

Chapter One: Success In Spite of Schism

On April 12, 1915, Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, wrote a letter to Alice Paul, leader of the Congressional Union of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

My dear Miss Paul...

There is a rift between the National Ass'n and the Congressional Union over the Federal Amendment. The Nation has agreed to let us alone during the campaign. Will thou not do the same? I hold it to be a courtesy which one body of earnest suffragists has a right to ask of another with whom it has not quarrel, that you will direct your efforts towards other states for the next six months. Give us the chance to think of you as allies and not as competitors.¹

Alice Paul responded on April 15, 1915:

My dear Mrs. Catt...

I think from your letter that you have been misinformed concerning our work and plans. We decided at our conference held at the home of Mrs. Belmont on March 31st to start the organization of the Congressional Union in each State, so that we might go to Congress, when it convenes next December, with a nucleus of workers in the constituency of each member of Congress organized backing of the Federal Amendment. To this end, we are now organizing a Convention in each State, at which members will adopt a Constitution for their State branch and elect their state officers. We have planned, however, not to begin the organization in the States where campaigns are now pending, until the close of those campaigns...²

Then the correspondence took a drastic turn.

On May 26, 1915 Carrie Chapman Catt wrote to Alice Paul and the Members of the Board of the Congressional Union:

...The women of New York have labored seventy years to get public opinion up to the point where a referendum is possible. There are thousands of women making the uppermost sacrifice of their lives for this campaign. Our vote comes November 2; Congress doesn't open before December 1st. Is it not good sense,

¹ Alice Paul Papers, 1785, 1805-1985, 222-240. MC 399 Boxes 12-16. *Women's Rights Collection* Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Box 16.

² Ibid.

fair courtesy and good tactics to give these women of the campaign states the best chance possible?

*...It would be a tragedy unspeakable, if, losing our battle next November, we who are working at our utmost speed, are not able to lay the onus of responsibility upon our opponents, **but must shamefacedly admit that the force which turned the tide against us came from our own camp!** Yet this is quite possible...³*

Unbeknownst to Carrie Chapman Catt, this “force” and schism would grow over the next five years and ultimately result in the successful passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment—universal women’s suffrage. Universal women’s suffrage in the United States is indebted to this force. How and why then does a social movement succeed when divided by schism?

Introduction

Social movement theorists generally agree that social movements are composed of the actions of a group that challenge the status quo of society. As Charles Tilly asserts, social movements emerge and are comprised of three elements: a campaign, political action, and public representations of WUNC (worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment).⁴ These campaigns, political actions and representations may take many forms, from quiet to intensely violent demonstrations to private meetings with government or media officials. A movement must convince those in power that the movement’s goals are worthy and deserve both recognition and validation by government and society. Thus, many factors are crucial to the success of a social movement. My thesis explores one of the neglected determinants of success: schism. The women’s suffrage movement succeeded because of schism.

As I will show, success of a social movement is commonly dependent on solidarity. Rick Fantasia, in *Cultures of Solidarity*, defines solidarity as a cultural

³ Alice Paul Papers, 1785, 1805-1985, 222-240. MC 399, Box 16.

⁴ Charles Tilly, *Social Movements 1768-2004* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2004), 3-4.

expression, “one that arises from a wider culture, yet which is emergent in its embodiment of oppositional practices and meanings.”⁵ Solidarity often forms through opposition towards the dominant cultural or political values in a society. Subsequently, as many theorists have argued, solidarity gives social movements strength and legitimacy to challenge the status quo and advocate change.

Different forms of heterogeneity may cause solidarity in social movements to schism, however. Race, class and socio-economic status are all factors that have previously divided social movements. Complex tactics and leaders can emerge within movements. These conflicts and tensions often result in intra-movement fragmentation. Social movement scholars, however, are generally very narrowly focused on the principles of solidarity and cooperation in determining movement success. They argue that intra-movement fragmentation and heterogeneity often result in failure.

Division, however, is not always synonymous with failure. I argue that success can derive from the effects of fragmentation in a social movement. Using the women’s suffrage movement in the United States, I will argue that heterogeneity and intra-movement fragmentation can lead to a movement’s success. The suffrage movement factionalized along radical and moderate tactical lines. This factionalization caused the government to engage selectively with movement participants. Selective engagement, with the moderate faction, led to overall movement success.

In this chapter, I apply social movement theory and scholarship to the history of the women’s suffrage movement. I argue that women gained the right to vote through a factionalization in the women’s suffrage movement. The methods utilized by two

⁵ Rick Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 17.

divergent suffrage organizations, the National American Woman Suffrage Association and the National Woman's Party, and the subsequent effects of these actions on the United States government were paramount to the successful passage of women's suffrage.

As I suggest in Chapter Two, the success of the movement and these two organizations is heavily indebted to leadership. Social movements cannot survive without strong and influential leaders. Morris and Staggenborg argue that leaders are critical to all social movements as "they inspire commitment, mobilize resources, create and recognize opportunities, devise strategies, frame demands, and influence outcomes."⁶ In Chapter Two, I explore the emergence and influence of the two prominent figures in the women's suffrage movement in the United States, Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul, and their respective roles in the success of the suffrage movement.

In Chapter Three, I analyze the moderate/radical schism that occurred in the women's suffrage movement and its unintentional effect of selective engagement by the government of the United States. I discuss how and why the government selectivity engaged with the moderate faction. This selective engagement was the catalyst for success. As I will show in Chapter Three, solidarity was not present in the practices of the two divergent suffrage organizations in the last decade of the movement. Solidarity did not define the women's suffrage movement in the United States. Its power, and success, was not in solidarity, but in schism.

I devote the remainder of Chapter One to a discussion of social movement theory and literature advocating the benefits of solidarity on the success of a social movement as

⁶ Aldon Morris and Suzanne Staggenborg, "Leadership in Social Movements," in *Blackwell Companion of Social Movements*, ed. David E. Snow et al. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.: 2004).

well as a historical overview of the women's suffrage movement. Many social movement scholars and theorists more often than not link solidarity with success. Conversely, I argue alternative approaches to these theories.

But first, what does a successful social movement look like? Are there certain characteristics that define success? Success is measured in terms of political and social gains. Additionally, as Cress and Snow suggest, success can be defined in terms organization, policy and collective outcomes.⁷ For my work, I focus on the organizational structures and tactics deployed by various movement leaders and organizations in the pursuit of equal suffrage. For the women's suffrage movement, the ultimate goal was universal women's suffrage in the United States. Although organization and collective outcomes are normally used to measure success, in this case they are not. One single organization did not benefit; two did, and as a result, all women gained a voice in government. Two organizations fought for a common objective with disparate tactics. Thus, I define success in terms of the passage the 19th Amendment.

A discussion of three theorists follows, which outlines the general claim that solidarity is necessary for the success of social movements. Fantasia and Weldon do not analyze the effect of either schism or the subsequent engagement of external actors to the success of a social movement. Ansell, however, argues that schism can contribute to solidarity and lead to a movement's success. I will explore this argument as well as the effects of schism on external actors in my case study.

Literature Review: Social Movements and Solidarity

⁷ Daniel Cress and David Snow, "The Outcomes of Homeless Mobilization: The Influence of Organization, Disruption, Political Mediation, and Framing" *The American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 105, No. 4 (Jan., 2000), 1063-1104.

Rick Fantasia, in *Cultures of Solidarity*, argues that solidarity in social movements develops over time in accordance with changing social and cultural norms. His analysis of labor movements in the United States determines how and why these forms of collective action could not exist without solidarity. As he states, it is impossible “to try to base a union movement on anything else [solidarity].”⁸ Workers, during union struggles, develop common identities, relationships and bonds through action against an external actor. It is this collective action, not disunity according to Fantasia, which facilitates a successful social movement.

The ideas of solidarity, common bonds and identities are also paramount in the work of S. Laurel Weldon in “Inclusion, Solidarity and Social Movements: The Global Movement on Gender Violence.”⁹ She claims that solidarity is especially important for women’s movements as class, race and ethnicity often divide women’s movements.¹⁰ Weldon suggests that these divisions have the potential to crush a movement’s chance of survival and success. She uses the movement against gender violence to explore different avenues of combating schisms that may arise in social movements. She focuses on the development of “norms of inclusivity.”¹¹ These norms lead to solidarity and provide movements with the strength and stability necessary to achieve success. Weldon focuses on the internal structure of a movement based on solidarity and argues that this will lead to success. The strength and stability, however, are solely internal.

As Christopher Ansell describes, certain social movements exhibit cycles of solidarity and schism. In *Solidarity and Schism in Social Movements*, Ansell emphasizes

⁸ Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity*, 245.

⁹ Weldon, S.L., “Inclusion, Solidarity and Social Movements: The Global Movement on Gender Violence” *Perspectives on Politics* (March 2006).

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 55.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 56.

the cyclical nature of movements through periods of solidarity and schism. The basis for solidarity, according to Ansell, is a “sense of difference from the dominant culture.”¹² He examines why certain movements are prone to schism, while others, for the sake of solidarity, put aside their grievances. As Ansell argues, groups and movements are “often united by a sense of being threatened by a common enemy.”¹³ He argues, “conflicts over the fundamental meaning or sanctity of collective identity are likely to prompt schisms.”¹⁴ Because the common identity of a social movement is “held to be sacred,”¹⁵ any action against this sacred identity is seen as a poor reflection on the group.

In Ansell’s work, the French labor movement is defined as a phase of schism, followed by a period of solidarity, and culminates with a period of schism.¹⁶ The movement was unable to remain united based on communal closure. Communal closure results when movement participation, activism and success decline. Movements move towards communal closure when participants and activists adopt an “us versus them”¹⁷ attitude. Groups that follow this path, often limit access to new membership in an effort to control the direction and strength of their organization. Groups become more exclusive in the “us versus them” mindset. Ansell argues, however, that members may be hesitant to devote themselves to a communally closed group because of the rigidity they exhibit.

As organizations within social movements respond to communal closure, these groups often seek to bridge the sharp “us versus them” distinction. This principle, which

¹² Christopher Ansell, *Schism and Solidarity in Social Movements* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 229.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, 228.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, 230.

Ansell describes as “balanced dualism,” leads opposing groups in the movement to consolidate principles, balance individual autonomy, and embrace collective unity.¹⁸

These tactics increase the solidarity of a particular organization. In order to successfully achieve balanced dualism and mobilize against disparate groups, groups use or form relationships with external actors. As Ansell argues, this action encourages the path back towards solidarity and typically strengthens the movement overall.

The French labor movement of the 20th century demonstrates these principles of solidarity and schism. Periods of schism were followed by solidarity based on the principle of balanced dualism. Networks and communities arose to strengthen the movement and move towards solidarity. The crux of Ansell’s analysis lies with the successful implementation of balanced dualism. In Ansell’s case study, solidarity is bookended with periods of schism. Solidarity was strengthened through balanced dualism and resulted in a strengthened movement overall.

The women’s suffrage movement in the United States is categorized by similar periods of solidarity and schism. Although Ansell mentions relationships with external actors, this is not pivotal to his argument. Similarly, leadership is not a major contributing factor to a movement’s success according to Ansell. Both communal closure and balanced dualism, however, are dependent on leadership styles, tactics and external relationships. I apply Ansell’s analysis of social movements through solidarity and schism to the women’s suffrage movement in the United States. I focus, however, on the importance of leadership and selective engagement, specifically during a period of moderate/radical schism. Although Ansell argues that schism can often lead to periods of

¹⁸ Ansell, *Schism and Solidarity in Social Movements*, 231.

solidarity, I will show how periods of schism can be the foundation from which the success of the movement overall is achieved.

Power came from schism in the last decade of the women's suffrage movement and resulted in the passage of the 19th Amendment, securing equal voting rights for all women. Schism, in the women's suffrage movement, is defined by the emergence of both a moderate and radical faction. This schism led one faction to communal closure and the other to balanced dualism. I analyze the profound effect of selective engagement by the government of the United States with the moderate faction of the movement. This selective engagement and the subsequent shift in each faction's political tactics and leadership resulted in the success of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment after a seven-decade struggle.

The literature that I have reviewed does not consider the effects of movement solidarity/schism on movement targets and external actors. This is the main focus of my thesis. The emergence of the schism and the government's response was an unintentional outcome that resulted in the movement's success. Because of the U.S. government's selective engagement with the moderate organization of the movement, the entire movement succeeded and women received the vote.

The Radical Flank Effect

Jo Freeman first used the term "radical flank" in her analysis of the emergence of radical organizations and their effect on moderate organizations and external actors in the context of the women's movement in the United States.¹⁹ She determined that radical flanks legitimize moderate flanks and lead movements to success. Since Freeman's work

¹⁹ Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation* (Lincoln, NE: Authors Guild Backinprint.com, 2000).

in 1975, however, few social movement scholars have focused on this analysis of social movements.

Devashree Gupta, however, furthers Freedman's argument and explores the development and effects of internal schism and selective engagement, specifically between moderates and radicals movement participants and the government, in her work "Radical Flank Effects (RFE): The Effect of Radical-Moderate Splits in Regional Nationalist Movements."²⁰ She asserts that movements are rarely homogeneous entities as they often "fragment internally along radical and moderate lines over what constitutes appropriate means and desirable ends."²¹ Gupta argues that heterogeneity of movement tactics, not solidarity, can result in success.

