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The Cultural Politics of Everyday Discourse: The Case of "Male Chauvinist"[1]

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Abstract

The spread of the term "male chauvinist," coined in the United States around 1934, reveals the crucial work done in a social movement – in this case the second wave of American feminism – by what we call "everyday activists." Everyday activists may not interact with the world of formal politics, but they take actions in their own lives to redress injustices that a contemporary social movement has made salient. The interplay between organized and everyday activists creates an evolutionary dynamic of "organized activist variation" and "everyday activist selection." Organized activists in tightly-knit and protected enclaves (such as those in the American Communist Party in the 1930s or the feminist movement in the late 1960s) produce a cornucopia of counter-hegemonic concepts. Everyday activists then select the concepts they will use, primarily for the purpose of persuasion, in everyday talk.

Keywords

activist, everyday activist, variation, enclave, everyday talk

Introduction

In the past decade, the study of social movements, along with historical and gender studies, has taken a "cultural turn." Nonetheless, work in the

social movement field has almost all focused on public acts: storming the Bastille (Sewell 1996), attending a political funeral (Payne 1995), signing a petition, speaking at a public rally, participating in a protest, sitting in at lunch counters. Most of the work has also focused on organized activists, because such activists – and the organizations they form – are crucial to the success of any social movement.[2]

We argue, by contrast, that many social movements are composed not only of organized activists but also of individuals who have never taken a public stand supporting that movement. In an evolutionary model of variation and selection, these "everyday activists" choose among the varied cultural products created by organized activists, selecting those that best fit their needs. Everyday activists further the social movement both through their cognitive acts of selection and by wielding their selected cultural critiques in micronegotiations with their bosses, husbands, and friends. The everyday activists work both through power, defined as the threat of sanction and the use of force, and through persuasion, defined as arguments based on logics and values that to some degree their interlocutors share. They thus participate, along with the interlocutors whose behavior they are trying to change, in a process of meaning making that challenges hegemonic understandings by deploying some aspects of the hegemonic values themselves.

To appreciate fully the effects of everyday activism, we must include among the goals of social movements not only policy outcomes but also "everyday outcomes" – changes in the realm of daily life. From Pat Mainardi's pamphlet, "The Politics of Housework" (1970 [1968]), and Ann Koedt's "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" (1968) to Jane O'Reilly's "The Housewife's Moment of Truth" (1972) in the first issue of *Ms.* magazine,

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[2] Even the path-breaking works in this field, such as Steinberg (1995) on the language of the Spitalfields silk weavers in nineteenth century London, Rochon (1998) on social movements' effects on changing values, Eliasoph on "actual political conversations" (1998:263), and Gamson on "the natural vocabulary with which people formulate meaning about issues" (1992:192) focus on public protest, organized activists, the absence of political conversation, or talk that does not include everyday acts of persuasion or power. Harris-Lacewell's (2004) analysis of everyday talk in a Black barbershop, a Black church, and other settings, building in part on an earlier report of this research (Mansbridge 1999), comes closest to ours. For more on the cultural turn, see e.g., Johnson and Klandermans (1995).

the second wave of the women's movement set the goal of attacking injustices in everyday life as well as in state policy. State action helped greatly, as changes in social security law, educational policy, rape law, and other fields reduced inequities in the workplace and elsewhere, changing both the balance of power in everyday life and the norms relevant to that sphere. But direct action in the home, workplace, and street also greatly affected everyday outcomes. This route to change has been less noticed in social movement theory.[3]

We define an "everyday activist" in a social movement as anyone who both acts in her own life to redress a perceived injustice and takes this action in the context of, and in the same broad direction as, that social movement.[4] Sometimes a measurable link with the movement occurs when an everyday activist frames her action in the language of a social movement. We focus on these instances while assuming that they are only one small, visible portion of a much larger, less visible set.

To exemplify the process of organized activist variation and everyday activist selection, we investigate the use of the term "male chauvinist." In the in-depth interviews that form the basis for this study every individual who reported using the term, even in jest, took seriously the criticism of prevailing norms that it embodied and, except in one instance, used it to describe the assumption of male superiority, with its often accompanying attacks on women's autonomy and claims to equal respect. Our respondents

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[3] See Taylor and Whittier for the point that "Collective efforts for social change occur in the realms of culture, identity, and everyday life as well as in direct engagement with the state" (1995:166; also 1992:118-9) and Staggenborg and Taylor (2005) and Rochon (1998:32ff) on movements engaging in "social" as well as "political" conflicts. See also Giugni (1999:xxiii) on looking for indicators of movement success at outcomes outside the state. Yet the anthology on "how social movements matter" (Giugni, McAdam, and Tilly 1999) does not investigate everyday outcomes.

[4] Every social movement has an identifiable broad goal or overall direction by which it is identified by the larger public, although different tendencies within that movement usually differ among themselves as to the appropriate means to that goal, either in general or in regard to their specific circumstances. These tendencies may even deny one another the right to identify with the larger movement and differ in the articulation and naming of the goal. Among organized activists in the United States women's movement, to take just three examples, liberal and socialist feminists, anti-pornography and sexual liberation feminists, and White feminists and Black womanists differ in emphases, means, and sometimes in defining ends. Everyday activists also reflect significant diversity on the basis of their own ideological and structural backgrounds, while usually evidencing a comparatively lower concern for articulating these differences.

used the term in two ways: first, to describe a man's behavior pejoratively, thus reinforcing the new and reinvigorated norms that condemned his behavior, and second, in many cases, to try to change that behavior. They took both of these actions in the context of an on-going social movement and in support of goals that the movement advocated – using, handily for analytic purposes, an identifiable product of the feminist movement. On the basis of the provenance of the term and its usage in our interviews, we categorize as an everyday activist everyone who used the term "male chauvinist" in this way.

The "organized activists" in a social movement are also everyday activists. But in addition they work, in varying degrees, to coordinate activities that further the movement. They give up time in their lives for that work. They often act and talk with one another in "enclaves" – groups with thick ties in which any one person's best friends, lovers, and daily associates are also likely to be organized activists. Acting together, organized activists pay much of the price in time and commitment for the coordinated collective action – such as sit-ins, demonstrations, organizing letter-writing campaigns, and lobbying elected representatives – that a social movement requires. Talking together as "critical communities" (Rochon 1998:22) in a relatively protected space, the organized activists produce a ferment that generates new ideas and cultural forms.[5] From these ideas, everyday activists select some and reject others.

Everyday activists (like organized activists and everyone else) are constrained by power. They face the threat of sanction and the use of force, both in the deep background of the very language they can use and ideas

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[5] Although a critical mass of similarly situated or like-thinking individuals in a protective enclave will tend to facilitate original ideas at any point in the political and cultural spectrum, be it left, right, or center, those who are structurally disadvantaged may require such enclaves to produce counter-hegemonical ideas. Scott (1990:120) describes the importance of "a sequestered social site where the control, surveillance, and repression of the dominant are least able to reach" and where the site "is composed entirely of close confidants who share similar experiences of domination." See also Groch (2001); Morris and Braine (2001); Poletta [AU: or Polletta?] (1999); Gamson (1996); Couto (1993); Taylor and Whittier (1992, 1995) and Allen (1970) on the importance of safe spaces or enclaves in social movements, and Mansbridge (1986) on the potential dysfunctions of such enclave interaction. Our analysis suggests two different forms of sequestered space: the relatively intensely oppositional space of organized activist enclaves and more intermittent, less intensely oppositional spaces, such as the kitchen or beauty parlor, frequented by everyday activists and others (see especially Harris-Lacewell 2004:162).

they can think and in the immediate foreground of the material and psychological punishments that often attend any significant deviation from prevailing social norms. Yet everyday activists (again like organized activists and everyone else) also have some power and persuasive resources at their command, including their relational links with other everyday activists like themselves.

