



SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE: WOMEN'S ROLE AS AGENTS OF TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

This study utilizes a qualitative literature review to examine how women shape social movements and the specific challenges they encounter. The findings reveal that women enrich movements particularly in environmental, civil rights, and peace sectors by introducing unique perspectives rooted in their lived experiences. They champion grassroots strategies, collective leadership, and expanded social justice agendas that bring private issues like domestic violence and reproductive rights into the public sphere. Furthermore, women foster cross-border solidarity and democratic organizational forms. However, women face significant hurdles from both patriarchal social structures and internal movement dynamics. These include marginalization in leadership, a heightened risk of violence, the "double burden" of domestic and activist responsibilities, and representational dilemmas. The study highlights that while marginalization causes fragmentation, inclusivity strengthens movement outcomes. Ultimately, women's activism has redefined social structural change, proving that transformation must occur not only in policy but also in everyday relationships. Their struggle emphasizes that the methods used to fight for change must reflect the inclusive society being sought.

Keywords: women, social movements, social change, women's leadership, gender challenges, inclusivity, social justice

Introduction

Women have been a significant driving force in various social movements throughout history, even though their contributions often do not receive an adequate place in mainstream historical narratives. In the struggle against colonialism, women were present on the front lines, bringing perspectives that differed from those of their male counterparts, highlighting how colonial oppression impacted the daily lives of women and families. In the labor movement of the early twentieth century, female factory workers fought not only for decent wages but also for working conditions that respected their dignity as women. This indicates that job satisfaction is greatly influenced by field experience as well as fair career development for everyone (Sinambela et al., 2023). In the civil rights movement in the United States, Black women such as Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer became symbols of resistance, while thousands of other women worked behind the scenes organizing communities, raising funds, and maintaining the continuity of the movement (Oriola, 2020). Women's experiences in social movements are often dualistic: they fight against injustices that affect society at large, while simultaneously facing gender injustice within the movement itself (Simien & McGuire, 2014). Nevertheless, they continue to be present, bringing new ways of organizing that are more collaborative, more inclusive, and more sensitive to the needs of the most vulnerable groups. In this collective experience, women do not merely become participants in movements led by men, but actively shape the agenda, strategy, and meaning of the struggle they undertake.

The presence of women in social movements cannot be separated from an awareness of their marginalized position within patriarchal social structures (Gallo-Cruz, 2016). Women's subjective experiences of discrimination, violence, and limitations on their space for movement serve as the fuel that drives them to act. A mother witnessing her daughter unable to access education due to restrictive norms, a worker receiving lower wages than her male colleagues for the same work, a woman experiencing domestic violence and receiving no protection from the state all bring these experiences into the movement space. We need to realize that the issue of unequal access to education in developing countries remains a major challenge that must be solved (Rojak & Khayru, 2022). These issues transform what were originally considered private problems into public

issues that require structural change. This process, which women activists call "the personal is political," has become a hallmark of women's movements that distinguishes them from other social movements. Daily experiences previously deemed unimportant matters only of the kitchen or the domestic sphere have become subjects of serious political analysis. By bringing issues such as domestic violence, reproductive rights, and the division of domestic labor into the public realm, women have expanded the definition of what is considered a political issue, challenging the separation between the public and private spheres that has long been the foundation of the patriarchal social order.

Women's contributions to social movements are not limited to movements that explicitly focus on women's issues (Simien & McGuire, 2014). In the environmental movement, for example, women are often at the forefront because they directly feel the impact of environmental degradation on their daily lives. Active citizen involvement in maintaining ecology is indeed very important through community-based social support (Zulkarnain et al., 2021). Female farmers who depend on the fertility of the land, mothers who must find clean water for their families, or indigenous women who protect the forest as a source of life become key actors in ecological movements. Anti-globalization and economic justice movements are also colored by the voices of women who highlight how neoliberal policies disproportionately impact women's lives, especially poor women and women in the Global South. Moreover, for those living in crowded cities, the problem of food vulnerability often haunts poor households (Mahmudah, 2021). In peace movements, women from various parts of the world have demonstrated extraordinary leadership, building bridges in the midst of ethnic and religious conflicts that divide society. Women's experiences in conflict are often different from those of men, and they bring a unique perspective on what true peace means—a peace that does not only mean the absence of war but also social justice and the recognition of the fundamental rights of every human being. Thus, the presence of women in social movements has enriched the understanding of what justice is and how to achieve it.