As the model stood in 2002, the REF primarily focused on situations when moderates won or lost. Gupta argues that these straightforward effects, either positive or negative gains for moderates, do not tell the whole story. As Gupta states, "the RFE arbitrarily truncates the range of possible interactions among radicals and moderates by focusing primarily on one kind of outcome: situations in which moderates benefit from a fragmented and polarized movement field."²² Two outcomes are typically possible given this argument: 1. Moderates win, Radicals lose or 2. Radicals win, Moderates lose.

Gupta, however, proposes four outcomes (Figure 1).

²⁰ Devashree Gupta, "The Radical Flank Effect: The Effect of Radical-Moderate Splits in Regional Nationalist Movements" (paper presented at the Conference of Europeanists, Chicago, March 14-16, 2002).

²¹ Ibid, 1-2.

²² Ibid, 3.

Figure 1: Possible Configurations for Moderate/Radical Outcomes²³

	GAIN (Moderates)	LOSE (Moderates)
GAIN (Radicals)	Overall movement strengthened; all groups benefit, but not evenly (INCR)	Radicals gain at moderates' expense; probable radicalization of movement and possible marginalization of moderates (RFE-)
LOSE (Radicals)	Moderates gain at radicals' expense; possible moderation of movement and marginalization of radicals (RFE+)	Overall movement weakened; all groups lose, but not necessarily evenly (DECR)

I will focus on the first block, when both radicals and moderates succeed. This is not an outcome usually associated with RFE theory. In the case of the women's suffrage movement, unintentional consequences of schism account for both organizations' success and the overall success of the movement. Selective engagement facilitated this beneficial outcome. Selective engagement, in the case of the women's suffrage movement, explains why both moderate and radicals benefited from internal schism. The lack of solidarity led to both a moderate and radical gain, resulting in the success of the entire social movement. The movement was strengthened and succeeded because of the unintentional consequences of a schism.

As Gupta claims, selective engagement is often the most critical piece of a social movement's story. Selective engagement occurs when "governments single out preferred groups to work with them, while marginalizing or repressing less palatable factions"²⁴ as

²³ Gupta, "The Radical Flank Effect," 7.

²⁴ Gupta, Devashree, "Selective Engagement and its Consequences for Social Movement Organizations: Lessons from British Policy in Northern Ireland," *Comparative Politics*, (2007): 331.

the government perceives one group to be a threat to its legitimacy. Given Gupta's RFE framework, governments will work with the moderate group and repress the radical group in the face of a moderate/radical split. How and why governments "pick and choose"²⁵ between various groups in a social movement is crucial to my argument that social movements can succeed despite schism.

Governments choose their own path for selective engagement, by applying the principles of minimal harm and maximal legitimacy to social movement groups.²⁶ "The principle of minimal harm posits that governments prefer organizations that do not threaten their own ability to govern and maintain law and order."²⁷ Governments tend to engage in partnerships with groups who are more peaceful and who "accept the legitimacy of established political institutions and work through them."²⁸ This is, more often than not, the moderate faction. Governments will also tend to ally with a group that is not seeking drastic change in the political or social order. The maximum legitimacy tenet of the principle "presumes that a government's main objective in negotiations is to get the movement to demobilize and return to a state of politics as usual."²⁹ Governments want to squash movements threatening it and the status quo as soon as possible. By aligning with the group that posits maximal legitimacy, the government hopes to "negotiate settlements that offer movement activists sufficient gains that prolonged mobilization no longer seems worth the effort."³⁰ Thus, both minimal harm and maximal

²⁵ Gupta, "Selective Engagement and its Consequences for Social Movement Organizations: Lessons from British Policy in Northern Ireland," 331.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 332.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

legitimacy will be taken into account when and if external actors intervene in an internally factionalized social movement.

Selective engagement can change the direction and course of internally divided social movements. As Gupta explains, “once governments engage some factions selectively, movement organizations relocate their resources in order to extract as much leverage as possible from their particular set of opportunities.”³¹ This reinforces the power of schism as it changes the frame of both the moderate and the radical factions. The group with access and support of government actors, in this case the moderates, shift their tactics and adopt an “insider strategy of influence.”³² This governmental relationship thereby facilitates positive progress towards the movement’s goals.

The relationship can come at a price, however. Although governments reason that selective engagement will benefit the chosen group or faction, resentment and backlash from the ostracized group may cloud any success. To this end, “access to the government makes them [groups associated with the government] easy targets for movement extremists who can claim that such groups have sold out their interests for their own selfish ends.”³³ Thus I look at engagement as a reciprocal process. How the government engages with a certain faction is important. How this affects both factions is also crucial in analyzing the success of the women’s suffrage movement.

As Gupta concludes, external actors selectively engage with a social movement when both a moderate and radical faction exist. Multiple factions exist when there is a lack of solidarity. In my case study, the most significant consequence of the moderate-radical schism was selective engagement from the government of the United States. The

³¹ Gupta, “Selective Engagement and its Consequences for Social Movement Organizations,” 335.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

government chose to engage with the faction that posited minimal harm as well as maximal legitimacy. As I will show, both groups, the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and the National Woman's Party (NWP) were fighting for the same goal with different tactics. The government's selective engagement with the moderate faction (NAWSA), ultimately led to the success of both factions. The goal of both moderates and radicals was achieved through the lack of solidarity in the movement and the eventual selective engagement of the government. This is contrary to the arguments that equate solidarity with success. As argued above, the lack of solidarity or factionalization of a movement leads to selective engagement. In this case, because of selective engagement, both radical and moderate factions were able to achieve success.

Cycles of Solidarity and Schism in the Suffrage Movement

Phase One: 1848-1869, Establishing a Movement Through Solidarity

As Ellen Carol Dubois argues in her book *Feminism and Suffrage*, the struggle for women's suffrage was not an isolated time or event. The suffrage movement was rooted in a larger feminist movement in the United States and across the globe. The feminist movement "was the first independent movement of women for their own liberation. Its growth—the mobilization of women around the demand for the vote, their collective activity, their commitment to gaining increased power over their own lives—was itself a major change in the condition of those lives."³⁴ Isolated and scattered groups of women realized the limitations of their sex in the political and social worlds.³⁵ Led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, the women's movement that emerged built a "race of

³⁴ Ellen Dubois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1978), 18.

³⁵ Ibid.

women worthy to assert the humanity of women.”³⁶ In 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott called a small convention to “discuss the social, civil, and religious rights of women”³⁷ in upstate New York. The Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 is generally referred to as the catalyst for the women’s suffrage movement in the United States. The Convention and the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments clearly defined grievances as well as called American women to action.

In entering up on the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrument within our power to affect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition State and National legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf.³⁸

These women were determined to do whatever it took to gain equal access and rights as men. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Antony, Lucy Stone, and Lucretia Mott emerged from the convention in leadership positions. These women would work, tirelessly, through individual state campaigns, for women’s suffrage.

Political alliances began to dominate the women’s movement directly before and after the Civil War. The alliance with the abolitionist movement proved critical as both endured oppression. By partnering with abolitionists, the suffragists learned how to turn their claims and grievances into a political struggle and social movement. Women looked to the abolitionist movement for constituency and tactics.

Phase Two: 1869-1890, Schism

The alliance between the suffrage movement and the abolitionists did not last long however, as both groups wanted their emancipation to take precedence. Leaders of the

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Anne F. Scott and Andrew M. Scott, *One Half the People, The Fight for Woman Suffrage* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975, 1982), 9.

³⁸ Ida Harper, ed, *History of Woman Suffrage*, vols.1-7, (National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1922), 71.

women's suffrage movement, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, moved away from the abolitionists and focused their energy on established political parties and individual state governments in their pursuit of suffrage. They focused on providing "a new ideological framework, both to argue for the importance of enfranchising women and to connect woman suffrage to the total transformation of society."³⁹ As such, new connections and alliances were established with the National Labor Union as well as the Democratic Party. Although these alliances did not significantly aid the suffrage movement, they did provide women with knowledge of the inner workings of the government of the United States.

In 1869, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton established the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) to focus on the passage of a federal amendment for women's suffrage. With the backing from the Democratic Party, the women proceeded with a fight for a federal amendment. Meanwhile, former friend and ally Lucy Stone, in conjunction with her husband Henry Blackwell, opposed the focus on a federal amendment. They organized the American Women Suffrage Association (AWSA), which was focused on gaining the vote through amendments to individual state constitutions.

The main schism in this phase of the suffrage movement was tactical and philosophical, as "Lucy Stone and her associates were inclined to concentrate on the states [and] Stanton and Anthony experimented with a number of approaches to national enfranchisement."⁴⁰ Although the fight for women's suffrage was put on hold during the Civil War, work was taken up after the war ended. There were immediate conflicts over

³⁹ Dubois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 107.

⁴⁰ Anne Firor Scott and Andrew MacKay Scott. *One Half the People, The Fight for Woman Suffrage* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975, 1982), 17.

the Reconstruction Amendments. Anthony and Stanton disagreed with supporting the 14th⁴¹ and 15th Amendments⁴², as women's suffrage was put on the backburner. In contrast, Stone and Blackwell allied with the abolitionist movement, believing that the anti-slavery movement should take precedence over the women's suffrage movement on the national agenda.

Historian and political theorist Steven Buechler asserts that this schism within the movement "altered the movement's reform program from one that challenged prevailing institutions and practices to one that defended those institutions and practices."⁴³ The movement was divided between support for different political parties, prioritization of suffrage or slavery, national versus local focus, as well as differing short-term objectives. Stone and Blackwell fought for the black vote before women's suffrage. Stanton and Anthony stood firm in keeping women's suffrage in the forefront of the movement. Stone and Blackwell defended the government; Anthony and Stanton did not. These new alliances and organizations did not result in any progress of movement goals. At the end of the 19th century, the women's suffrage movement was divided and stalled.

Phase Three: The Reunited "Doldrums"

In 1890, "it seemed to them [suffrage movement leaders] manifestly sensible to pool financial resources and coordinate programs in pursuit of the common goal."⁴⁴ The AWSA and the NWSA were consolidated to form the National American Woman

⁴¹ "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." 14th Amendment, Constitution of the United States.

⁴² "The government of the United States may not deny a citizen the right to vote based on 'race, color, or previous condition of servitude.'" 15th Amendment, Constitution of the United States.

⁴³ Stephen M. Buechler, *The Transformation of the Woman Suffrage Movement: The Case of Illinois, 1850-1920*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 137.

⁴⁴ Scott and Scott, *One Half the People*, 22.

Suffrage Association (NAWSA), with Elizabeth Cady Stanton as the president. This organization was the primary mobilizer for the women's suffrage movement until the beginning of World War One. Even though the suffrage actors were now united under one common organizational umbrella, the movement still lay dormant and immobile for another two decades, as the idea of action towards a federal amendment stagnated. As one historical account notes, "morale, confidence and energy seemed to be at a low ebb"⁴⁵ during this time. Although the movement seemingly was defined by solidarity, as it was no longer factionalized, this solidarity did not increase its prospects for success. It was only through internal changes and selective engagement in the next phase of the movement that success was finally achieved.

Leaders such as Carrie Chapman Catt (president of the NAWSA, 1900) emerged to facilitate changes. From 1900-1904, she worked tirelessly to unite the movement and build a strong network of movement participants fighting for the same goal, using similar tactics: first state, then national suffrage for women. She believed, as do social movements scholars, that the state and federal amendments would only pass through solidarity. Catt resigned as president of the NAWSA, however, in 1904 to care for herself and her ailing husband. The movement and NAWSA remained stagnant until a new radicalism from England traversed the Atlantic and infiltrated the women's suffrage movement and caused yet another period of schism.

Phase Four: 1910-1920—Schism and Success

Although the movement seemed to be at a standstill in 1905, many changes were taking place in women's political and social spheres. Since the turn of the century, women were becoming increasingly more educated, they were working outside of the

⁴⁵ Scott and Scott, *One Half the People*, 24.

home and through progressivism, people (women especially) were becoming more politically and socially active. There was “a willingness to cross class lines, study economic questions, and engage in public demonstrations.”⁴⁶ New organizations, such as the Boston Equal Suffrage Associations for Good Government and the College Equal Suffrage League in Boston, formed out of this progressivism and increased visibility of women in the public realm.

The founding of the College Equal Suffrage League in Boston (CESL) signified a growing trend in the suffrage movement: the recruitment and activism of college-aged women. These younger women had their own agenda for advancing women’s suffrage. Maud Wood Park and Inez Hayes, the founders of the CESL, had spent considerable time at universities in England. The “suffragettes” in Britain advocated direct action and holding the “party in power” directly responsible for the lack of equal suffrage. These radical tactics appealed to young American women studying in England. They brought these ideas back with them to the stagnant NAWSA.

In 1912, recent college graduates and friends Alice Paul and Lucy Burns had returned from studying and working in England. Influenced and inspired by the suffrage movement they witnessed in England, they were devoted to returning home and fighting for the cause in the United States. They were asked by NAWSA president Anna Howard Shaw, Catt’s successor, to go to Washington D.C. and work on the federal amendment for suffrage and organize a suffrage parade. There was still great tension and debate within the NAWSA during this time as to what the main focus of the organization should be: federal amendment or individual state referendums and amendments. Paul and

⁴⁶ Scott and Scott, *One Half the People*, 29.

Burns, influenced by their experiences in England focused on the federal amendment. Conversely, the rest of the NAWSA remained focused on state-by-state amendments.

At the 1915 Suffrage Convention, Carrie Chapman Catt was persuaded to take up the presidency of the NAWSA once again. Anna Howard Shaw argued that state work was still paramount: “as if all our past and present successes in Congress are due to the influence of enfranchised States, is it not safe to assume that the future power must come from the same source until it is sufficiently strong to insure a reasonable prospect of national legislation?”⁴⁷ Catt, however, successfully reorganized and restructured the organization to work towards the national amendment.

