶⁶ Alfred C. Kinsey, a zoologist, was a prominent and influential researcher at Indiana University in the 1940s. He studied sexual behavior and endorsed liberal attitudes about human sexual activity. The CWA notes disparagingly that "Kinsey's fellow researchers

against such values -- the Restore Value and Social Purity or the RSVP campaign. Concerned with the "sexualization of children" the CWA argues that "[a]rmed with Kinsey's statistics, feminists and pedophiles are also challenging parental authority. They clamor for 'children's rights' -- to privacy, to association, to family planning services" (Warner and Hutchens 1997, 16). It also cites the demise of sexual ethics, due in part to the success of feminism, as the cause of teenage pregnancy, increased single parenting, pornography, homosexuality, pedophilia -- all considered social problems -- and all leading to familial strife and breakdown. Implicit in its analysis is a sense that women's dissatisfaction with marriage and motherhood and men's dissatisfaction with monogamy and traditional familial arrangements lead to unbridled and detrimental sexual activity.

Like the CWA, the IWF is critical of the negative influence feminism can have on families. The IWF's Ledeen, sounding much like the socially conservative women of the CWA, writes a piece on religious tolerance where she argues:

The National Organization for Women (NOW) . . . has proclaimed the Promise Keepers a grave threat to American women. How can it be that women feel threatened by an organization whose mission it is to inspire men to reaffirm and rejuvenate their commitment to their wives and

also served as his sex partners. Their zeal for sex played a role in leading their research to focus on people who deviated from societal standards -- pimps, prostitutes, homosexuals, imprisoned sex offenders -- and away from those who conformed. Kinsey's methodology and sampling technique virtually guaranteed that he would find what he was looking for... Further investigation reveals that much of the sexual activity included in the research was photographed" (1998b).

children? These good men are not threatening to women. They are, however, a moral threat to radical feminists who want the family replaced with something else (1997, 6).

As noted earlier, the perceived feminist goal of eradicating gender differences is also framed as being detrimental to women. At stake here is a threat to femininity and all of its alleged prizes. The CWA's founder Beverly LaHaye writes:

Feminists not only reject God's design in creation, they also reject God's plan for the "different yet equal" framework in male/female relationships. They cannot accept the idea of men and women complementing and completing each other. Feminists do not acknowledge that there are true differences -- biological, emotional, and social -- between men and women (1993, 186).

And, one IWF writer asserts:

[A]ndrogyny isn't the wave of the future. Sex distinctions are not socialized constructs but deep human impulses. Men can't be taught to want unfeminine women. Women who follow the feminist model may end up, not freer and happier than their mothers were, but sometimes more sad and more compromised (Emery 1997, 29).

Indeed, feminists, one IWF writer argues, did not support Paula Jones' allegation of sexual harassment against Bill Clinton because of Hillary Clinton. Hillary Clinton, she suggests, wooed Mr. Clinton despite that she is unattractive, unfeminine and aggressively intelligent. Jones, however, filled a need for President Clinton -- the need to be with a feminine, unintimidating body -- one who provides the necessary relief from the stronger, more feminist Ms. Clinton. If

feminists supported Jones, they would have to have acknowledged that ugly, smart women cannot keep their men (Emery 1997).

Feminist influence is also framed as omnipresent by both of these organizations. Consistent with "equality feminists"⁶⁷ such as Christina Hoff Sommers, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Katie Roiphe who castigate feminists for depicting women as victims, the IWF also notes that "[c]onservative girls rightly believe that whining about victimhood is bad form in a world where most of us have a full range of opportunities to make what we will of our lives" (Schiffren 1997, 7). Despite this critique of "victim feminism," however, both the IWF and CWA, suggest that women are at the mercy of feminists -- victims of their ideology and social and political influence. Feminists have successfully "convinced many women that they could have it all" and now they resent their husbands and families (Bush 1997a, 8). Women "absorb" feminist teachings and can be "enticed" by feminists (LaHaye 1997, 3). Men, too, can be victims of feminist ideology: the IWF sarcastically notes that feminist domestic violence programs may indeed be effective because: "[w]hat better punishment for a loutish man than to make him endure hours of feminist lecturing?" (Satel 1997, 6). The language used in these "victim" narratives is telling: since feminists can convince, entice and punish, they can overwhelm women into a false sense of liberation and into a destructive life of unhappiness.

⁶⁷ Liberal activist and researcher Jean Hardisty uses this term (Hardisty 1999).

On feminism the messages from the CWA and the IWF are clear and powerful. Feminism is so pervasive a threat that it must be halted. Feminism's omnipresence and its ability to lure women necessitates political intervention from the IWF and CWA. And, as juxtaposed to these images of radical feminists, the politically active women of the IWF and the CWA are the more legitimate representatives of women's interests.

Conclusion

As this chapter indicates, the CWA and IWF have the potential to be formidable opponents for feminist organizations. They directly battle feminists on issues that feminists have long struggled for and cite women's interests as being central to their organizational missions and policy agendas. Combined with their strategy of speaking as women (as discussed in Chapter Three), these antifeminist women's organizations show the political salience of gender identity especially as it relates to advocacy on women's issues. In addition, the groups engage in issue framing strategies that should help them appeal to a broad range of women, while still securing support from their conservative members and allies.

As I also argue in Chapter Three, the CWA, unlike the IWF, cites women's differences from men as a critical reason for forming into a women's organization. Its support for women's issues and interests, then, is not at all inconsistent with its socially conservative ideology. In addition, as I have shown, to negotiate between

the need to appeal to its conservative members with the need to make sense of the influence of feminist rhetoric and identity-based strategies, the CWA ably uses a frame transformation strategy. And, while the organization criticizes feminists for making universal claims about women's interests while it does the same, its being a conservative religious organization may help in part, to explain this inconsistency. As religion scholars have shown, Evangelical Protestants, like those women who comprise the CWA, believe in absolute and divine truth, as found in Biblical scripture and ordained by God (Smith 1998; Hunter 1989; Hunter 1983). Thus appeals to women's *universal* interests are consistent with its socially conservative ideology as well.

As I demonstrated in Chapter Three, the IWF claims to support identity-based organizing on the grounds that it enables them to counter feminists most directly, but denies that women's differences from men translate into differing policy preferences. Yet, when we examine how IWF frames its issues and talks about women's interests, we find that it does make group-based identity claims about issues and that gender differences are quite salient to them. Indeed, while the IWF negotiates its support for women's issues and its claims to representing women broadly by transforming feminist policy debates through its *laissez-faire* ideology, it sounds much like the socially conservative CWA when debating a range of issues, especially women in the military, sexuality and the ERA.

There is a possible explanation for the discrepancy between the IWF's deriding identity-based politics, while at the same time arguing that the differences between men and women are natural and translate into policy goals and preferences. While the IWF focuses on women's issues, it may ideally believe that any laissez-faire conservative organization can advocate for them. As I demonstrated in Chapter Three, its forming into a women's organization was motivated by a desire to play according to the terms already established by feminists and a way to establish legitimacy for its conservative views. That is, to be an effective countermovement organization, the IWF believes it should be a women's organization that promotes women's issues, even if it violates its classical liberal ideology about group-based interest claims. Therefore, the organization engages in issue framing strategies such as frame transformation and identity construction to help negotiate among these tensions.

By framing women's issues and interests through conservative ideologies, these organizations also have the potential to link women to other conservative causes and organizations. Generally, for the socially conservative CWA, these causes include opposition to abortion and homosexuality and support for the traditional family. For the IWF, it means advocating for less government

intrusion and opposing affirmative action and other social programs designed to remedy group-based complaints.⁶⁸ As Marshall contends:

The greatest achievement of the New Right may be its overlooked genius for mobilizing women to its cause through such rhetorical strategies that connect the broader conservative agenda to social issues more likely to resonate with women (Marshall 1996, 68).

And as articulated through women's organizations, these issues may be even more likely to strike a chord with women.

The CWA's and IWF's discourses about reproductive health, violence against women, sexuality, economic policies and gender differences also challenge much of what feminists say about women. Through its public policy debates, these antifeminist women's organizations also construct women's identities. And, through their alternative frames about women's issues, they have the potential to complicate policy debates about women's interests. As I show in the next chapter, this is especially true in light of these organizations frames concerning child care and motherhood. At the same time, both organizations also reinforce the feminist message that women's issues and interests are relevant to politics.

⁶⁸ The CWA is also critical of affirmative action and government intrusion, especially in the case of public education, where they believe parents' rights are ignored.

Chapter Five: “Women’s Shoulders Are For Crying On”: Child Care Policy and the Framing of Mothers’ Interests

Introduction

One of the most important political symbols for the CWA and IWF is that of the mother. She is cast at the center of family life, the nurturer who sacrifices her own interests and the one who fights for her family’s welfare. Any threat to her status reflects and foreshadows disruption not only to the cherished traditional family, but also to the nation’s health as a whole. For the antifeminist women’s organizations in this study, support for child care programs poses such a threat. The CWA and IWF declare that child care, especially government-funded care, hurts children and families, encourages women to work outside the home, and allows for excessive government intrusion into our private lives. Ultimately, the nation’s desire for child care signals the degradation of true motherhood and stable, healthy families.

Building on the analyses in the previous chapter, this chapter provides an in-depth examination of a women’s issue common to both organizations -- child care. In so doing I examine how both groups use frame alignment and identity construction strategies to negotiate tensions consistent with their being countermovement women’s organizations and establish themselves as legitimate

representatives of mothers' interests.⁶⁹ As I will show, the CWA and IWF transform feminist inspired messages about child care to better fit their conservative values and use their debates about child care to make claims about motherhood and mothers' interests. As such, motherhood is a key category of contestation for both feminists and antifeminists, as each seeks the right to represent women's interests.

To some extent, feminists have attempted to negotiate the tensions between the needs of the home and the workplace by advocating for policies that enable parents to have careers while raising their children. That is, they seek workplace changes and government support to address the tensions. parents, especially mothers, face as they try to simultaneously raise children, have careers and earn money (Michel 1999; Berry 1993; Stoper 1988). The Family and Medical Leave Act and federally funded day care are examples of policies that follow from this strategy. While feminists have not been wholly successful in accomplishing massive workplace changes, several feminist organizations have these political issues as part of their agendas (e.g. NOW, AAUW and the National Women's Law Center (NWLC)). In this way, feminists have helped make child care and mothers' interests national policy priorities and relevant to politics in general.

⁶⁹ As I show, both groups equate mother's interests with women's interests. That is, since these organizations contend that motherhood is a natural and desirable role for most women, their claims about mother's interests are really claims about women's interests.

Central to feminists' framing of these issues is the tensions women feel between childrearing and workplace expectations (Hays 1996).