Unlike the organized activists, everyday activists do not act in concert. Their individual acts are not coordinated. Yet in some sense they act "collectively." As in much cultural politics, they interact with one another and with others through subtle processes of mutual influence that are synergistic, interdependent, and far more than just the sum of individual actions. In part because they are not organized to wield power in concert, the everyday activists described here specialize in persuasion, adapting to their needs not only shared values but strategies from cultural toolkits (Swidler 1986) with a long oppositional history.

Many acts of the everyday activist, such as calling one's boss a male chauvinist, can benefit the individual actor as well as furthering the goals of the movement. That benefit to self (sometimes only an expressive benefit) is often a major motivation, coexisting and interwoven with the actor's perception of injustice and her perception of acting in the context of a larger social movement designed to redress that injustice. Organized activists too often benefit in some way from their activism (expressively, solidaristically, and even materially). But for this group, the sense of moral duty to the cause is also usually a significant motivating force (Teske 1997; Schwartz and Paul 1992; see also Jasper 1997). Such a sense of duty is almost a necessary condition for creating coordinated movement action, because the coordinated action (action in concert) in most movements is aimed at creating goods, like laws, that will benefit everyone, including those who have not contributed to producing the good. When non-contributors cannot be excluded from the benefits, it pays each individual to free ride on others' efforts, creating the collective action problem whose logic Mancur Olson first articulated in 1965. Voluntary coordinated action to produce such non-excludable goods can emerge only if some people decide not to free ride, for reasons that include a sense of duty. Those motivated by duty may feel some justifiable anger toward the "opportunism" of those who act only to get benefits for themselves. Yet the everyday activists described here are not opportunists in this sense, acting only to get benefits.

They act to get benefits *and* because they are motivated by a sense of injustice. They are often motivated as well by an emerging definition of self that is at least broadly congruent with the collective identity of the movement.[6]

Organized activists are far more likely than everyday activists to have a developed oppositional consciousness that identifies some specific dominant group as causing and in some way benefiting from the injustices that the activists oppose. They are more likely tend to see actions of the dominant group as forming a "system" of some kind that advances the interests of that group. Their ideology thus provides coherence and explanation as well as moral condemnation (Mansbridge 2001a:5). The everyday activists of whom we write typically have only a minimal oppositional consciousness[7], without either the organized activists' enclave learning or their protected space for experimentation. For a relatively unprotected everyday activist, it is easier to see men as badly socialized but ready to learn or, in the more incorrigible cases, simply as "dogs," rather than as beneficiaries and even authors of a patriarchal system that has evolved to promote men's interests over women's. Everyday activists are thus more likely to select from the organized activists' productions a teasing admonition like "male chauvinist" that can be used, as one respondent put it, "chucklingly," than the more serious "sexist" or a concept like "patriarchy" that seems to make men the "enemy."

Because oppositional consciousness is not a single thing that one "has" or "doesn't have" but instead a loose and messy continuum with sometimes internally self-contradictory elements (Mansbridge 2001a, 2001b), some

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   [6] The difference between "opportunism" – taking advantage of a larger movement to advance one's own ends – and everyday activism is signaled by the everyday activist's genuine perception of injustice and desire to redress it, even when in doing so she benefits herself. In general, a motive to get individual benefits does not vitiate concurrent and intertwined altruistic motives (Mansbridge 1990; Scott 1985:291ff). In particular, political activism does not lend itself to the standard of not being the beneficiary of one's act. Good organizers usually try to get people to become politically active on issues that will benefit them. If becoming a political activist meant eschewing any political activity that benefited oneself, few would be entitled to that name. (Thanks to Doug McAdam for the phrase "an emerging definition of self.")

   [7] A minimal oppositional consciousness includes 1) claiming one's previously subordinate identity as a positive identification, 2) identifying injustices done to one's group, 3) demanding changes in the polity, economy or society to redress those injustices, and 4) seeing other members of the group as sharing an interest in rectifying those injustices (see Mansbridge 2001a:1 and the extensive and contested literature cited therein).

everyday activists consider themselves "feminists" while others do not.[8] This disjunction between acts and formal identification reflects both the openness of the ideological structure in the United States, in which clusters of ideas that highly politicized people would not allow together co-exist in uneasy tension (Converse 1964), and the continually contested quality of any ideology or discourse (Steinberg 1994, 1996). The many individuals in the half to three-quarters of women in the United States who do not consider themselves feminists often adopt and actively advance feminist positions, but associate feminism with organized activism, extremism, or simply with being labeled.

James Scott has coined the term *infrapolitics* (literally "below politics") for actions taken to resist domination that are "hidden" (1990:4), are "beyond direct observation by powerholders" (1990:4), and "dare not speak in their own name" (1990:19). By contrast, much of the everyday activism uncovered in our interviews consists of open confrontation. It is neither "backstage" in Goffman's terms (1959:128) nor "hidden" in Scott's. It is backstage only in the limited sense that it takes place in spaces that many theorists do not consider part of the public sphere, and it is hidden only in the sense of being ignored by a world that focuses on elite and organized activist behavior. The women on whom we report are embedded in a contested, on-going social movement, of which they are conscious, on which they have formulated opinions, within which they position themselves (either as a "feminist" or "I'm not a feminist, but…"), and from which they have often drawn for their own use an overt and in-your-face language of critique. Their acts are not in the governmental realm. Yet if we define politics as the "authoritative allocation of values" (Easton 1953), with the understanding that what is "authoritative" is contested and need not be authorized by the state, and that "values" include norms as well as material goods, this definition brings discourse over authoritative norms squarely into the purview of politics.[9]

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[8] Depending on question wording, somewhere between a quarter and a half of women in the United States tell survey researchers that they consider themselves "feminists" (Huddy, Neely, and LaFay 2000; Mansbridge forthcoming).

[9] Perhaps by defining "infrapolitics" extremely broadly and seeing it as a continuum with at least two dimensions one might consider the acts we describe here infrapolitics. If we let infrapolitics encompass the two continua of visibility and intentionality (meaning here intent to achieve social change), then the acts on which we report would fall at the highly visible and intentional

The use of "male chauvinist" that we document fits badly not only into "infrapolitics" but also into the current understanding of "framing" in social movement theory. Framing theory almost always portrays organized activists as consciously and strategically engaging in the "clever coining" of terms to persuade the larger public.[10] This kind of analysis privileges the work of the organized activists and renders invisible that of everyday activists. As we revise this theory here, "male chauvinist" provides the analytic advantage of being both undeniably a product of the feminist movement and at the same time not a term that activists consciously promulgated with the hope that others would take it up and use it.[11] The history of "male chauvinist" reveals the independent work of everyday activists in a way that the

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end while the acts on which Scott reports fall at the other end of each continuum. Why? A continuum of power-in-the-situation influences visibility (the more power one has, the more likely one is to act overtly and visibly), while a continuum of embeddedness in a social movement influences intentionality (the more embedded one is, the more likely one is to act with intent motivated by that movement). The acts described here fall at the more powerful and embedded ends of these related continua. (On overtness/visibility and intentionality see Hollander and Einwhoner 2004.) Paradoxically, Scott argues explicitly, although infrequently, that even infrapolitics is "real politics" (1990:200; see also 17, 18, 19, 183 ff., 218 and Kelley 1994:4, 8). In "The Personal is Political," Carol Hanisch (1970) coined the now famous phrase expressing the convictions of many organized activists in the early feminist second wave that everyday actions in intimate spheres are part of "politics." Some feminist writers later tried to define the political simply as any act that involved power (see citations in Elshtain 1981:218). Yet if one defines power as an actor's preferences or interests causing outcomes through the threat of sanction or the use of force (see Bachrach and Baratz 1963; Lukes 1974; Nagel 1975; Mansbridge 1996), then equating politics with any exercise of power problematically both leaves out persuasion and includes personal acts that have nothing to do with the authoritative allocation of values. Habermas (1985[1976]) equally problematically suggests that the "political" properly encompasses only persuasion.

