MESSAGES OF EXCLUSION
Gender, Movements, and Symbolic Boundaries

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This article examines two disputes within sex and gender movements, using them to think through inclusion/exclusion processes, the place of such explosions in the construction of collective identity, and the gendered nature of social movements. Literatures on collective identity emphasize the ways boundary negotiation reinforces the solidarity necessary for collective action and note benefits of solid boundaries, yet downplay the role of internal conflict in the making of collective identities. The cases examined here both involved the explicit expulsion of some "members": the North American Man/Boy Love Association from the International Lesbian and Gay Association, and transsexuals from the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. An incongruence between practical participation and symbolic exclusion suggests that internal movement debates are best understood as public communications, depending heavily on the communicative environment. Finally, these stories raise questions about the gendered nature of collective identity construction in social movements more generally.

Begin with two strange, apparently unrelated moments of conflict in sex and gender movement histories.

CNN's *Larry King Live* was blaring on television. "You won't believe who's won the right to advise the United Nations," the announcer crowed to his audience. "A gay-rights alliance with UN standing that includes groups that advocate sex with children. The debate starts here, live," he promised (*Larry King Live* 1993). Within the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), granted consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council earlier in 1993, the debate had

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already exploded. Within a year, the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) was expelled from ILGA. "NAMBLA is not a gay organization," said Gregory King of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, the largest U.S. gay and lesbian lobbying group, in support of the ouster. "They are not part of our community and we thoroughly reject their efforts to insinuate that pedophilia is an issue related to gay and lesbian civil rights" (in Tsang 1994b, 15). His statement, echoed elsewhere throughout the debate, sidesteps a fact no one disputed: NAMBLA had been a member of the ILGA for a decade. An old stasis was demolished: NAMBLA's practical if awkward inclusion, now public, was undermined as it threatened the existing symbolic boundaries of the *gay and lesbian* collective.

Around the same time, the 19th Annual Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (MWMF) was in full swing, and several attendees were meeting with the festival's communications coordinators. Having set themselves up outside the gates under the banner "Camp Trans: For Humyn-Born Humyns," they were lodging their protest of a policy limiting attendance at the festival to "womyn-born womyn." Writer Leslie Feinberg introduced herself as a person born anatomically female but "who passes and lives as a man and has a driver's license showing her sex as male." Would she be allowed entry under the policy? Kodi Hendrix self-identified as a person born with both male and female genitalia asked, "Will only half of me be allowed in?" James Green, a female-to-male transsexual activist, asked if "he would be considered a woman by the festival owners using the same logic by which they consider male-to-female transsexuals to be men even after sex-change surgery" (Camp Trans 1994). Eventually, although no change was made in the policy under which transsexuals had been ejected in the past, transsexual protesters entered the festival grounds without resistance. In a mirror of the ILGA/NAMBLA dispute, a new equilibrium had been reached, at least temporarily: Transsexual women remained excluded from the lesbian feminist collective, even as they gained entry.

Political battles like these within movements, many of them ending in similar expulsions, are nothing new. (Consider, for example, the factionalization in the early years of the contemporary women's movement [Buechler 1990; Echols 1989; Ryan 1989, 1992].) Nor are these kinds of disputes, at least on the face of it, terribly difficult to understand. Scholars now routinely note that social movements depend on the active, ongoing construction of collective identity, and that deciding who *we* are requires deciding who we are not (Phelan 1993; Taylor and Whittier 1992). All social movements, and identity movements in particular, are thus in the business, at least sometimes, of exclusion.[1] Their reasons, in addition to the general advantages of group solidarity, are good ones at both strategic and expressive levels. In political systems that distribute rights and resources to groups with discernible boundaries, activists are smart to be vigilant about those boundaries; in cultural systems that devalue so many identities, a movement with clarity about who belongs can better provide its designated members with the strength and pride to revalue their identities.

Maintenance of group boundaries involves movements in bitter disputes not only with those everyone agrees is not a member (that is, with antagonists) but also

in often uglier conflicts with those who might reasonably be considered members or protagonists. The *us* is solidified not just against an external *them* but also against *thems* inside, as particular subgroups battle to gain or retain legitimate *us* standing. Yet, despite a renewed interest in the cultural dynamics of social movements (Johnston and Klandermans 1995), these internal contests are still only rarely analyzed as movement phenomena in their own rights, and for what they reveal about collective identity construction (Cohen 1996; Gamson 1995). For scholars of gender, moreover, these movement processes are especially significant: The construction of a collective gender identity is in part a movement outcome (Taylor 1996; Taylor and Whittier 1992).

In this article, I take a closer look at two internal movement disputes to shed a brighter light on inclusion/exclusion processes and their place in the construction of collective identity. I first review some of the perspectives already circulating, emerging from literatures on collective identity, which emphasize the ways *boundary negotiation* reinforces the solidarity necessary for collective action, and note the benefits of solid boundaries. Then, drawing on extensive primary documents from the two debates, I develop and revise those perspectives, arguing for greater attention both to communication contexts and to the gendered aspects of movement identity building.

The cases examined here, which both involved the explicit expulsion of some members, emerged in sex and gender movements in the early 1990s: over the involvement of the NAMBLA in the organizing of the ILGA, and over the participation of transsexuals in the MWMF. The ILGA and MWMF cases provide important evidence that dynamics of exclusion depend only partially on the expressive and instrumental needs for group solidarity. In both cases, significantly, it is not the *participation* of particular people (boy lovers, transsexuals) that is threatening. In fact, NAMBLA members were active in the international lesbian and gay organization long before they were excluded, and transsexuals were quietly allowed into the women's music festival just after they were officially expelled. This gap between practice and public discourse suggests that internal movement debates over inclusion and exclusion are best understood as *public communications*. They depend heavily on the communicative environment, I will argue, especially the location and nature of the primary *audience*.[2]

Practical participation in the collective, in each case, coexisted—often uncomfortably, but coexisted just the same—with public silence about that participation for a period. That stasis was disrupted, however, when interested parties called public attention to the collective's symbolic boundaries; those boundaries were then renegotiated publicly, with groups fighting to define true membership. These public definitions, and redefinitions, may or may not change the ways participation happens. The cases examined amount to different versions of the same process: In one, the challenge came from outside (as right-wing political organizations attempted to publicly undermine gay and lesbian boundaries), and the communication was primarily geared toward a broad American public; and in the other, the challenge

came from within (as transsexuals publicly disputed *lesbian feminist* boundaries), and the public communication was primarily between members. In each case, the *we* of collective identity shifted through a similar and revealing process, shaped primarily by the communication environment.