As I will show, however, the CWA and IWF frame feminist advocacy regarding child care and other related workplace policies as being antithetical to the interests of most mothers. Both groups construct mothers' interests as natural and argue that feminist claims are purely ideological and driven by destructive social and political values. As the CWA's Beverly LaHaye writes:

The battle over child care actually goes back to the late 70's when federalized child care topped the feminist agenda. Trained social workers and licensed day care providers, they said, could raise a child much better than a mother. This was federalized child care in its infancy. Now a more sophisticated version will be part of President Clinton's State of the Union Address (LaHaye 1998).

To assess how the CWA and IWF frame child care policies and mothers' interests, I divide this chapter into three analytical sections. The first demonstrates how the CWA and IWF, as countermovement women's organizations, attempt to make sense of the tensions women feel as workers and mothers. As I show, both groups concede to feminists the relevance of these issues as public policy concerns, but transform feminist messages about the meaning of motherhood and child care to be more consistent with socially conservative values about gender roles and maternalism. The second section examines the invocation of specific antifeminist frames particular to the cases of motherhood and child care, noting how the CWA and IWF use these frames to construct their own identities as

legitimate representatives of mothers' interests. Third, I evaluate the CWA's and IWF's specific child care policy proposals, demonstrating that these proposals are framed in ways to be consistent with both socially and laissez-faire conservative ideologies and thus made more amenable to these groups' constituencies. Before moving onto these three sections I provide a brief discussion about the issue of child care itself.

The Issue of Child Care

As a political issue, child care requires advocates to articulate their positions on parenting and familial responsibilities, as well as their views about workplace policies and government intervention. In this way, the issue of child care allows for an excellent analysis of how these antifeminist women's organizations negotiate the often conflicting interests of women and the workplace. As such, their advocacy on this issue requires that these countermovement women's organizations mark themselves as different from feminists and frame debates in ways that appeal to both conservative constituencies and women more generally.

Much of their rhetoric concerning child care is found in articles about the specific topic or in writings about mothering and parenthood more generally (e.g. the CWA's *Family Voice* typically devotes considerable space to the issue of mothering in May, the month in which Mother's Day falls).⁷⁰ Some of the pieces

⁷⁰Chapter One describes the specific data used for this analysis.

address specific legislation, like a child care initiative introduced by President Bill Clinton and a bill offered by Senators James Jeffords (R-VT) and Christopher Dodd (D-CT).⁷¹ This chapter does not address the particular impact these organizations may have had on such bills (although in some places interviewees do discuss legislative successes), but instead examines the strategies they use to achieve their legislative goals.

Mother's Nature? Framing the Ideal Mother

As noted, feminists have been active in making women's concerns about parenting a policy priority and work to negotiate the tensions between childrearing and workplace expectations. Thus, as countermovement women's organizations, the CWA and IWF must accede to feminists the relevance of these concerns, but frame them in ways that are consistent with their ideologies and help them appeal to members and potential members. That is, they must construct themselves as legitimate representatives of mothers' interests. To do so, both groups argue that mother's interests arise from naturalized gender differences and use the image of the ideal mother to support their positions on child care policies. Thus, like feminists, they call for attention to women's anxieties about working and

⁷¹ In 1998 and 1999 President Clinton proposed a broad child care initiative that would, among other things, offer tax credits for child care, build the supply of after-school programs and improve the safety of child care programs. In 1999, Sens. Jeffords (R-VT) and Dodd (D-CT) offered S. 810, a bill that addressed the quality of child care programs, offered support for the professional development of child care providers and increased child care subsidies for low-income families.

motherhood, but argue that tensions between the two come from women denying their natural desires to be stay-at-home mothers in order to seek professional success and/or earn more money for their families.

To assert their authority on the issues of child care and motherhood, both groups claim to know what mothers want. And, consistent with their framing of other women's issues (see Chapter Four), these groups make universal assertions about mothers' interests. For example, both organizations suggest that a *majority* of employed mothers would prefer to be stay-at-home parents. As the IWF writes: "*most* mothers want more time with their children" (Blair 1998b, 21: emphasis added), and the "agendas" of child care advocates do not "coincide with the wishes of the *majority* of American parents" (Olsen 1998, 17: emphasis added). To substantiate their claims, the CWA and IWF cite polls,⁷² anecdotes and personal experiences. While their references to these data are

⁷² For example, the CWA commissioned Wirthlin Worldwide to conduct a poll about women's attitudes and opinions that included this question -- "If I could afford it, I would like to stay home and be a full-time mother." According to the CWA, eighty percent of nonmembers agreed with that statement (Concerned Women for America 1997c). In addition, the IWF features regular "poll-pourri" columns written by pollster and American Enterprise Institute fellow Karlyn Bowman, some of which addresses this topic. The organizations cite other polls as well, although they are not necessarily conclusive. For example, a Pew Research Center poll found that 41% of women polled think that the increase in mothers with small children working outside the home is a bad thing. On the other hand, 17% said it was a good thing and 37% said it did not make a difference (The Pew Research Center For the People and the Press 1997) In reporting on this poll, the CWA failed to mention the 54% who did not specifically think mothers working outside the home was a negative thing. See Cathy Young for a more thorough discussion about the use of polls in the case of the "mommy wars" (Young 1999)

important, as I show, a critical strategy for both groups is to frame mothers' interests as being naturally derived from biological gender differences.

As discussed in Chapter Four, for the CWA, with its socially conservative religious base, framing gender differences as biological and/or divinely ordained is consistent with its overall organizational philosophy. For the IWF, however, with its focus on individualism, one might expect a more nuanced portrayal of women's differences from men. As we have seen in previous chapters, however, for the most part, this is not the case.⁷³ As this chapter will show, the IWF, like the CWA, uses socially conservative frames to argue that women are naturally fit to be their children's primary caretakers. And, this primary caretaking is best when it comes from the child's mother, not a day care provider. For these organizations, the maternal instinct drives mothers' interests.

Women, according to the CWA and IWF, are primarily motivated by what sociologist Sharon Hays calls the "ideology of intensive mothering" (Hays 1996). According to Hays, this ideology comes from the social construction of appropriate child rearing, which proffers that women should be the central care givers and put their children's needs above their own. The ideology of intensive mothering, she argues, contradicts the logic of the marketplace where workers must be rational self-interested actors, not nurturing selfless caretakers, to be

⁷³As I will discuss, there are critical moments of contradiction and complexity for both organizations: but their public debates and policy goals do tend to reflect this naturalized division.

successful. Despite this tension, the ideology exists, causing great strain for all women, regardless of their political values and independent of their employment status (Hays 1996). As discussed, feminists have longed argued for attention to these stresses for working parents, calling for changes in workplace policies to remedy the problem.

As I show, the antifeminist women's organizations in this study use an "intensive mothering" frame to articulate their positions on child care policies and motherhood in general. However, unlike Hays' "social constructionist" approach, the CWA and IWF suggest that intensive mothering is derived naturally: that is that women are biologically driven to be this type of parent. However, both groups also bemoan that feminist ideology and liberal child care policies contradict mothers' natural desires in these cases and compel women to act against their maternal instincts. Thus, while feminists cite workplace policies as the locus of women's problems in this case, the CWA and IWF blame feminism and liberal advocates for encouraging women to work when they would be happiest staying home caring for their young children. Integral to the CWA's and IWF's debates about child care policies, then, is the framing of the ideal mother, as she is the one whose interests are at stake. So, what does the intensive mother look like? How are her interests framed? I turn to these questions next.

The Intensive Mother as Ideal Mother

Nostalgia plays an important role in framing mothers' interests. Through references to women's "simpler" lives as stay-at-home mothers, these organizations conjure up images of a life untainted by feminist politics and ideological conflict. They refer to a time when the family was a safe and secure place because mom was home to keep it that way. Diane Fisher, an IWF affiliate and critic of institutional child care, writes "whatever happened to rocking chairs, whispered songs, soft blankets, and dim lights?" (Fisher 1998, 15). All of these things, it seems, are left behind when women leave their children in day care to enter the workplace. In fact, child care institutions are portrayed as awful places that would make any good mother cringe at the thought of having to leave her child there. As juxtaposed to the images of the selfless nurturing mother, these nostalgic frames can be powerful and persuasive. For the IWF, Fisher offers this foreboding tale about child care centers:

[I]s this the Brave New World? One day I observed a caregiver cradling a baby horizontally at her waist, swinging her gently in an attempt to induce sleep. The overhead fluorescent fixtures, the cacophony of other toddlers, the swaddling in a blanket discarded a moment ago by someone else -- somehow it didn't seem conducive to slumber. As she stood rocking in the midst of the bright noisy room, the caregiver looked at me ruefully and said, "She's fighting it!" And well she should (Fisher 1998, 15).

Another article in the IWF's *Women's Quarterly* assessed child care centers like this:

Nobody would put her child into a car seat as casually tested as institutional daycare has been. And millions of infants will spend most of their waking hours in these places. Are they being damaged? Sooner or later we'll find out (Genuis 1996, 17).

Aside from nostalgic imagery, gender differences are also invoked to frame women's true roles and desires and transform the meaning of mothers' interests as being naturally derived. As the CWA's LaHaye argues: "[m]ost little girls will tell you that when they grow up they want to be mommies. There's nothing more natural" (LaHaye 1993, 137). But women are not only predisposed to be mothers -- they are predisposed to be particular kinds of mothers. To realize the natural state of "intensive mothering," a mother puts her children's needs ahead of her own. Ultimately, her children's interests are also hers. The IWF's Kimberly Schuld framed her organization's advocacy of "intensive mothering" this way:

[B]ut as a women's group we weren't saying women need this or women want that. as much as we were saying children need a mother who is home, a father who is there at decent hours. They need both parents, they need not to be in day care, they need nurturing, they need a single, consistent care giver. Things like that. We really kind of turned it around, and yes we did talk about what women want, that they really want to be able to take care of their children. But more importantly, that children need their moms (Schuld 1998).

And, therefore, the true mother is one who prioritizes her children's needs. She is, according to an IWF associate:

a woman whose major concern is not herself and her own advancement, but others and their advancement -- a woman who refuses to bow to social forces telling her, in the words of social critic Mary Ebetadt, to continue "putting children last" (Mack 1997, 19).

This kind of selfless woman, Mack argues, is preferable to the contrasting “skewed values of career and self-obsessed parents” (Mack 1997, 19). As the CWA writes: “you sacrifice your time, your energy and your own desires . . . You go without luxuries so they can have necessities -- and you don’t complain.” This, it professes, is the “Power of Motherhood” (Concerned Women for America 1999a). When a woman leaves her career (and income), she is realizing her own maternal interests. Given the right conditions, according to these organizations, women with small children would prefer to be stay-at-home mothers. Career satisfaction is a mere diversion to a mother’s true desires and, as such, child care policies should reflect women’s preferences to spend more time with their children. In fact, both organizations express sympathy for women who feel they “have” to work and thus suppress their natural desires. A CWA Board member put it this way:

I really feel for those women who have to work outside of their home to take care of their family. I know they are doing the absolute very best that they can to keep their family together and going. But probably for most of them, their heart of hearts would be to be with their children while they are being raised. That doesn't mean that if there is a real satisfaction in a particular career role, that sometimes those things can't be worked in too. I'm talking about in the best of worlds, the dream of dreams, where most women's hearts are. It's hard. I just never had to leave my children. I was able to work in my husband's businesses, but in the home (Arrington 1998).