The final period of schism lasted from 1913 until the Amendment was passed. Paul and Burns led the Congressional Committee of the NAWSA in 1912, transformed it into the Congressional Union in 1913, and completely broke away from the NAWSA in 1917 with the consolidation of multiple organizations into the National Women’s Party (NWP). Although both organizations (the NAWSA and the NWP) eventually worked towards securing the national amendment, their tactics, political repertoires and styles of leadership factionalized the movement.

So how did this factionalized movement succeed? There were two divergent organizations working towards the same goal. As many scholars argue, factionalization of a movement leads to failure. The lack of solidarity from 1913 to 1920 should have resulted in a deterioration of the movement. But it did not. As the women’s suffrage movement demonstrates, a moderate/radical schism can lead to success.

Methodology

⁴⁷ Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 5, 445.

The majority of social movement scholarship establishes solidarity as a precondition for success. Again, how can a movement defined by schism succeed? To answer this question convincingly required me to dig deep into the historical documents of the women's suffrage movement to determine how the movement was able to succeed in spite of schism.

The majority of my work focuses on primary source material from the leaders of the women's suffrage movement. Housed in the Schlesinger Library at Harvard's Radcliff Institute for Advanced Studies, the papers of the NAWSA and the NWP provided an insiders guide to the thoughts and tactics of both Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt. This primary source data helped me understand each leader's tactics and relationship with the government of the U.S. As I expected, correspondence between Catt and the U.S. government frequented the papers; conversely records of direct correspondence between Paul and Wilson were not found and even referenced conversation between Paul and Wilson was minimal.

The other primary materials I utilized were Woodrow Wilson's papers and NAWSA and NWP primary accounts, available at Mount Holyoke College and through the Five College Consortium, to further understand the relationship between the organizations and the U.S. government. Additionally, I drew upon the historical *New York Times*, also available through Mount Holyoke College. These accounts gave me further insight into the two organizations, their effects on the government and on American society in the 20th century.

I filled in any gaps from the primary sources with secondary sources, namely biographies and historical accounts of the women's suffrage movement. The biographies

of Catt and Paul were particularly useful in understanding further the different approaches each woman took to women's suffrage and what it meant for the movement.

Alternative Explanations

As a result, I modify Lee Ann Banaszak's theory that the women's suffrage movement succeeded because of a single suffrage community. Her social movement analysis of the women's suffrage movement, in *Why Movements Succeed or Fail*, compares the women's suffrage movement in the United States to the women's suffrage movement in Switzerland. She argues that the American women's suffrage movement succeeded because of resource mobilization, political opportunity structures and collective values and beliefs. Banaszak claims, "to understand the outcomes of social movement...requires a focus on social movement's decisions and activities."⁴⁸ Solidarity and collective actions influence these decisions and activities. This argument relies on her vision of a single suffrage community.⁴⁹

Banaszak claims that the suffrage movement in the United States was divided prior to the 20th century, reunited by 1892 and remained united until the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. During this period, Banaszak asserts, movement participants made political and cultural decisions, formed alliances, and ultimately secured the amendment they had been fighting for for over 70 years.

This argument however, does not follow the history or the primary source material of the suffrage movement in the 20th century. As I will discuss in Chapter Two, the movement divided along moderate and radical lines in the early 20th century. The

⁴⁸ Lee Ann Banaszak, *Why Movements Succeed or Fail* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 223.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 219.

NAWSA and the NWP both wanted universal women's suffrage, but had two very different ideas of how to achieve it. The leadership in this phase of the movement is crucial in analyzing the schism and its consequences.

As I will discuss in Chapter Three, the government's selective engagement with the moderate faction of the movement was the factor that ultimately led to the successful passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment. Selective engagement by President Wilson and the U.S. government in this instance had a significant impact on the history of women's power, liberation and movement success. Without the moderate/radical divide in the movement and the subsequent selective engagement, the movement would not have succeeded when it did. Thus, a lack of solidarity does not always lead to movement failure. Rather, a lack of solidarity can lead to success.

Why this movement?

Why pick the American women's suffrage movement? There are other social movements that have experienced periods of schisms. This movement was different, however. This is an example of a movement that conventional social movement theory suggests would fail. But the movement did not fail. It prevailed and succeeded in passing the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

My research furthers Gupta's research of the "Radical Flank Effect." For we can clearly see when a RFE will strengthen both a radical and moderate group. When selective engagement occurs, many outcomes are possible. Selective engagement does not have to define one group winning and the other group losing. When the factionalization is tactical, and the goals sought are the same, both radical and moderate factions can succeed through selective engagement.

The women's suffrage movement in the US also follows the cyclical trajectory framework Ansell uses to define certain social movements that experience periods of solidarity and schism. Although Ansell determines that internal schism can lead to success for social movements, his analysis does not account for the profound effects of selective engagement or leadership. These two facets of social movements experiencing schism cannot be overlooked.

My work brings these two factors to the forefront of social movement scholarship. The women's suffrage movement succeeded because of unintended effects of schism. This argument is necessary for the continued study of social movements, as a sharper eye must be focused on periods of schism, and on heterogeneity, to determine if and how they can either be a contributing factor or, as in the case of the women's suffrage movement, the primary factor of a movement's success.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the role of leadership in measuring the success of the women's suffrage movement. Additionally, I will discuss the history of the movement just prior to the internal schism in the 20th century. In Chapter Three, the effect of this schism in promoting selective engagement will be analyzed.

Chapter 2: Suffrage, Leadership and Division

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduced social movement theory and explained the approach I will be using to determine the success of the women's suffrage movement in the United States. Additionally, I outlined the history of the suffrage movement in terms of two periods of solidarity and two periods of schism. I will now discuss the last period of solidarity in the suffrage movement, its leadership, and the events that shaped and led to the final period of internal struggle. The divide is most clearly evident in the role and position of the two leaders of the movement: Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul.

As discussed in Chapter One, Morris and Staggenborg use leadership to measure the success of a social movement. The success of the women's suffrage movement is indebted to the work of two leaders. Carrie Chapman Catt led the moderate NAWSA at the beginning of the 20th century. Alice Paul founded and led the Congressional Union (later the National Women's Party, NWP) beginning in 1913. Paul demanded national, political and social equality for women, while the NAWSA solely focused on women's suffrage by targeting individual states. Although Catt led the NAWSA at the turn of the century, she took a leave of absence in 1904 to refocus herself and her efforts. During Catt's absence, Anna Howard Shaw assumed leadership of the NAWSA. Under Shaw, little progress was made in advancing suffrage. Shaw's weak leadership resulted in a period of stagnation of the NAWSA. It was not until Catt returned, both physically and mentally, that the NAWSA found strength and purpose.

Morris and Staggenborg suggest "that leaders help to create or undermine political and socioeconomic realities that influence the trajectories and outcomes of social

movements.”⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, as I will show, Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt led their respective organizations utilizing very different tactics in their common pursuit of suffrage that greatly influenced the public’s perception of their individual organizations. The divergent means resulted in a moderate/radical schism in the women’s suffrage movement overall—a schism that propelled passage of the 19th Amendment.

Leadership, according to Morris and Staggenborg, affects the outcomes of social movements. Although Morris and Staggenborg suggest that leadership is necessary in all levels of a social movement, they reason that more research and evidence is needed in leadership effects on elites and governmental officials. As such, they ask the following questions, “how do movement leaders become elite challengers and how do their connections to leaders in government and other sectors affect movement goals, strategies, and outcomes?”⁵¹ I suggest that the answer lies in the schism. Schism affects how different organizations and leaders connect to the government and other external actors. Subsequently, schism affects how governments respond to leaders and specific organizational tactics.

Schism also affects the composition of organizations. Although effective leadership aids the success of a social movement, the composition of these organizations is, however, equally important. In the case of the women’s suffrage movement, the leaders either opened or closed their organizations when faced with schism. When analyzing the importance of leadership, it is as important to analyze the followers. Who were the women of the NAWSA and the NWP? Why were Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul able to achieve success? This chapter seeks to analyze the effect of both

⁵⁰ Morris, and Staggenborg “Leadership in Social Movements,” 42.

⁵¹ Ibid.

leaders in their respective organizations.

Leadership tactics and power came from schism. As I have suggested, the suffrage movement would not have succeeded without these two organizations. The outcome of the moderate/radical schism was both unintentional and responsible for the movement's success. The remainder of the chapter focuses on the leadership in the two organizations in a historical account of the 20th century suffrage movement.

NAWSA: New Leadership, New Organizational Framework

Carrie Chapman Catt was born on February 9, 1859 in Ripon, Wisconsin. Self-described as an “ordinary child, in an ordinary family, on an ordinary farm,”⁵² her public life after age 18 was anything but ordinary. Carrie Chapman Catt was heavily interested in and influenced by the Seneca Falls Convention. A newspaper writer for the *Mason City Republican*, she covered the American Association of Woman conference in October 1885. Led by Julia Ward Howe, the conference was designed to inspire and encourage women to become involved in equal voting rights. At the conference, Catt met prominent figures in the fight for women's suffrage such as Abby May, Clara Colby, and Lucy Stone. These women were “the strongest, best-educated, most earnest, broad-minded and philosophical women”⁵³ Catt had ever seen. This was the beginning of a formidable relationship between these figures and Catt, as well as Catt's relationship and passion for women's suffrage. Inspired by Seneca Falls, Catt decided to dedicate herself fully to the cause of women's suffrage.

As biographer Robert Booth Fowler asserts, “by the turn of the century organization was the channel to leadership, power, or achievement in America and...that

⁵² Jacqueline Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1987), 5.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 12.

for women the vehicle of women's voluntary organizations was particularly crucial in the process."⁵⁴ Catt's organizational experience and passion for women's suffrage led her to be elected secretary of the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association in 1889. Successful leadership in Iowa drove her to the national stage of the suffrage fight. In 1890 she joined the campaign for suffrage in South Dakota. Here, she worked in the "field," rallying individual citizens and counties to organize for an electoral vote. This type of recruitment was used in various states during the preliminary stages of the women's suffrage movement. An excerpt of the referenda campaign in New Hampshire in 1902, as published in Catt's book *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, demonstrates the growing difficulty of the suffrage campaigns.

New Hampshire—One campaign took place in the East during this period. In 1902, New Hampshire held a constitutional convention and the suffragists, following their custom of appeal to all constitutional conventions, conducted a preliminary campaign of preparation which was to culminate in a hearing before the convention.⁵⁵

Although the campaign in South Dakota, and subsequently in New Hampshire, failed, Catt continued to gain valuable leadership skills that she would use later in the national fight for women's suffrage.

After working in South Dakota, Catt moved on to Colorado's suffrage movement. Catt was instrumental in the success of suffrage in Colorado in 1893. Catt said that they were,

...startled by their own victory. The women wanted to do something in celebration, which would remain forever after in their memories. A crowd gathered in the suffrage headquarters and they talked it over, being unable to

⁵⁴ Robert Booth Fowler, *Carrie Catt: Feminist Politician* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 17.

⁵⁵ Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1923, 1926), 126.

devise any unique plan, someone started ‘Praise God from whom all blessings flow,’ and people passing by outside heard a great chorus of song. After which the tired workers went home quietly with praise God singing in their hearts.⁵⁶

Catt’s strength came from her ability to rally and organize supporters to the cause and her firm conviction and passion for women’s suffrage.

A predominantly rural fight until this point, after the battle in Colorado, Catt shifted focus to the east coast of the United States. In 1894, New York was the focus of the NAWSA’s efforts. Catt gave over 30 speeches and organized political equality clubs to inspire women to join together in a collective fight. The *New York Times* published its first article on Catt that same year, declaring, “the ballot is the weapon women need for protection and advancement, whether they use it or not.”⁵⁷

Catt traveled with the current and former President of the National Association for Woman Suffrage (NAWSA), Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in 1894. During their travels throughout the United States, Catt witnessed the passion and devotion of thousands of women to the suffrage cause. They traveled to Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Alabama holding public speeches, where they charged a ten-dollar attendance fee to gain revenue for their cause.

Differences began to emerge in the tactics and approaches used by Anthony and Stanton and Catt. In a speech on February 20, 1894, Stanton attacked the men in the crowd:

To throw obstacles in the way of a complete education is like putting out the eyes; to deny the rights of property is like cutting off the hands. To refuse political equality is like robbing the ostracized of all self-respect, of credit in the market place, of recompense in the world of work, of a voice in choosing those who make and administer the law, a choice in the jury before whom they are tried, and in the judge who decides their punishment. Shakespeare's play of Titus and

⁵⁶ Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, 136.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 38.

Andronicus contains a terrible satire on woman's position in the nineteenth century - "Rude men seized the king's daughter, cut out her tongue, cut off her hands, and then bade her go call for water and wash her hands." What a picture of woman's position! Robbed of other natural rights, handicapped by law and custom at every turn, yet compelled to fight her own battles, and in the emergencies of life fall back on herself for protection.⁵⁸

Catt, however, took a more inclusive approach. Her moderate approach, "reassured them (the men), to presume that their motives for wanting an educated electorate were of the very highest, and then make an appeal that the best way to secure enlightened voters was to enfranchise their mothers, wives, and sisters."⁵⁹ She continued to advocate moderate and inclusive tactics throughout her work with the NAWSA. Finding a balance between the NAWSA's aggressive tactics and Catt's moderate approach proved difficult for the movement. Schism eventually developed.