[10] Jasper (1997:85) for "clever coining," a term appropriate when social movement organizations engage in conscious publicity campaigns (e.g., Staggenborg 1991). See also Snow et al.(1986) on "framing," Klandermans (1988, 1992) on "consensus mobilization," and Rochon (1998:31) on "movement leaders" "choosing, bundling together and shaping" ideas "in such a way as to maximize the chances of movement success." The phenomenon we describe has more in common with Klandermans' (1988, 1992) "consensus formation" and "consciousness raising," but he restricts these processes to organized activists.

[11] The conclusion that organized activists made no conscious effort to promulgate the use of the term derives both from both our personal experience and from communication with others in the movement, including informal communication with individuals active in the 1960s and two group emails (one to members of Veteran Feminists of America, an organization of feminists active in the early second wave) specifically requesting information about such possible efforts.

history of a more consciously coined term such as "reproductive rights" would not.

Our investigation of the challenges to male social and cultural domination carried forward by the use of the phrase "male chauvinist" is based on four sources of data. From 1992 through 1994, Jane Mansbridge interviewed in depth approximately 50 relatively low-income and non-college-educated women, few of whom were involved in any form of formal politics or organized activism other than voting. These were opportunistic samples chosen by occupation and launched initially by a contact with a friend.[12] About one-third of the women were Black and about two-thirds White. "Male chauvinist" appeared spontaneously in an early interview, prompting a follow-up in most of the interviews that followed. Mansbridge then tested the extent of this usage, along with other words and phrases that had appeared in the interviews, through a telephone survey (perhaps the first use of survey research to measure discourse). Next, Mansbridge and another researcher telephoned and re-interviewed briefly the women who had responded in that earlier survey that they were "conservative" and that they had called someone a male chauvinist.[13] In a fourth step, Katherine Flaster traced "male chauvinist" and selected other words through a newly available data set, the *New York Times Historical Archives*.

The history of the phrase as chronicled in the *New York Times Historical Archives* reveals starkly the difference between organized activist variation, when the term stays within the organized activist enclave, and everyday activist selection, when a great many everyday actors pick up the term and use it in their lives. In this case, the women in the CPUSA coined the term around 1934. In 1967 and 1968 enclaves of organized activists in the radical or "younger" branch of the second wave of the women's movement in the U.S. (Freeman 1975) recuperated the term and the oppositional ideas it encapsulated. Ordinary language-speakers now took up the term and used it widely, presumably because it met needs that the social movement

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[12] Contacting the respondents through a friend formed part of a larger approach to minimizing the effects of class and race differences in the interview. Because of the non-random nature of the sample, our generalizations about the extent of these phenomena rely entirely on more representative samplings. Names have been changed to protect confidentiality. See Section III for more on these methods.

[13] We thank Emily Satterthwaite for this help.

had activated across the country.[14] Although the use of "male chauvinist" itself soon declined rapidly in the typical trajectory of a "vogueword," the ideological lessons it helped spread (of women's justified claims for equal respect) remained, as interviews more than two decades after the introduction of the term reveal.

In most periods of major cultural and political change, old analyses coexist with the new, informing them and giving them life. In this way the ongoing ideal of equal respect informed the new usage of male chauvinist. At the same time, the new analyses may help the old ideas cohere in new ways. So, unlike previous formulations (such as "men think they know everything"), "male chauvinist" suggested a broader pattern that could, like racism, be identified and attacked as not just irritating but morally wrong. One major role of the organized activists is ideological – to formulate new visions, weave a coherent story out of previously scattered elements, and challenge existing hegemonies with new counter-narratives. "Male chauvinist" became part of this effort, without conscious intent on the part of the organized activists, as did "sexist" and, with a good deal more intentionality, "sexual harassment" and "a woman's right to choose." Whether men defended themselves against the charge of chauvinism or laughingly agreed that they fit the bill, the new term implicitly made a normative point. It also signaled that change was in the air.

The history of the phrase "male chauvinist" demonstrates both its origin in an organized activist enclave and the power of everyday activist selection. In addition, it illustrates how Black responses to racism have typically preceded and provided a model for women's responses to sexism in the United States, and how, in contrast to Europe, progressive politics in the U.S. responded to the challenge of racism and later sexism by making the personal political. Preeminently, however, this history illustrates how a construct shaped in an ideologically committed enclave can lie dormant until millions of everyday activists find that it meets their needs. Organized activists did not direct this work and could not have done it them-

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[14] The specific mechanisms of diffusion, about which we have only a little direct evidence, were in this case both "relational," as individuals talked with one another about the ideas, and "non-relational," as the media spread the ideas through outlets such as news programs, talk shows, and sitcoms (Tarrow 2005, ch. 6). Brokerage, or the "joining of two or more previously less connected social sites through the intervention of third parties" (Tilly 2001), seems to play a negligible role in this instance. See Tarrow and McAdam (2005) on "scale shift."

selves. The causality in this process is mutual: the social movement lifts to salience the ideals that lead people to take up the term, and the spread of the term promotes the ideas in the social movement.

History of the Phrase

The word "chauvinist" originally emerged in France in the early 1830s, when Nicolas Chauvin, a veteran of the Napoleonic wars, became a widespread laughingstock for his exaggerated patriotism. The term based on his name came to describe derogatorily any overly nationalistic person.[15]

The term took off slowly in the United States. In the *New York Times*, the first mention of "chauvinist" or "chauvinism" occurs in 1867, more than thirty years after its coinage (see Figure 1).[16]

The twelve years after 1867 saw only about one article a year, on average, using the word "chauvinist." The rate then rose slowly to about 6 articles a year for the 1880s, about 12 articles a year from 1890 to 1910, then about 20 a year in the 1910s, and 30 to 40 a year from the 1920s through the 1950s. In 1888, the first variation on the term appeared, as an Englishman laughingly accused the French of "literary chauvinism." Variations

[15] Brewer's Dictionary (1981:224) and the Merriam-Webster's Biographical Dictionary (1995:208) report the first appearance of the Chauvin character in a vaudeville play, *La Cocarde Tricolore*, by the brothers Cogniard in 1831, followed by several other plays.

[16] In Figure 1, the notation "chauvinist/ism" (like the notations in Figure 2 of "sexist/ism" and "feminist/ism") indicates not only these two variants but all words with this root (e.g., "chauvinisms" and "chauvinistic") in the recently released New York Times Historical Archives (Proquest), a new database with a far longer historical reach than earlier databases such as Lexis-Nexis. These numbers derive from citations generated by the ProQuest program in 2002 and 2004 on the basis of scanning the original New York Times, using the command "chauvinis!" Each citation was then read and coded for national chauvinism, other varieties of chauvinism, male chauvinism, and implied male chauvinism. (The 2004 ProQuest program inexplicably picks up many fewer articles with the command "chauvinis!" than did the 2002 program, but a few more with "male chauvinis!" We have in each case adopted the larger number, as each has been independently verified by reading the article itself.) The number of articles in the New York Times increased over time, as indicated by the numbers in italic on the x axis of Figure 1 (every ten years beginning with 1868), but we have graphed the raw numbers rather than a percentage, because the increase in overall articles sometimes reflected the introduction of or increase in sections of the newspaper, such as sports, that would not be likely to contain this word. Nothing in the analysis depends on the use of one measure rather than the other. The New York Times measures elite usage; our survey research measures popular usage.