Both organizations also conflate parenting with mothering, reifying their beliefs that women are the better primary caretakers. With the exception of one article written by a stay-at-home dad (Eddie 1998), there is little talk about fathers’

interests in discussions about child care.⁷⁴ True, fathers are presumed to be concerned about their children, but they are not considered to be conflicted about their employment status or driven to be a child's primary caretaker. A CWA staffer succinctly articulated this sentiment:

I just think that women are natural nurturers and are more concerned about what's going on in the home; whereas a lot of time men are concerned about what is going on in the marketplace. Although a lot of them are really concerned about their children, their wives, and so on: but women to me are the natural nurturers (Bush 1998).

And this female nurturing impulse leads to different parenting styles. For example, as Mona Charen writes for the IWF:

Men's shoulders are for hoisting toddlers on. Women's shoulders are for crying on. It has always been so. It will always be so. A mother's love is the cocoon of childhood. A father's love offers children the equipment to leave home (Charen 1998, 23).

Nonetheless, both organizations would rather have fathers, not the government or other institutions, being responsible for childrearing. For example, the legislative staff of both the CWA and the IWF criticized the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference's Platform for Action for using the word "caretaker" in lieu of mother, father or parent. Expressing her anger over this, the IWF's Ledeen told me:

⁷⁴CWA talks about families and fathers more frequently when discussing other issues like education and pornography. In addition, both organizations reinforce the need for children to be raised in two-parent, heterosexual families where the father is responsible, loving and present.

Look at the Beijing Women's Conference thing. It is very interesting. We have the disk on it, the Platform for Action. So we searched for the word father, it doesn't appear. Searched for the word mother: doesn't appear. The word caretaker appears. It is very well, more than interesting, it's pernicious. It's dangerous . . . The concept that we're going to have caretakers, that kids don't need their parents (Ledeen 1998).

As these organizations frame mother's interests to legislators, the media and the general public, they construct particular ideas about motherhood that are quite powerful and that compete with feminist frames and strategies. In addition, both organizations use framing strategies that naturalize mother's interests, and contend that women's anxieties about work and childrearing come from feminist messages that encourage women to deny their most basic feelings and instincts. Thus, as countermovement women's organizations, they engage in framing strategies that enable them to make sense of feminist strategies to publicize the issue of child care and motherhood, while also refuting feminist claims to representing women's interests in this case. Later in this chapter, I also address how the CWA and IWF specifically frame feminist views of child care and motherhood.

Limits on Intensive Mothering

As countermovement women's organizations, the CWA and IWF frame mothers' interests as natural and disparage feminists for encouraging women to act against their own true maternal interests. As I demonstrated, these strategies should enable the CWA and IWF to appeal to their conservative constituencies and allies, make sense of feminist inspired messages about motherhood, appeal to

unaligned women and thus establish themselves as legitimate representatives of mothers' interests. However, as countermovement women's organizations having to contend with competing goals and influences, there are critical moments of contradictions that are left unresolved and show the limits of intensive mothering. I explore two here.

First, I look at how both groups draw distinctions between "good" and "bad" mothers, despite that they make universal claims about mothers' interests. I note that these differences are predicated on issues of marital status, race and class. Second, I show how the personal and professional choices of the antifeminist women leaders interviewed for this study mediate the extent to which they actually live the lives of "intensive mothers."

Marital Status, Race and Class

It is critical to add to my discussion about the framing of the intensive mother, that the ideal mother, the one who recognizes and acts on her natural maternal desires, is bound by marital status, race and class. As critics of such policies like welfare reform show, distinctions are frequently made between "good" and "bad" mothers in debates over federal funding of family assistance programs (Ladd-Taylor and Umansky 1998; Lubiano 1992; Gordon 1990; Mink 1990). The CWA and IWF are not immune from producing these dichotomous images of mothers, and as I show, do so frequently.

First, single mothering *not* brought on by widowhood or divorce is roundly criticized by both of these organizations and cited as a source of children's problems. The CWA argues that:

Children living with a single mother have several strikes against them. They are more apt to live in poverty than children from intact families; they have a higher rate of early sexual experiences; and they are also more likely to commit crimes. (Bush 1997a, 10).

In fact, the CWA encourages unmarried pregnant women to give up their children for adoption:

What's more, adoption benefits *birth* mothers. A study done by the Search Institute found that a young woman who makes an adoption plan is less likely to be on welfare. Less likely to find herself in another out-of-wedlock pregnancy. And more likely to finish school and find a steady job (Bush 1997a, 15).

And writing for the IWF, Amy Holmes bemoans the increasing willingness of women in their 20s and 30s to be single parents:

Children raised in single-parent households are more likely to drop out of school, get lower grades, get in trouble with the law and become unwed parents themselves. This is true among children of both well-to-do and struggling, single-mother households . . . Indeed the absence of fathers from so many of our children's homes is far more of a threat to our national health than secondhand smoke or violent video games (2000).

In addition, contrary to the prescription for married mothers to stay at home, single mothers, especially women on welfare (or workfare), are "excused" for having to work and, in fact, are encouraged to do so. According to these organizations, entering the workforce should encourage self-sufficiency and behavior modification among women on welfare. As such, both the CWA and the

IWF support the federal government's subsidizing of child care for *poor* women. despite that they oppose federal funding of child care centers and programs for the general population. These subsidies are meant to help women enter the workforce, not be stay-at-home mothers.⁷⁵ Thus, to frame their discussions about "welfare mothers," both groups transform the image of the ideal mother to be a woman who reflects their laissez-faire and socially conservative values about self-sufficiency and moral responsibility respectively. And, each group uses *both* conservative ideological frames, again indicating the commonalities between these two groups, especially on the issue of welfare. For example, in chronicling the lives of poor families in Chicago, Camille Harper writes of the women there on welfare:

The only trouble is, the mothers of these kids tend to view them less as their flesh and blood than they do as keys to a bank. There are no requirements on the mother in return for the benefits, except for making sure that her kids enroll in school and report occasionally for official attendance (1996, 10).

And, the CWA opposes federally funded welfare programs, such as the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), because "Big Daddy Welfare," discourages marriage and encourages illegitimacy, fatherlessness, irresponsibility, helplessness and an "inbred dependence on big government" (Bush 1997c, 10). In addition, in an article offering solutions to the problem of

⁷⁵ These provisions can be found in the 1996 federal law that overhauled the U.S. welfare system -- the Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act of 1996. This law, which had support from conservative organizations like the IWF and CWA, greatly limits the federal government's role in welfare by developing a program that gives states more control and funding in the form of block grants.

teen violence and gang activity the CWA suggests that we “eliminate long-term reliance on welfare” (Hacker 1997, 19) which, according to this group, encourages single parenting that in turns leads to violent children. Another CWA staffer frames the group’s position on welfare this way:

Welfare devours its victims -- destroying their incentive to work and dividing families by making husbands indispensable . . . The person mostly likely to remain on welfare long-term is a young, uneducated single mother with no previous work experience. Yet a single mother on welfare, who wants to marry, faces the loss of benefits. And if she wants to work, any money she earns is subtracted from her grant. This may explain why less than 10 percent of welfare mothers work (Bush 1994).

As Bush’s quote suggests, the “natural” desire to be the intensive mother does not apply to women on welfare. That is, she contends that mothers on welfare do not want to work because of their dependency on government assistance, not because, like other women, they desire to be at home with their children. In the case of poor women and single mothers, conservative views about traditional family structure, self-sufficiency and limited welfare programs override organizational beliefs about mothers being the most natural and best form of child care for their children. This does not stop either organization from making universal claims about mothers’ interests, however. As such, through their debates about child care and mothers’ interests, they produce maternal images that obscure and distort the experiences of many women.

Personal and Professional Challenges

Despite their claims about women prioritizing motherhood, all but one of my interviewees are women who work outside of the home. Some of them have small children, while many have older children or none at all. When I asked these antifeminist women leaders if there were women with children working at their organizations, they related that those who did tried to work from home or part-time. Indeed, I even asked interviewees to respond to the stereotype that conservative organizations like theirs “encourage women to be homemakers.” All of their answers were similar -- they maintained that they were merely trying to increase options for women by reinforcing the value of the stay-at-home mother. As I show in the next section, according to both groups, feminists are to be blamed for *limiting* women’s options by making women think they have to be “superwomen” to be successful and happy. In this spirit, CWA’s Franceski, an unmarried professional staffer, related to me:

The role of a homemaker, especially if they're a mother, it never ends. 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. So I have the utmost respect for homemakers, and I know the rest of the women here do too. But that being said, we believe that women are very capable of letting their opinions be known, are capable of running an organization, are capable of being players in the political process, and very well should be. So while we value homemakers, we also value women being in the workplace (Franceski 1998).

And, despite its rhetoric about women enjoying the role of stay-at-home mother, the IWF acknowledged that for many women, compromises between work and family were actually more appealing. That is, its leaders suggest that women

could be stay-at-home mothers for a few years or work part-time and then return to work for the many years they would have left to build their careers. For example, the IWF's Ledeen shared this about her mothering experiences:

Some women are better moms because they engage during the day in something else, they can't stand, I mean, do you have kids? It's hard . . . So you know, it's really hard. And sometimes just being gone half a day gives you a kind of refreshing break that you can go back and be a better mom the rest of the day. That is fine, some people are like that. I happen to be like that. I have to come and go. Even with shopping, nothing intellectual, just let me out of here, I can't do ABCs any more. If I read that book one more time I'm going to slit my throat (1998).

But on the opposite end of the idealized maternal spectrum were these responses from IWF associates:

I consider myself . . . on the libertarian wing of the IWF, because there are some women who are, I think, fairly aggressive about motherhood. My attitude is do what you want. If you want to have kids and be a stay at home mommy, go ahead, but don't start proscribing it for me. I get a little annoyed when I hear that (Satel 1999b).

And an IWF Board member confided:

So let us be honest about it. I personally would lose my mind if I had to do play-doh all day. I think that we in some ways do value motherhood more than feminists certainly did. Some of them, like Betty Friedan, in their evolution, have come around to say that they value it more than they did. But there was certainly a feeling in the 1970s and '80s that feminists by and large didn't care about, and devalued, being a mother who stayed at home. I admire women that can do it. I simply do not have the self-discipline or whatever it takes to endure that all day long. I don't know many women who do (Anonymous 1999).