This analysis triggers further questions, taken up in the conclusion, about the gendered nature of these collective identity processes: Are these dynamics somehow unique to gender and sexuality movements, or are movement dynamics gendered in some more general, discernible ways? Drawing on the model of gendered institutions and organizations (Acker 1990; Gordon 1990; Lorber 1994), and especially on the call to come to terms with the gendered nature of social movements (Taylor 1996), I return to the ILGA and MWMF cases to suggest that gendered communication environments are central to understanding collective identity construction not only in sex and gender movements but also in social movements more generally. The cases of explicit expulsion of group members in sex and gender movements, in the end, put the spotlight on the issue of whether and how "all social movements—regardless of whether they are focused on issues pertaining specifically to women and irrespective of their gender composition—are engaged in the social construction of gender" (Taylor 1996, 166).

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY, EXCLUSION, AND SOLIDARITY

Among the ways in which collective identities are created and maintained, clarifying boundaries of membership is plainly central. Put simply, identity requires difference; building collective identities requires not simply pointing out commonalities but also marking off who we are not (Phelan 1993; Spelman 1988).[3] The "achievement" of collective identity is inevitably tied to some degree of boundary patrol. Clear membership boundaries are, moreover, useful for mobilization (one knows who is a potential participant and who is not), for collective grievances (one knows for whom a claim is being made), and for group solidarity (one knows to whom one is tied).

Although there are important exceptions, especially from those writing about women's movement factionalization, for the most part scholars have pointed to the relationship between movement actors and those explicitly opposed to them as the site of boundary negotiation.[4] Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier, for instance, in building their important analytical framework for understanding collective identity construction, point to "the social, psychological and physical structures that establish *differences between a challenging group and dominant groups*" (1992, 111, emphasis added; see also Gerson and Peiss 1985). The conflict among the challengers is here underplayed, in favor of that between challenger and dominator. In a related effort, Scott Hunt, Robert Benford, and David Snow (1994) emphasize the ways collective identity construction is linked to the framing of issues by social movements. In their analysis, movements construct three sets of identities: protago-

nists (sympathizers, beneficiaries, advocates), antagonists (opposition actors), and audiences (neutral or uncommitted observers). In the course of making claims about "countermovements, countermovement organizations, hostile institutions, inimical publics, and social control agents," movements establish "antagonist identity fields" (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994, 197).

Certainly, this is the case. Movement actors solidify their boundaries by defining themselves against those they agree are enemies. Yet, while Hunt, Benford, and Snow (1994) note the elasticity and overlap between these identity categories, this fluidity remains overlooked. As in Taylor and Whittier's (1992) analysis, the process by which a collective defines its identity against those claiming to already be members is overshadowed. That process of *contested membership* and *indigenous policing* (Cohen 1996), that muddle in which members fight for the title of protagonist, is crucial for understanding collective identity. Indeed, it is the fact that movements often fight internally over who is the antagonist, and that audiences are sometimes committed antagonists or protagonists, that needs careful attention. And as Cathy Cohen has shown in her discussion of Black gay identities and AIDS politics, there is much at stake in these fights, since "contestation of identity has tangible effects, influencing the distribution of resources, services, access, and legitimacy within communities" (1996, 6).

Looking closely at debates over expulsion or inclusion, then, takes us a step further toward clarifying the dynamics of collective identity construction. Direct exclusion is not the only way such boundaries are drawn. Many forms of exclusion are more coded or less visible (Cohen 1996). Some white-dominated gay bars, for instance, exclude African American patrons by requiring three forms of identification; more broadly, many have pointed out that much "universal" women's organizing excludes by making assumptions reflecting white, heterosexual, middle-class women's experience (Ryan 1992; Spelman 1988). Looking at cases, as I do here, in which exclusion is not just uncoded but loud and clear, highlights the process by which in-groups become out-groups, and vice versa.

METHOD

These cases have the further advantage of leaving large paper trails. Methodologically, I pursued those trails, and the analysis presented here is based on a review of reporting about and writings from the debates, including articles from and letters to lesbian, gay, and feminist publications, transcripts of government hearings, and documents produced by the various organizations involved (press releases, letters, memoranda, and so forth). Searches were conducted, first of all, through major archives of lesbian and gay publications and documents: the Cornell University Human Sexuality Collection, the Harvey Milk Branch of the San Francisco Public Library, and the Archive of Lesbian and Gay History at New York's Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center. Second, documents were

provided by organizational sources: NAMBLA and ILGA organizers both provided extensive documents, as did a member of Transsexual Menace; the *Washington Blade* provided all of its coverage of the disputes, as well.[5] All in all, the data comprise 160 primary documents from the two disputes, supplemented by numerous documents from related debates in other locations.

The data are not without their restrictions, of course, and these should certainly be kept in mind. They lack the depth and texture, for instance, of interviews (proscribed in this case simply by resource limitations); they are, moreover, filtered through editorial selection, editing, and, in the case of newspaper and magazine articles, the interpretive frameworks of reporters. Nonetheless, especially given the strong presence of first-person accounts, letters to the editor, and internal memos, they offer relatively clear snapshots of the actions, experiences, and thinking of those involved.