Figure 1
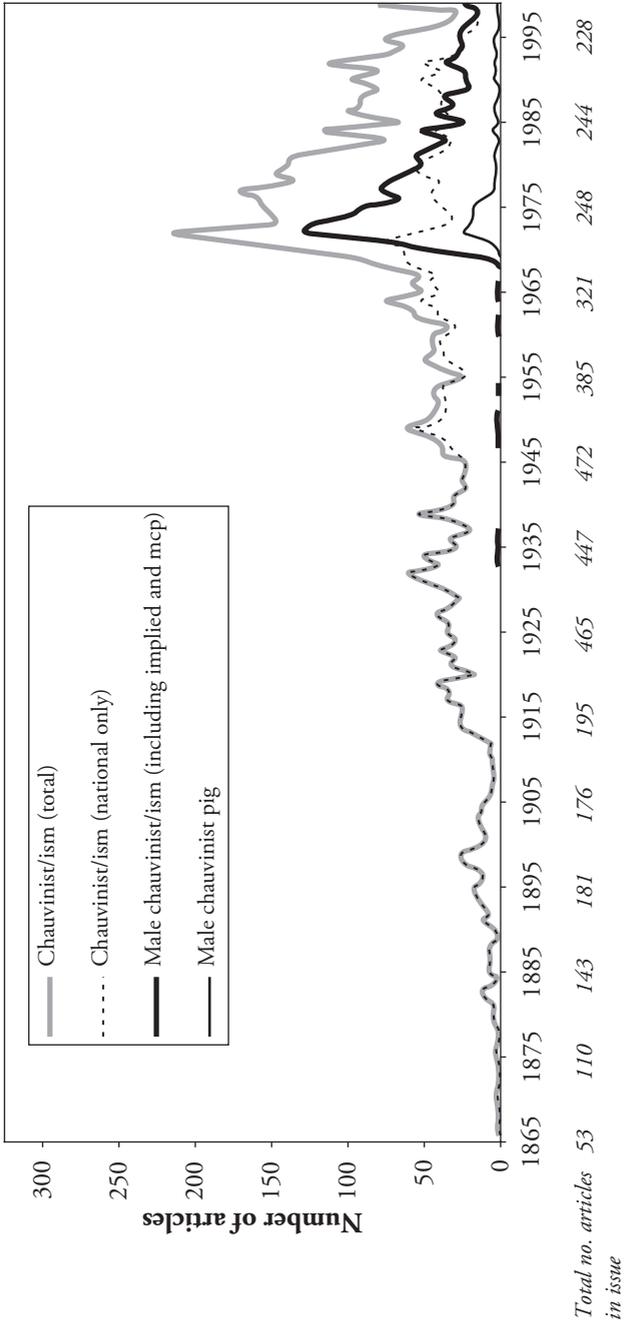
like this made up a slowly increasing but small percentage of the total from 1888 through the 1950s. (For the increase in variations, compare mentions of *total* chauvinist/ism and *national* chauvinist/ism in Figure 1).

Although the increasing variety of European nationalisms before World War I undoubtedly boosted the derogation of "chauvinism," the growing use of the word after the war derived in part from its evolution in the Communist Party and other left-wing circles. The debates on the "national question" in the early history of the European Left soon established "chauvinism" as an indictment of nationalist sentiments.[17] Yet only in the American Communist Party (CPUSA) did an intense scrutiny of the interpersonal politics of race and gender produce a stress on two variations of this usage: "white chauvinism" and "male chauvinism."

This aspect of the story begins in 1928, when Joseph Stalin, with a reputation for expertise on the nationalism question, consolidated his power over the direction of the Party in the Sixth Comintern Congress. In one result of a larger battle shaped by Stalin's policy on nationality, the Comintern "stunned the C.P." in the United States when its "Resolution on the Negro Question" called for self-determination for Negroes in the contiguous Southern states with a Black majority. "Not even the black leadership of the party had supported such a resolution; it seems to have been Stalin's inspiration" (Klehr and Haynes 1992:75).[18]

Although the idea of self-determination in the majority-Black states had the disadvantage of having only a tenuous connection to the reality in the United States (and was for this reason initially opposed by almost all the Black leaders in the CPUSA), the analysis also had the great advantage for Blacks of directing the American Party to "come out as the champion of

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[17] For the debate on national self-determination and the national question from 1893 on, see Davis (1976), Luxemburg's early (1976 [1896]) and later writings, and Connor (1984). "Social chauvinism" (socialists' support for bourgeois governments prosecuting national wars – a term that Lenin coined in 1915), "great power chauvinism," and "Great Russian chauvinism," in addition to simple "chauvinism," appeared frequently in this discourse.

[18] For the thought leading up to and including this Resolution, see documents in Foner and Allen (1987) and, for a history based on the recent opening of records in the former Soviet Union, Solomon (1998:68–81). Naison (1983:18) describes the self-determination section of the 1928 resolution as an "albatross" for the Party in the US, noting that separate nationhood for the Black majority states was "a singularly poor mobilizing device in the North or the South." The concept "was formally interred by Earl Browder in 1943, when he declared that African Americans had exercised self-determination by rejecting it" (Solomon 1998:86).

the right of the oppressed Negroes for full emancipation," making "the struggle on behalf of the Negro masses… one of its major tasks." Most importantly for our analysis, the active participation of Black American CP members at the Sixth Comintern Congress resulted in one section of the resolution emphasizing in detail and with strong language the necessity of combating interpersonal prejudice within Party ranks. In a tribute to the Stalinist-Leninist analysis of the national question, this form of discrimination was now termed "white chauvinism," echoing the resolution's innovation in seeing the US race issue in nationalist terms.[19]

Long committed in principle to opposing racism, the CPUSA quickly applied the new policy to practice. When an educational campaign proved insufficient, it instituted heavy sanctions, expelling members in cities as far-flung as Seattle, Washington, and Norfolk, Virginia, for objecting to the presence of Blacks at Party dances or refusing to admit Blacks to meetings (Solomon 1998:130–33). In 1930, after the Executive Committee of the Comintern passed a new "Resolution on the Negro Question," the Party stepped up its campaign of internal self-criticism, trying not to leave "unchallenged within our Party, any manifestation, even the smallest and most indirect, of white chauvinism" (Browder 1935[1932]:293).

In this era the phrase "white chauvinism" became so prevalent within the Party that it was shortened in many contexts simply to "chauvinism."[20] In 1931, in "the first Communist trial to be held in America" (New York Times March 2, 1931:1), a janitor at the Finnish Workers Club in Harlem was publicly tried for "chauvinism" because he had expressed fears that

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[19] For these quotations, see "The Communist International Resolution on the Negro Question in the U.S.," October 26, 1928 (Foner and Allen 1987:189–96), especially the three-paragraph section entitled, "White Chauvinism Evidenced in the American Party," in which the phrase "white chauvinism" appears six times. In Foner and Allen's collected documents on the Negro question in the CPUSA, the term "white chauvinism" does not appear before the 1928 meeting of the Sixth Congress that produced this resolution, suggesting strongly that the term was coined at this moment. For the link between choosing the word "chauvinism" and substituting national "self-determination" for the "race question," an earlier formula now derided as "bourgeois," see Haywood (1991 [1930]). Haywood was the primary Black contributor to the wording of the Resolution.

[20] Mansbridge, interview with Herbert Aptheker, January 5, 2001. The "Resolution of the District Bureau, CPUSA, District 2, On the Struggle Against Chauvinism" (Daily Worker February 19, 1939), for example, uses "chauvinism" and "white chauvinism" interchangeably.