These organizational leaders contend that no discrepancies exist between their lives and the lives of the "audience" of mothers they speak to and for. Like feminists, they view their work as increasing options for women and making them

feel valued. In addition, as demonstrated, their motherhood frames reinforce their conservative views about families and the role of government giving them credibility among this important group of allies as well.

While my interviewees produced a more nuanced and complicated assessment of the relationship between mothering and the workplace, their organizations' written materials and policy positions frame mothers' interests in much more narrow and definitive ways. Why is this the case? First, one important goal for these countermovement women's organizations seeking legitimacy to represent women's interests, is to convincingly and aggressively refute feminist claims and appeal to conservatives constituencies and allies. Thus, their conservative views on motherhood should help them accomplish this goal. However, as organizations also seeking to appeal to a wide range of women, their glorification of motherhood is a framing strategy that could actually help them speak to more women. Even women who enjoy working outside the home can appreciate the exaltation of motherhood. And, combined with their frames about feminism that I discuss next, these organizations have the potential to construct themselves as the women's groups who really speak to the interests of mothers, especially the many who feel conflicted, harried and overworked.

Second, and more personally, all these advocates are professionals. They live and work in a climate where women are rewarded by, and gain great satisfaction from, their careers. And, to engage effectively in interest group

politics. they must work outside the home to achieve their political goals. Indeed, their activism is seen as a mission of sorts for the CWA, who encourage women to act politically as women and mothers for their families.⁷⁶ The CWA's LaHaye proudly proclaims of her organization's members:

They are actively working at the local, state and national levels to derail legislation and education that will harm their families. They are concerned about protecting the rights of families rather than their own personal rights . . . They are seeking to fill a concrete need: preserving the nuclear family and society from destruction (LaHaye 1993, 87).

Presumably, then, acting politically to restore civic virtue and conservative values is an acceptable, really necessary, distraction for mothers from their children and homes. In addition, by urging women to act for their families, both groups produce images of mothers that disrupt the notion that motherhood is a private role (see Jetter et al., 1997, for studies of women acting politically as mothers). As such, while their maternal ideals are framed consistently with conservative values about women's roles and natures, they accede to feminists the need for women's political participation and power.

In framing the ideal mother whose interests are at stake in debates over child care policies, both the CWA and IWF have mostly invoked socially conservative ideology. That is, both organizations use romantic and traditional

⁷⁶ Despite this call for advocacy as mothers, the CWA took no stand on the recent Million Mom March, a grassroots effort that called on mothers to protest the lack of gun control laws in the United States. The IWF, on the other hand, responded to this successful protest by issuing a press release entitled "Gun Control Hurts Women" (Independent Women's Forum 2000).

frames to produce the ideal mother and both blame feminists and liberal government policies for denigrating her. Indeed, though they rarely work in coalition with each other, the CWA and IWF could prove to be quite formidable on this issue if they combined their efforts.⁷⁷

Feminism and Motherhood -- Why Women Deny Their Maternal Instincts

Framing Feminism

Look carefully at what feminists are promoting, and you will see that only one thing is considered: what the woman wants . . . In this warped view of motherhood, the child's needs are not even mentioned. *Motherhood* used to be a term of honor and responsibility; today it has been reduced to an optional status with an ever-decreasing sphere of influence (LaHaye 1993, 137-138; emphasis in original)

As illustrated by LaHaye's quote, the CWA blames feminism for the degradation of motherhood and the subsequent rise in the number of children in day care. The IWF joins the CWA in attributing such blame. Feminist organizations are chastised for their advocacy of child care policies at the expense of stay-at-home mothers, while the prevalence of feminist ideology is cited as one cause of women's dissatisfaction with their lives. The construction of feminism as a viable political and ideologically threat to women's natural interests is essential for these countermovement women's organizations to explain why so many women work outside the home and deny their own interests. It also helps these

⁷⁷ In the conclusion of this dissertation, I explore their relative lack of co-operation with each other and theorize ways in which they could work together effectively.

groups construct their own identities as the organizations who really care about women's interests.

In the Spring of 1998, the IWF devoted an entire issue of its magazine, *The Women's Quarterly*, to discussions about motherhood and child care. Former editor Danielle Crittenden⁷⁸ framed the contents this way:

In this special issue on motherhood, we offer our readers an unabashed defense of those women who dare to defy the feminist wisdom on which they were weaned and raised, to wean and raise their children themselves (1998, 26).

And, according to *The Women's Quarterly* contributor Mona Charen, this feminist wisdom "has been at war with human nature from the beginning, and nowhere more so than its fierce campaign against motherhood" (1998, 22). Charen's comments strongly follow what the CWA's Pate told me:

The redefinition of the family is one that has probably had the greatest negative impact on our society. That is from two angles. One, the feminist movement has broken down what we believe is the traditional family, one man married to one woman, and fulfilling the roles that we feel that God has led them to fill in the home. We believe in the context of what God has laid out for men and women that creates the strongest environment for children; where both the mother and the father are equal in the home, yet they have different roles. They have roles that are very important through nurturing and raising that child (1998c).

But, if women want to be good mothers *and* feminists, they could abide by the IWF's President Ricky Silberman's ideals about each:

⁷⁸ Crittenden was editor of the publication at the time of her writing in 1998. She has since left the IWF (in 1999).

I think that true feminism says that women are different than men. that women are just as good as men at whatever they try to do. and that women have to be intelligent about their choices of when they try to do what it is they are trying to do. and to not turn their back on what is the most fulfilling and important role in society. That is their role as mothers in a family. And that they shouldn't do things that disrupt the structure of the family (1998).

As framed by these two antifeminist women's organizations, feminists are narcissists, women who, at the expense of their children and partners, strive for personal gain and happiness. The CWA and IWF attribute the now commonplace image of the "superwoman" -- a woman who is simultaneously a wife, mother and has a successful career -- to feminist ideology and policy goals (LaHaye 1993). But these antifeminist women's organizations are extremely critical of this "superwoman" image, arguing that it causes women to sublimate their maternal desires and ultimately make professional choices that harm their families. In an essay criticizing working women for having children, Melinda Ledden Sidak likens the children of employed women to pets:

Given the finite number of hours in the day, it seems curious that so many busy professionals do not consider the ease, practicality, and warm companionship of a dog or cat rather than the insatiable demands of children . . . When they don't have time to care for Junior personally, which is in fact, most of the time, they have to hire a baby-sitter to do the job for them, just as Fido's owner will hire a professional dog walker and pet-sitter. If they can't afford the personal in-home touch, they can just drop Junior off at the kennel--er, day-care center . . . The parent loves Junior, just as Fido's owner loves Fido. But neither would dream of sacrificing important personal and professional aspirations because Fido and Junior would like more quality time at the park (1998, 11).

In addition, Sidak argues that “the natural feminine urge to have babies cannot so easily be suppressed. Mainstream feminists therefore sought a compromise by promoting the idea that women can ‘have it all’” (Sidak 1998, 12) and have thus forced women to sacrifice theirs and their children’s well-being. Similarly, in an IWF publication, Tempelsman, writes: “as soon the quality of [child] care is called into question, however, feminists object. They invariably subordinate the best interests of the children to the presumed interests of working women” (1995, 17). And CWA’s founder, Beverly LaHaye, bemoans that because of feminism “some women have lost sight of the beauty of motherhood and have focused on issues of convenience and control” (LaHaye 1998).

While early second wave feminists like Betty Friedan (1963) cited political and social institutions and values as sources of oppression for women, antifeminist women’s organizations blame feminism for women’s current dissatisfaction. Unlike Friedan’s analysis, however, in the cases described by the CWA and IWF, mothers who work *outside* the home are those most subject to malaise and unhappiness. In the *Women’s Quarterly*, Gurdon, who gave up her professional job to be a stay-at-home mother, writes that she and her housewife friends are all happy, former professionals. She notes that her friends

understand more about real human interaction and deep emotional fulfillment than the cranky feminists who tut-tut that we’re wasting our potential, ‘giving up our lives,’ and generally lounging around having pedicures (1998, 7).

Gurdon goes on to blame feminists for destroying the pride and satisfaction that many housewives enjoy. She encourages women to "show our daughters how admirable and richly rewarding it can be not to spend all day at the office" (1998,7).

In addition, as I discussed earlier, feminists have pushed for policies that help working women earn more money and gain better access to professional jobs. According to the CWA and IWF, though, economic independence comes at a price -- it requires that women spend more time in the workforce and less time with their children. And, it lessens women's dependency on men; a shift that puts traditional heterosexual relationships at risk. The heterosexual family is an institution very dear to the conservative Christian women of the CWA.⁷⁹ For them, challenges to women's traditional familial roles beckon the acceptance of homosexual and other nontraditional families, lead to the demise of social order and morality and ultimately hurt children. For example, in decrying the acceptance of homosexual parenting the CWA writes:

Most importantly, every child has the right to a mother and a father. Two fathers or two mothers don't provide the stability and security every child deserves . . . [Children raised in such families] will never know the consistent love of a mother and father -- nor the stability of a real family (Concerned Women for America 1998, 2)

⁷⁹The IWF does not formally take a position on the issue of homosexuality.

Finally, along with both of these goals, feminists have called for equal parenting between men and women, a position that threatens women's valued status as wife and mother.

Indeed, feminist policy solutions that attempt to balance work and family commitments for men and women can be threatening; they put into question the value of the traditional family and women's primary importance as mother and wife. Feminists, have, in large part, been successful in opening up career opportunities for women and lobbying for policies that increase women's economic independence. In addition, these antifeminist women's organizations frame feminists in ways to suggest that they great political and ideological power - - they suggest that women have been duped by feminists and will thus make decisions that run counter to their own true interests. Thus, women will deny the natural urge to be "intensive mothers" and instead seek satisfaction from their careers and material gain only to find that in the long run they are unhappy. As such, feminists do not really represent the interests of most women.

But if women's desire to be a stay-at-home mother is natural, how have feminists been so successful in getting women to "suppress" or undermine this urge? According to the CWA and the IWF: feminist consciousness.