BOY LOVERS, HOMOSEXUALS, AND THE EXTERNAL AUDIENCE: ILGA, NAMBLA, AND THE UNITED NATIONS

In the summer of 1993, the ILGA, a worldwide confederation of lesbian and gay organizations founded in 1978, made a historic achievement: It gained consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). While this was a big step symbolically, it was a smaller one in terms of actual power, allowing ILGA to participate in UN conferences and present papers to meetings of both the ECOSOC and UN human rights bodies, but never to participate in decision making (United Nations Economic and Social Council 1968).

The Report, a fundamentalist Christian group based in Southern California, agreed with many gays and lesbians about the symbolic significance of ILGA's observer status.[6] The Report attacked the "international gay so-called 'human rights' group," astutely picking up on and publicizing not just another case of what they see as "homosexual activists who fight for special rights and are forcing homosexuality on our culture," but also an important "bind" for ILGA (The Report 1994, 1-2). Included in ILGA's membership, The Report correctly pointed out, was NAMBLA, a group that since its founding in 1978 has defended and promoted some relationships between men and boys ("We support CONSENSUAL intergenerational relationships," their mission statement reads, "and help educate society about the true nature of such relationships" [NAMBLA 1995; see also Chibbaro 1994]).

Indeed, NAMBLA had been an active, voting member of ILGA for a decade. As both NAMBLA and, ironically, Senator Jesse Helms pointed out, several ILGA decisions were directly in line with NAMBLA's ongoing challenge to age-of-consent laws: for instance, a 1985 ILGA resolution that "young people have the right to sexual and social self-determination and that age of consent laws often operate

to oppress and not protect," a 1990 ILGA call, under the heading of Man/Boy, Woman/Girl Love, "to treat all sexual minorities with respect and to engage in constructive dialogue with them," and ILGA's stated support for "the right of every individual, regardless of age, to explore and develop his or her sexuality" (*Cong. Rec.* 1994, p. 1; NAMBLA 1993). Apparently, NAMBLA had participated in ILGA for quite some time, but neither the international association nor NAMBLA had much interest in calling this to public attention. As long as ILGA was mostly out of the public eye (operating mostly through annual meetings), NAMBLA's participation, while causing ongoing tensions in ILGA, did little to disrupt the federation's functioning.

ILGA's successful pursuit of UN consultative status and the subsequent publicity generated by antigay organizers transformed NAMBLA's presence into a significant communicative act. The symbolic boundaries of the sexual minority or lesbian and gay identity, left loose and relatively uncontroversial for a good long time, suddenly became salient. One version of *us*—that is, how external political audiences, themselves sensitive to broader publics, interpreted *us*—meant ILGA might lose political gains; another meant a shot at retaining them and perhaps achieving other gains. Thus, a battle began over who is "really" gay or lesbian, over who will be included. The luxury of loose boundaries was gone, now that these boundaries were acting as communications with political consequences. The Report grabbed exactly this ideological stress point and hammered away at it. "ILGA's stuck," a fund-raising letter ("your gift will help us fight the hypocrisy") gleefully noted (pp. 1-2).

> If they force NAMBLA to leave, they'll be hypocrites, discriminating against NAMBLA members who claim to be part of a "sexual minority" with an "orientation" towards gay sex with boys. . . . If it kicks out NAMBLA it's hypocritical, if not it supports sex between boys and men! (The Report 1994)

Getting wind of this and no doubt sensing the potential for a coming public relations disaster, Bisa Williams Manigault of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations wrote to ILGA demanding the expulsion of NAMBLA (Chibbaro 1993; Tsang 1994a). ILGA's Secretariat's Committee quickly responded, declaring their objections to "the political aims of NAMBLA," its own concern with "the power imbalance that exists between adults and children," and asking for NAMBLA to resign at the next ILGA World Body Conference (ILGA 1993; Tsang 1994a). The battle between NAMBLA and ILGA went public: NAMBLA spokesman Bill Andriette, The Report's Peter Labarbera, and ILGA representative Julie Dorf appeared on *Larry King Live*; press releases demanding NAMBLA's ouster came from major gay and gay-supportive organizations, including the Log Cabin Republicans, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum, and the Human Rights Campaign Fund (van Hertum 1993), as well as from openly gay Massachusetts Congressman Barney Frank (Frank 1993); public and vocal opposition to the proposed expulsion was also

expressed by several ILGA member organizations; lobbying, bitterness, and press releases circulated all around.

In January and February of 1994, Senator Jesse Helms brought the dispute even more directly into the public eye, proposing a bill, approved unanimously and signed into law by President Clinton in April 1994, to withhold some $119 million in contributions to the UN until the president "certifies that no UN agency grants any official status, accreditation, or recognition to any organization which promotes, condones, or seeks the legalization of pedophilia, that is, the sexual abuse of children" (*Cong. Rec.* 1994, p. 1). Quoting from NAMBLA's *Bulletin* ("published by and for perverted individuals," Helms asserted), Helms argued that the United States should safeguard its own interests against a UN that "officially [condones] the sexual molestation of children" (*Cong. Rec.* 1994, p. 1). He was not after NAMBLA—a small and easily discredited fish—but ILGA. "ILGA itself," he argued, "is an organization that promotes pedophilia" (*Cong. Rec.* 1994, p. 1).

> ILGA never displayed any concern about NAMBLA until it became a public issue. ILGA is now like the little boy who got caught stealing and said he was sorry—not sorry he was stealing, just that he got caught. (*Cong. Rec.* 1994, p. 1)

Drawing on stereotypes of the homosexual predator, Helms made certain to assert that NAMBLA was well within the boundaries of the gay collective.