Black Party members would try to use the Finnish baths and had reportedly said he did not want to bathe "in the same tub used by Negroes."[21]

As the Depression wore on, the Party organized in Black communities through rent strikes, anti-lynching campaigns, marches against hunger and unemployment, actions against eviction, extensive work among share-croppers in the South, a campaign against discrimination in the Harlem Hospital, and – perhaps most successfully – protests around the country over the Scottsboro case, which ended with the Supreme Court in 1935 acquitting nine Southern Black boys accused of rape.[22] Internally, the "fever" of the anti-chauvinism campaign finally subsided in 1933 after many members concluded that the effort had counterproductively promoted the impression that racism was ineradicable in the working class and rampant in the Party itself (Solomon 1998:144). Looking back on the recent past in 1934, one Black member complained, "When I joined the Party, the situation within the Party was rotten.... Nearly every white comrade was charged with the crime of chauvinism, the vast majority of these charges had no foundation whatsoever. At this time, as a new member, it appeared to me that the duty of a Negro worker in the Party was to accuse a white worker of white chauvinism" (Mackawain 1934:60, quoted in Naison 1983:97).

Yet the campaign also made members of the American Communist Party aware that the personal is political (Naison 1983:43; Weigand 2001: ch. 6 and passim). As the racial struggle gradually revealed how assumptions of group superiority could infiltrate everyday life, Party members in the United States began to stress, far more than their European comrades, the role of interpersonal mores and interactions in politics.

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[21] New York Times March 2, 1931: 2, quoting the Party's prosecuting attorney describing the janitor's words and commenting on the crowd: "Every one of the 1,000 chairs was occupied and 1,000 more persons stood about." See also Daily Worker, February 16, 1939 and later, and Solomon (1998), ch. 8.

[22] See e.g., Kelley (1990); Solomon (1998); Naison (1983); Foner and Allen (1991). Klehr and Haynes estimate the Black membership of the CPUSA before the 1928 resolution as between 50 and "a few hundred," with "no black members of the party's central committee until 1929" (1992:56). Yet after the anti-chauvinism campaign and the Party's work on issues important to Black people in the North and South, by between 1934 and 1936 "blacks made up just over 9 percent of total party membership" (77). At that time, Blacks made up 9.7 percent of the total U.S. population (extrapolating from 1930 and 1940 in Series A 91–104, The Statistical History of the United States, 1976:14). Approximating the population's percentage of Blacks to this

As usual, consciousness and action against racism preceded the women's struggle. Like the earlier American suffragists of the late nineteenth century and the later activists in the women's movement in the l960s, the women in the US Communist Party in the 1930s used their newly forged understanding of the ways Whites exercise their power against Blacks as an analogy, guide, and source of terminology and symbolism in combating the ways men exercise power against women. The first appearance of the variant "male sex chauvinism" in the *New York Times* in 1934 suggests that it was during the anti-white-chauvinism campaign of 1928 to 1933 that the women of the CPUSA coined the term "male chauvinism" to describe the patronizing assumption of male superiority. In a new play by Clifford Odets the next year, 1935, a young woman comments wryly to her boyfriend, "You and your male chauvinism!" (Odets 1939 [1935]:111).[23]

For many years, this concept had no life outside the Party. Between 1934 and 1968, the phrase "male chauvinism" or a variant appears in the *New York Times* record on average in less than one article every three years (see Figure 1). Yet within the Party, women continued to organize, not only as workers but also as women. Only a few weeks after the serialization of Party member Betty Millard's influential postwar "Women Against Myth" in 1948, a woman signing herself "A Communist woman from NYC" wrote to the *Daily Worker*: "We women would like to see some study of male chauvinism in the United States. And we would like a… column in the Sunday Worker which would discuss concrete examples of male chauvinism and the Marxist solutions to them" When another member complained to the *Daily Worker* that her husband considered it her duty to stay home with the children so he could go to meetings, one woman responded, "I consider him as guilty as one who is white chauvinist and I feel he must be expelled," while another suggested that the husband should "read Betty Millard's wonderful pamphlet" and see if then he can "still maintain his chauvinistic attitude." A man suggested that the first writer might have been "exaggerating her husband's faults" and sputtered,

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degree has rarely been achieved by any White-initiated face-to-face membership association in the United States.

[23] Odets was a Party member at the time. The first mention of the phrase "male chauvinism" in the New York Times comes decades before the first citation of 1970 in the Oxford English Dictionary (2nd ed., 1989, vol. 9:260).

"My wife called me a chauvinist because I wanted her to go away for the summer with the kids!"[24] Thus by 1948 in Party circles "chauvinist" had begun to stand in for "male chauvinist" as well as for "white chauvinist."[25]

At this moment, beginning in October 1949 and continuing to 1953, the Party embarked on a new campaign against white chauvinism that in the estimation of Joseph Starobin, an historian and former Communist, "wracked the lives of tens of thousands.... No single experience is remembered in retrospect with such dismay, even fifteen years later, by thousands of former Communists and their progressive supporters" (Starobin 1972:198–199). With the Party weakened and demoralized by falling membership and external persecution, "[b]oth whites and blacks took advantage of the enormous weapon which the charge of 'white chauvinism' gave them to settle scores, to climb organizational ladders, to fight for jobs and to express personality conflicts" (200).

Often the struggles against white and male chauvinism were linked. In Schenectady, New York, in the early 1950s, "The language was 'the struggle against male chauvinism,'... women had to be liberated," while the writings on women's equality of Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya, became "required reading" in the Party schools (Marshall Garcia, interview January 22, 1996, in Zahavi 1996:514–48).[26] Although elsewhere

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[24] Weigand (2001:82–84). In Weigand's view Millard's 1948 work produced a "major turning point" in "the politicization of everyday life" in the Party (2001: 75, 114–135).

[25] White women in the Party also used other conceptual parallels with racism to improve the Party members' receptiveness to their arguments. When the Daily Worker and People's World (the West coast Party newspaper) published photographs of "bathing beauties" in 1949, one woman reader wrote to the Daily Worker, "What would we think if 90% of the pictures of Negroes in our paper were to show them in 'zoot suits'?" Another wrote to People's World, "Every PW reader and every progressive group would rise in fury if the bourgeois characterization of the Negro 'song-and-dance man' or the 'lazy' Mexican worker were chronic in the paper. Why then is the cheesecake stuff permitted?" In the late 1940s, sensitivity to racial issues also informed the Party's decision to promote leadership development among Black women, whose "triple burden" and "triple oppression" as workers, Black people, and women gave them particular insights into the three-pronged analysis of structure, culture, and everyday life (Wiegand 2001:88, 97–113).

[26] Zahavi concludes that although "[t]he more aggressive racial and sexual agendas of the party were not the ultimate or most important factors marginalizing the CP within [the General Electric plant in Schenectady] and the community or alienating trade-union Communists," these battles against white and male chauvinism "help explain the decline of the party's influence" (1996:144).

in the world the Party also tried to make Communist ideals part of every facet of each member's existence, this new concern with race and gender interactions in everyday life emerged specifically in the US.

The Party never employed sanctions against male chauvinism as severe as those it had employed in the early 1930s against white chauvinism. The few reported episodes of sanctioning come from the time in the early 1950s when the Communist Party was distinctly on the wane, and none involved expulsion. In Minnesota, one sanctioned local Party leader had "brushed off his wife's attempts to confront his male chauvinist behavior" by joking about "feminism" and insisting "that his daughter learn to wash dishes so that she 'might make some man a good wife.'" Another had been "super-critical of the way his wife did housework," while a third "habitually lectured his wife on politics instead of discussing political questions with her as an equal." Elsewhere sanctions were levied on "(1) an unmarried male who carried on a series of affairs with a number of women without any intention of marrying; (2) a married male who suggested wife swapping with his closest friend; and (3) a man who struck his wife and later said there was nothing political in his actions." Typically, the Party "charged such men with male supremacy, subjected them to criticism of their peers, and sentenced them to . . . tasks involving 'study on the women question'" (Weigand 2001:130).