Women as Victims of Feminist Consciousness

Some feminists have justified antifeminist women's behavior as the outcome of "false consciousness" (Dworkin 1983). For example, it has been

argued that women would endorse feminism if only they had the right consciousness-raising experiences (MacKinnon 1989). Taking a turn from feminism, the CWA and IWF cite feminist consciousness, imposed on women by the media, liberal government, public schools and feminist organizations, as a challenge to women realizing their own maternal interests.⁸⁰ The CWA and the IWF do not actually invoke the phrase “feminist consciousness.” but, consistent with their message that feminism is powerful and omnipresent, frequently use the words “impose,” “force” and “impinge” when framing discussions about feminist

⁸⁰ While feminists have been critical of the institutions of marriage and motherhood, these antifeminist women’s organizations’ portrayal of their positions is oversimplified. Several interviewees cited Betty Freidan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) as the quintessential text through which feminists have learned to degrade motherhood. While Freidan’s work did hit the nerve of many a housewife who felt unchallenged, overwhelmed and underappreciated, she and other feminists are hardly to blame for the devaluation of motherhood. In fact, feminists have argued for years that “housework” and reproduction be considered valuable forms of labor and experience (Eisenstein 1990). True, some feminists like Firestone (1970), argued that reproduction and motherhood are sources of oppression for women, but many feminists, have used and continue to use motherhood to make claims about women’s worth and common experiences.

In documenting feminists’ pro-maternalism between the late 1960s and the early 1980s, for example, Umansky argues that “from the start a positive discourse paralleled the negative” (1996, 76). (See also Snitow (1992) who details feminism’s “pronatalism” citing myriad examples of feminists who embrace and celebrate motherhood). Those feminists who urged for the valorization of motherhood did so, in part, to unify women. Umansky also argues that many white feminists, especially those she calls “radical” or “cultural,” felt that motherhood was a universal experience and one that could be invoked to help create a “sisterhood” of sorts with Black feminists whose strong pro-maternalism was in part a response to the negative beliefs about Black “matriarchs.” Invoked to notes that this was partly a reaction to the 1965 report by Daniel Patrick Moynihan that pathologized the African American family (Moynihan 1965). Like their antifeminist counterparts, feminists called for the celebration of women’s bodily differences and experiences from men. Unlike antifeminists, however, these feminists blamed “patriarchal” institutions and values for the degradation of motherhood.

influence. Danielle Crittenden, former editor of *The Women's Quarterly*, writes that "feminism implored women to work" (1997) and to leave their children in day care. CWA's President, Pate told me:

We believe that the feminist agenda has really had a negative impact on what those roles are, has taken a lot of women out of the home. Women who desire to stay in the home but feel they can't be complete unless they also have a career. Our government has joined in that effort and has placed so many tax burdens on the family that now women are pretty much forced into the workforce (1998c).

And CWA's Rein related that

[m]aybe what we're trying to do is trying to free women from having it imposed on them that they are not fulfilling their role by choosing to be home. Many women have had it imposed on them to go out and bring home some bacon, and have not been made to feel comfortable at home (1998).

Another CWA activist framed motherhood as a "rights" issue:

I don't know how to resolve that whole issue, because I'm a homemaker, but I'm not really just a homemaker. I mean I'm an activist. But I think every woman should have the right and the option to stay home. I don't think that she should be forced into the workforce by government policy, tax policy or whatever it is that is creating this driving need for women to go to work. I don't think, well, it should be an option. If people want to work, then that's fine. But I don't think that the government should be enforcing that women should have to work (Lipsit 1998).

Feminists have argued for policies that better enable women to both work and have children. While feminists view this as a way to make employers more responsive to the needs of parents, antifeminist women's organizations frame it as a way to encourage women who have children to work outside the home. Thus they transform the meaning of "having it all" to be a concept that shows feminists'

contempt for women who choose to stay at home when their children are young. For antifeminist women's organizations, women's roles as wives and mothers are framed as being sacred and sources of great pride for women. Through their identity construction strategies whereby they frame feminism as being in opposition to mothers' true interests, both organizations mark themselves as different from feminists, reinforce their beliefs about the natural origins of women's maternal interests and establish their own identities as legitimate representatives of women's interests.

It's The Economy, Mothers

For the CWA and IWF, in a perfect world, there would be no need for child care. Women would not "need" to work and would be able to stay home with their children until they are at least of school-age. However, these antifeminist women's organizations are aware that many women do work outside of the home and may even enjoy it; thus as countermovement women's organizations seeking to appeal to range of women, they must speak to this audience and potential constituency.⁸¹ Both groups are especially sympathetic to single mothers who have no husband to support them. As I noted earlier, however, they are not supportive of women who choose to be single mothers without ever including the

⁸¹According to the Children's Defense Fund, in 1998, 65 percent of mothers with children under age six and 74 percent of mothers with children ages 6-13 are in the labor force (either full or part-time). Almost 60 percent of mothers with infants under age 1, are in the labor force (Children's Defense Fund 1999).

father. When they express sympathy for single mothers, they are referring to widows or women whose husbands have left them. Despite that they prefer women to be stay-at-home mothers, given the reality of women's lives and influence of feminism in opening up career and economic opportunities for women, antifeminist women's organizations must offer policy solutions that attend to the needs of women who work outside the home. Most of their policy solutions, however, are framed in ways consistent with both the CWA's and IWF's views about limited government interference, and, as I show, still assume that mothers should be home with their children. As I will also show, both groups transform the nature of child care debates to be less amenable to feminist values and policy solutions and more consistent with their conservative values. In addition, both the CWA and IWF bridge their respective conservative frames about government interference to be more consistent with each other. This frame bridging strategy can assist both groups in appealing to a broader range of conservatives.

For slightly different reasons, social conservatives like those of the CWA, and laissez-faire conservatives like those of the IWF are wary of "big government." Social conservatives fear that government intrusion will disable parents from teaching children their conservative values, while laissez-faire conservatives see big government as antithetical to individuals realizing their own economic interests (Klatch 1987). The CWA and IWF, however, each use both social and laissez-faire conservative frames to articulate their beliefs about the

government's roles in child care institutions and policies. As such, they bridge their respective ideologies with each other. For example, while the CWA is explicit about its fear of government enforcing its moral beliefs on families, it also argues that government funded child care is wasteful:

Instead, the government would rather take more of our income, thereby making the family dependent on government. With the money, the government implements programs to control the family unit -- such as child care. But we don't want the government dictating the upbringing of children (Concerned Women for America 1999b, 2).

One CWA staffer also likened institutionalized child care to socialism, suggesting the imposition of both government morality and an oppressive economic system on unwilling citizens:

I think that as a parent it concerns me that just more and more rights are being taken away from parents and put into the hands of government. It is a very socialistic philosophy, particularly if you look at the child care issue: the desire to truly take children at the earliest ages, as early as three months, to put them in government controlled day care centers so they can be not taught the values and beliefs of their parents, but the values and beliefs of government. I think that is a very dangerous trend that we seem to be heading to in our society (Bush 1998).

The laissez-faire women of the IWF frame government-funded day care to be an unnecessary taxpayer expense, but also cite fears about the state's ability to instill liberal anti-family values into children and society as a whole. As such, the organization artfully bridges concerns about the denigration of capitalism and classical liberal economics with concerns about the devaluation of parents' roles.

This conservative rhetoric is well-illustrated by one IWF *Women's Quarterly* author as she suggests that the need for child care has been largely fabricated:

Conjuring up a child-care crisis, however, gives both liberals and conservatives an opportunity to dictate to parents how to raise their children: whether it's subsidizing more federal day care or subsidizing stay-at-home mothers. Yet the best resolution Congress could adopt would be to stand back and allow parents, not politicians, to determine what is best for their children. Only parents are equipped to make decisions about what sort of care their children need. If politicians insist on doing something for children, they should simply cut taxes. Reducing taxes would help parents to be able to spend more time with their children, afford better child care, or do whatever it is they think best for their families. Letting moms and dads keep more of their hard-earned money would certainly benefit children more than another unwanted entitlement program. (Olsen 1998, 17).

For both organizations, the way to lessen government intrusion into families, restore parental control and reduce the need for child care, is to offer tax reductions and other business incentives to workplaces that allow parents to spend more time with their children. According to these groups, such types of policies ameliorate the economic conditions that "force" many women to work. That is, tax cuts can relieve families of financial hardship, thus allowing women to stay home without sacrificing too much of the family's material necessities. And, although these organizations do not advocate *mandatory* family-friendly policies for businesses, they do recommend giving tax incentives to companies that offer flex-time, comp-time and other options to allow employees to work from home. In using laissez-faire frames, one IWF Board member summed it up this way:

[W]e think the tax policy is a very important solution to that. We think that . . . if we do not rely on big bureaucracies and solutions that really don't

speaking to what the problems are; but rather have a decentralization in terms of, for instance, day care. There is no doubt about the fact that millions of American women, perhaps the majority, are working not because they want to but because they have to. That can be solved in two ways. One way is to put more money in their pockets by lower taxes, and therefore, the women who want to stay at home may be able to stay at home for those years when it's possible. Another way is to have better compensatory legislation, so that they can better balance work and family. Another way is to have bigger tax deductions for day care, so that the kinds of solutions that are available to you are available to blue collar workers and other people (Anonymous 1999).

Similarly, the CWA lobbied for a \$500 per child tax break and takes credit for working with U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) to pass a "Homemakers' IRA."⁸² Carmen Pate noted the reasons for the CWA's advocacy of these issues:

A study that we did about a year ago pointed out that 8 out of 10 women, if they could financially afford to do so, would stay home and be mom. But our society has just not created an atmosphere for them to feasibly do that. So we are working to provide tax breaks for women so they can choose whether they are going to stay home or work or start their own in home business or whatever (1998c).

Several articles in the IWF's *Women's Quarterly* also propose easing laws to help families hire nannies, either from the U.S. or from other countries. David Frum, who writes for the IWF, bemoans the shortage of "old-fashioned housekeeper-nannies" (1997, 4) -- native born well-educated women who want to

⁸² Sen. Hutchison (R-TX) worked with Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) to successfully amend the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 to allow non-working spouses of working spouses to contribute \$2000 a year to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). Previously, non-working spouses were only allowed to add \$250 to these retirement plans.

make careers out of raising children. He argues that tax reductions would enable families to pay such women good wages with benefits; in that way families would not have to hire from the “bottom of the labor pool” (5) or put their children into institutional centers. According to Frum, this bottom pool consists of illegal and legal immigrants who cannot speak English and other native-born workers who cannot get other jobs. Writing for the IWF, Sidak offers advice that is similar to Frum’s and not that inconsistent with feminist attempts to legitimate the role of caretaker:

The DOL, with the stroke of the pen, could help working women and children in this country enormously simply by creating a new job category called “nanny” and permitting employers to require 2 years of experience. That would catapult nannies into the skilled visa category and substantially shorten the waiting period (1997. 8).

While Sidak’s proposal is not necessarily inconsistent with feminist goals, she does offer this slight:

the dirty secret is feminist organizations and politicians who otherwise trumpet their concerns about inadequate child care are reluctant to make it easier to sponsor foreign nannies because it would be viewed as benefitting the rich (1997. 8).

For these advocates nannies are considered better alternatives than day care centers, as parents have more control over who watches their children and they work “privately,” in the home; both factors point to the framing of child care policies as being consistent with the need for less government interference.