Helms's actions, not surprisingly, triggered even more intense argument between NAMBLA and ILGA, and their respective supporters. NAMBLA opponents made essentially three arguments: first, that NAMBLA is an organization of child molesters; second, that pedophilia is not a gay issue and, therefore, that NAMBLA is not a gay organization; and third, that NAMBLA, gay or not, is an obstacle to important ILGA gains.[7]

Jenny Wilson of ILGA's Financial Secretariat, for example, suggested that expulsion was necessary simply because of the voice provided by UN observer status and the possibility that status provided for recognition by the European Community and the Council of Europe (ILGA 1994). Most arguments, however, were focused less on expediency and more on attacking the standing of NAMBLA as a *gay* organization, primarily by framing it as an organization of sexual abusers. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force issued a statement condemning "all abuse of minors, both sexual and any other kind, perpetrated by adults" and, "accordingly," condemning "the organizational goals of NAMBLA and any other such organization" (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 1994). Julie Dorf, arguing that ILGA "is on record repeatedly condemning the sexual exploitation of children—over and over again," claimed that "groups like NAMBLA represent an incredible fringe element" that "represent a very small number of people." Neatly placing NAMBLA as outsiders, she argued that "the gay community is extremely, extremely upset about NAMBLA" (in *Larry King Live* 1993). *You are not us.*

For their part, NAMBLA and its representatives mirrored these sorts of claims directly. NAMBLA, they argued back to the first charge, has never advocated or

facilitated child molestation but is instead committed to *sexual self-determination.* As one group of supporters put it, "advocating social acceptance and legalization of consensual activity with children is not the same as supporting or promoting such sexual activity" (Verein fuer sexuelle Gleichberechtigung 1995). Second, they argued (as did The Report [1994]) that "man/boy love is by definition homosexual" (Tsang 1994a, 20), that "man/boy lovers are part of the gay movement and central to gay history and culture" (NAMBLA 1993), part of "the Western homosexual tradition from Socrates to Wilde to Gide," and part of "many non-Western homosexualities from New Guinea and Persia to the Zulu and the Japanese" (Secretariats have lied 1995). "Homosexuals denying that it is 'not gay' to be attracted to adolescent boys," wrote one, "are just as ludicrous as heterosexuals saying it's 'not heterosexual' to be attracted to adolescent girls" (NAMBLA & ILGA 1995).

Citing extensive examples (some of which Helms later borrowed), NAMBLA representatives further maintained that the group had been

> continuously active in ILGA longer than any other organization from the United States. NAMBLA delegates to ILGA have contributed to the writing of ILGA's constitution, its official positions on the sexual rights of youth, and its stands against sexual coercion and corporal punishment. (NAMBLA 1993)

Not only, they claimed, are intergenerational same-sex relationships gay, but NAMBLA itself has long been active and included in the gay and lesbian organizing of which ILGA is a part. *You are us and we are you.*

Finally, NAMBLA supporters countered, against the claim that they themselves were in the way of political gains, that ILGA was submitting to "political blackmail" (German National Gay Association 1995) and "political opportunism" and willfully "selling out boy-lovers" (Andriette 1993). This strategy was not only "politically calculating and spiritually bankrupt," but, NAMBLA asserted, unlikely to work (NAMBLA 1993).

Their prediction was eventually borne out. In June of 1994, ILGA voted 214 to 30 to oust NAMBLA and two other groups (Vereniginig Martijn and Project Truth) on the grounds that "groups whose predominant aim is to support or promote pedophilia are incompatible with the future development of ILGA" (Campbell 1994, 1; Verein fuer sexuelle Gleichberechtigung 1995). Later that summer, an anonymous fax to the U.S. mission to the United Nations revealed that an ILGA member, the German group Verein fuer Sexuelle Gleichberechtigung, had listed as an example of its political activities "support for elimination of Article 175 [of the German penal code, repealed in 1994, which had prohibited homosexual contacts with young males between 14 and 18] and the decriminalization of pedosexuality" (Verein fuer sexuelle Gleichberechtigung 1995). In September, the UN ECOSOC suspended ILGA's consultative status, claiming that it counted a pro-pedophile group among its 300 members and was thus in violation of the 1994 Senate act. At present, the ILGA has no UN status whatsoever.

At least insofar as they are established by major organizations claiming the moniker "lesbian and gay," the boundaries of the collective identity have here been

tightened through exclusion. That renegotiation of boundaries took place not because loose boundaries were newly disruptive of the everyday work of movement organizing; NAMBLA participation had been opposed by some for a good long time, but their inclusion had never before blocked organizational work. But because they became relevant as public communications—in this case, to an audience of decision makers interested primarily in a discreditable definition of the gay collective—the awkward stasis was no longer workable. It is not so much that loose membership boundaries are unproblematic in movement activity but that compromises and alliances are reached on the basis of the looseness that allow movement activity (e.g., pursuing UN status) to continue. When the communication environment changes, the fault lines bridged by loose boundaries are exposed, triggering attempts to define the collective more "purely."

This was not just a debate about exclusion but a debate about gender and, in particular, about gay male masculinity. Although lesbians were heavily involved in it, the ILGA dispute was plainly enmeshed not in the meanings of lesbianism but in the meanings of male gayness (in which lesbians, as part of a more general "homosexual" category, were implicated). Right-wing attackers deployed discrediting stereotypes of gay men (primarily as recruiters and molesters of young boys) in which gay masculinity is a monstrous, out-of-control exaggeration of male sexual appetite. These gender meanings were resisted by many ILGA members by distinguishing *that* form of masculine homosexuality from the "good," respectable brand, whose sexual appetite, if visible at all, is under control. The debate over group boundaries was thus closely tied to disputes over how one properly does "masculine" as a gay man (Connell 1995).