The Communist Party in the US finally crumbled in the 1950s under the cumulative impact on its members of the Nazi-Soviet pact, the revelations of innocent deaths in the Moscow show trials, the growing awareness of terror in the Soviet Union, and the McCarthy persecution at home. Yet a decade later, when Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), many elements of what was to become the theory of the new "women's liberation movement" were preserved in the collective memories of women who had articulated these ideas in the Communist Party.[27] Friedan's previous work with organized labor had brought her into exten-

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[27] Weigand (2001). Similarly, the National Women's Party worked as an "abeyance structure" to bridge the suffrage era and the 1960s by bequeathing activist networks, a repertoire of goals and tactics, and a collective identity to the feminist second wave (Taylor 1989:162, 770). On social movement continuity see also Mannheim (1952 [1928]); Polletta (2002), Whittier (1995).

sive contact with the CPUSA, making it highly likely that these ideas influenced her book (Horowitz 1998).

The actual term "male chauvinist" came to the second wave of the women's movement through the children of Party members, who passed on to 1960s radicals the thoughts, experiences, and language that the women in the Party had developed. Organized activists Linda Gordan and Rosalyn Baxandall, in interviews with Kate Weigand, remember their parents calling the actions of men they knew "male chauvinist." In the mid-1960s, when Barbara Epstein was left out of a planning meeting of the Students for a Democratic Society because she was a woman, and "got nowhere" with her complaints to SDS, she brought the issue up at a Party meeting, where the man in question "was accused of male chauvinism and admitted that he had male chauvinist tendencies." Weigand writes:

> It is not coincidental that Old Left terms such as 'women's oppression,' 'women's liberation,' 'women's movement,' 'male supremacy,' and 'male superiority' all reappear in the first articles about women in *New Left Notes*, in SDS's 1968 'National Resolution on Women,' and in early pamphlets and papers from the women's liberation movement. ["Consciousness raising," Weigand shows, also derived indirectly from the old CP]. (2001:149–52, 157, 199–200)

Until 1968, "male chauvinist" was seldom used outside Party circles. But as the new women's movement spread across the country, millions of women who had never had any interaction with the Communist Party took up the phrase and used it to challenge the realities they faced. The spread of this phrase was reflected in the *New York Times*. As we have seen, the phrase "male chauvinist" or one of its variations had appeared in the *New York Times* record only eleven times between 1934 and 1968. In 1968, with the second wave of the women's movement, one article appeared using the word. Eight articles appeared the next year, 48 articles the next, and 76 the next. In 1972 the number soared to 130. After 1972, the number slowly decreased. Three decades later, on average only 26 or 27 articles per year mentioned a form of "male chauvinism" (see Figure 1).

A verbal accident helped popularize the phrase. Within two years of the introduction of "male chauvinist" in the second wave, those two words had attracted the third word "pig" (see Figure 1). When "pig" joined "male chauvinist," the arcane novelty of "chauvinist" could make the phrase

interesting while the familiar "pig" let a novice use it without uncertainty. "Male chauvinist pig" also had just the right tone of improbability to pass as something of a joke. It became a teasing term, expressed in fun, in a way that the more serious "male chauvinist" could not. It was thus easier for everyday activists to adopt. In one of the in-depth interviews for this study, for example, a secretary who identified herself as a registered Republican reported that when a co-worker "put down women," "I just chucklingly would tell him that he was a male chauvinist pig."

The spread of "male chauvinist" also benefited from a linguistic dynamic common in the modern era, in which new terms of approval or derogation flare to popularity in one decade, helping create a generation that to some degree defines itself by the use of these new words, only to fade slowly as another generation looks for new linguistic identifiers. The sudden surge and gradual decline of "male chauvinist" follows what we have elsewhere identified as the characteristic trajectory of a "vogueword."[28]

Several other feminist words that the second wave coined or resuscitated began their lives at about the same time as "male chauvinist" but did not decline (see Figure 2).[29] "Sexist" and "sexism," for example, began on a

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[28] See Mansbridge and Flaster (2005), showing that the vogueword (Safire 2002) "groovy" had a trajectory similar to that of "male chauvinist." Some analysts would consider the phrase "male chauvinist" a *meme*, that is, an "active replicator" or "any replicator whose nature has some influence over its probability of being copied" (Dawkins 1976:206; Dawkins 1982:83). (Note, however, that in Dawkins' view a meme, strictly speaking, is "a unit of information residing in a brain," in contrast to its "consequences in the real world" such as "words, music, visual images" [1982:109]). Popular writers on memetics often depict memes as active agents, "viruses" that can "invade the reproductive facilities of other organisms and put them to use making copies" of themselves (Brodie 1996:55), forms of "thought contagion" in which "ideas program for their own propagation" (Lynch 1996:ix), and are "working only to get themselves copied" (Blackmore 1999:8). Blackmore writes, "the whole point of memetics is to treat the meme ... as operating entirely for the benefit of its own selfish replication" (1999:30). This formulation implies agency in the meme itself, although the more careful writers insist that they use locutions implying agency only to help readers understand the phenomenon (Blackmore 1999). By contrast, we emphasize both the use-value to humans of a vogueword and its downward as well as upward trajectory.

[29] The trajectory of these words thus resembles a "cascade" (Bikchandani, Hirshleifer and Welch 1992, 1998; Hirshleifer 1995; Kuran and Sunstein 1999), particularly a "norms bandwagon" or "norms cascade" (Sunstein 1995, 1997; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998), produced by "critical mass" (Oliver, Marwell and Texeira 1985; Markus 1987) with a "tipping" point

Figure 2
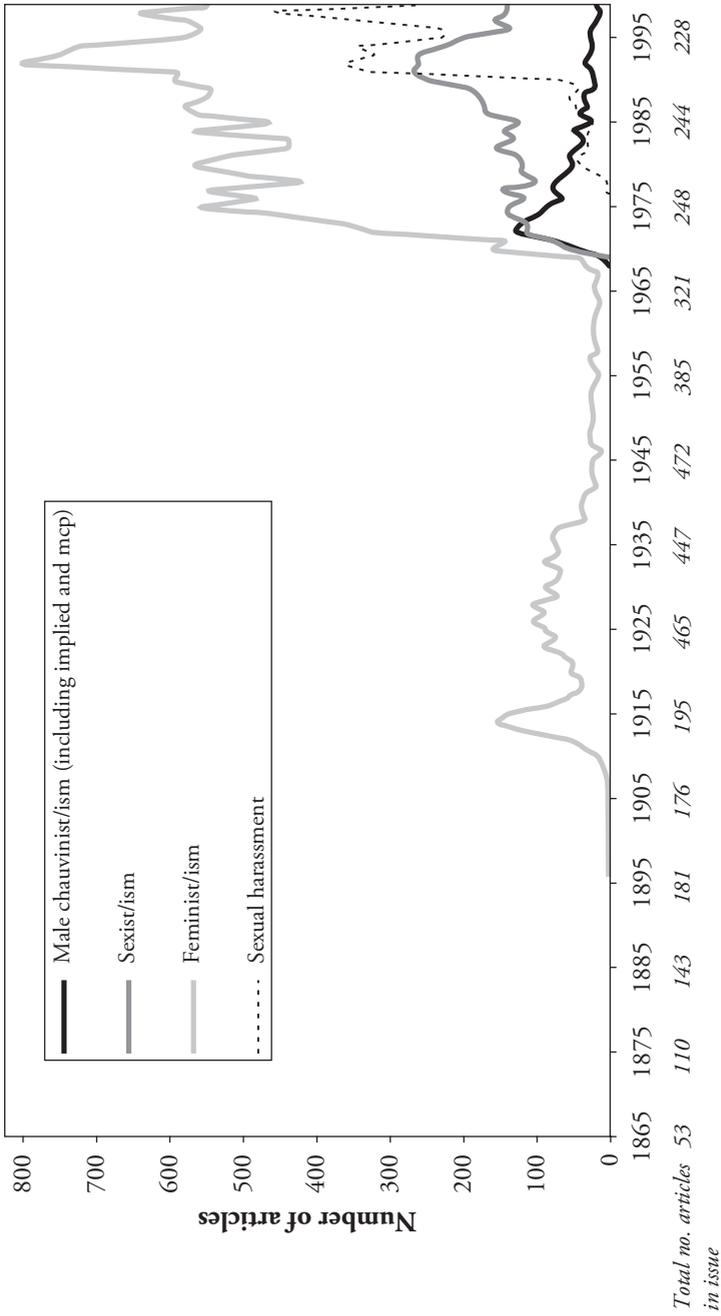
trajectory identical to that of "male chauvinist" and "male chauvinism," and after rising to the same level of usage in the *New York Times*, maintained that level (with one extended higher peak). The use of "feminist" and "feminism," coined in France in 1882, similarly soared with the second wave and remains high today, as does "sexual harassment," a word that organized activists consciously introduced into legal discourse and succeeded in having institutionalized in the courts.[30] These terms lasted longer than "male chauvinist," but "sexism," at least in 1993, did not achieve a comparable diffusion across class and race.