The challenges faced by women in social movements are highly complex and multilayered. Outside of the movements, they face structural barriers in the form of unequal access to resources, education, and decision-making positions (Reger, 2018). Many women pursuing careers ultimately

have to bear a double burden in their lives (Fauzi, 2023). Within the movements themselves, they often have to contend with a masculine culture that views female leadership as illegitimate or less effective. Women activists are frequently faced with difficult choices between prioritizing the collective struggle against broader injustices or fighting for specific women's issues that may be considered by some movement members as less important or even divisive. In many movements, women must work twice as hard to gain the same recognition as their male counterparts. They also face greater risks in terms of violence, both physical violence that threatens their safety and symbolic violence that demeans and delegitimizes their contributions. The experiences of women activists are often marked by tension between solidarity with fellow movement members and the struggle to secure equal space within the movement itself. Despite these challenges, women continue to be present, building networks of solidarity among themselves, creating alternative spaces where their voices are heard, and gradually changing the internal dynamics of movements toward being more inclusive and democratic.

The impact of women's participation in social movements on changes in social structures is significant and long-lasting (Guerra, 2022). Through the movements they conduct, women have succeeded in pushing for policy changes that protect their rights, such as laws on domestic violence, women's quotas in parliament, and protections for female workers. In some cases, the role of the court is also very important in helping to resolve family problems through a mediation process (Zahid et al., 2021). However, the deeper impact may lie in the shifting of consciousness and social norms. Women's movements have changed how society understands the concept of justice, expanding it from mere distributive justice to justice that considers differences in experience and needs. They have changed the way we talk about violence, from something considered a private matter to a public crime that must be addressed by the state. They have changed the way we view leadership, showing that effective leadership does not have to be masculine that gentleness and care are not weaknesses but strengths. In this collective experience, women have changed social structures not only through policy changes but also through changes in thinking, changes in language, and changes in everyday social relations. This process takes place slowly, often unnoticed, but its accumulation over time results in a fundamental transformation of a social order that was previously considered unshakable.

In the discourse on social movements and societal change, women's contributions are often marginalized or reduced to merely supporting movements led by men (Crossley & Nelson, 2018). Dominant historical narratives tend to highlight male figures as movement leaders, while women's roles are placed as supplementary or ignored altogether. Modern times are now beginning to change how we view the roles of men and women in modern society (Negara & Khayru, 2022). This creates an incomplete understanding of how social movements actually take place. Women are not only present in large numbers within social movements, but they also bring different perspectives, strategies, and forms of leadership that fundamentally shape the direction and outcomes of those movements. When women's contributions are ignored, we lose the understanding of why some movements succeed in achieving more inclusive change while others fail. Furthermore, the marginalization of women's narratives in social movements also impacts future generations. Young women who wish to be involved in the struggle for social justice lose role models who can inspire them, while the understanding that leadership in social movements is a male domain continues to be reproduced. This issue is not merely academic, but has real practical implications for how social movements are organized and how social change can be achieved more justly and sustainably.

Another equally important issue relates to the dilemma faced by women activists in navigating their positions, which are often at the intersection of various forms of oppression. A working-class woman, for example, faces injustice based on gender as well as class. Especially in urban areas, the problem of social inequality is often a major challenge in building togetherness (Mardikaningsih, 2021). A woman from an ethnic minority group faces racial discrimination and gender discrimination that reinforce each other. In social movements, debates often arise about which is more important to fight for: class injustice, racial injustice, or gender injustice. Women at this intersection are often forced to choose, to set aside one aspect of their identity for the sake of another, even though in their lived experience, all these forms of oppression are inseparable. This dilemma creates ongoing tension within social movements, where issues specific to women are often regarded as divisive or less important than issues considered more universal. The struggle to gain recognition that gender oppression is an integral part of social injustice, not something separate or secondary, remains an ongoing

fight. Without this recognition, social movements risk reproducing the same hierarchies and marginalization they seek to oppose, and the most marginalized women will continue to be the hardest to hear.