Catt felt there were problems in the leadership and organizational tactics of the NAWSA. Anthony, as the main face and voice of the movement, was alienating and aggressive in Catt's view. The movement was making no progress. As Catt saw it, leadership and organization were failing the activists, the suffrage amendment and American women. Catt redirected her focus on organization. She focused on gaining respect and recognition from the government. Working together would be crucial as she argued, "the great need of the hour is organization."⁶⁰ Organization would be their key to success as Catt argued, "suffrage today is the strongest reform there is in this country, but it is represented by the weakest organization."⁶¹

⁵⁸ Anthony, February 20, 1894, accessed February 14, 2011, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAWstanton.htm>

⁵⁹ Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, 43.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 43.

⁶¹ Catt to Abigail Scott Duniway, *Woman's Journal*, (March 14, 1895): 58.

To implement her plans, she established an Organization Committee in the NAWSA. The goals of this Committee were to mobilize the southern and western states and provide a “Course of Study” for education in politics. She focused her energy on local suffrage clubs in individual states. Active organizations would be necessary to make women “visible and vigilant,”⁶² as well as to prepare them to be committed citizens. “It was in light of this frequently controversial behavior that her [Catt] ascendancy takes on added meaning. She was nice enough and hardly flamboyant, but she was also, as Anthony and others realized with considerable ambivalence, a hard driving and skillful proponent of her strategy for the suffrage within the NAWSA.”⁶³ Catt’s actions, tactics and leadership skills, eventually, propelled her to the forefront of the NAWSA.

Catt was the frontrunner for the NAWSA presidency upon Anthony’s resignation in 1900 because of her dedication to improving and strengthening the NAWSA. Anthony supported Catt as her successor, and Catt won handedly (254 out of 275 votes). But Catt did not see herself as a leader. Instead she would be “an officer of [the] Association...do all that I can, but I cannot do it would the co-operation of each of you.”⁶⁴ Catt was an inclusive leader, securing by-in from the ‘rank and file’ as she focused on a solitary objective of gaining women the vote. Anthony was confident Catt would lead with rationality over emotion—a key platform of the NAWSA. A letter and poem from friend and fellow suffragist Maud Wood Park in 1932 demonstrates this point.

“For courage and Cheer your letters stand,
And Comfort to friends on ev’ry hand;
For wise Contemplation’s wide survey:

⁶² Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, 44.

⁶³ Fowler, *Carrie Chapman Catt: Feminist Politician*, 18.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 20.

For calmness, let come whatever may,
 And Constant Care for each small detail
 That kept our great Cause upon the rail
 Of unfailing progress to its goal,-
 The Cause that burned in your very soul... ”⁶⁵

There was a balance between the feminine sphere of passivity and the sphere of dominance, typically exhibited by males. In the movement, “there was a strong norm that *harmony* was both expected and essential.”⁶⁶ Even Anthony realized that suffrage had to be the sole focus of the NAWSA. To primarily focus on suffrage would increase the likelihood of its success.

During her first term as president, Catt was constantly “on the road, educating women, building membership, finding organizers, and, of course, urging states to adopt woman suffrage.”⁶⁷ It was during this time that she also turned her attention to the international suffrage community. Anthony and Stanton had established the International Council of Women in 1888, but did little to organize or collect support. Consistent with her enthusiastic appeal for global suffrage, Catt established the International Woman Suffrage Alliance in 1902 to continue what Anthony and Stanton had failed to finish. But, despite Catt’s full efforts, little was accomplished internationally or nationally from 1900-1904. The United States’ suffrage movement had little to show for its 56-year fight. Catt’s mind, and body, grew weak from her work. In 1904, with no progress to report, Catt retired from the presidency of the NAWSA. She reported her resignation in the *Woman’s Journal*: “I find a rest...has become necessary.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵Maud Wood Park to Carrie Chapman Catt, 1932, in *Carrie Chapman Catt Papers in the Women’s Rights Collection* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Radcliff College), 7.

⁶⁶ Fowler, *Carrie Chapman Catt: Feminist Politician*, 21.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 24.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 27.

New Ideas from Abroad

Impatience and frustration categorized the suffrage militancy that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century in the United States. Women had been fighting for equal voting rights for decades, but had nothing to show for it. Although Susan B. Anthony was not typically seen as a radical feminist, her demand for political equality sparked the use of militant tactics to get women what they deserved. Alice Paul, the leader of a new faction of the women's suffrage movement in the United States, idolized Anthony. Anthony's personal courage and commitments to feminism resonated with Paul. Although the two never met, Anthony's teachings and actions greatly influenced Paul and allowed her to take the next step for women's suffrage.

The militancy of the British movement played a critical role in the transformation and splintering of the movement in America. The same year as the Seneca Falls Convention (1848), the first association for female suffrage was established in England. Influenced by John Stuart Mill's book, *The Subjection of Women*, British women fought for political equality. Mill argued that “the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes...is wrong itself...[and] it ought to be replaced by the principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.”⁶⁹ British suffragists embraced this ideology as they moved forward in their fight.

Lydia Becker formed the Woman Suffrage Society in England in 1865. With little success and a desire for more militant tactics, Emmeline Pankhurst founded the

⁶⁹ Linda Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman's Party 1912-1920* (Maryland: University Press of America Inc., 1991), 26.

Women's Social and Political Union in 1903 on the platform of "deeds, not words."⁷⁰

Pankhurst and her followers strongly advocated "holding the party in power responsible"⁷¹ for the failure of women's suffrage and the political inequality that plagued the government. In 1905, these methods turned militant. As Christabel Pankhurst wrote,

The militant methods of the Women's Social and Political Union were first adopted in 1905 after a 40 years' campaign of persuasions and appeal to which politicians have turned a deaf ear. These militant methods consist of (1) in opposing the Government at elections by canvassing and speaking against their nominee (2) in protests made for the purpose of showing that women do not give their consent to a system of government in which they have no share. This second form of militant action has aroused special criticism, for it is alleged that Suffragette protests are violent and lawless...

In the first place, we point out that it was the Government who first resorted to violence by casing women who asked questions about Women's Suffrage to be thrown out of their meetings. Also, the violence used by the Government is much greater in degree than any used by the women.⁷²

These women wanted the vote "because...no race or class or sex can have its interest properly safeguarded in the legislature of a country unless it is represented by direct suffrage."⁷³ They also wanted the vote "because...politics have invaded the home, and women must therefore enter politics."⁷⁴ They resorted to violent, militant tactics to take what they believed was rightfully theirs. They would fight for all forms of equality for women, resisting authority along the way. This resistance turned violent when, in 1908, the women used stones as weapons against British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith. After mass protests, demonstrations, and arrests, Parliament was still unwavering in its

⁷⁰ Marjorie S. Wheeler, *One Woman, One Vote* (Troutdale, Oregon: New Sage Press, 1995), 281.

⁷¹ Doris Stevens, Carol O'Hare, ed. *Jailed for Freedom: American Women Win the Vote* (Troutdale, OR: New Sage Press, 1995), 20.

⁷² Alice Paul Papers, 1785, 1805-1985, 222-240. MC 399 Box 16. Folder 224.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

opposition to women's suffrage. The Women's Social and Political Union's report from 1909 outlines their claims and justification for their tactics.

Important as is the extension of the organization, experience has shown that it would be of no avail without a vigorous prosecution of the militant methods which are the very soul of the movement. The Women's Social and Political Union realizes to the full, the meaning of the phrase "Government rests on the consent of the governed," and understands, that unless women rebel, they are, by their consent supporting the Government in its opposition to their claims. The women who have rebelled, have inflicted no personal injuries on their opponents, they have infringed no moral law; rather they have vindicated the moral laws which are at the basis of human liberty. During the coming year the militant tactics which have succeed so well in the past will be extended and prosecuted more vigorously than ever before. Opposition to Government candidates at By-elections will be so conducted that no Government nominee will be returned in any constituency. Cabinet Ministers will be met by constant protests against their continued refusal to enfranchise women....The Government in its obstinacy may delay for a little while the triumph of the principles of liberty and right, but complete and speedy victory is assured.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,
 Emmeline Pankhurst
 Emmeline Pethick Lawrence
 Mabel Tuke
 Christabel Pankhurst⁷⁵

To these suffragists, violence was the only way to gain the attention of the entire population to the current injustice and force the government to listen to their calls for equality.

These ideas crossed the Atlantic and infiltrated the American women's suffrage movement beginning in 1910. As historian Ford suggests, "the most important aspect of the British struggle embraced by American militants in terms of feminist philosophy, was their attitude of complete defiance, their determination to *force* the government to act on women's rights."⁷⁶ American women studying in Britain during this time embraced these

⁷⁵ Alice Paul Papers, 1785, 1805-1985, 222-240. MC 399 Box 16. Folder 223.

⁷⁶ Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman's Party 1912-1920*, 27.

ideologies and brought them back with them to the ever-stagnant American suffrage movement. Alice Paul proved to be the necessary change the movement needed.

A New, Radical Leader: The Emergence of Alice Paul and the Congressional Union

The British movement gave the American movement a fresh start. While studying abroad in England, Alice Paul, an American student and suffrage activist, received the resources and knowledge necessary to jumpstart a radical group in America as “women who were very important to the woman suffrage movement had long traveled the Atlantic to inspire and inform each other.”⁷⁷ Alice Paul’s ideas came from history, a long history of devotion to fight inequality of women. Women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Wollstonecraft and Frances Wright advocated a new independence for women as early as the 18th century, an independence based on action. The militant actions of Emmeline Pankhurst also sparked Paul’s interest. She joined their cause, engaged with them in violent protests, was arrested alongside them and participated in hunger strikes. She “learned from the British movement a resentment of male domination, a desire for full equality, and a determination to organize women to act aggressively on their demands—to take their rights.”⁷⁸ She also became acquainted with Lucy Burns, another American-born graduate student fighting for women’s suffrage in England. Both women were arrested numerous times for their suffrage activities. They bonded over their mutual dissatisfaction of the progress of the suffrage movement in the United States and the lackluster leadership of Anna Howard Shaw, the then current president of the NAWSA.

⁷⁷ Wheeler, *One Woman, One Vote*, 281.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Alice Paul brought these tactics and ideas back to the United States in 1910, and Burns followed behind her two years later in 1912. Paul and Burns returned to an America facing economic and social changes, especially for women. They returned to a country facing a global crisis, a country on the brink of war. Paul enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania upon her return home to further her educational pursuits. Here, she joined the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Burns also joined the NAWSA when she returned home and the two began to “concoct a scheme for starting federal [suffrage] work in Washington.”⁷⁹ Addressing the NAWSA convention of 1912, Paul and Burns compared American suffragists to their counterparts in Britain and wanted American suffragists to embrace and embody these tactics. Paul and Burns were a dynamic duo who excited and enlightened the women’s suffrage movement: “the two young militants brought a new excitement—an aggressive spirit—to what had become a lethargic woman suffrage movement.”⁸⁰ The two were asked to chair the Congressional Committee of the NAWSA in 1912, as the leaders thought their vivacious energy was exactly what the movement needed. For the NAWSA, under the leadership of Anna Howard Shaw during this period, was completely stagnant.

The first project Paul and Burns initiated was a parade in Washington, DC. President Woodrow Wilson’s inauguration was scheduled for March 4, 1913. The suffrage parade would take place on March 3, 1913. Doris Stevens, a prominent fighter in the new suffrage organization authored *Jailed For Freedom* to describe the actions, struggles and active leadership of Alice Paul. She wrote, about the first suffrage parade:

⁷⁹ Inez Haynes Irwin, *The Story of Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party* (Fairfax, Va: Denlinger's Publishers, Ltd 1977), 12.

⁸⁰ Wheeler, *One Woman, One Vote*, 282.

Led by a young woman in flowing white robes on horseback, eight thousand women in costumed marching units—marched towards the White House...It dramatized the fact that women wanted to vote and wanted an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to give them that right.⁸¹

The lack of protection at the parade from police forces gained national attention. As the *New York Times* reported from an interview with Anna Howard Shaw, “There was certainly no effort made to protect us. The whole attitude of those in authority was anger because we were taken away from the inaugural parade. They did everything they could to belittle us and make our parade a failure. They had no idea what our parade would be or the people who would come out to see us.”⁸² Paul used the momentum from the parade to bring the suffragists inside the White House for a conversation with Wilson days later. As Stevens explains,

After politely listening to the women, President Wilson responded that he had no opinion of the subject of woman suffrage; that he had never given it any thought; and that above all it was his task to see that Congress concentrate on the issues of currency revision and tariff reform.⁸³

Although Wilson said he would consider women’s suffrage, he eventually determined that it was neither the time nor the place for such deliberations. This frustrated Paul and Burns. Experience had taught them, however, to channel the frustration into action. Dedicated to action over passivity, Paul and Burns transformed the Congressional Committee into the Congressional Union in 1913 and increased “the intensity of their power politics by utilizing a British-style, national ‘party responsibility’ policy.”⁸⁴ Their focus: a national amendment enfranchising women.

⁸¹ Stevens and O’Hare, *Jailed for Freedom: American Women Win the Vote*, 35.

⁸² “Parade Protest Arouses Senate,” *New York Times*, March 5, 1913.

⁸³ Stevens and O’Hare, *Jailed for Freedom: American Women Win the Vote*, 37.

⁸⁴ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 45.