Measuring Diffusion of the Phrase

Our study of "male chauvinist" began when the phrase came up in one of Mansbridge's earliest interviews, with Sonia Rice, an African American woman on AFDC ("welfare") in Chicago, in 1992. Mansbridge and Rice were sitting in Rice's living room, laughing and drinking a beer, when Rice said about a man she knew, "He's getting on my nerves. This one man is really touched, and I don't mean by God. He's gone. He is a chauvinist pig. He is a chauvinist!" When Mansbridge asked, "What does he do?" Rice replied:

> He – he's a dipshit, is all.... and when I said he was a chauvinist pig, my girlfriend said, "You know it, you're right!" He really thinks he's the only rooster in the hen house. That's just what he's thinking, and he thinks when he clucks everybody's supposed to cringe.

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(Schelling 1978), after which use of the innovation or new norm becomes less risky. Similar patterns can appear in "herding" (Banerjee 1992) and the "diffusion of innovation," where "early adopters" are more likely than later ones to be cosmopolitan, educated, highly networked, and able to take risks, as well as more likely to have heard of the innovation through the media than through other individuals (Rogers 2003), with that status perhaps helping to spread the innovation. In the diffusion of innovation, early adoption also serves both to confer status and to mark it (Rogers 2003). Unlike voguewords and most epidemics, cascades and the diffusion of innovations are often relatively permanent.

[30] See Rochon (1998) for a more detailed analysis of articles on sexual harassment over time using the New York Times Index. Rochon also centrally makes the point that the "changing use of language is one of our primary signals that culture is being reformed" (1998:16).

The friend's exclamation, "You know it, you're right!" suggests pleasure in naming this novel inflection of norms. Although equal respect had been a central American value for many years, it was new to apply that value seriously to women, criticize morally the long-standing male assumption of superiority, and intimate through this novel term the possibility of widespread social change born on the wings of a social movement.

After this exchange, Mansbridge asked almost everyone she interviewed, "Have you ever called anyone a 'male chauvinist'?" – a question that prompted many tales of everyday activism. Because at this meaning-investigative stage the sample was not representative and the power of suggestion might have encouraged more people to speak than their own experiences warranted, she also placed a question on the 1992 and 1993 Chicago Area Survey conducted by the Northwestern University Survey Laboratory. The survey asked a representative sample of English-speakers: "Have you ever referred to someone as a 'male chauvinist,' either while speaking directly to that person or in describing that person to someone else?"[31]

In both years 63 percent of the women in the Chicago area reported having used the phrase. It also had a broad reach across political, class, and racial lines. Although the phrase derives from the feminist movement, 58 percent of the women who did <u>not</u> describe themselves as "feminist" in this sample said they had called someone a male chauvinist. Although the phrase promoted a progressive change, 56 percent of the women who called themselves "conservative" on a liberal-conservative scale said they had used it. Although one might expect its use to be restricted to people interested in politics, 60 percent of the women who were not registered to vote said they had used it. Although one might expect a new word that originated in cosmopolitan circles to be used primarily by the highly educated, 55 percent of the women with only a high school education said they had used it. And although the feminist activists who appeared on television were primarily White, 51 percent of the African American

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[31] Northwestern University Survey Laboratory Chicago Area Survey (1992, 1993). This direct-digit-dial telephone survey of about one thousand English-speaking respondents taps a sample intended to be representative of the English-speaking population in the Chicago metropolitan area. Although the area of this survey has a socio-economic distribution much like that of the United States, it is urban and suburban. The use of "male chauvinist" is more likely here than in small towns and rural areas.

women said they had called someone a male chauvinist.[32] In short, the phrase "male chauvinist" had been used by large numbers of women, far beyond the usual circles of educated liberals who promote progressive ideas, and across lines of class, race, political identity, and political activism. The same was not true of "sexist," which appeared in the *New York Times Historical Archives* only a year later than "male chauvinist," rose at the same rate to approximately the same level, and has remained in elite use at that level. Only 36 percent of the women in the 1993 Chicago survey reported having used "sexist," and only 21 percent of those with a high school education.

Because transcripts of television shows and other popular media are not available in searchable form, it would be prohibitively expensive to investigate the possible links from the enclave use of "male chauvinist" through various mechanisms of diffusion into everyday talk.[33] Yet intimations of how the term might have spread appear in the interviews. One woman mentioned that she heard it "on T.V. and the talk shows." In another instance, a young African American in South Carolina exemplified the diffusion of the term when she told her boyfriend, "You ain't nothing but a male chauvinist pig," and on his reply, "What do you mean by that?" retorted, "Go look it up in the dictionary!"[34]

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[32] Chicago Area Survey. Getting exactly the same total percentage two years in a row is a matter of chance, but does suggest that the percentage in the population from which the sample is drawn is not far from the reported number. For the 1992 and 1993 female sample combined, non-feminist N = 644, "conservative" N = 489, non-registered N = 181, high school education N = 176, African American (self-designated "Black" plus self-designated "African American") N = 274.

[33] Individual "translators" in the media include writers, singers, newscasters, and participants in talk shows and television dramas. Specifically asking in the interview where a respondent had heard the term would have been fruitless, as practically no one remembers where she or he first heard a term that is "going around," and would also have put a damper on the interview, like any question to which people do not have an answer but think they should.

[34] Ironically, this was the one instance in the interviews in which the respondent used "male chauvinist" not in a context that connoted an assumption of male superiority but rather in one that suggested only a criticism of her boyfriend's selfishness in not caring about her and her newborn baby. She still acted as if the term gave her criticism extra purchase, but because the rest of the interview indicated little awareness of or sympathy with the aims of the feminist movement, her usage should probably not be included under our definition of everyday activism, which stipulates action aimed at redressing an injustice or wrong (or furthering a policy) in the direction and context of a social movement. A fuller determination would require knowing more about the way she understood her actions in this incident.

How much of the spread of the phrase came about through everyday talk and how much through the popular media is impossible to say. We know that in 1971, while the term was still in its ascendancy, Richard Nixon called his Attorney General John Mitchell a "male chauvinist" in the locker-room banter of the Oval Office (Dean 2001:184). But we do not know where Nixon had heard or read the term. Nor can we know how quickly the term spread to the low-income and relatively unpoliticized women whom Mansbridge interviewed in 1992. But those interviews and the surveys make it clear that by 1992 many respondents had actively used the term, and some were still using it. The considerable difference in the Chicago Area Survey between the reported usage rates of "male chauvinist" and "sexist," both of which appeared in the *New York Times* at approximately the same time and rose at the same rate, can be attributed only to many Chicago women having themselves chosen to wield one term and not the other.