TRANSSEXUALS, LESBIANS, AND THE INTERNAL AUDIENCE: THE MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

The MWMF, one of many women-only events and institutions that grew out of the lesbian feminist movement of the 1970s (Echols 1989; Ryan 1992; Taylor and Rupp 1993), began in 1976 and has grown into an event that annually attracts several thousand women to a 650-acre plot of land for five days of camping, cooking, music, and workshops. Although it is of course built on music, it is explicitly a political event, built on the lesbian feminist philosophy of the woman-oriented woman as feminist vanguard and related community-building strategies, many of them involving separation from men (Phelan 1989; Ryan 1992; Taylor and Rupp 1993; Whittier 1995). The festival, in the words of one longtime participant, is part of the project of maintaining "male-free spaces" as spots for the development of women's culture in opposition to male domination:

> Standing naked "downtown" at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, I have thought of myself as "inside" and of the patriarchal world as "out there" somewhere beyond the borders of the womyn-owned land. (Penelope 1990, 15)

For this experience of an "inside" safe from patriarchy to work, there must be no ambiguity about who is female and who is not. Of course, femaleness is not a sufficient condition for inclusion and is, like gayness in ILGA, one among many boundaries being simultaneously negotiated in and through lesbian feminism (see Whittier 1995); the presence of certain kinds of females (vocally antifeminist women, for example) would also be likely to trigger policing, and the presence of certain kinds of females (sadomasochists, for instance) does trigger controversy (Festival Forum 1990; Taylor and Rupp 1993). Still, for a lesbian feminist cultural event like this, drawing as it does on "female values, separatism, the primacy of women's relationships, and feminist ritual" (Taylor and Rupp 1993, 34), the delineation of male from female would seem to be a necessary condition. Transsexuals make that delineation unclear.

While the presence of transsexual women in women-only spaces was an issue of dispute periodically during the 1970s, especially with the publication of Janice Raymond's *The Transsexual Empire* (Raymond 1979; Stone 1991), at the MWMF the question of who qualified as a woman did not explode until 1991, when Nancy Jean Burkholder was expelled from the 16th annual festival. As she tells it, Burkholder had attended the festival the previous year without incident but was approached as she waited to enter in 1991 by two women, asking to speak to her about "a serious and difficult matter."

> Chris said that the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival was a woman-only event and she wanted to know if I were a man. I replied that I was a woman and showed her my New Hampshire picture ID driver's license. Then she asked me if I were a transsexual. I asked her what was the point of her questioning and she replied that transsexuals were not permitted to attend the festival. She said that MWMF policy was that the festival was open to "natural womyn-born womyn" only. (Burkholder 1993, 4)

Told that the policy "was for the benefit of transsexuals' safety and the safety of women attending the festival," Burkholder asked to see the policy in writing. "I said I was willing to submit to a genital examination in order to satisfy her concerns about my sex," Burkholder (1993, 4) recalls, but this was refused. Although no written policy was produced, after the festival producers were consulted, Burkholder was expelled from the festival (Burkholder 1993; Keen 1991).

Although no transsexuals were expelled from the next year's festival, Burkholder's expulsion set in motion a controversy over transsexual inclusion within the festival that has continued for several years.[8] More important, it set in motion an organizing effort by a group of transsexual women and their supporters, aiming specifically to publicly challenge the festival's "womyn-born womyn only" policy, to "raise consciousness among festival participants" about the policy, and to "demonstrate that not only could [the policy] not be enforced, but that there is, in fact, no rational justification for its existence" (Fredrickson 1993; Gabriel 1993, 8). Their efforts involved holding workshops and setting up a literature table including Burkholder's account of the previous year's events, 24 "gender myths" ("common misperceptions about transsexuality within the lesbian community with rebuttals"),

and buttons such as "Where's Nancy?" "I Might Be Transsexual," and "Bisexual, Transsexual, Meat Eating, Lipstick Wearing Leatherdyke from Hell" (Gabriel 1993, 8). One participant announced herself as transsexual at two workshops, later declaring her presence there "to be in the same tradition of civil disobedience as that of African Americans who conducted sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in the early 1960s" (Gabriel 1993, 11).

This organizing effort emerged, not coincidentally, during the growth period of a small but vocal, radical transsexual movement (Bornstein 1994; Brown 1994; International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy 1994; Stone 1991). Many of those involved in transsexual organizing identify as feminist, and many as lesbian, and have explicitly asserted recognition as openly transsexual feminists as a political goal. (One of the women expelled from MWMF, Davina Anne Gabriel, is publisher and editor of *TransSisters: The Journal of Transsexual Feminism.*) As transsexual activists, these women had good reason to push at the public boundaries of the lesbian feminist *we*. They *wanted* their exclusion publicized among the women present at MWMF. Once Burkholder was expelled, transsexual women directed their efforts toward keeping the issue of feminist boundaries in public view for festival goers. In fact, one track of a "multi-track strategy" during the 1992 festival was to "create suspicion" that a nontranssexual woman was actually transsexual, to "see if she would be expelled;" she was not; (Gabriel 1993, 8). Provoking expulsion, if it directed public attention toward the exclusion of transsexuals, was itself a strategy. "The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival is, quite simply," one group of women wrote, "the frontline in the struggle for inclusion of transsexual womyn within the lesbian/feminist community" (Burkholder et al. 1994, 11).

It was precisely the terrain of "who is a woman?" (and, therefore, "who is a lesbian?") and, perhaps most of all, "who is a feminist?" on which transsexuals waged their public battles.[9] One argument was simply that transsexuals are women, and the policy is, therefore, discriminatory. If they are indeed "legally, hormonally, socially and anatomically female," one woman wrote, the festival organizers have no more right to the policy "than they do to exclude differently abled women, fat women, old women, young women, or left handed women" (Malone 1992). Taking another tack, Nancy Burkholder argued that since medical history is the only way to distinguish transsexual women from nontranssexual women, the policy is "not based on any real difference" but on "a gut feeling—like racism or homophobia" (Burkholder 1991, 15).