Studies on the role of women in social movements and societal change become highly relevant amidst the resurgence of global social movements led by women. In recent years, we have witnessed an extraordinary wave of movements, ranging from the #MeToo movement that changed how the world talks about sexual violence, the women's movement in Iran risking lives for their freedom, to local movements in various parts of the world led by women against environmental injustice, corruption, and policies that harm the common people. These movements show that when women take leadership, they bring new ways of organizing that are more fluid, more collaborative, and more difficult to be co-opted by power. They also show that issues long considered specific to women, such as sexual violence and bodily rights, are actually fundamental issues of justice and human dignity that concern the entire society. Without an adequate understanding of these dynamics, we will lose the opportunity to learn from these most significant contemporary movements. A systematic study of women's roles in social movements is important for mapping emerging patterns, identifying effective strategies, and understanding how these movements can be supported to achieve broader change.

The importance of this study is also driven by the need to understand how women's participation in social movements contributes to more fundamental changes in social structure, beyond just policy changes or elite turnover. Women-led movements often bring agendas that are more radical in the sense of touching the root of the problem: they do not only demand greater representation within existing structures but also question the structures themselves. They demand changes in the unequal division of domestic labor, in the power relations between men and women within the family, in the way we understand masculinity and femininity, and in the values underlying economic and development policies. These changes take place over the long term and are often invisible in short-term statistics, but their impact on human life is immense. Understanding how women as agents of change bring transformation to social structures, norms, and underlying values is essential for designing more effective and sustainable social change strategies. It is vital for all of us to continue learning and

understanding the role of every individual in creating positive and just change (Fauzi, 2023; Negara & Khayru, 2022). Without this understanding, efforts to achieve gender justice and broader social justice will continue to operate on the surface without touching the true roots of the problem.

This research aims to systematically analyze the role of women in social movements and their contribution to societal change, focusing on two main dimensions: the forms of women's contributions in various social movements and their influence on the direction and outcomes of movements, as well as the challenges faced by women in social movements and how these challenges influence the internal dynamics of movements and their impact on changing social structures. The theoretical contribution of this research is to formulate a conceptual framework that maps how the presence of women changes the characteristics of social movements from organizational strategies and struggle agendas to how movements interact with the wider community and how the challenges faced by women in movements reflect and, in turn, influence the broader social structure. Practically, the results of this research are expected to provide a better understanding for activists, policymakers, and academics regarding the importance of strengthening women's participation in social movements, as well as strategies that can be developed to overcome the challenges women face in their struggle for social justice and gender equality.

Method

This research uses a library research design with a qualitative approach aimed at exploring and synthesizing various theoretical perspectives and empirical findings regarding the role of women in social movements and societal change. The selection of this method is based on the characteristics of the topic, which requires an in-depth exploration of concepts that have developed within gender studies, the sociology of social movements, and feminist history. As explained by Creswell (2009), qualitative research in the form of a literature study allows researchers to understand social phenomena through the interpretation of existing texts without having to conduct primary data collection. In this study, the primary data sources are academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and research reports discussing women's participation in social movements, women's leadership, feminism, and changes in social structure. The data collection process was carried out

through systematic searches of academic databases using a combination of relevant keywords. Each identified source was then evaluated for credibility through an assessment of the publisher's reputation, the methodology used, and the consistency of arguments with findings from other reputable sources. This approach allows the researcher to build a comprehensive understanding of how women act as agents of social change (Reftantia et al., 2022).