More on Meaning

Soon after her interview with Sonia Rice, Mansbridge asked Susie Crowell, a young White welfare mother in Chicago, "Have you ever called anybody a male chauvinist pig?" Crowell replied, "Oh, yeah," and told this story:

> It's like, he's – I'm supposed to be his. To me that's a male chauvinist, okay. . . . He – this is a good example of him, okay? He'd be coming in the house, okay. First thing he does is flop on the couch. "Get me this, get me that, get me this." . . . And, you know, I just turn around and . . . call him a male chauvinist, you know. And he looks at me and he's like, "Why did you call me that?" I say, "You just come in here, plop down and –." "Well, I <u>worked</u> all day. What did <u>you</u> do?" "Oh, nothing. I just sat here and let Jessica tear up the house. I decided to let her go ahead and pull everything off the shelves and everything, you know." So, you know, to me he's a male chauvinist pig.

By taking up a phrase that was "going around," Crowell signaled to herself and to others that she was not alone. She may even have heightened her own self-esteem, at least temporarily, by her verbal defiance, claiming the respect she believed she was due. She implicitly referenced a gender structure larger than her household and implied a further claim that this gender

structure was itself in some respects wrong or unjust. Finally, by telling her boyfriend he was not just a pig but also a "male chauvinist pig," she used words that a social movement had spread at that historical moment. In a culture that believes in progress, including progress against prejudice, the recency of the phrase itself signaled a possible normative advance.

In a highly curtailed form, Crowell's use of the phrase was part of a process that mixed power and persuasion. In a context permeated by power, she used the small sanction of her anger. But when her boyfriend responded, "Why did you call me that?" Crowell produced reasons, making the claim that caring for Jessica was as demanding as her boyfriend's paid work outside the home. Her choice of words drew from and added to an ongoing public debate on the status of women's work, changing that debate infinitesimally with her addition.

The women interviewed reported that men reacted in various ways to the challenge of "male chauvinist." Many laughed it off, some denied it, and some made an effort to change. In a typical example, when an Irish-American teachers' assistant called her husband a male chauvinist pig "right to his face" (he had said about a woman politician "that she should be home running her house and looking after her kids"), he simply retorted, "No I'm not," to which she replied, "Yes you are!" – not, perhaps, a highly persuasive exchange. By contrast, a woman who identified herself as "conservative" reported that after she told her husband he was a male chauvinist, "I remember him being surprised and then saying that he didn't think he was, but as he thought about it he guessed he was a little. It never occurred to him that he was male chauvinist before I said it." Asked if he took it as a criticism, she answered, "Yes. I don't think he wanted to be that way, especially since he values my intelligence and that is why he married me. I think he has improved. I am looking back a couple of years and he is better now."

Conclusion

The history of the phrase "male chauvinist" illustrates a discursive form of the more general evolutionary dynamic of variation and selection (Campbell 1960, 1965). In the first phase of this discursive evolution, organized activists, speaking among themselves in an enclave that partially protects them from the hegemony of reigning ideas, create new words to express

new ideas. In the second phase, everyday activists select and use some of these words in the micronegotiations of their everyday lives.

In the case of "male chauvinist," one set of organized activists created the phrase in the early 1930s and another set revived it in the late 1960s, along with related terms such as "male supremacy," "male superiority," "oppression," and "patriarchy." Neither group tried to disseminate the phrase to the general public. The media acted reactively, not proactively, taking up the phrase "male chauvinist" only because other social actors had already taken it up and it was interesting and trendy. Thus the media acted as a mechanism of transmission between the original enclaves of organized activists and the public, but did not cause the phenomenon and had no incentive to cause it. Millions of everyday activists picked up only some of the organized activists' ideas and rejected many others. Those choices helped shape the intellectual contours of the movement. When the everyday activists acted on these ideas, derogating men's actions by calling them "male chauvinists," for example, they cumulatively changed the world in which they lived.[35]

Past theorists have often called actions like these "resistance" (e.g., Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Scott 1985, 1990; Lamphere 1987; Kelley 1994). Yet "resistance," which implies reaction and rigidity, does not capture the everyday feminists' active, positive quest to change both their own lives and the larger society. Nor does "resistance" conjure up the kind of

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[35] The magnitude of these effects combined with the difficulty of teasing out the exact mechanisms of transmission from these data suggests a need for future research on the process of everyday activist selection. A conservative estimate of 25 million everyday activists in this era may be derived from the following calculations: In the 1992–1994 in-depth interviews from which this study is drawn, every woman who called herself a "feminist" had engaged in some form of everyday activism in directions advocated by the feminist movement. Extrapolating from these interviews, we may assume that almost every woman who in those years called herself a "feminist" had also engaged at some point in some small act of everyday activism. In these three years, between twenty-six and thirty-three percent of US women called themselves "feminists" on surveys (Huddy, Neely, and LaFay 2000; Mansbridge forthcoming). In 1990, twenty-six percent of the adult female population over 18 numbered just over 25 million people (US Census Bureau 2002:13). This estimate of 25 million does not include the large number (perhaps another 25 million) who engaged in everyday activism without calling themselves feminists. We consider at least those who called themselves feminist part of the feminist movement.

cognitive persuasion in which these women engaged.[36] Michel Foucault, who was the first to use the term "resistance" in this context, eschewed, like Marx, any persuasive appeal to justice. Indeed, he eschewed any vision of progress. When his colleagues, Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, asked, "Is there any way to make resistance positive...?" he had no answer.[37]

For the everyday feminists described here, the world of micronegotiations with husbands, boyfriends and bosses is not one with "margins" of liberty "to gambol in," in Foucault's phrase (1980[1977]:141–2). The people they have been brought up to be and still largely are, the choices they have and think they have when they try to find a job or someone to love, and the power others have over them through providing the material basis of their own and their children's lives – all these constrain their possibilities and make them vulnerable to sanctions when they begin to act in certain ways that they have come to feel are good for them. Even the very words that people have at their disposal derive from centuries and sometimes millennia in which dominant groups have had more power than others to shape the language that we all must use. Persuasion encodes power. But the history of the phrase "male chauvinist" suggests that change can arise when, in a material and political environment that has become susceptible to that change, the creative ferment of organized activists generating ideas in protected enclaves combines with the energy of everyday activists taking up and using those ideas.

The analysis presented here thus introduces everyday actors as activists, selecting and using concepts to change the world around them, rather than as objects of the organized activists' persuasive powers. Returning to an inclusive definition of social movements, as "socially shared demands for

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[36] Mansbridge (forthcoming) details examples of other attempts at everyday persuasion, which appeal variously to shared values, the logic of formal justice, empathy, and a belief in the capacity to improve human relations. Such attempts at persuasion assume implicitly that hegemonic ideology is not unified but diverse and even internally contradictory. Moreover, because people usually belong to more than one group, their conceptions of the world are "disjointed and episodic" (Gramsci 1971[1929–35]:324). Both features make it possible to develop persuasive counter-hegemonic discourse (Hunt 1990:314).

[37] Foucault (1982:207, 216). Scott points out also that Foucault's greatest interest was in the modern forms of impersonal domination, e.g. through surveillance, whereas for many oppressed groups, including women, much of the relevant power is highly personal (Scott 1990:21 n. 3, 62 n. 31).

change in some aspect of the social order" (Gusfield 1968) or "a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society" (McCarthy and Zald 1977:1217–8) makes it possible to recognize the work of these everyday activists, who with varying degrees of consistency and ideological coherence take actions intended to redress the injustice that the social movement addresses.

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