While Paul and Burns were busy applying pressure, other parts of NAWSA were failing. With Catt and her attention focused overseas, Shaw seriously weakened the NAWSA that Catt had worked so hard to create. Although Shaw was a great public speaker, she was not a leader, as she could not handle the pressures of the organization. She also could not handle the emergence of the militant and radical suffragists. While abroad, Catt witnessed the militant organizations and tactics used in England towards suffrage. She was surprised, however, when militants greeted her upon her return home to the United States. The increase and popularity of new militant suffrage tactics, coupled with Shaw's lack of leadership ability, led to the downward spiral of the NAWSA and the national suffrage movement from 1910-1915. "Specifically, she did not know how to handle the challenges posed by the emergence of those in the association who sought federal, rather than state-by-state, action and how increasingly called for more militant tactics during 1914 and 1915."⁸⁵ It appeared that Shaw's ineffective leadership hindered rather than helped the national struggle. The conflict between militant suffragists in the Congressional Union and the non-militant faction of the NAWSA would prove to be pivotal in the success of the women's suffrage movement.

NAWSA: Peace or Suffrage?

Catt returned to the United States in 1914. Upon her return home, there was a tension brewing in the NAWSA between peace and suffrage. European nations were engaged in World War One, and although the U.S. remained isolationist, there still existed great tension in the country. Before United States involvement in the war, the NAWSA had advocated peace. Women organizers planned a peace parade in mid-August of 1914, and although Catt had concerns on the possible impact of the peace

⁸⁵ Fowler, *Carrie Chapman Catt: Feminist Politician*, 26.

parade on the suffrage movement, she did not want to upset the *harmony* of the movement. The women had finally come together and were fighting for a common cause. The women marched in New York on August 29, 1914. As the *New York Times* reported, “With muffled drums, a small army of women robed in black marched down Fifth Avenue from Fifty-eighth Street to Union Square yesterday afternoon as a protest against the war...One band of young girls, who identified themselves as only being ‘citizens of the world,’ wore printed bands: ‘Let Us Have Peace.’ One of them carried a globe tied with purple and white ribbons.”⁸⁶

Catt, however, grew conflicted between support for peace and suffrage. Although she brought various peace petitions to President Wilson, Catt thought “the suffragists should not be the prime movers in peace demonstrations because they were pushing hard for the vote and she did not want to deflect them when victory seemed in sight.”⁸⁷

Although she presided over a meeting of the Woman’s Peace Party in Washington, her only concern was the impact the Peace Party would have on suffrage for it involved “two big causes—the New York campaign and the International Alliance.”⁸⁸ Catt decided to re-focus on suffrage and slowly began to distance herself from the Peace Party. Although she initially led the Peace Party delegation in New York, she quickly handed power over as suffrage activities began to pick up.

Catt focused her attention to New York as it was both the “hope and despair”⁸⁹ of the suffragists. New York was the largest state in the Union by population, thus had the largest number of votes in Congress. Success here would significantly impact future

⁸⁶ “Protesting Women March in Mourning” *New York Times*, August 30, 1914.

⁸⁷ Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, 124.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 126.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 117.

success in Washington DC. Devoting herself and the NAWSA to suffrage, the women furthered their efforts and increased their visibility. In New York, “there were canvassing squads, procession with banners and music, meetings of every kind, peripatetic headquarters, gaily decorated and supplied with speakers and workers who went the rounds of each county visiting every town and post office.”⁹⁰ Catt and the women held special days and sessions for different workingmen, police chiefs, fire fighters, and as Catt reasoned, “no voter escaped.”⁹¹ They tried to reach, teach, and disturb every possible male voter. They were doing “ridiculous things in order to challenge men’s attention and to make men think.”⁹²

Catt founded the New York State Woman Suffrage Party in 1915 to mobilize efforts in New York. As a branch of the NAWSA, focused solely on the efforts of suffrage in New York, it garnered 100,000 members by September 1915. All signs indicated successful passage of the suffrage referendum was at hand. A speech Catt gave signified her full commitment and dedication in 1915 to the suffrage fight.

Twenty-five years ago I began to work for the enfranchisement of women. They said at the time that they were afraid of the masses of women who would vote. In these twenty-five years they had admitted to these shores and given citizenship to more men—and foreigners—than there were women of the voting age in this country when I first began to work for their enfranchisement. And they still have to the women, “There are too many of you.” Reason will stand no more. We are going to be a government of people and know the reason why.⁹³

By 1915, membership in the NAWSA had reached 53,320.⁹⁴ The NAWSA remained focused on securing suffrage in individual states. As Buechler argues, the NAWSA “was a large, heterogeneous, inclusive, membership organization that

⁹⁰ Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 288.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, 290.

⁹³ Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, 119.

⁹⁴ Banaszak, *How Movements Succeed or Fail*, 45.

welcomed any degree of support and tolerated a wide range of perspectives.”⁹⁵ It continued to recruit members and spread its message through annual conventions. There was a shift in membership, however, from the white-middle class volunteer, concerned about her family and other obligations, to the full-time, white working woman activist.⁹⁶ These new full time activists devoted themselves solely to the cause of women’s suffrage. As Buechler suggests, the NAWSA was a sort of umbrella, under which all of “the state campaigns, annual conventions, education, and publicity fell.”⁹⁷ To this end, Catt was able to harness broad-based appeals for women’s suffrage. Her tactics and leadership styles needed to appeal to all women.

Under Catt’s guidance, the NAWSA focused on organization and activism. These new tactics were financed largely by individual donations. In 1915, the budget of the NAWSA was approximately \$51,000. (A year later in 1916, that number had almost doubled to approximately \$91,000.⁹⁸) These funds were used to support recruitment, conventions, and publications of the NAWSA. They were crucial for the longevity of the NAWSA but did not play a dominant role, as Banaszak suggests, in the history and success of the suffrage movement.

Where a peace parade had been held just two months prior, a suffrage parade represented the culmination of Catt’s efforts in New York in October, 1915, right before the November 2nd election and the vote on the suffrage amendment. “About 30,000 marched up Fifth Avenue in the teeth of a bitter wind, which swept down their banners remorselessly. It took them over three hours to pass any point. Some 5,000 men were

⁹⁵ Steven M. Buechler, *Women’s Movements in the United States: Woman Suffrage, Equal Rights, and Beyond* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 57.

⁹⁶ Banaszak, *How Movements Succeed or Fail*, 47.

⁹⁷ Buechler, *Women’s Movements in the United States*, 57.

⁹⁸ Banaszak, *How Movements Succeed or Fail*, 78.

also in the march. It was a great demonstration.”⁹⁹ Although men were involved for the first time in the case, the amendment was once again defeated.

The amendment failed in New York because Catt did not have support from the government. She did not have support from vital external actors. While her work continued in New York, there was growing debate and concern, however, over the Congressional Union of the NAWSA.

Similar End, Different Means

The NAWSA focused on appeasing and engaging Wilson and the government of the United States. In contrast, the Congressional Union (CU) and Alice Paul believed in taking what they wanted. Paul and Burns had transformed the Congressional Committee into the Congressional Union in 1913 in order to concentrate on the passage of a national amendment. (Up until 1915, the NASWA had been solely focused on passing suffrage in the individual states.) Using the British suffrage policy of “holding the political parties in power responsible,”¹⁰⁰ Paul wanted to fight against Wilson, rather than with him for the national suffrage amendment. She wanted to focus on the passage of a federal amendment, not individual state referendums. Through the Congressional Union, Paul and Burns directed their attention to the Senate and the government, and to disenfranchised women nationwide. They encouraged these women to vote against Democratic candidates and the Democratic Party, as Democrats did not support women’s suffrage.

The CU’s attack on current members of Congress forced the Senate and the House to form suffrage committees by the spring of 1913. As dedicated as Paul was,

⁹⁹ Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, 128.

¹⁰⁰ Stevens, *Jailed For Freedom*, 34.

however, to the militancy of the British suffrage fight, she still continued to work “within normal American political channels to win suffrage” from 1913 to 1914. (This practice, however, did not last long and led eventually in 1917 to schism between the then created NWP and the NAWSA.) The militancy and strong feminist viewpoints of the Congressional Union became “a liability and an embarrassment to the NAWSA leadership determined not to erode the legislative and public support they had painstakingly won for suffrage.”¹⁰¹ In December 1913 the problems between the Congressional Union and the NAWSA were exposed when the CU implemented their “party in politics” slogan for their entire campaign in which they blamed the Democrats, and Wilson as their leader, as the obstacle to the amendment’s success. This was the final straw for the NAWSA, as they viewed this slogan as a direct connection to the suffrage militancy in Britain. As the *New York Times* reported in January of 1914, “Miss Paul and Miss Burns, both of whom were associated with Mrs. Pankhurst in Great Britain, were slightly tinged with militancy, which the National Association does not countenance.”¹⁰² The article also stated “a schism in the suffrage ranks is likely.”¹⁰³ Neither Paul nor the leaders of the NAWSA wanted to be associated with each other.

Alice Paul and Lucy Burns believed that “women must take it upon themselves to demand suffrage, and use tactics of strength rather than those that cajoled and pleaded.”¹⁰⁴ Discharged from their services within the NAWSA, Paul and Burns took this ideology into the independently functioning Congressional Union. By the fall of 1914, their “party in power” strategy had taken full effect. Paul and Burns were activity

¹⁰¹ Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman’s Party 1912-1920*, 58.

¹⁰² “Suffragist Rivals Now in the Field,” *New York Times*, January 5, 1914.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman’s Party 1912-1920*, 59.

speaking out against the Democratic Party and Woodrow Wilson, blaming them for the unsuccessful enfranchisement of women. As the *New York Times* reported, “the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage is making a spirited campaign against Democratic candidates for the Senate and the House of Representatives on the grounds that the record of the Wilson Administration and the present Democratic Congress show that the party is opposed to votes for women.”¹⁰⁵ The *Times* was careful to note, however, that the “Congressional Union is not affiliated with the National Women Suffrage Association, that organization having repudiated the method of the union.”¹⁰⁶ The Congressional Union and the NAWSA were completely separate entities, fighting, however, for the same ultimate goal.

NAWSA: Leadership Changes and an Emergency Convention

With the failure in 1915 to pass the amendment in New York, progress towards a federal suffrage amendment languished. Women had now been fighting for 67 years with neither statewide nor federal success. This did not stop them, however, from looking to the 1917 referendum in New York as their next campaign. Change would be necessary, however, to keep the fight alive. Anna Howard Shaw announced she would be stepping down as president of the NAWSA. Catt was the logical successor. Her brief successful stint as president earlier in the century gave her credibility as a leader. Additionally, her work and leadership in the International Woman Suffrage Associate had proven quite successful. She had worked for nine years abroad promoting women’s equality and suffrage. Her intense and steadfast organizational tactics would severely aid the struggling NAWSA.

¹⁰⁵ “Women Oppose Democrats,” *New York Times*, November 2, 1914.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Although she described herself as “an unwilling victim,”¹⁰⁷ and thought younger leadership was necessary, Catt eventually agreed to re-assume the role of president of the NAWSA. It was at this time, that she decided to focus all of her efforts on the federal amendment for women’s suffrage. She was influenced by the Congressional Union’s focus on a federal amendment. Catt was “determined to overcome the lack of cohesion, and to bring organization, unity, and consequent momentum”¹⁰⁸ to the NAWSA. Catt reenergized and redirected the focus of the suffragists to the national stage. This was especially important to gain Congress’ support.

Pressured by the Congressional Union’s focus on a national amendment, Catt called an emergency convention of the moderate faction of the NAWSA in 1916. The emergency convention proved extremely successful in improving membership as well as increasing political allies. As Catt stated, “From that moment...there were no defections, no doubts, no difference in the Association. A great army in perfect discipline moved forward towards its goal.”¹⁰⁹ President Wilson, realizing the severity of the movement, made a speech at the convention.

Almost every other time that I have ever visited Atlantic City I came to fight somebody. I hardly know how to conduct myself when I have not come to fight anybody but with somebody...The movement was coming to full time, we rejoice in the strength of it, and we shall not quarrel in the long run as to the method of it. Because, when you are working with masses of men and organized bodies of opinion, you have got to carry the organized body along. The whole art and practice of government consists not in moving individuals, but moving masses...I have not come to ask you to be patient, because you have been, but I have come to congratulate you that there was a force behind you that will, beyond any preadventure, be triumphant and for which you can afford a little while to wait.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, 130.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 133.

¹⁰⁹ Carrie Chapman Catt, 1859-1947. Papers in the Woman’s Rights Collection, 21.

¹¹⁰ Harper, *History of Women’s Suffrage*, vol. 5, 499-500.

Wilson said he was on the side of the suffragists, but also told them they had to wait. Hadn't they waited long enough? This was the first indication, however, that the suffragists had gained legitimacy of its objective from the government.

Complete Division

Although Catt had united and reinvigorated most parts of the NAWSA, the Congressional Union was not willing to compromise either on its mandate or tactics. The Congressional Union became a formally recognized national organization in 1915 and founded a political party, the Woman's Party of Western Voters (WPWV), in 1916.¹¹¹ By March 1917, the CU, under the direction of Alice Paul and the WPWV consolidated to form the National Woman's Party (NWP).

In contrast to the NAWSA, membership in the NWP was a fairly homogeneous group. Young, white, educated women made up the majority in the NWP. They were "an exclusive cadre organization that demanded full participation and tolerated no deviation for its carefully chosen course."¹¹² These young, college-aged women, stood behind Paul and Burns with a steadfast dedication to women's suffrage and equal rights. United and driven by a goal of federal suffrage, the women of the NWP would not back down until they got what they wanted.