Beyond establishing the commonality between transsexual and nontranssexual women, antiexclusion arguments claimed the ground of feminism. As Davina Gabriel put it, the justifications for exclusion

> are rooted in patriarchal assumptions and practices. All of the justifications cited for the exclusion of transsexual womyn prove to be inadequate because, ultimately, they are all based on patriarchal concepts of *determinism*, either biological, environmental, or a combination of both. Determinism, in turn, proves to be based on another

> patriarchal concept, that of *reductionism*. Likewise, arguments favoring the exclusion of transsexual womyn also prove to be fundamentally founded in patriarchal concepts of gender *binarism*. (Gabriel 1994, 12)

Not only do transsexuals belong within the boundaries of feminist community, but their exclusion is antifeminist, contrary to "universal sisterhood" and "feminist values" (Severns 1992, 4). Expanding the boundaries to include transsexual women affirms feminist community. *We are you; you are us.*

Transsexual organizing against the "womyn-born womyn only" policy met with a strong response from the festival producers.[10] In 1992, the producers defended their response to the presence of "a known transsexual man" at the festival (refusing, interestingly, Burkholder's self-definition) and reaffirmed their commitment to "keep our focus and energy on womyn and on presenting the best week of womyn's culture and community that we know how to create." The issue of transsexual inclusion was "processed" by the festival working community, the producers reported, and those discussions revealed that "the group of womyn who come together to create this gathering supports this Festival policy" (Vogel and Price 1992, 10). The Michigan festival, they argued,

> is and always has been an event for womyn, and this continues to be defined as womyn-born womyn. We respect everyone's right to define themselves as they wish. . . . We mean only to define *who this event is for*. We hold dearly our right to make this determination and in the same regard we believe that it is the right of every other womyn's institution and community to define these issues depending on their own particular needs and concerns. (Vogel and Price 1992, 10, emphasis added)

Other supporters of the newly revealed policy argued similarly. As one writer to the lesbian feminist magazine *Lesbian Connection* put it,

> One of the benefits of festivals is that we can fully explore—even glorify—our identities as women, without the trappings and traps this culture imposes upon those of us born with the XX chromosome. To argue that anyone who decides to become a woman has undergone the same oppression, and has the same bond of common experience as those born to it, is to flatten the experience of those who came to it by birth, and who have lived it since. (Festival responses 1992, 8)

Another writer, similarly arguing that *woman* is an identity that cannot be taken on later in life, recategorizes male-to-female transsexuals even more dramatically, arguing that "the fuss about 'transsexual women' exists because our society has no role for castrated, feminized men—'eunuchs.' "

> I can understand how American eunuchs would think of themselves as women—one has to think of oneself in the terms available. However, surgery doesn't make a eunuch a woman, any more than melanin implants and a wish for African ancestors would make me Black. Transgendered people are part of the queer community, and ought to be valued for their individuality and able to make friends on the same basis as anyone else. However, *women as a group have no obligation to take care of eunuchs as a group*. (Festival responses 1992, 9, emphasis added).

Transsexuals, as castrated men clearly outside the bounds of women's *we*, are justifiably excluded.

In keeping with their policy, three days into the 1993 festival, producers expelled three transsexual women who had gained admittance and, on the second day, had set up a table with literature about transsexual exclusion. Although womyn-born womyn was never defined, the message was always clear: *You are not women, you are not us.*

The objection here, it is crucial to note, was not so much to the presence of transsexual women nor to any terribly rigid version of what womanhood, which comes in many expressions and shapes and colors at the festival, can look like. The objection was any movement in the publicly noted boundaries; what was at stake was what public inclusion of transsexuals communicated to the feminist community members gathered at the festival. According to one account, in fact, the security coordinator told the tablers that "if we had not revealed our transsexuality to anyone that we would have been allowed to remain at the festival" (Gabriel 1993, 20).

The priority on symbolic rather than actual boundaries becomes even more clear as the story continues. In 1993, the expelled transsexuals, along with their supporters, set up camp across the road from the festival's front gate, calling it Camp Trans. This protest camp was reinstated the following year, with 13 transsexual women, 12 nontranssexual women, one transsexual man, one nontranssexual man, and one intersexed person in attendance. The organizers held workshops, speeches, readings, and religious services, and distributed statements. After extensive meetings that year with festival producers, a new compromise was reached. While they refused the demand to replace "womyn-born womyn" with "nontranssexual" in their policy, the producers declared that they were leaving it up to individuals to decide whether they were womyn-born womyn. Declaring that their group consisted of transsexual women, nontranssexual women, an intersexed person, and transgendered women, and "that each of them interpreted the term 'womyn born womyn' to include them," the protesting group entered the festival. None among them was refused tickets or asked questions (Camp Trans 1994, 3).

As in the NAMBLA case, the renegotiation of collective identity takes place not because loose membership boundaries threatened the operation of the festival, as the looking-the-other-way inclusion attests. Instead, it is pushed by a party for whom the current formulation no longer works—in this case, by transsexuals for whom visibility has come to be seen as a political necessity and who have garnered enough personnel to wage a challenge. Again, a stasis is disrupted by the publicness of the inclusion, and long-standing divisions within lesbian feminist politics are reopened.

Here, too, the communication context, the targeting of an internal audience of feminist women at the festival, shapes both the identity claims and the resolution. As opposed to, say, using transsexualism to muddy or take apart the category of *woman* (Bornstein 1994; Gamson 1995), transsexuals in this context aimed primarily at expanding the boundaries of *woman*, *feminist*, and *lesbian*, while reaffirming

the categories. And as long as the category *woman* was left loose but intact, allowing both separation (we know who we are) and community (we are diverse), actual participation by the "excluded" was not disturbing to producers. As long as the symbolic boundaries communicated what they needed to—that *woman* is a clearly designated category—the physical gates are open. A new compromise is reached, in which the question of who is female, and, therefore, potentially lesbian and feminist, is no longer up for grabs.

CONCLUSION: AUDIENCES, IDENTITY PATROL, AND GENDERED MOVEMENTS

These cases of conflict within sex and gender movements indicate that building and maintaining collective identity boundaries takes place not just vis-à-vis clearly designated antagonists (Helms and the antigay right, men demanding access to women's bodies and spaces) but largely on the unstable terrain of contested membership. Moreover, I have argued, with their odd incongruence of on-the-ground inclusion and public exclusion, the stories point to the importance of the *symbolic* aspect of symbolic boundaries. As in the current U.S. "don't ask, don't tell" compromise for lesbians and gays in the military, what gets publicly communicated by inclusion or expulsion trumps the question of actual participation. As this examination of internal disputes in sex and gender movements illustrates, "Transsexuals are not women" and "Man-boy lovers are not gay," however heartfelt, are not so much permanent positions on identity as elastic, directed communications about identity.