In the case of actual policy solutions, both organizations offer proposals that can be appealing to a broad range of conservatives, thus allowing them to speak to their constituencies and allies and suggest solutions that differ from those of feminists. Each speaks to women who are concerned about the decline of moral values and the burden of high taxes, but also to the broader public of women who are looking for resolutions to the tensions they feel between childrearing and workplace expectations. Thus, while as countermovement women's organizations they concede to feminists the need for government consideration and establishment of child care policies, the CWA and IWF employ framing strategies that transform the meaning of motherhood and mothers' interests to be more consistent with their views and values.

Conclusion

As this chapter shows, through debates about child care policies, the CWA and IWF produce images about motherhood and seek to establish themselves as legitimate representatives of mothers' interests. While the "cultural" feminists Umansky (1996) describes invoked motherhood as a universalizing experience, it is clear from this research that women's ideals about motherhood are not universal. Motherhood is a key category of contestation for both feminist and antifeminist women's organizations, as each seeks the right to represent women's interests. Debates over child care policies and practices make for an excellent site of disagreement; at the heart of these debates are ideas about women's maternal,

political and economic status. For the CWA and IWF, reframing the meaning of the clashing interests between the workplace and the child allows them to articulate their views about women's roles and feminist political influence.

Evidence of antifeminist women's organizations' conservative political beliefs and the myriad constituencies they must address are also exhibited here. Anxieties about the economy, familial breakdown, and big government all get played out as they act to represent mother's interests.

Chapter Six: Contemplating the Impact and Future of Antifeminist Women's Organizations

Introduction

My foray into the worlds of antifeminist women's organizations provides important data about women's activism, interest group strategies, identity politics and political representation. By intersecting all of these areas, my research expands our knowledge about politics, but also raises questions about the actual impact of antifeminist women's organizations political efforts. In this concluding chapter I briefly summarize my main findings, delineating more closely the differences and similarities between the two organizations. I follow this discussion with a two-part exploration of the significance of studying antifeminist women's organizations. First, I review the contributions this work makes to our understanding of interest group behavior, political representation, identity politics and feminist activism. I then shift gears to posit the significance of antifeminist women's organizations activities on the conservative movement in general. Finally, I end this chapter by posing some questions for future research.

Contrasting the CWA and IWF

The similarities and differences between the CWA and IWF are clearly exhibited when we examine their representational and issue framing strategies. As both are countermovement women's organizations, both operate in political

contexts whereby they must contend with competing values and constituencies, most notably other conservative allies, members, potential members, feminists, the media and policymakers. Given this environment, both embrace feminist inspired strategies and achievements, while they simultaneously engage in representational and issue framing strategies that allow them to explicitly chastise feminists for going too far, becoming too radical and allowing women to believe that they are victims of male power.

Because of the variance in their conservative ideologies, their policy agendas are somewhat different, although there is some overlap on the issues that they care about. For example, as shown in Chapter Five, both are opposed to most forms of government-funded child care and both oppose gender-integrated military training. The CWA, however, focuses much of its policy efforts on socially conservative goals, like opposition to abortion and homosexual rights, as well as support for prayer in schools and policies that help to reinforce the traditional family. By contrast, the IWF works to undermine specific feminist policy successes and is more likely to articulate the desire to limit government-funded social programs in framing their policy goals. These differences accurately reflect Klatch's findings about social and laissez-faire conservative women (1987). Despite these specific ideological variations, both organizations use surprisingly similar rhetoric when it comes to framing their women's issues and concerns about women's interests, a finding that differs significantly from Klatch's (1987). For

example, as I show throughout this study, both invoke gender differences. consistent with socially conservative ideas about women's roles, to justify their political goals. Given that both were formed as women's groups to explicitly oppose feminism, this commonality makes sense. As I discuss below, these similarities make these groups likely candidates for coalition partners, despite that they rarely work together.

The biggest difference between the two organizations is not really found in their policy platforms, but in their general organizational identities. The IWF projects a much less ideologically consistent image than the CWA. In fact, a *Washington Post* reporter noted that "it can be a challenge to sort out exactly where the IWFers sit on the political spectrum" (Rosenfeld 1995). The CWA believes strongly in a female essence that connects women, renders them different from men and relates specifically to women's interests and needs. That is, it is comfortably and proudly essentialist, and, as a countermovement women's organization, invokes these beliefs to contest feminist values and align feminist inspired messages with its own conservative views. As such, the strategies it uses to establish itself as a legitimate representative of women's interests -- forming into women's organizations and making claims as women -- meshes well with its views on gender differences and women's interests. Some have criticized the CWA for acting politically and professionally while they advocate for women to be homemakers (Faludi 1991; Dworkin 1983), but it justifies itself by arguing that

it is women's moral obligations as wives and mothers to fight for and protect their families.

Conversely, the IWF simultaneously criticizes identity politics and gender-based "merit" claims, but acts as women, promotes women's issues and makes sweeping claims about women's differences from men. In so doing, it not only comes across as an organization prone to contradictions and paradoxes, it also vividly exemplifies a problem central to identity politics. That is, it argues that as a countermovement women's organization formed to fight feminists, it must act as women and in the collective interests of women. Yet, despite that the IWF justifies its actions as strategic, it produces meanings about women's identities and policy goals, something they criticize feminists for doing. I explore this paradox more fully in the next section. Nonetheless, these moments of contradiction and paradox do not really do significant damage to the IWF. As I demonstrated in this study, the organization engages in framing strategies that help it make sense of its contradictions. And, it still gets significant media attention, has access to policymakers and continues to grow in size and stature.

I have argued in this study that these groups could forge formidable political partnerships on some issues if they chose to do so. Despite the fact that they agree on some policy goals, like opposing federally-funded child care, and favoring gender-segregated basic military training, they do not work together on these issues or any others. Why is this the case? First, the CWA's religiosity.

based on its conservative Christian theology, and its willingness to support government implementation of things like prayer in school, is an affront to many of those who lead the IWF. As a predominantly laissez-faire organization committed to individuality and freedom of choice, the specter of government-supported religion can be quite offensive.

Nonetheless, there could be some room for shared organizing. As Bernice Reagon reminds us, “coalition work is not work done in your home . . . you shouldn’t look for comfort” (1983, 359). Since both countermovement women’s groups are trying to show the limits of feminism and offer alternative meanings about women’s identities and issues, their combined efforts on similar goals could prove to be quite effective. First, they could help persuade different factions within the conservative movement to support each other’s goals. For example, the IWF’s Ledeen told me that she encouraged and worked with social conservative Gary Bauer and his organization, the Family Research Council, on getting funding for HIV/AIDS testing policies (and making sure the tests are *non-confidential*). She related that their unity helped bring along many socially conservative activists and policymakers who opposed any government funding of HIV/AIDS programs. Second, by making political claims about a range of conservative women, they could show the breadth of their support among this constituency and the potential for working together. Indeed, the new senior editor of the IWF’s *Ex Femina*,

Charmaine Yoest, has long been affiliated with the CWA⁸³ and her mother, Janice Crouse, is a Senior Fellow at the CWA's newly formed Beverly LaHaye Institute: A Center for Studies in Women's Issues. Yoest contributed an article to the IWF's *Women's Quarterly* article, entitled, "Not a Pretty Picture: The New Face of Kiddie Porn" (Yoest 2000a) that laments the extent of child pornography on the Internet and criticizes its promoters for using free speech arguments to keep the pornography going. As I discussed in Chapter Four, opposition to pornography has been central to the CWA's policy agenda. As the IWF matures and takes on more policy issues, it may just happen that these groups realize that they have more in common than they do things that divide them.

Exploring the Impact of Antifeminist Women's Activism

As the CWA and IWF are continuing to grow in size and stature, it is important to contemplate their potential impact. Through my analysis of these two groups I show how learning about them bears on our understanding of interest groups, political representation and feminism. In addition, I contemplate the impact that these organizations could and do have on conservative politics in general.

⁸³ Indeed, the July/August 2000 issue of the CWA's *Family Voice* includes an article by Yoest criticizing the proliferation of government funded early childhood education programs (Yoest 2000b).

Interest Groups

By examining the CWA and IWF, I expand our knowledge of interest group strategies. These case studies add an important dimension to understanding the relationship between organizational characteristics and strategies by exploring nuances easily missed by large-scale surveys. Through this research I show the salience of gender identity, specifically how organizational beliefs in naturalized gender differences get translated into strategies and goals. For example, I find that both interest groups, like most other institutionalized political actors, seek media attention to promote their beliefs and goals. But to really understand the nature of their media influence, it is important to consider not just that these organizations “talk with people from the press and media” (Schlozman and Tierney 1986, 150), but *who* is talking to the press for them and why. In both cases, these groups choose *women* to make public statements to give them credibility and try and change the way the public thinks about women’s interests.

In addition, while many scholars have looked at how organizations frame issues and help set policy agendas (Snow and Benford 1988; Kingdon 1984), my research also adds to this body of work. Through this study I demonstrate how the claim to represent a particular group of people actually influences issue framing: as such we learn that representational claims can be linked to rhetorical outcomes. That is, that organizations, especially countermovement organizations, can use issue framing strategies to establish their legitimacy as representatives of group-

based interests. In so doing, I expand our knowledge of what factors within an organization's environment factor into how they talk about issues and goals. This is especially important when considering the activities and strategies of identity-based political groups.

Representation and Political Legitimacy

By examining interest groups we see how the question of representation comes up not only in studying elected officials, but in other contexts as well. As I discuss in Chapter Three, the debate over the value and legitimacy of descriptive and descriptive-substantive representation can be broadened and thus even better understood when investigated within a variety of political institutions. In addition, by evaluating the different forms in which representation can be invoked, and the different reasons for invoking types of representation strategically, this project presents a dynamic view of representation. In his ground breaking study of members of Congress and their constituencies, Richard Fenno argues for a "inclusive, process-oriented view of representation" (1977, 915). Fenno contends that a linear focus on the connection between what policies representatives support and how their constituents feel about their representatives' actions obscures other questions about the relationship between representatives and their constituencies. The few studies that do empirically explore representation generally look to policy outcomes or the connection between elites and constituency opinion (Dodson, et al. 1995; Thomas 1994; Dodson and Carroll 1991; Hertzke 1988). Based on

Fenno's data, however, he concludes that constituents may want other things like good access from their representatives. Certainly, Fenno's specific findings are different than mine, but Fenno's work does elicit ideas that are useful to thinking about representation more broadly and dynamically. He compels us to explore representation as an ongoing process that motivates representative's actions on many levels and shows the importance of factors like constituent trust in establishing a representative's credibility. This is akin to Mansbridge's notion of the need for de facto legitimacy, as discussed in Chapter Three.