Conclusion

The suffrage movement was internally divided. In this chapter, I discussed the role of the main leaders of the movement at the time of schism. In the next chapter, I will explore the effects of this schism on the political climate in the United States. The effects of this internal schism will be used to determine the success of the suffrage movement.

¹¹¹ Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman's Party 1912-1920*, 64.

¹¹² Buechler, *Women's Movements in the United States*, 57.

Chapter Three: Selective Engagement

Introduction

The suffrage movement had just experienced an internal schism that splintered the movement into two distinct groups: the NAWSA and the NWP. In this chapter, I will explore the effects of this schism on the success of the movement. As I will show, the movement could not have succeeded without the unintentional effects of selective engagement. As Gupta defines, selective engagement occurs when a social movement is internally divided in moderate and radical flanks. The government chooses to work with a preferred group while marginalizing another other.¹¹³ The government is likely to choose a moderate partner over a radical one. In the case of the women's suffrage movement, the government's selective engagement with the moderate NAWSA led to overall movement success.

Although traditional social movement scholarship assumes that this schism would be a detriment to success, I argue that this schism actually powered the passage of the constitutional amendment. By analyzing the effect of selective engagement in the case of the women's suffrage movement, I will prove an additional outcome of the Radical Flank Effect, as both the NAWSA and NWP succeeded. Schism powered the passage of the 19th Amendment on June 4, 1919, enfranchising all American women.

World War One

On August 3, 1914, Germany declared war on France and the next day Britain, allied with France, entered World War One. The United States entered the conflict in 1917, as Wilson explained, to make the world "safe for democracy." It was this phrase

¹¹³ Gupta, "Selective Engagement and Its Consequences for Social Movement Organizations," 331.

that both the NAWSA and the NWP would use and attack in their quest for women's suffrage.

When the United States declared a break from diplomatic relations with Germany on February 3, 1917 it paved the way for the United States to enter World War One. The U.S. declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. Carrie Chapman Catt was personally torn as to where to place her allegiances. She personally objected to the war yet was committed to maintaining suffrage on the front page of national politics. Her positions (anti-war and pro-suffrage), however, had not proven beneficial in years past. She had to consider the possible benefits of a relationship between war support and suffrage. She also had to be careful not to offend the national sentiments of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance.¹¹⁴ She postured that if and when international countries enfranchised women, the United States and Woodrow Wilson might follow their lead. Catt's theory, however, worked in the opposite direction, as the United States took the lead in becoming among the first countries worldwide to provide for universal women's suffrage.

Catt called a meeting with her Executive Council in mid-February, 1917, to rally her suffragists around the war. Mainly upper middle class women, Catt asked her fellow suffragists,

Shall suffragists do the "war work," which they will undoubtedly want to do with other groups newly formed, thus running the risk of disintegrating our organizations, or shall we use our headquarters and our machinery for really helpful constructive aid to our nation?¹¹⁵

Catt encouraged women to present cases for and against aiding the war effort. A vote was then taken.

¹¹⁴ Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, 137.

¹¹⁵ Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage*, 721.

The majority decision was that the NAWSA should now abandon its unbroken custom of not participating in any matters except those directly relating to woman suffrage and in that view of the national emergency it should offer its assistance to the Government of the United States and proceed to organize war service.¹¹⁶

Catt agreed that support for the war would advance the NAWSA's position as well as the suffrage movement. Her beliefs, as expressed in a letter to President Wilson, written at the conclusion of the conference, articulated the NAWSA's new focus and direction.

...If, however, our nation is drawn into maelstrom, we stand ready to serve our country with the zeal and consecration which should ever characterize those who cherish high ideals of the duty and obligation to citizenship. With no intention of laying aside our constructive forward work to secure the vote for the womanhood of this country as "the right protective of all other right," we offer our services in the event that they should be needed, and in so far as we are authorized, we pledge the loyal support of our more than two million members...¹¹⁷

NAWSA's platform focused on strong allegiance to national leaders and the President at this time. This was critical. Catt did not want to lose strength for women's suffrage during the war, and realized the positive impact strong nationalistic and patriotic action could have on the success of the suffrage movement overall.

Patriotic duty may have been a prime mover, but women were shrewd enough to realize that such duty could serve not only their country, but also the women's movement and its suffrage goals...As relief work progressed through the weeks and months of the war, it presented many opportunities to demonstrate what a major contribution women could make to society in the public sphere.¹¹⁸

Men and the government needed to realize how influential women could be to the war effort. Women could only contribute if they were equated with men on the political stage.

Catt was strategic in her support of the United States' involvement in World War One. By allying with the government and Woodrow Wilson, she proved the power that

¹¹⁶ Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage*, 721.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 723.

¹¹⁸ Cheryl Law, *Suffrage and Power: The Women's Movement, 1918-1928* (London: I.B Tauris & Co Ltd, 1977), 22.

women held. Catt urged suffragists to “answer the government’s call by working with the forces of construction and conservation, never forgetting their efforts for suffrage and for peace.”¹¹⁹ In a published pamphlet addressing Congress, Catt stated:

Every day the conviction grows deeper that a world humanity will emerge from the war, demanding political liberty and accepting nothing less. In that new struggle there is little doubt that men and women will demand and attain political liberty together. To-day they are fighting the world’s battle for Democracy together. Men and women are paying the frightful cost of war and bearing its sad and sickening sorrows together. To-morrow they will share its rewards together in democracies which make no discriminations on account of sex.¹²⁰

Her shift though, from peace advocate in 1914 to war defendant in 1917, confused her constituents at first. Biographer Van Voris argues that “in part this (her change) was political expediency, in part a reflection of the powerful propaganda at work that influenced even as independent a thinker as she.”¹²¹ This was a strategic political move on Catt’s part that, she thought, would win the suffrage fight. Catt believed taking a nationalistic approach to suffrage work would finally spell success for the NAWSA and for the United States, overall.

Wilson on Suffrage

“...Making woman suffrage appear respectable and in keeping with widely shared American values and goals,”¹²² Catt made sure the NAWSA remained nationalistic and patriotic. As per her 1916 plan, President Wilson had to be “cultivated—rather than harassed—to persuade him into action.”¹²³ This would be a challenge, however, given Wilson’s predisposition and history of opposition to women or their suffrage.

¹¹⁹ Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, 140.

¹²⁰ Carrie Chapman Catt, 1859-1947. Papers in the Woman's Rights Collection, 62.

¹²¹ Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, 140.

¹²² Wheeler, *One Woman, One Vote*, 295.

In a letter Wilson wrote a letter to a friend, Charles W. Kent, in 1894, he explained how intellectually inferior he believed women to be:

It distressed me very deeply that the University of Virginia should think, even through a minority of its faculty, of admitting women to its courses. I have had just enough experiences of co-education to know that, even under the most favorable circumstances, it is most demoralizing. It seems to me that in the South it would be fatal to the standards of delicacy as between men and women which we most value.¹²⁴

By his presidential election campaign in 1912, Wilson had warmed to the idea of suffrage, but only on a state level saying in a campaign speech:

It [suffrage] is not a national question, but a state question. So far as it is a state question, I am heartily in favour of its thorough discussion and shall never be jealous of its submission to the popular vote. My own judgment in the matter is in an uncertain balance, my judgment as a voting citizen.¹²⁵

North Dakota, Ohio and Arkansas all passed women's suffrage by the time the United States entered World War One. Catt remained committed to gaining Wilson's support of suffrage. Her dedication to moderation and loyalty appealed to Wilson. Wilson's position would soon be challenged by the development of the NWP and its radical actions. Unlike Carrie Chapman Catt, Alice Paul pushed the envelope until she got what she wanted.

The NWP and WWI

Given Paul's guiding principle that political pressure was the only way to gather Wilson's support, she and the CU/NWP would not side with the government and support the war efforts. Alice Paul and the CU/NWP believed that full attention, both by suffragists and the government, should be paid to women's suffrage. On June 21, 1916,

¹²³ Christine Bolt, *The Women's Movements: In the United States and Britain from the 1790s to the 1920s* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 247.

¹²⁴ Scott and Scott, *One Half the People*, 149.

¹²⁵ Ray S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939, 1946), 385.

the *New York Times*, published an article titled, “Suffragists Make a Threat.”¹²⁶ The article stated:

The Congressional Union for the Woman’s Party announced tonight that they were prepared to enter a campaign against the Democratic Party if the Democrats persist in blocking the passage of the Susan B. Anthony constitutional amendment.¹²⁷

They would continue their fight and “make national suffrage a war measure.”¹²⁸ The women of the CU/NWP turned to non-violent civil disobedience. Their objective: “force Wilson and the government, through public pressure, to pass woman suffrage, using the most effective weapons available to them.”¹²⁹ These weapons included continued pickets, press, and pressure on the Wilson and the government. Signs and banners read:

“WE SHALL FIGHT FOR THE THINGS WE HAVE ALWAYS CARRIED NEAREST
TO OUR HEARTS”

“DEMOCRACY SHOULD BEGIN AT HOME”

“WE DEMAND JUSTICE AND SELF-GOVERNMENT IN OUR OWN LAND”¹³⁰

Although a Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage was established not long after, Wilson continued to disregard women’s suffrage as an integral part of his political or wartime program. The inaction and silence of Wilson and the government on the question of national women’s suffrage pushed the CU/NWP to concern itself “only with the effort to obtain for women the opportunity to give effective expression, through political power, to their ideals, whatever they might be.”¹³¹

¹²⁶ “Suffragists Make a Threat,” *New York Times*, June 21, 1916.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 83.

¹²⁹ Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman’s Party 1912-1920*, 146.

¹³⁰ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 84.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 82.

The great publicity surrounding the pickets disturbed Wilson and his administration. Every major newspaper in the East ran stories about Paul and the White House pickets.¹³² Press coverage was thorough, publishing not only accounts of the events, but Paul's goals:

It is those who deny justice, and not those who demand it, who embarrass the country and its international relations....The responsibility, therefore, is with the government and not with the women of America, if the lack of democracy at home weakens the government in its fight for democracy 3000 miles away.¹³³

Paul accused Wilson and the government of fighting for democracy abroad while continuing to allow injustices and inequalities on American soil. Her speeches, pickets, and signs followed this message. The President's actions were contradictory. Paul determined it was her responsibility, and the responsibility of the CU/NWP to continue to hold the party in power responsible for the injustice.

While the Democrats remained silent and blinded by Wilson's sentiments, the Republicans became stronger proponents of woman's suffrage. They "wanted to know why they [the Democrats] should ignore suffrage for women as a war measure."¹³⁴ This inspired the women of the CU/NWP and gave them hope for the future of the suffrage amendment. These women were gaining momentum. Their pickets garnered national recognition and support. "The picket line, approaching its sixth month of duty, had aroused the country to an unprecedented interest in suffrage."¹³⁵ Nebraska, Michigan, and Rhode Island all passed suffrage within a month. The Democrats could not continue to be silent bystanders in the growing conflict. In defiance of newly found support for

¹³² Sally Hunter Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Women's Suffrage Movement," *Political Science Quarterly* 98, 4, (1983-1984): 668.

¹³³ National Women's Party Press Release, 22 June 1917, reel 209, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Library of Congress.

¹³⁴ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 87.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 89.

suffrage, the government decided to take direct action against the women of the NWP and remove them from the picket lines.

The Government Responds

The NWP women, including Alice Paul were arrested and placed in prison on charges of disturbing the peace and blocking streets and sidewalks. These arrests were the government's response to threats against the status quo—a status quo which had elevated the Democrats to power. One picket banner was particularly damning. The banner read:

We the Women of America tell you that America is not a democracy. Twenty million American women are denied the right to vote. President Wilson is the chief opponent of their national enfranchisement.¹³⁶

Speaking against Wilson had seen its final days. Violence and police arrests escalated. The women had been picketing for long enough. They were instructed to “stop it.”¹³⁷ If they did not comply, they were warned of being “arrested if [they] attempted to picket again.”¹³⁸ These suffragists were not silenced by this threat, however. Consequently, the arrests continued to escalate.

The pickets continued for the remainder of 1916 and pushed on into 1917 (when the NWP was finally consolidated), just as the United States was preparing to enter the World War. Going into the war, Wilson had argued “We shall fight for the things we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy—for the right of those who

¹³⁶ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 92.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 93.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 94.

submit to authority to have a voice in the own Government.”¹³⁹ Paul and the NWP argued, however, that the same could not be said about citizens in America.

With Alice Paul and the NWP continuing their protests undaunted by police harassment, Wilson turned to censorship. Wilson’s secretary sent the following instructions to the *New York Times*:

Please have nothing about the picketers or what they do in prison or anything else on the front page of the newspaper. Tell the news in two sticks, not farther forward than the fourth page until further notice, no matter what happens or what they do, and a small head over two sticks, *never* a display head.¹⁴⁰

This wartime censorship thus “had assumed a new and unconstitutional function...of censoring material critical to the Wilson administration but not critical to the war effort.”¹⁴¹

The Final Straw

The government was ultimately engaged in two battles, one abroad and one on domestic soil. At the October 1917 “War Congress,” all war measures were voted on and approved. Suffrage, however, was nowhere on the agenda. Earlier, on July 4, 1917, thirteen picketers were arrested outside the White House for carrying signs that said: “Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.”¹⁴² They went to jail for silently protesting. This perplexed them, as they had broken no laws. They argued, “Persecution has always advanced the cause of justice...Our work for the passage of the amendment must go on. It *will* go on.”¹⁴³ The methods of the government to stop these suffragists became “physically more brutal, politically more stupid, and lawless in

¹³⁹ Wilson, Woodrow, “Declaration to War Congress,” 1917, accessed January 13, 2011 http://wadsworth.com/history_d/special_features/ilrn_legacy/wawc2c01c/content/wciv2/readings/wilson1.html.