When and how exclusion takes place, then, is closely tied to the specific conditions under which the collective boundaries are being used politically; those boundaries are, in a sense, cultural resources (Williams 1995), communication tools in specific political struggles. Understanding collective identity construction thus requires careful, grounded analysis of these communication environments, the conditions under which various actors fight for "true" membership status (Lichterman 1995): Who is calling the question of public exclusion and for what political purposes? Who are the audiences being targeted, and how do they (or the perception of them by those attacking and defending versions of collective identity) shape the outcome?

As this analytical framework suggests, these dynamics of course differ for different movements, shaped as they are by the particular political concerns and environments. The two cases presented here may help us see more clearly some of the important conditions affecting the opening and closing of movement boundaries. To begin with, it is plain that a shift in the communication environment can come from either outside or inside the existing movement boundaries. The use of NAMBLA and ILGA by outsider antagonists (Helms and his allies) to communicate to nongay and nonpedophile audiences set in motion a set of events not at all unlike the attempts by insider transsexuals in Michigan to communicate to women within

the collective *we* of (lesbian) feminism: bitter arguments, expulsions, a narrowing of the identity category.

That boundary contestation can take place with or without the involvement of external adversaries is unsurprising, but it matters: primarily because the audience for the subsequent communication-by-expulsion differs. ILGA's key audience, for instance, was those in a position to rescind UN status (or pressure others to rescind it), and the tightening of the gay-and-lesbian identity boundary was prompted by the need to communicate respectability to those decision makers. As I have pointed out, when the audience was gay-and-lesbian membership organizations alone, NAMBLA's participation prompted no dramatic boundary patrol. At the MWMF, at which the primary audience is other lesbian feminist-identified women, the commitment to narrower public boundaries came about because of a perceived threat to the organizing principle by which the festival's participant-audience is attracted: that those born to female bodies experience similarly oppressive (and empowering) experiences.

Clearly in these cases, what is being communicated is not just generic boundary drawing but has much to do with gender: with distinguishing male from female, with defining appropriate relationships between adult men and male children, with making or unmaking the link between same-sex desire and men as sexual predators. This suggests that we need to think more carefully about the gendered nature of movement activity—in this case, the process through which identity boundaries stretch and contract in response to particular communication environments. Are these communications gendered simply because the movements initiating them are gender-based ones, or might inclusion/exclusion processes and identity patrols be gendered in other sorts of movements as well?

The literature thus far is largely silent on these sorts of questions. Although the strong turn in the last decade to "the idea that social structure and social processes are gendered" (Acker 1990, 145; see also Lorber 1994) has been amply applied to the state (e.g., see Gordon 1990) and organizations (e.g., Acker 1990), it has made only small ripples in the approach to social movements. Scholars have certainly recognized gender divisions within movements and carefully analyzed gender as a basis for mobilization and the gender system as a movement target, but the notion that "the concept of a two-gender system that constructs women to be the subordinates of men is central to the emergence, nature, and outcomes of social movements" (Taylor 1996, 166) remains largely unexplored.

The stories I have recounted here provide some initial directions. If the argument holds that exclusions are most prominently public communications and thus that identity boundaries shift in response to particular audiences, it is fruitful to consider how communication settings are themselves gendered. Beyond the genders of the speakers and listeners, the resonant gender symbolism of a communication environment (ideas and images about masculinity and femininity, the links between sexuality and gender, distinguishing male from female) crucially shapes boundary patrol.

For instance, ILGA (and NAMBLA) were very quickly enmeshed in a scene in which particular images of men could be easily deployed to discredit cogendered

lesbian and gay organizing. In the highly rhetorically oriented sites of Congress and television, the image of the predatory, child-molesting man was easy to evoke—especially at a time when "family values" have been symbolically opposed to gay and lesbian rights. Given its association with the predatory homosexual, this image threw a dark shadow over gay men and lesbian women both. ILGA, directed by the gender symbols deployed by others, cast itself as pro-child in opposition to the male predator, using expulsion of NAMBLA as its means of communicating, and thus tightening, the collective identity boundaries.

The gendered communication setting shaped identity-patrol activities at MWMF in a different way. Rather than particular discrediting imagery, at MWMF it was male-female categorization more generally that was at stake. It was public confidence in female difference that was being protected. Of course, the emphasis on rigid gender categories is hardly a lesbian feminist invention, but it is nonetheless central to lesbian feminist culture (Taylor and Rupp 1993). The expulsion of transsexuals has been much less about some need to deny participation to transsexuals than about reinforcing the clear difference between women and men in a setting in which *woman* cannot stop making sense. If the "drawing of boundaries between male and female promotes the kind of oppositional consciousness necessary for organizing one's life around feminism" (Taylor and Rupp 1993, 43) and transsexuals make the boundary harder to draw, their expulsion communicates its clarity anew. Exclusion and inclusion, here again, are largely patterned by gendered meanings circulating most strongly.

It might appear that this is a dynamic peculiar to sex and gender movements, and the significance of gendered communication is certainly more overt in these cases than it might be elsewhere. But to stop at that appearance would be to miss the point. It is hard to imagine a public communication setting that does not link up in significant ways to the doing of gender—and the identities that social movements of all kinds constantly create and recreate are significantly molded by those settings. In the Nazi movement, for instance, gender oppositions "served as the metaphor for the polarization of Jews as weak and emotional and 'Aryans' as strong and rational," Verta Taylor (1996, 171) reminds us. The systematic, gender-specific stigmatizing associations of "the abnormal sexuality of both black men and women," used "historically and currently in this country to support and justify the exploited position of black people," Cathy Cohen points out, have critically influenced the indigenous definitions of who is or is not "really" Black, and in particular to partially exclude Black gay men from communal membership and, therefore, from access to community resources (Cohen 1996, 376).