Data analysis in this study employs a thematic analysis approach developed by Boyatzis (1998), which allows researchers to identify recurring patterns in the literature and organize them into meaningful themes. The analysis process begins with open coding of all collected literature material, followed by grouping codes with similar meanings into more abstract categories, and concluding with the formulation of main themes that answer the research questions. This approach enables the researcher to do more than just summarize what other authors have written, but also to perform a critical synthesis that generates new understanding of the dynamics of women's roles in social movements. To maintain the validity of the findings, this study implements a source triangulation strategy by comparing findings from literature with diverse disciplinary backgrounds, theoretical traditions, and geographical contexts. As emphasized by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), triangulation in qualitative research serves to enhance the credibility of findings by considering various potentially differing perspectives. Additionally, the researcher searched for literature with different or conflicting perspectives to ensure that the resulting conclusions are not biased due to an overly narrow selection of sources. The entire analysis process is systematically documented so that every step can be traced back by other researchers wishing to perform verification or replication.

Result and Discussion

Women's Contributions to Social Movements and Their Influence on the Direction and Outcome of Movements

Women's contributions to social movements often stem from an awareness of their life experiences that differ from those of men, and this difference brings a unique perspective that enriches the understanding of what is being fought for. In the environmental movement, for example, women who are daily responsible for providing water, firewood, and food for their families

possess very specific knowledge about how environmental degradation directly impacts their lives. We can see that factors such as gender and life experience indeed have a major influence on how someone faces challenges in the real world (Khayru et al., 2022). This experience makes them not just participants in environmental movements but also the most persistent drivers, as they personally feel the consequences of policies that destroy nature. In rural India, the Chipko movement which involved women hugging trees to prevent logging became a symbol of resistance born from a deep understanding of the relationship between forest conservation and family survival. In Indonesia, female farmers who oppose mining or palm oil plantations that damage their water sources bring a perspective on ecological justice that differs from more technocratic approaches. Daily experiences long considered domestic matters politically unimportant actually become the basis for sharp analysis on how development policies oriented solely toward economic growth sacrifice the lives of the most vulnerable people (Reger, 2018).

In civil rights and anti-discrimination movements, women bring organizational strategies that differ from male-dominated approaches. They tend to build movements from the grassroots, focusing on community organizing through small meetings, building mutual trust, and creating safe spaces where people can share experiences without fear of judgment (Taylor, 1998). Furthermore, involving women in human resource management processes has also been proven to provide a positive impact on equality (Infante & Darmawan, 2022). This approach has proven very effective in mobilizing long-term support, as it does not rely solely on momentary enthusiasm but builds a solid foundation of solidarity. In the civil rights movement in the United States, women like Ella Baker emphasized the importance of building leadership from below, training a new generation of activists who then became the backbone of the movement. This approach differs from the charismatic leadership model often dominated by men, which, while effective in the short term, is often unsustainable when the central figure is no longer present. It is important for us to maintain a sense of collective empathy in the public service system so that all parties feel valued (Khayru & Darmawan, 2023). Experience shows that movements built on a foundation of collective leadership and grassroots empowerment

distinctive features of women's contributions tend to be more resilient against repression and more capable of adapting to changing conditions.

Women also bring new agendas to social movements that were previously not considered important or even recognized as political issues. The issue of domestic violence, for example, was for centuries considered a private matter that should not be interfered with by the state or society (Molyneux, 1998). In fact, societal views on domestic violence greatly affect the mental health and recovery process of victims (Issalillah & Khayru, 2021). Women's movements succeeded in changing this understanding, demonstrating that domestic violence is gender-based violence that constitutes a human rights violation and a state responsibility to protect its citizens. Similarly, the issue of reproductive rights which includes a woman's right to determine whether, when, and with whom they will have children became a central agenda in the global feminist movement. This is closely related to how career women often have to face a double burden in the current social structure (Khairi, 2021). These issues were previously absent from the struggle lists of mainstream social movements that focused more on topics like labor wages, national independence, or general civil rights. By bringing these issues into the public sphere, women have expanded the definition of what is considered social justice. Justice does not only mean an even distribution of economic resources or the recognition of equal political rights, but also includes the right to one's own body, the right to be free from the persistence of violence, and the right to determine one's own life.