¹⁴⁰ Arthur Bisbane to Joseph Tumulty, 9 November 1917, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Library of Congress

¹⁴¹ Graham, “Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Women’s Suffrage Movement,” 673.

¹⁴² Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 96.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 102.

the extreme.”¹⁴⁴ As the pickets continued, the violence and police brutality increased. There were seventy women in jail at the beginning of October 1917. Alice Paul, the fighter that she was, decided she too must be arrested and jailed to prove the severity of the suffrage issue and join her fellow revolutionaries. She joined and remained on the picket line until she was arrested.

The NAWSA and Catt did not remain silent during the NWP’s pickets. In an open letter to the public, Catt displayed the NAWSA’s disapproval of the White House pickets and advocated that the public disregard these radical and “unpatriotic” actions:

The National American Woman Suffrage Association points out that with its membership of two million women representative of all the states, it is the essential agent to be reckoned with; that its work has always been constructive, law-abiding and non-partisan; that every grant of suffrage to the women of this country has been the result of its labors; that its efforts to secure a Federal Suffrage Amendment have never flagged.¹⁴⁵

The NWP was relentless, however. By late October 1917, Paul urged women to ask for political prisoner status. Paul wanted to make sure that the public knew that these women were arrested for “opposing their government and that the women were being denied basic right of citizenry, including the freedom of speech.”¹⁴⁶

Paul’s advocacy of non-violent civil disobedience led to a new tactic for the suffragists while in prison: hunger strikes. “Her own sacrifice could thus constitute a powerful form of nonviolent persuasion and pressure because no warden wanted to be responsible for the severe illness or death of this well-known leader.”¹⁴⁷ Although Alice Paul was ready to sacrifice her body for her cause, the government had an answer: force-

¹⁴⁴ Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman’s Party 1912-1920*, 87.

¹⁴⁵ Carrie Chapman Catt, “Open Letter to the Public” July 13, 1917. NWP Papers: Group 1, the Suffrage Years. Reel 45, accessed April 2, 2011, http://www.oocities.org/emilyc_25/cunwp_split.html.

¹⁴⁶ Adams and Keene, *Alice Paul and the American Suffrage Campaign*, 196.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 201.

feeding. As Lucy Burns' diary states, "It hurts nose and throat very much and makes nose bleed freely. Tube drawn out covered with blood. Operation leaves one very sick. Food dumped directly into stomach feels like a ball of lead."¹⁴⁸

As Stevens describes, the situation was dire:

Never was there a sentence like ours for such an offense as ours, even in England. No woman ever got it over there even for tearing down buildings. And during all the agitation we were busy saying that never would such things happen in the United States. The men told us they would not endure such frightfulness.¹⁴⁹

Women were sacrificing themselves and their bodies for suffrage. Alice Paul's personal situation, however, took an even more dramatic turn as she was held in isolation and eventually transported to a mental ward. This only increased pressure on the U.S. government, as activists fought long and hard for their steadfast leader. The actions of the NWP resulted in far more radical and violent tactics by government officials. Mass picketing resulted in one of the largest group arrests to date. The "Night of Terror," as referred to by the women, followed these arrests. Thirty-three women who were arrested during the NWP's picketing were brutally beaten and assaulted by national guards and soldiers. "All the arrested suffrage militants regarded themselves as political prisoners of the Wilson Administration, and were quite willing to undergo whatever was necessary to have prison and government authorities recognize them as such."¹⁵⁰ Women continued to be arrested and force-fed every day. Wilson, however, remained silent.

The free women of the NWP continued to picket, adding to their protests public disclosure of the deplorable living conditions of their imprisoned fellow suffragists. These free suffragists began a speaking tour, "A Prison Special." They dressed in prison

¹⁴⁸ Stevens and O'Hare, *Jailed for Freedom: American Women Win the Vote*, 125.

¹⁴⁹ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 190.

¹⁵⁰ Wheeler, *One Woman, One Vote*, 286.

uniforms and spoke out against what was occurring, at the hands of the government of the United States. These suffragists also encouraged American citizens to write letters to Wilson in support of the fair treatment and release of the suffragists.

Given the unrelenting and critical publicity on the Wilson administration, Democrats in Wilson's administration began to side with the suffragists. "The treasurer of the Wilson Independent League protested to Wilson that:

'It is absolutely essential that the American people be united at this time. But unity is not to be obtained by dragging women to filthy jails for the crime of bearing banners upon which are inscribed the words from the president's lips!'"¹⁵¹

By the end of November 1917, the sheer number of jailed women, the funds necessary to keep them locked up, and the negative publicity proved to be too much pressure and embarrassment on both Wilson and his government. A court ruling suggesting, "you ought lawfully lock them up instead of unlawfully locking them up,"¹⁵² exposed the unwarranted and biased actions of the government. Although appeals were filed, public opinion prescribed action. All prisoners were released by November 28th, 1917. Alice Paul said as she left prison that,

We hope that no more demonstrations will be necessary, that the amendment will move steadily on to passage and ratification without further suffering or sacrifice. But what we do depends entirely upon what the Administration does. We have one aim: the immediate passage of the federal amendment.¹⁵³

Alice Paul received a visit prior to her prison release that significantly altered, for a time, her actions once released. In late November 1917, Paul received a visit from David Lawrence, a journalist with connections to the Wilson Administration.¹⁵⁴ He "reportedly asked Paul if she would agree to abandon the picketing in exchange for a guarantee from

¹⁵¹ Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Women's Suffrage Movement," 676.

¹⁵² Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 239.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 241.

¹⁵⁴ Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Women's Suffrage Movement," 677.

the administration that the suffrage amendment would pass through Congress by 1919.”¹⁵⁵ Paul’s statements, once released from jail, showed her support of this offer. Pickets stopped for a couple months, but resumed when it seemed Congressional efforts stalled.

The NAWSA Responds

Once the NWP women were released from prison, President Wilson and the government could no longer remain silent. They knew the threat these women possessed to the government’s legitimacy and power. The NWP’s radical tactics posed a threat that Wilson could not afford to ignore. The NAWSA realized this and rode its wave.

Catt increased her effort in response to opposition to the NWP. She knew with a little more work, suffrage would be passed. Alice Paul, and her reliance on non-violent civil disobedience, legitimized the political processes of the NAWSA. Carrie Chapman Catt remained supportive of Wilson. She continued to give speeches before Congress, advocating through words, the importance of women’s suffrage:

Do you realize that in no other country in the world with democratic tendencies is suffrage so completely denied as in a considerable number of our own states? There are thirteen black states where no suffrage for women exists, and fourteen others where suffrage for women is more limited than in many foreign countries.

Do you realize that when you ask women to take their cause to state referendum you compel them to do this: that you drive women of education, refinement, achievement, to beg men who cannot read for their political freedom?

Do you realize that such anomalies as a college president asking her janitor to give her a vote are overstraining the patience and driving women to desperation?

¹⁵⁵ Graham, “Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Women’s Suffrage Movement,” 678.

Do you realize that women in increasing numbers indignantly resent the long delay in their enfranchisement?...

Woman suffrage is coming--you know it. Will you, Honorable Senators and Members of the House of Representatives, help or hinder it?¹⁵⁶

The *New York Times* published a letter from Woodrow Wilson to Carrie Chapman Catt proving the support and alliance between the government and the NAWSA.

My dear Mrs. Catt,

May I not express to you my very deep interest in the campaign in New York for the adoption of woman suffrage, and may I not say that I hope that no voter will be influenced in his decision with regard to this great matter by anything the so-called pickets have done here in Washington? However justly they may have laid themselves open to serious criticism, their action represents, I am sure, so small a faction of the women of this country who are urging the adoption of woman suffrage that it would be most unfair and argue a narrow view to allow their actions to prejudice the cause itself. I am very anxious to see the great state of New York set a great example in this matter.

Cordially and sincerely yours,
Woodrow Wilson.¹⁵⁷

Catt's moderate messages and support appealed to Wilson and the government as they signified moderate change as well as provided Wilson with maximal legitimacy in advocating for the federal adoption of women's suffrage:

The magnificent way in which women had met the demands of war, their patriotic service, their loyalty to the Government, had swept away the old-time objections to their enfranchisement and fully established their right to full equality in all the privileges of citizenship.¹⁵⁸

The Woman Suffrage Committee had been established in September 1917 in the House of Representatives. Wilson would soon turn to supporting a federal amendment.

¹⁵⁶ CCC to Congress, "Woman Suffrage is Inevitable," 1917. Carrie Chapman Catt, 1859-1947. Papers in the Woman's Rights Collection.

¹⁵⁷ "Wilson Writes of Pickets: In a Letter to Mrs. Catt He Hopes They Won't Hurt Cause." *The New York Times*, October 17, 1917.

¹⁵⁸ Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage*, 551.

In addition to speeches before Congress, the NAWSA held press conferences, made posters and used the newspaper to get people to sign petitions for women's suffrage. They focused their attention on New York, a prime state to support women's suffrage. They held a suffrage parade, the last of their cause, on October 27, 1917. Woodrow Wilson supported the work of the NAWSA in the NY campaign for suffrage stating:

I think the whole country has appreciated the way in which the women have risen to his great occasion...I am very glad to add my voice to show which are urging the people of the great State of New York to set a great example by voting for woman suffrage...¹⁵⁹

By the November 6th elections in New York, it looked like suffrage would win in every part of the state. Finally, Catt could taste victory in New York after over a decade of fighting. She was right. By the end of 1917, suffrage passed in North Dakota, New York and Oklahoma. Woodrow Wilson wrote to Carrie Chapman Catt on January 25, 1918:

As you know, I have a very real interest in the extension of suffrage to the women, and I feel every step in this direction should be applauded.¹⁶⁰

The victory in New York was crucial for the passage of a national amendment. As Carrie Chapman Catt stated, "political leaders pronounced the suffrage victory in the Empire State a political miracle. The bosses from ocean to ocean 'listened in,' and recognized the coming of woman suffrage."¹⁶¹ Theodore Roosevelt, of the Republican National Committee wrote a letter to William R. Willcox, chairman of the Committee, in favor of universal women's suffrage, sighting the victory in New York and the work of the NAWSA.

¹⁵⁹ Ray S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters*, vol. 6, 324.

¹⁶⁰ Scott and Scott, *One Half the People*, 152.

¹⁶¹ Catt and Schuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 299.

I earnestly hope that the Republican Party as such will do everything possible to get all its representatives in Congress to vote in favor of the constitutional amendment giving women suffrage. This is no longer an academic question. The addition of New York to the suffrage column, I think, entitles us to say that as a matter of both justice and of common sense the nation should no longer delay to give women suffrage...¹⁶²

Wilson also agreed. On January 9, 1918, President Wilson publicly endorsed national women's suffrage as a "war measure." As evidence by the *New York Times*, however, his support for suffrage did not come out of respect or loyalty to the NWP. As Wilson's letter to Carrie Chapman Catt demonstrates, he publically endorsed suffrage, notwithstanding the actions and pressure from the NWP: "Their action represents, I am sure, so small a fraction of women of the country who are urging the adoption of woman suffrage that it would be most unfair and argue a narrow view to allow their actions to prejudice the cause itself."¹⁶³

The House was scheduled to vote on the women's suffrage bill on January 10, 1918. Catt and the NAWSA "learned Congress through and through. Its way of work, its machinery; its tricks; the men in it, their pet foibles, their fundamental weakness, their finer abilities, their human qualities."¹⁶⁴ Catt and the NAWSA's homework paid off. The amendment passed in the House (274 ayes to 136 nays).

Full attention, from both the NWP and the NAWSA was now on the Senate. During this time, it was crucial for them to "convert as much of the press as possible, so that it makes the cause its own, and as for the rest, to give it such compelling news that not even a European war or an attempted boycott by the government will keep it off the front pages."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² *New York Times*, January 4, 1918.

¹⁶³ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 183.

¹⁶⁴ Catt and Schuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 316.

¹⁶⁵ Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman's Party 1912-1920*, 227.

In September 1918 Paul and her suffragists continued their use of non-violent, yet confrontational tactics. On September 16, they remained at their post outside the White House, but this time they were armed with Wilson's words. They physically burned papers containing parts of Wilson's "war for democracy"¹⁶⁶ speeches. As the *New York Times* reported, "The President's words were burned because they were not regarded by the militants as holding out definite assurance of action by the Senate on the pending Federal Woman Suffragists amendment."¹⁶⁷ To the NWP suffragists the President spoke words without truth or action to back them up. Although Wilson was quoted saying "I have endeavored to assist you in every way in my power, and I shall continue to do so,"¹⁶⁸ this was not enough for the suffragists. They burned his words to "symbolize the burning indignation of women who for a hundred years have been given words without action."¹⁶⁹ Their non-violent actions and protests of the preceding years had taken a dramatic turn.

Catt, on the other hand, remained steadfast to her dedication to Wilson and the U.S. war effort. She wrote to Wilson on September 29, 1918, stating, "Our country is asking women to give their all, and upon their voluntary and free offering may depend the outcome of the war."¹⁷⁰ In response, Wilson relayed this message and his views on women's suffrage to the Senate on September 30, 1918:

I regard the concurrence of the Senate in the constitutional amendment proposing the extension of the suffrage to women as vitally essential to the successful prosecution of the great war of humanity in which we are engaged. I have come to urge upon you the considerations which have led me to that

¹⁶⁶ Adams and Keene, *Alice Paul and the American Suffrage Campaign*, 224.