The lesson from all this arguing, then, goes much beyond the difficult skirmishes over ancient Greek pedophiles and UN influence, eunuchs and woman's culture: If all communication environments are gendered, and inclusion/exclusion processes shift in response to communication settings, collective identity construction and deployment are, in general, necessarily gendered processes. We need to look much more closely at the subtle and not-so-subtle intersections, then, between gendered communication environments and social movement dynamics. Turning *us* into

them, them into *us*, be they environmentalists, fundamentalists, men, women, or in between, is a process never divorced from the gendered meaning structures in which all movements operate.

NOTES

1. Exclusions and symbolic boundary-patrol activities, I would argue, are more visible and more critical for identity-based organizing: Whereas collective identity building is necessary for any movement to mobilize participants and build solidarity (Friedman and McAdam 1992), identity-based movements make their claims on the basis of, and on behalf of, a particular collective (as opposed to, say, peace movement activists making more universal grievances).

2. By *public communication*, I mean simply the sending, receiving, and exchange of ideas, information, and symbols (via speech, gesture, visual representation, and so on) that operate independent of specific, personal relationships. By *communicative environment*, I mean the loosely structured arena in which such exchanges take place: the interacting characteristics of "senders" and their institutional or social location, of the actual "receivers" and intended audiences and their institutional or social location, and of the medium through which symbols are carried. By distinguishing *symbolic* from *practical* inclusion/exclusion, I do not mean to suggest that practices are not symbol carriers, but to distinguish rhetorical exclusion from the actual closing off of active participation.

3. I am using *collective identity* to mean simply the "shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity" (Taylor 1989, 771). Alberto Melucci has recently expanded on this definition in ways that directly inform this article, emphasizing that collective identity is "process" rather than product, an "interactive and shared definition" that is "constructed and negotiated through a repeated activation of the relationships that link individuals" (Melucci 1995, 44). For extended discussions of the concept of collective identity, see Friedman and McAdam (1992) and Melucci (1989, 1995). On symbolic boundaries more generally, see Lamont and Fournier (1992).

4. Much of the literature on women's movement factionalization has described and analyzed internal divisions within feminism, including such events as the "purge" of the lesbian "lavender menace" from the National Organization for Women in the 1970s and the often bitter tensions between "cultural feminists" and various others within the women's movement (Echols 1989; Ryan 1992; Taylor and Rupp 1993). While these writings focus important attention on internal disputes, they either are primarily descriptive or have a somewhat different analytical focus than the one taken here. That is, they tend to be more concerned with explaining the emergence and workings of specific women's movement divisions than with making use of those divisions to understand collective identity construction; Barbara Ryan's analysis, for instance, concerns how feminist ideology "was used by leaders and activists as a mobilizing resource during the organizing stage and why, at the same time, the feminist groups making up the movement experienced antagonistic relations based on ideological conflict" (1992, 54). Although her book is primarily concerned with movement persistence and transformation, Nancy Whittier's recent discussion of conflicts within the radical women's movement in Columbus, Ohio, is closest to mine, examining the contribution of such conflicts to changes in movement identities and group boundaries (Whittier 1995; see esp. pp. 100-14).

5. Access to internal documents from the Michigan dispute have been much harder to come by, and the analysis is limited primarily to published reports from and letters to the editor about the festival.

6. This organization also produced *The Gay Agenda*, a video asserting that "gay rights are special rights," widely distributed to elected officials. Their ally in the Senate, Jesse Helms, accurately pointed out that "any category of so-called consultative status, even the roster status conferred on this homosexual group . . . is seen as a major achievement by [homosexual groups] in terms of official recognition, and as they say in gaining legitimacy." Characteristically misstating the case, and spiking it with antigay innuendo, he nonetheless captured the significance even such low-level status has for gay organizing: "Needless to say, the UN action was seen as a big victory by the national homosexual

organizations. They danced in the streets. Oh, they slapped each other on the backs and maybe other things as well" (*Cong. Rec.* 1994, 5).

7. This is not the only time and place these arguments have been waged. NAMBLA has long elicited controversy within lesbian and gay organizations and events, typically (and for my argument, significantly) erupting around their participation in public events such as parades (Chibbaro 1994; Clark 1994; Gays 1992; Green 1994; Varnell 1993).

8. Similar debates have emerged in diverse locations, including Seattle (O'Hartigan 1994), Brisbane, Australia (Griffin 1994), and the lesbian S/M conference Powersurge (Powersurge drops 1994).

9. These debates echo long-standing discussions within lesbian feminism about "who is a lesbian?" and within feminism more generally about the relationship between feminism and lesbianism (Echols 1989; Ryan 1992; Taylor and Rupp 1993). Adrienne Rich's (1980) now-classic "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," for instance, set off rounds of definitional debates among feminist intellectuals (Ferguson, Zita, and Addelson 1981). The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (MWMF) debates, interestingly if unsurprisingly, are more focused on defining the statuses of woman and feminist than that of lesbian—although, of course, those statuses are all tightly linked in the radical-feminist framework of the festival. As Whittier and others have pointed out, as lesbians became more visible in the 1970s radical women's movement, "lesbian ideology developed, and in practice activists often conflated the categories 'lesbian' and 'radical feminist'" (Whittier 1995, 107). Thus, while *woman* and *feminist* are explicitly debated in the transsexual disputes (see also Gamson 1995), in the lesbian feminist context the boundaries between lesbian and nonlesbian are also implicitly being negotiated through inclusion and exclusion of transsexuals.

10. This dispute is only one of several related ones over the years at the MWMF, most notably over the presence of male children and sadomasochists at the festival (Baker 1990; Braeman 1989; Briggs 1990; Festival forum 1990; Festival responses 1990; Johnson 1989; Rodriguez and Booky 1990).

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