Women's contributions to social movements are also evident in the way they build cross-border solidarity that transcends differences of ethnicity, religion, and class. In many contexts, women become bridges connecting diverse groups, as they share common experiences as women that often surpass other divisions (Beckwith, 2002). In the modern world of work, diversity and inclusion have become key to maintaining social order (Irfan & Hariani, 2023). In peace movements, for example, women from conflicting groups are often the most active in building dialogue and reconciliation. They realize that ongoing conflict brings no benefit to their daily lives, and they are the ones who suffer most from violence, the loss of family members, and the destruction of life-sustaining infrastructure. Moreover, in the current era of remote work, the balance between work and family life presents a new challenge for gender dynamics (Irfan, Darmawan,

& da Costa, 2023). In various parts of the world, from Northern Ireland to Rwanda, from Palestine to Aceh, women have played key roles in peace efforts that are often unrecorded in official history. They build networks of solidarity that cross conflict lines, share experiences of suffering, and together imagine a different future. This cross-border solidarity demonstrates that women have the capacity to look beyond the narrow interests of their own groups and build movements based on universal human values. Therefore, it is crucial for us to support one another to create a better environment for everyone (Khairi, 2021; Irfan & Hariani, 2023).

In movements explicitly focused on women's issues, such as second and third-wave feminist movements, women developed highly innovative forms of organization and strategies for struggle. Consciousness-raising groups that flourished in the 1970s became a new model of organizing, where women gathered in small groups to share their personal experiences, discovering that what they considered personal problems were actually experienced by many other women and thus had a political dimension (Sutton & Pollock, 2000). This organizational model was significantly different from the hierarchical structures common in social movements at the time and became the precursor to movements that were more fluid, more participatory, and more difficult to co-opt. Women's ability to create alternative spaces where they could speak, listen, and learn from one another became the foundation for movements that subsequently brought about major changes in policy and public awareness. This experience shows that the form of an organization is not neutral; it carries certain values and influences what can and cannot be achieved. By creating more inclusive and democratic forms of organization, women have made contributions that have changed not only the content of the struggle but also the way the struggle is conducted.

Women also bring a very significant contribution in terms of documentation and the creation of alternative knowledge (Hurwitz & Taylor, 2012). In many social movements, women become the chroniclers of history who ensure that marginalized voices are not lost. They write memoirs, collect testimonies, document human rights violations, and create archives that serve as important resources for future generations. In Argentina, the mothers and grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who lost their children to forced disappearances by the military regime, did not only fight for justice but also meticulously documented what happened, ensuring that the truth was not

buried along with the victims. In various parts of the world, women activists create alternative media, journals, and publications that disseminate perspectives unavailable in mainstream media. They also develop participatory research methodologies that involve communities, which are usually the objects of research, as active subjects. This contribution to the field of knowledge is crucial because social change requires not only policy changes but also changes in perspectives, narratives, and the knowledge considered legitimate. By creating alternative knowledge, women have built the foundation for more fundamental and sustainable change.

The impact of women's contributions to the direction of social movements is clearly seen in the shift from state-focused approaches toward more community-based approaches (Banaszak, 2008). Movements influenced by feminist perspectives tend to be more critical of the state as a tool for change, as the state itself is an institution built upon patriarchal structures. Instead, they focus more on strengthening civil society, building horizontal solidarity, and creating alternatives at the community level. This approach brings significant consequences to movement strategy. Rather than just demanding policy changes from the top down, movements influenced by feminist perspectives also build alternative institutions such as sexual violence crisis centers, shelters for victims of domestic violence, women's credit unions, and alternative schools. These institutions do not only provide services not offered by the state, but also serve as models for what a more just society looks like. Thus, movements led or influenced by women do not only fight for policy change but also directly build the society they desire, here and now. This approach has changed how we understand the relationship between social movements and change: change does not only happen when policies change, but also when we begin to build new relationships based on different principles.

Women's contributions to social movements have changed not only the content and strategies of the struggle, but also who is considered a leader and what leadership should look like (Bhattacharjya et al., 2013). Male-dominated leadership models often emphasize individual charisma, public speaking skills, and physical courage. This model tends to ignore the invisible labor that actually forms the foundation of a movement's sustainability: building trust, nurturing relationships, ensuring members' needs are met, and maintaining the collective spirit. Women in social

movements have shown that the work previously dismissed as domestic or unimportant is actually vital leadership work. They have also demonstrated that leadership does not have to be held by a single person but can be distributed collectively. They show that a soft voice does not mean weakness, that listening is a form of strength, and that caring for movement members is part of the struggle, not a distraction from it. This shift in the understanding of leadership has opened up space for more people to see themselves as leaders, not just those with formal positions or extraordinary speaking abilities. In this way, women's contributions have made social movements more inclusive, more democratic, and better able to maintain long-term commitment.