¹⁶⁷ "Suffragists Burn President's Words," *New York Times*, September 17, 1918.

¹⁶⁸ Baker, *Woodrow Wilson Life and Letters*, 404.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ CCC to Woodrow Wilson, September 29, 1918. Carrie Chapman Catt, 1859-1947. Papers in the Woman's Rights Collection.

conclusion. It is not only my privilege, it is also my duty to apprise you of every circumstance and element involved in this momentous struggle which seem to me to affect its very process and its outcome. It is my duty to win the war and to ask you to remove every obstacle that stands in the way of winning it.

...They (the people of Europe) are looking to the great, powerful, famous democracy of the West to lead them to the new day for which they have so long waited; and they think, in their logical simplicity, that democracy means that women shall play their part in affairs alongside men and upon an equal footing with them. If we reject measures like this in ignorance or defiance of what a new age has brought forth, of what they have seen, but, we have not, they will cease to believe in us; they will cease to follow or to trust us...

We have made partners of the women during this war... This war could not have been fought, either by other nations engaged or by America, if it had not been for the services of women- services rendered in every sphere...¹⁷¹

Notwithstanding Wilson's message, the suffrage proposal on September 30, 1918 fell two votes short of Senate passage. Although Wilson had pledged his support of women's suffrage, it proved insufficient. Filibuster after filibuster delayed the vote on suffrage. Neither Alice Paul, nor the conservative NAWSA gained recognition or success.

As these primary documents demonstrate, Wilson and the NAWSA were in constant communication and contact during this time. On the other hand, direct communication between Alice Paul and Woodrow Wilson was minimal at best. The lack of direct and indirect communication furthers my claim that Wilson, convinced that the Alice Paul threatened his own legitimacy and power, did not associate or communicate with her or the NWP. He chose to work with the NAWSA, as they posited minimal harm and maximal legitimacy.

¹⁷¹ Wilson to the Senate, September 30, 1918, accessed February 3, 2011, http://www.public.iastate.edu/~aslagell/SpCm416/Woodrow_Wilson_suff.html

World War One Ends

Wilson continued to advocate for women's suffrage because of his support of the NAWSA's patriotic mission and its dedication to the war efforts. In a speech to the Senate in December 1918, Wilson spoke on behalf of the NAWSA, stating that these women "added a new luster to the annals of American womanhood."¹⁷² "The least tribute we can pay them," he argued, "is to make them the equal of men in political rights, as they have proved themselves their equals in every field of practice work they had entered, whether for themselves or for their country."¹⁷³ The time had come. The pressure from the NWP coupled equally by the moderate and supportive faction of the NAWSA had finally paid off.

World War One aided the women's suffrage movement. Although women had been struggling to gain rights and acceptance for over fifty years, the suffrage movement was only finally propelled to the national stage during the First World War. The schism between the moderate and radical factions, and the threats/benefits posed by each, was clearly visibly during this period. The NAWSA's demand for suffrage was cloaked in their unfailing support of Wilson and the war effort while the NWP held the Wilson government responsible for the oppression of women and thus vehemently opposed/challenged its very existence. The threat that the NWP posed to the legitimacy of the U.S. government provided the necessary catalyst for the U.S. government's selective engagement with the moderate faction of the movement, and, most importantly, the resulting U.S. government's support of women's suffrage.

¹⁷² Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 299.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

Success

Wilson called a special session of Congress on May 19, 1919. The House passed the measure by a vote of 304-89.¹⁷⁴ As suffragist Doris Stevens described

Immediately the Democratic National Committee passed a resolution calling on the legislative session where necessary, to ratify the amendment as soon as it was through Congress, in order to “enable the women to vote in the national elections of 1920.”¹⁷⁵

On June 4, 1919, the Senate approved national women’s suffrage in a 66-30 roll call vote. Victory belonged to women.

And so the assertion that “the rights of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex” introduced into Congress by the efforts of Susan B. Anthony in 1878, was finally submitted to the states for ratification.¹⁷⁶

After 71 years, women finally had a voice and a vote. The women’s suffrage movement succeeded.

In this chapter I have suggested that victory was not due to the unrelenting patriotism of either Paul or Catt, or a result of their shared pursuit for democracy for all citizens. Rather, victory was born from a schism that separated Paul and Catt. This schism resulted in selective engagement by the government of the United States with the moderate faction (the NAWSA). In the concluding chapter, I will explore this movement dynamic and its implication for the future study of social movements.

¹⁷⁴ Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 341.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 342.

Chapter Four: Power in Schism

In 1923, Alice Paul described the women's movement as "a sort of mosaic."¹⁷⁷ The suffrage movement is both one piece of this overall larger mosaic as well as a mosaic within itself. The work of various organizations is responsible for its success. Although unified by a common objective, the various organizations within the suffrage movement were fiercely divided over the appropriate means to ensure success. The women's suffrage movement succeeded despite this factionalization. Traditional social movement scholarship predicts that movements defined by factionalization will fail. In my thesis, however, I have suggested that factionalized movements can be empowered by schism both in accomplishing its defined "end" as well as tackling new challenges.

As such, I have asked the following question: how and why can a social movement succeed in spite of schism? The women's suffrage movement, through its prolonged 70-year fight, provides answers to this key question in social movement theory. The goal of my thesis was to analyze the success of the women's suffrage movement through schism.

As I reviewed in Chapter One, a strong and united social movement is generally thought to succeed over one that is divided. Theorists rely on the principle of solidarity for defining the strength and success of a social movement. Fantasia argues that movements develop solidarity over time in terms of changing social and cultural norms.¹⁷⁸ As demonstrated by the history of the women's suffrage movement, solidarity did develop over time in response to changing social norms and cultures. At the turn of the 20th century, the movement was united and focused on passing women's suffrage in

¹⁷⁷ Sewall and Belmont Museum, accessed April 1, 2011, http://www.sewallbelmont.org/mainpages/supportus_donate.html

¹⁷⁸ Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity*.

the individual states. As my research suggests, however, this period of solidarity did not lead to the movement's success. Strength and success came in the last phase of the movement, achieved thanks to schism and selective engagement.

I also discussed in Chapter One the cyclical nature of social movements as described by Christopher Ansell. Social movements traverse periods of both solidarity and schism. Ansell determines that schisms can be overcome with solidarity through communal closure and subsequently, what he terms balanced dualism. He determines that a social movement may fragment when participation and enthusiasm are low. Often, a movement fragments into separate divisions with different objectives and tactics. As one division moves towards communal closure, limiting access to membership, the other may experience balanced dualism to counter this closure. The latter division often reaches out to an external group to strengthen relationships and validate its identity.

The women's suffrage movement follows parts of this dynamic. In my case study, the division was, however, permanent. It resulted in both a moderate and a radical faction. Carrie Chapman Catt reached out to the then U.S. government leadership to further the legitimacy of the NAWSA's role and objectives, while Alice Paul attacked Wilson and his government. The radical faction, the NWP, is clearly defined by communal closure. Alice Paul organized her group around commitment to a single cause and limited and controlled enrollment and membership. Subsequently, the NAWSA consolidated their principles and embraced a diverse group of suffragists, responding with balanced dualism.

This is where Ansell's analysis ends, however. I have furthered his argument by analyzing the outcome of the schism. The result of the schism was selective engagement

by the government of the United States. As Gupta concludes, governments pick and choose between groups when there is a radical/moderate division. With the women's suffrage movement, the selective engagement by the government with the moderate NAWSA, the group that posited minimal harm and maximum legitimacy to the Wilson government's legacy, was crucial in the success of the movement overall.

Both Catt and Paul were fiercely patriotic to the concept of democracy and the ideals upon which the United States was founded: liberty and equality for all. They differed, however, in the approach used to gain suffrage for women. Paul lashed out against the current government and its leaders. Catt promised unfailing support not only in the concept of complete democracy at home for all US citizens, but also support for President's Wilson's leadership at home and abroad. As I have argued, this tactical schism propelled the movement to success.

Borrowing Lee Ann Banaszak's language, why then do movements succeed or fail? Banaszak argues that the women's suffrage movement in the United States succeeded because of a single-suffrage community whole-heartedly devoted to its cause. Her argument suggests that because of collective values and beliefs, the United States enfranchised women much earlier than Switzerland.¹⁷⁹ I have argued that the collective values and beliefs Banaszak identifies as strengths and factors of success were not the deciding factors in the successful pursuit of American suffrage. Banaszak claims, "without a movement community and intense social interaction among activists, a social movement will remain divided, impeding the flow of information and reducing its capacity for effective innovation and action."¹⁸⁰ In addition, she emphasizes collective

¹⁷⁹ Banaszak, *Why Movements Succeed or Fail*, 215.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 223.

identity in the success of the suffrage movement in the United States. This framework proposes that the NAWSA was the only important suffrage organization and community. Banaszak argues that the NAWSA was responsible for the success of the suffrage movement with its collective beliefs and tight-knit suffrage community.

My research and conclusion suggest an alternative explanation. Both the NAWSA and the NWP were instrumental in the success of the suffrage movement. A tight-knit suffrage community did not exist in the latter part of the movement. Collective actions and beliefs existed in each organization, but there was not a united movement. Thus Banaszak's argument that solidarity and a single suffrage community were instrumental in the passage of the 19th amendment is incorrect. As evidenced by the fact that before 1913, when the movement was united, suffrage remained elusive.

As discussed previously, intra-movement divisions between radical and moderate actors can be categorized by the Radical Flank Effect (RFE). Movements divide because of internal disagreement over tactics, pace of change, or legitimacy of goals and motives. As I have shown, the women's suffrage movement in the United States divided in two instances. The first division occurred in 1864 over support for the 15th Amendment for universal African American suffrage. Reconciled in 1894, the movement persisted in supporting women's suffrage on a state level. This reconciliation did not last long, however, as radical tactics from the English suffrage movement soon appeared on U.S. soil. The NAWSA and the NWP, although divided on movement tactics, still remained committed, individually, to the goal of universal women's suffrage. This, as deemed by Gupta, constitutes the social movement concept of the Radical Flank Effect (RFE).

Gupta states that the RFE is most often used to “describe situations in which radical groups pose a threat to the interest of the state or to other external actors by pursuing those goals using transgressive (often violent) methods.”¹⁸¹ As illustrated in Chapters Two and Three, the NWP demonstrated methods that intimidated the government. Their pickets, parades, hunger strikes and political prisoner status were tactics that threatened the power and legitimacy of the government.

When movements divide along these terms, governments will choose to engage with the faction that posits both minimal harm and maximum legitimacy. This is what occurred in the latter part of the women’s suffrage movement. Woodrow Wilson and the government of the United States were faced with two factions advocating the same goal. Given the current domestic and foreign political climate surrounding World War One, the government could not afford to lose legitimacy or support from the majority of American citizens by denying democracy on its domestic shores while advocating democracy abroad. Thus, as Woodrow Wilson’s papers and the press from *the New York Times* demonstrate, Wilson allied himself with Carrie Chapman Catt and the NAWSA in support of women’s suffrage. Wilson urged Congress and the American people to support the federal amendment for women’s suffrage. The NAWSA and Carrie Chapman Catt advocated a platform for suffrage that posited minimal harm to Wilson. In addition, the moderate tactics to achieve women’s suffrage provided Wilson and the government with a legitimate ally, both in domestic and foreign politics.

Gupta asserts that there are multiple outcomes for moderate/radical schisms. When short-term goals (passing the 19th Amendment) are the same, a RFE can strengthen

¹⁸¹ Gupta, “The Radical Flank Effect: The Effect of Radical-Moderate Splits in Regional Nationalist Movements,” 5.

the overall movement and both groups.¹⁸² Both groups got what they wanted; the 19th Amendment is now and forever part of the Constitution of the United States. Without both factions, it is difficult to argue that the Amendment would have passed when it did. The RFE and subsequent selective engagement positively strengthened the movement and both the moderate and radical flanks.

Movements succeed, then, for multiple reasons. In this case, I have demonstrated how a social movement can succeed through schism. The RFE, leadership and selective engagement employed in the framework of a schismatic movement benefit both factions and can strengthen the movement overall. Solidarity is, therefore, not the sole determinant of success.

Implications for Social Movement Scholarship

I am applying a relatively new social movement theory (RFE) to an old social movement. This course of action allows me to explore an aspect of the movement that has been overlooked: the link between schism and success. My work and evidence prove that this aspect was crucial to the success of the women's suffrage movement in the United States. Additionally, the role of leadership and selective engagement cannot be overlooked when analyzing social movements defined by periods of schism. My research furthers the review of these frameworks in social movement scholarship.

When looking at how and why movements succeed or fail, it is not enough to argue that a lack of solidarity always results in failure. Schism, as I have shown, can be a key to success. The success of the United States suffrage movement is linked to the different organizations that emerged in the 20th century, their leadership, as well as the

¹⁸² Gupta, "The Radical Flank Effect: The Effect of Radical-Moderate Splits in Regional Nationalist Movements," 7.

selective engagement by the government. Radical Flank Effects can no longer be overlooked when outlining the success of a social movement. My work advocates for scholars to study the link between schism and success. I have provided one chain in this link. In Alice Paul's words, "Each of us puts in one little stone, and then you get a great mosaic at the end."¹⁸³ Here is one more stone: Social movements can succeed through schism.

¹⁸³ Sewall and Belmont Museum, accessed April 1, 2011, http://www.sewallbelmont.org/mainpages/supportus_donate.html.

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