While I do attend to how antifeminist women's groups frame their policy goals and make some claims about their congruence with women's general attitudes, this study really highlights the importance of the relationship between representation and political legitimacy. As I show, these two well-connected, well-publicized groups have policy agendas consistent with many other conservative organizations. But, as women's organizations who take seriously the connection between gender identity and political strategy, they offer something more than energy and resources to the conservative movement. They offer women -- both members and those not yet-affiliated with their groups -- a chance for political representation. As such, I suggest that we need to broaden how we think about and study political representation to determine what factors may or may not enhance a particular group's feelings of legitimacy and political efficacy. We need to look beyond outcomes or whether or not people are being represented, and

explore whether or not they feel like they are being represented. In addition, we should examine what strategies enable citizens to believe they are being represented. In this way, we can further explore whether or not feeling politically connected or present compels citizens to be more politically involved and have more faith in government. CWA and IWF leaders argue that feeling represented will motivate women to support them and act politically. Certainly these are important considerations in a representative democracy.

Antifeminist Women's Organizations and the Conservative Movement

Through my research I explore how conservative ideology mediates CWA's and IWF's strategic choices. As organizations seeking credibility among other actors in the conservative movement, the CWA and IWF engage in strategies that not only reflect their own missions, but are generally consistent with their ideological counterparts. And, on a more practical level, these organizations must also appeal to conservative donors and policymakers to maintain themselves and have political influence. As I show, as countermovement women's organizations, their attention to conservatism can produce paradoxical outcomes that sometimes contradict their gender-based claims. Overall, though, they have established themselves as forceful and competent conservative advocates.

Their relationship with the conservative movement, however, is not unidirectional. As I discussed in Chapter Four, the organizations bridge women to other conservative causes, forging important political alignments and ideological

partnerships that broaden and strengthen the appeal of conservative political activism. This is one way that the CWA and IWF help shape the agenda of the conservative movement. There is another component to antifeminist women's political advocacy that also bears on, and complicates, our understanding of conservative politics. As women making political claims, the CWA's and IWF's activism disrupts the (mostly) conservative notion that gender differences should be the necessary foundation for a public/private dichotomy in our social and political lives -- that is, that women generally belong in the home and men in the public sphere (e.g. paid employment and politics). As I note in Chapter Five, both organizations encourage their members and their publics to translate maternal roles into political ones. In so doing, these antifeminist women's organizations can justify their political participation to secure the "rights associated with their obligations" (Kaplan 1982) as wives and mothers and bring these issues as well as themselves into the "public" realm of political life. As such, these organizations show the interconnectedness between the private and public, or really its instability, ironically blurring the division while reinforcing it through a call for women to spend more time at home. Like feminists have also argued for decades, these antifeminist women's organizations demonstrate that the personal truly is political.

By obfuscating the line between the private and public, antifeminist women's organizations' activities could also have the effect of encouraging

conservative male leaders to locate more women in positions of political and social power. Thus, while many conservatives, especially social conservatives, have longed for the return to traditional gender roles, and have fought politically to make this happen, they do and will probably continue to embrace the political participation of women. Doing so could help decrease electoral gender gaps for Republicans and other conservatives and transform the nature of women's interests to be more consistent with conservative ideologies. In addition, despite that laissez-faire conservatives criticize identity-based political claims, the IWF's prominence as a women's organization, gives this type of political organizing legitimacy among that "wing" of the conservative movement. As such, the IWF complicates what it means to be neoclassical liberals and shows the need for more fluidity between social and laissez-faire conservatism as advocates engage in national interest group politics.

Finally, this study has implications for evaluating other identity-based conservative organizations, especially those organized around the issue of race. While their numbers are small, there do exist some identity-based national conservative organizations that address racial concerns. Both the IWF and CWA have worked with, or invited speakers from two of them -- the Center for Equal Opportunity (CEO) and the Center for New Black Leadership (CNBL). The CEO, led by the former director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Linda Chavez, who herself is Latina, is "devoted exclusively to the promotion of

colorblind equal opportunity and racial harmony” (CEO 2000). The CEO takes conservative positions on issues of affirmative action, immigration and bilingual education. Likewise, the CNBL, founded by African-American businessperson Peter Bell, seeks a laissez-faire conservative approach to resolving issues of racial tension and divide by emphasizing “the primacy of market-oriented, community-based solutions to the nation’s problems” (CNBL 2000). While there are other organizations who hold similar positions, these two groups specifically seek to represent and organize people of color to support their conservative positions. My research should help inform us about what strategies these groups are likely to employ, and how they can address the tension that arises when they make claims to represent people of color, many of whom might feel they have benefitted from more liberal civil rights organizations.

The Politics of Identity -- Lessons from the CWA and IWF

As I noted in Chapter Two, some feminists have criticized identity politics because of its potential for obscuring differences among women. For example, Butler points out that when feminist groups make claims as women, they essentialize what it means to be a woman, thus suggesting a homogeneity that does not exist (1992). To be clear, I am using the term essentialism to mean that women have some core or essence that renders them all as basically the same in terms of needs, interests and desires and marks them as a group that is different from men. Yet despite that identity politics has the potential to essentialize and

therefore homogenize women's interests, the "radicality or conservatism of essentialism depends, to a significant degree, on who is utilizing it, how it is deployed and where its effects are concentrated" (1989, 20). As I show throughout this study, when antifeminist women's organizations make claims as women about women, they are doing so to counter feminist claims, promote conservative causes and appeal to a broad range of women. Because these identity-based organizations exist in the same political milieu as feminists, their effects can be simultaneously tempered and profound.

For the CWA and IWF, countermovement women's organizations, acting as women gives them the legitimacy to counter feminist representational claims. In this way, for them, identity politics is a positive form of political engagement. The relative value of identity-based activism for these groups also points to the salience of gender identity in politics; an outcome made possible by feminist activism. I explore this concept in more depth below. First, however, I consider why and how identity politics enables these groups to fight feminists and be politically significant. I then consider the negative implications of antifeminist women organizations acting as women.

Diana Fuss argues that political identities do not precede politics, but are derivative of them (1989; see also Butler, 1992, for a similar argument). For example, what we consider to be "women's" interests and experiences are really constituted when a group called "women" engages the political process and makes

claims about itself. In addition, Phelan asserts "that our identities rely on politics rather than ontology -- indeed, that ontology is itself an effect of politics" (Phelan 1993, 773). That is, that identities are constructed through political action, not prior to them. Since the process whereby women's interest groups represent their political goals is one process through which gender identity is constructed, antifeminist women's organizations' activism challenges feminist claims about women's identities by producing their own narratives about women. In so doing, we learn that women's interests are not fixed and narrow and that politically active women are not homogenous. Thus, when antifeminist women's organizations make claims about women's interests and seek strategies based on gendered identities to get them represented, they also complicate the images of "women" as presented by feminists. As discussed earlier, while middle class white feminists have heard these critiques from poorer women and women of color, they do not usually take such claims from very ideologically different women as seriously. Therefore, in the cases of the CWA and IWF, their essentialist claims have radical potential to undermine feminists' identity-based claims. Although their claims exist in the same intellectual and political marketplace as those of feminists, antifeminist women's organizations' constructions can shift our ideals about women, mothers, housewives and even political activists, depending upon the support they get from policymakers, the public and the media (see Diamond 1995 for a more in-depth discussion about the role of "system-support" in legitimating

movement goals). The political implications of antifeminist women's organizations are thus meaningful in that their narratives about women enter into policy debates and could shape and transform policy solutions.

While antifeminist women's leaders organizing as women broadens our understanding of women's interests and identities, it also reifies the problem of essentialism inherent in relying on identity-based activism. Through their narratives, the CWA and IWF produce what it means to be a woman, an antifeminist woman and a mother, based on their values and ideologies about gender roles. For example, as I show, their image of the good mother tends to assume she is married, middle-class and eager to forgo her career. Thus, when antifeminist women's organizations act as countermovement women's organizations to make claims as women, whether to contest feminists and/or transform the meaning of women's issues and interests, they suggest a homogeneity of interests and experiences that do not exist even among conservative women. As channeled through identity-based political organizations, then, the activism of antifeminist women can suffer from the same weaknesses feminist groups encounter when they claim to speak for women. This is precisely the concern that the IWF's Anita Blair points to in Chapter Three, as she relates why she and other IWF associates feel conflicted about organizing as women.

My analysis of identity politics and the relevance of gender identity to antifeminist women's organizations also generates important strategic lessons for

feminists by revealing the successes and limits of feminist theory and activism. As we saw in Chapters Three, Four and Five, both the CWA and IWF adopt feminist representational strategies by acting collectively as women, promoting women's issues and framing issues in terms of women's interests. And, in her study of two antifeminist women's organizations, Marshall (1995) also finds that antifeminist women's organizations have shifted to what she calls a "woman-centered" framing approach, reflecting a co-optation of feminist rhetoric by those antifeminist women's groups.⁸⁴ Marshall contends, rightfully so I believe, that this reflects the success of feminists in making gender salient and in changing values about women's role in the family and workplace.

For the CWA and IWF, two countermovement women's organizations, gender identity acts as a foil against the perceived threat of feminist hegemony and for the promotion of traditional gender differences; it thus enables the CWA and IWF to establish themselves as legitimate representatives of women's interests. Thus, while the CWA's and IWF's activism poses a challenge to feminists, it also confirms that gender identity is related to political representation and the interpretation of interests -- an outcome due in part to years of feminist activism. That the antifeminist women's organizations in my study are concerned with such issues as domestic violence, pornography and women's health, also indicates a

⁸⁴ Marshall (1995) studied the rhetoric of the CWA and the Eagle Forum.

significant gain by feminists who have long argued for political attention to these issues.

Future Research on Antifeminist Women

My research offers insights into antifeminist women's organizations' political strategies and expands our perspectives on the relationship between gender identity and political activism. As with most studies, this one both answers questions and generates interest in others. In this section I turn to the questions raised by this study and posit some areas for future research to address them. Exploring these range of questions about antifeminist women's organizations will help expand our knowledge of the political interests and goals of antifeminist women's organizations specifically and between gender and politics more generally.

Much of this study is motivated by the reality that antifeminist women's organizations' claims of representation pose a very real challenge to feminism. My goal was to describe and analyze the myriad factors influencing their strategic choices, highlighting the influence of factors associated with their being countermovement women's organizations. A logical next step is to determine the actual impact these organizations have had on policy debates and outcomes as other interest group and women and politics scholars have done (Costain 1998; Woliver 1998; Godwin 1992; Gelb and Palley 1987). I suggest some research questions below.