Challenges for Women in Social Movements and Their Impact on Movement Dynamics and Changes in Social Structures

Women in social movements face structural challenges rooted in gender inequalities that are deeply embedded in society. Before they can even begin to fight against external injustices, they must deal with restrictions that limit their room for maneuver within the family, the community, and society at large. The norms governing what is appropriate and inappropriate for women often become the first obstacle that must be overcome (Yulia, 2010). Women's involvement in community development is actually a form of emancipation that is vital for collective progress (Issalillah, Khayru, & Wisnujati, 2022). A woman who wishes to engage in activism may have to confront a husband who forbids her from attending evening meetings, parents who worry the family's reputation will be tarnished, or a community that views women active in the public sphere as immoral. These obstacles are not individual but structural, as they reflect a value system that places women in the domestic sphere and men in the public sphere. On a smaller scale, women's roles within the household also significantly influence more environmentally friendly consumption decisions (Halizah & Nuraini, 2021). They must develop specific strategies to navigate these barriers, such as building solidarity with other women in the family, utilizing kinship networks to gain support, or gradually expanding their space through the achievements and recognition they earn. This process itself is a form of struggle that transforms power dynamics within the family and the community.

Within social movements themselves, women often face challenges that are no less severe. Although they are present in large numbers and contribute significantly, formal leadership positions in movements are often dominated by men. Women are assigned roles deemed appropriate for their gender, such as managing logistics, caring for sick members, or organizing social events, while strategic decision-making remains in the hands of men (Carroll, 1989). Understanding the principles of organizational behavior greatly helps us see how cooperation dynamics within a group take place (Darmawan, 2013). When women speak in movement forums, their voices are often not taken seriously, or they are considered too emotional and lacking in rationality. This experience creates what is known as a "double burden" for women activists: they must prove themselves not only as competent activists but also as women worthy of being seen as equal to men. Moreover, in today's modern society, we need to look at the psychological side of individuals to better understand social interactions (Darmawan et al., 2021). Many women subsequently choose to form women's organizations or wings within a movement as spaces where they can develop leadership and strategies without having to constantly face marginalization. However, the creation of these separate spaces is often used by men in the movement to assume that women's issues are women's business and do not need to be the concern of the entire movement. This dynamic creates a recurring tension throughout the history of social movements.

The challenges faced by women in social movements are also linked to a greater risk of violence. Women activists often become targets of violence intended not only to halt their activities but also to punish them for violating gender norms. Violence against women activists is frequently sexual in nature, designed to shame and demean them as women, not just as activists. In situations of conflict or political repression, women face different risks than men: they can be targets of rape as a weapon of war, or arrests accompanied by sexual harassment by officials. This security issue also impacts other vulnerable groups, such as street children who are often trapped in a cycle of vulnerability because of failing protection systems (Aidan Bin Abdullah, 2021). These risks are often not discussed openly within movements, due to a sense of shame or because they are considered too personal an issue. Consequently, women activists often have to face these risks alone, without adequate support from the movement. These

traumatic experiences can lead many women to leave activism, or at least reduce their involvement. Additionally, practices such as underage marriage also pose a serious problem as they can worsen household welfare (Aliyah et al., 2023). This greater vulnerability to violence also means that women must develop security strategies that differ from those of men, which often require additional resources that are not always available. Thus, the unequal risk of violence becomes one of the factors limiting women's participation in social movements and influencing the form of their involvement.

Another challenge faced by women in social movements is the dilemma of representation: who speaks on behalf of women, and whether the voices of the most marginalized women are heard within the movement. In mainstream women's movements, the voices of middle-class, white, and educated women are often the most dominant, while the experiences of working-class women, women from ethnic minority groups, or women from the Global South are marginalized (Chatillon & Taylor, 2021). Differences in social mobility between people in cities and villages also create interesting dynamics to study (Amri & Khayru, 2021). Critiques from postcolonial and Black feminists have shown that women's movements often reproduce the same hierarchies they seek to oppose, by claiming to speak on behalf of "women" when what is meant is the experience of women from dominant groups. In broader social movements, this dilemma arises when women from marginal groups attempt to bring up specific issues they face, while the dominant group within the movement considers those issues divisive or less important. Socially constructed environmental values also significantly influence how an individual makes decisions in daily life (Mardikaningsih et al., 2022). Women from marginal groups are often forced to choose between solidarity with their group based on class, ethnicity, or religion, and solidarity with fellow women. This dilemma creates ongoing tension and often leads to divisions within the movement. Experience shows that movements successful in overcoming this dilemma are those capable of acknowledging that oppression is never singular, that women have different experiences based on their position within other social structures, and that the struggle for justice must encompass all these forms of oppression simultaneously.

The challenges faced by women in social movements are also related to how they must balance various roles demanded by society. A female activist is often still expected to be a good mother, wife, and homemaker,

alongside her role as an activist. When she spends time on meetings, demonstrations, or other movement activities, she is frequently labeled as a negligent mother or an irresponsible wife. In reality, every child has rights that must be legally guaranteed, both in the fields of education and health (Hariyani et al., 2021). This pressure can come from the family, the community, or from within the movement itself, where male activists do not face the same demands. This double burden often leads to physical and mental exhaustion, causing many women to leave activism or, at the very least, reduce their level of participation. Gender-conscious movements strive to overcome this by creating structures that support women's participation, such as providing childcare during meetings, scheduling activities at times that allow women to attend, or distributing responsibilities more fairly between male and female members. Even in divorce situations, the best interests of the child must always be the primary principle in parenting (Fajar et al., 2021). However, in many movements, these matters are still considered trivial affairs that are unimportant compared to the "great struggle." The neglect of this dimension reflects how patriarchal structures permeate even into movements that claim to fight for justice.

The impact of the challenges faced by women on the dynamics of social movements is very significant. When women feel their voices are not heard or their positions are not valued, they tend to form separate organizations. The formation of women's organizations or women's wings within a movement can be an effective strategy for developing women's leadership and fighting for specific issues (Chatillon & Taylor, 2021). On the other hand, a major challenge to social integration also comes from the rising tide of ethno-religious nationalism (Fariz, 2021). However, this can also lead to movement fragmentation, where the issues championed by women are considered secondary issues that are not a priority for the movement as a whole. In extreme cases, tensions between men and women within a movement can cause splits that weaken the movement overall. Conversely, when women are given equal space within the movement, and when the issues they bring are recognized as an integral part of the struggle, the movement becomes stronger, more inclusive, and better able to build alliances across differences. Experience shows that movements that successfully integrate a gender perspective into their analysis and strategy tend to be more adaptive and better able to respond to diverse community

needs. Thus, how a movement handles the challenges faced by women becomes one of the determining factors for the success or failure of the movement in achieving sustainable change.

The impact of the challenges faced by women is also evident in how social movements interact with the broader social structure. When women within a movement successfully overcome the obstacles they face, this experience often becomes a model for change outside the movement (Crossley & Nelson, 2018). Current social media culture also helps shape how we perceive authenticity and human relationships through the role of influencers (Hariani & Mardikaningsih, 2022). The struggle for recognition within the movement, for leadership positions, and to bring issues previously considered private into the public agenda, all reflect a broader struggle within society. Women's success in changing the internal dynamics of a movement is often followed by changes in broader social norms regarding what is possible for women to do. Conversely, when women fail to secure equal space within a movement, it can reinforce the message that gender inequality is natural and unchangeable. In this way, social movements are not only arenas for external change but also fields where internal changes regarding gender relations occur, and the outcomes of these internal struggles have consequences that extend far beyond the movement itself.