Through engagement with identity politics, both feminists and antifeminist women's organizations battle over whose stories about women are most representative. And, given that these narratives about women's lives have very real policy implications, the battle over their authenticity is quite valid. Shane Phelan suggests that "[r]ather than arguing with one another about which story is true, [we] must look instead at what is at stake in our different stories; we must examine the consequences of our stories in terms of power and change" (1993, 773). In this spirit, future research could investigate if and why antifeminist women's organizations representational and issue framing strategies may be more effective and successful than that of feminists. Does speaking as women, as they claim, really help them achieve their goals and shape policy outcomes? Are their stories about women more credible and plausible than those offered by feminists? What contextual factors could account for failures and successes? Have other conservative organizations benefitted from their advocacy? Like previous researchers who have studied the impact of organizations, scholars could hone in on the efforts of these antifeminist women organizations to see where they have actually changed the political landscape.

Another path for researchers to explore would be in asking questions about antifeminist "grassroots" activists. What do members and associates of the two organizations think about the political strategies of invoking gender identity, promoting women's issues and framing issues in terms of women's interests?

Presumably, since they are members, they agree with the overall goals of the organizations, but do they hold similar attitudes about women and politics as their more "elite" counterparts who operate within a different political context and structure? And, given that organizational leaders seek to attract new members and claim to speak for a majority of women, to what extent are the goals and strategies of these organizations really in synch with women's general attitudes? Are these groups really effective in mobilizing women? What impact could differences in members and leaders have on state and local politics? What factors could account for discrepancies between leaders, members and the general public?

Finally, longitudinal analyses of these groups can determine if these organizations have changed their goals and strategies since their inception and point to factors that might account for these changes. While such an analysis would be richer with the CWA, an organization that is now twenty years old, the eight year old IWF is on the verge of shifting its structure and engaging in long-term strategic planning. Thus, in a year or two, an over-time study of the IWF could prove to be quite fruitful as well.

For the CWA, an over-time analysis could provide an even more nuanced and vivid account of the significance of gender identity to this organization over the past two decades. For example, a few factors point to the increasing importance of gender identity to the CWA since its origins. As I discussed in Chapter Four, Marshall finds that for the CWA "even issues of social

conservatism, such as pro-life and anti-pornography, are framed to the membership not in terms of women's interests, but as issues of children's or parental rights" (1996, 70). My more recent examination of the CWA contradicts her findings, as I indicate the many instances of their framing issues in terms of women's interests. And, since Marshall's study (1996),⁸⁵ the CWA purposively replaced its male CEO with a woman President, has started calling itself the "nation's largest *women's public policy* organization"⁸⁶ and founded the Beverly LaHaye Institute: A Center for Studies in Women's Issues, an academic think tank. These factors indicate the organization's desire to be more gender-identified and perhaps more likely to tackle women's issues and frame their issues in terms of women's interests. This raises important questions for studying the CWA's strategies. For example, why has the CWA become *more* gender identified and willing to frame its political goals in terms of women's interests? When the CWA was founded, many prominent national feminist organizations were also relatively new and fighting for legitimacy. Perhaps the perceived threat of feminism (and thus the need to counter it) is related to a real rise in funding for, and public attention to, the work of feminist organizations. As feminist organizations have gained in prominence and number, did the CWA direct more of its attention to co-opting feminist strategies

⁸⁵Marshall based her study on data from 1992; the changes I am referring to have taken place since that time.

⁸⁶This descriptor can be found in their website: www.cwfa.org.

like positioning women as spokespeople and framing issues to note their attention to women's interests? Or, maybe the "Year of the Woman," the increase in the number of women in elected office and heightened attention to the effects of the gender gap have mobilized conservatives to fund and organize into women-identified interest groups. This suggests that careful attention to political context is imperative in studying the actions of antifeminist women's organizations specifically, and interest groups generally.

Another change to explore is whether the differences *among* conservative women has shifted over time. As noted, in her 1987 book, Klatch did not find laissez-faire conservative women to be gender identified. She finds that "laissez-faire women do not recognize their collective interest as women: at the core, their activism is not motivated out of concern regarding gender" (10). While Klatch's study did not focus on women organized into women's groups -- women more likely to be gender-identified -- she does suggest a dualism that puts socially conservative women at odds with laissez-faire conservative women and fails to account for the possibility of overlap between them. My study indicates that there is more fluidity between these two groups than Klatch suggests. As such, I pose some questions to further examine the differences and similarities among conservative women's organizations and individuals. Have some laissez-faire conservative women become more gender identified and antifeminist over time or are there two very distinct groups within the laissez-faire contingent that must be

accounted for? What could explain the differences among women *within* that typology and have differences become more pronounced over time? Klatch's study shows that conservative women are not monolithic. Exploring potential differences and changes within her categorizations could point to even more nuances among these activists.

Far from dismissing antifeminist women leaders as political pawns and victims of false consciousness, feminists need to take seriously how women are represented by antifeminist women's organizations and the salience of gender identity to them. Through engagement with identity politics, feminists have helped generate these countermovement women's organizations and shown them strategies for effective political advocacy. Because both feminist and antifeminist women's organizations are making claims as and for women, each "side" needs to be more specific in their claims about women's interests or they will continue to be targets for each other as each exploits women's uncertainties about gender roles and other material conflicts to show that they are better able to speak to and for women. While I do not believe we should abandon identity politics -- as I argue it gives women a sense that their political claims are legitimate -- I think that the risks of such political engagement require that groups be more specific in their interest-based claims. In addition, given that both feminist and antifeminist women's organizations do care about women, and even overlap to some extent on some concerns (e.g. many feminists, like the CWA, call for more strict regulation

of the pornography industry), some dialoguing between these two factions may even help advance women's interests.

Appendix A -- List of Interviewees*

*title denotes their positions at the time of the interview

Concerned Women for America:

Interviews conducted in person:

Rosaline Bush, Director of Publications and Research. October 8, 1998

Patty Dahnke, National Field Director, October 7, 1998

Barbara Franceski, Director of Broadcast and Media. October 29, 1998

Laurel MacLeod, Legislative Director, August 18, 1998

Carmen Pate, President. August 18, 1998

Seriah Rein, NJ State Area Representative, August 6, 1998

Jan Roberto, Board Member. September 25, 1998

Interviews conducted by phone:

Kathy Arrington, Board Member, October 14, 1998

Kenda Bartlett, Special Assistant to the Chairman, November 4, 1998

Angela Lipsit, Prayer Action Chapter leader in West Virginia. October 27, 1998

Independent Women's Forum:

Interviews conducted in person:

Anonymous, Board Member, February 19, 1999

Anita Blair, Vice President and Counsel. October 30, 1998

Barbara Ledeen, Executive Director for Policy, October 30, 1998

Sally Satel, Science Advisor, IWF. February 17, 1999

IWF Interviewees (Continued)

Ricky Silberman, Board President, November 11, 1998

Interviews conducted by phone:

Wendy Gramm, Board Member, January 20, 1999

Kimberly Schuld, Special Projects Manager, November 24, 1998

Appendix B -- List of Interview Questions*

For Concerned Women for America:

1) Can you tell me about yourself and how you got involved with the CWA?

2) Organizational Mission and Goals

Can you describe the structure of CWA?

What do you see as CWA's main goals and missions?

Can you tell me about the demographics of your membership?

Why do you think women join CWA?

Do you think of CWA as women's organization? Why/not?

How are you similar to or different from other women's organizations?

What are your goals as an Area Representative for the CWA? (For field people.)

Can you discuss CWA's main policy goals?

How do you decide which issues to prioritize?

What issues do you see as a priority for CWA?

Are there any issues you would like the organization to address that they do not?

3) Organizational Strategies

What activities do you engage in to promote the goals of CWA?

Do you work in coalition with other organizations? With Whom?

Probe: The other organization I am researching is the IWF. Are you familiar with them? Do you ever work with them?

Some people think it's important to have more women in elected office and active in politics. Do you consider this important? Why/not?

Would it help promote the goals of this organization? What does CWA do to promote the presence of women as elected officials/activists?

Probe re: The Susan B. Anthony PAC

Are there specific Members of Congress that are especially supportive of your organization?

Have you seen changes with conservative women's participation over the past decade?

What are the greatest obstacles you face in achieving the goals of your organization?

3) Gender

One of these things that seems important for your organization is the promotion of what your literature calls "traditional family values." How would you define those? What kind of public policies are necessary to promote these?

Probe: If they do not bring this up probe them re: gender differences: what do you see as men and women's roles in the family? In the community? Why?

Probe: what are threats to traditional gender differences?

4) Miscellaneous

What do you see as the long term future for CWA?

Is there anything I haven't asked that you feel is important for me to know?

For Independent Women's Forum:

1) Can you tell me about yourself and how you got involved with the IWF?

2) Organizational Mission and Goals

Can you describe the structure of IWF?

What do you see as IWF's main goals and missions?

Can you tell me about the demographics of your membership?

Why do you think women join IWF?

Do you think of IWF as women's org? Why/not?

How are you similar to or different from other women's organizations?

In your literature, you say you are taking on the "Old feminist establishment." How would you define that? In what ways does the IWF accomplish this?

Can you discuss the IWF's main policy goals?

How do you decide which issues to prioritize?

What issues do you see as a priority for IWF?

Are there any issues you would like the organization to address that they do not?

3) Organizational Strategies

What activities do you engage in to promote the goals of IWF?

Do you work in coalition with other organizations? With whom?

The other organization I am researching is the CWA. Are you familiar with them? Do you ever work with them?

Some people think it's important to have more women in elected office and active in politics. Do you consider this important? Would it help promote the goals of this organization?

What, if anything, does the IWF do to promote the presence of women in public office?

Are there specific Members of Congress that are especially supportive of your organization?

Have you seen changes with conservative women's participation over the past decade?

What are the greatest obstacles you face in achieving the goals of this organization?

4) Gender

One of these things that seems important for your organization is challenging feminist interpretations of gender differences/relationships.

How would you explain gender differences? What kind of public policies are necessary to promote these?

5) Miscellaneous

What do you think the future of IWF will be?

Is there anything I haven't asked that you feel is important for me to know?

*This is the general format used for interviewees. Additional questions were added as necessary to individual interviews to probe responses and continue specific topics of conversation.

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Education

- 1980-1984 University of Pennsylvania. 1984. Communications and Women's Studies. BA.
- 1985-1987 George Washington University. 1987. Women's Studies. MA.
- 1992-2000 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. 2000. Political Science. Ph.D.

Positions Held

- 1986-1987 Research Assistant. Women's Studies Program and Policy Center. George Washington University
- 1986-1988 Public Policy Associate. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- 1988-1992 Senior Policy Associate. American Association of University Women
- 1992-1996 Research Associate. The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), Rutgers University
- Summer 1995 Instructor. Political Science Department. Rutgers University
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Publications

- 1995 "Outsider Issues and Insider Tactics: Strategic Tensions in the Women's Policy Network During the 1980s" (with Roberta Spalter-Roth). In Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement. Ferree, Myra Marx and Patricia Yancey Martin (eds.). Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995.
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