The challenges faced by women in social movements have also driven the development of more critical feminist theories and practices regarding the relationship between social movements and social structure changes. The experience of marginalization within movements that claim to fight for justice teaches that no movement is automatically inclusive; inclusivity must be consciously and continuously fought for (Montoya, 2014). Even the use of artificial intelligence needs to be analyzed so that it does not create biases that could hinder social transformation (Mardikaningsih & Oluwatoyin, 2023). This gave birth to the concept of "intersectionality" developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, which demonstrates that various forms of oppression cannot be separated and that movements focusing only on one form of oppression will always leave behind those at the crossroads of multiple oppressions. This concept has changed the way social movements formulate their agendas, encouraging a more integrative approach that recognizes that the struggles against racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression are an inseparable unity. The experiences of women in social movements

have also encouraged the development of practices such as "feminist organizing," which emphasizes collective decision-making processes, consensus building, and distributed leadership. These practices have been adopted by many contemporary social movements, even those not explicitly focused on women's issues, demonstrating the broad impact of women's struggles in changing how social movements operate.

The challenges faced by women in social movements and how they respond to those challenges have changed the understanding of what social structure change is and how to achieve it. Women's experiences show that social structure change cannot be achieved solely through policy changes or shifts in formal power. Social interaction in digital society has also now changed communication patterns and the dynamics of our virtual communities (Darmawan, 2021). It also requires changes in everyday relationships, in the way we interact with one another, in the division of labor at home, and in how we understand and value unpaid work. Social structure change also requires changes in the way the movement itself is organized, in who is considered a leader, and in what issues are deemed important. In other words, social structure change cannot be separated from changes in the micro-power relations that shape daily life. Women's contributions to social movements have shown that the struggle for justice cannot only focus on "what" is being fought for but also on "how" the struggle is conducted. The way we fight must reflect the society we want to build; if we want an equal and democratic society, then our movements must also be equal and democratic. Women's experiences have taught that the process of struggle itself is part of the change, and that change occurring only at the policy level without changes at the level of relationships and consciousness will not last long. Therefore, education and legal guarantees for children's rights remain an important foundation for a more just future (Hariani et al., 2021).

Conclusion

This research shows that women have a very significant contribution to social movements, not only as participants but as shapers of the direction, strategy, and outcomes of the movement. Women's contributions begin with an awareness of life experiences that differ from men's, bringing unique perspectives that enrich the understanding of what is being fought for, especially in environmental, civil rights, and peace movements. Women

bring different organizational strategies, building movements from the grassroots through more sustainable collective leadership, and bringing new agendas that expand the definition of social justice by elevating issues such as domestic violence and reproductive rights into the public sphere. They build cross-border solidarity that transcends ethnic, religious, and class differences, and develop innovative organizational forms that are more participatory and democratic. However, women in social movements also face severe challenges, both from patriarchal social structures and from within the movement itself, including marginalization in leadership, a greater risk of violence, the double burden of being an activist and a homemaker, and representation dilemmas that make it difficult for the voices of marginalized women to be heard. The impact of these challenges is very significant to the movement's dynamics, where marginalization can cause fragmentation while inclusivity strengthens the movement. Ultimately, women's struggle in social movements has changed the understanding of social structure change, showing that change occurs not only at the policy level but also at the level of everyday relations, and that the method of struggle must reflect the society one wishes to build.

Theoretically, the findings of this research enrich the understanding of social movements by showing that analyses focusing only on political opportunity structures or resource mobilization are insufficient to fully understand movement dynamics. A gender-sensitive approach is required to understand how women's positions in the social structure influence their forms of participation, how the issues they bring change the movement's agenda, and how the movement's internal dynamics reflect as well as influence the broader social structure. This implication shifts the focus of analysis from questions about whether women participate in social movements toward an understanding of how women's participation transforms the movements themselves. Practically, these findings provide direction for developing strategies to strengthen more inclusive social movements. For activists and movement organizations, it is important to consciously build structures that support women's participation, including a fair distribution of responsibilities, protection mechanisms against violence, and recognition of various forms of leadership that are not limited to the male-dominated charismatic model. For policymakers, it is important to recognize that supporting social movements led by or actively involving

women is an investment in more sustainable long-term social change, as these movements tend to carry more inclusive agendas and build solidarity that transcends narrow interest.

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