This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled

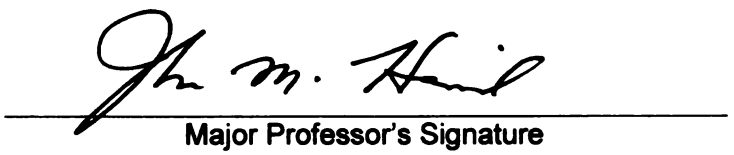
THE BOUNDARIES OF SISTERHOOD: RACE, CLASS, GENDER, AND PARTICIPATION IN MICHIGAN'S WELFARE RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND RESPONSE TO WELFARE POLICY, 1964-1972

presented by

CYNTHIA EDMONDS-CADY

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Ph.D. degree in Social Work



Major Professor's Signature

July 19, 2006

Date

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE

THE BOUNDARIES OF SISTERHOOD: RACE, CLASS, GENDER, AND PARTICIPATION IN MICHIGAN'S WELFARE RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND RESPONSE TO WELFARE POLICY, 1964-1972

By

Cynthia Edmonds-Cady

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Social Work

2006

ABSTRACT

THE BOUNDARIES OF SISTERHOOD: RACE, CLASS, GENDER, AND PARTICIPATION IN MICHIGAN'S WELFARE RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND RESPONSE TO WELFARE POLICY, 1964-1972

By

Cynthia Edmonds-Cady

This historical, qualitative study used the combined methods of oral history and document analysis to examine how race, class, and gender intersected in women's participation in the welfare rights movement and their responses to changes in welfare policy during the period between 1964 and 1972. A multidimensional feminist standpoint approach (Naples, 2003) and an intersectional approach were used to inform the conceptual framework for this study, and the literature on women's historical participation in social movements, the development and dismantling of the National Welfare Rights Organization, and historical changes in welfare policy during the Johnson and Nixon administrations were also examined. This research focused on Detroit and Southeast Michigan, and examined how women in the welfare rights movement crossed and/or maintained boundaries of race and class while acting from a similar gender perspective. Interviews were conducted with 13 participants in the welfare rights movement in the Detroit, Michigan area and documents from various archival sources were analyzed. Primary sources, documents created by movement participants, were examined. Results of this study indicate that a shared standpoint of "woman" was particularly evident in non-recipient "friends of welfare rights" initial motivation to join the movement, and a strong poverty-class standpoint was emphasized in recipient members' participation. Maternalism was a significant mobilization feature for the

friends of welfare rights; however, a *practical maternalism* emerged within the recipients' motivation and involvement in the welfare rights movement. Documents that responded to changes in welfare policy most frequently emphasized gender, particularly motherhood and the right to financial support. Overall, race and class based differences were emphasized most in decision making, tactics, and control within the movement. Within the documents, race was used in a more divisive way in responding to welfare policy changes, calling up images of slavery and oppression, and class was used ambivalently by including "working families" and "working mothers" in calls to fight against policies that would harm poor women on welfare. Where boundaries of race and class were able to be crossed within this sample, it was when non-recipients engaged in the same activities as recipients, but encouraged control and leadership to be maintained by recipients. These results indicate that similarities in gender or motherhood status were helpful in motivating some individuals to initially form linkages across difference, but connections were complicated based on differences in the ways that class and race intersected gender. This dissertation is an interdisciplinary study that fills gaps in the literature within the fields of social work and community practice, social work advocacy, women's history, women's studies, and sociology.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the women who are currently struggling or have previously struggled on welfare. You are somebody, and you deserve the life you always imagined possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work represents a journey, albeit one that is never quite over. For the journey towards completion of this dissertation is also a journey towards learning and understanding. As such, there have been many individuals I have met along the way who have contributed to my efforts in some manner.

The first individuals who must be thanked are those whose stories are presented here. I am grateful to all of the strong, brave, courageous, proud, and wonderful ladies of the welfare rights movement. To all of you who shared your kitchen tables, living rooms, porches or offices with me, in order to spend some time talking about the past, I will always be thankful. It is your work that made this work possible. It is your work that stood the test of time. I hope all of you know that you did "make a difference".

I next thank my family, especially my husband who at times took on more responsibility than the equal partnership we originally agreed to. Without his support and encouragement I would never have been able to complete this dissertation. During the numerous occasions when I wished to "give it up", he always encouraged me to keep going, and was always prepared to hold down the fort when I needed to go away alone in order to write. My three children also contributed, each in their own way. My oldest son assisted in my completion of the dissertation by growing up and finally finding his own trajectory, without mom. My daughter was always ready to ask what I had worked on that day, and on occasion placed notes with encouraging and affectionate messages written on them in my books, files, and papers. My youngest son gave me the hugs and kisses that I needed to keep going, and he often seemed to genuinely want to know what "welfare

rights" was all about, and who George Wiley was. Besides the emotional support I received from my family, they also assisted in very concrete dissertation related work. I will always be thankful for my father's emergency assistance in the archives. He will forever remain my "unofficial" research assistant. My husband's late night cassette tape dubbing skills also came in handy on several occasions when copies needed to be made at the last minute. I am also thankful to both my parents for listening to long passages of the dissertation to see if it "sounded okay" and for lending me their empty house when I needed to work alone. My sister and best friend both acted as helpful "sounding boards" when I needed to talk about the process of completing the dissertation itself. I am sure they now know much more about feminist research and qualitative methods than they actually care to. I am also thankful to my two youngest children for listening to my endless descriptions of women and social movement activity, race, class, and gender, etc... I am glad that they didn't always tune me out.

There have been numerous colleagues, educators, and friends who have also assisted me in formulating questions, understanding concepts, and clarifying this work. I first of all, owe a tremendous debt to all of my committee members at Michigan State University. I am particularly grateful to my chair, Dr. John Herrick, who was always ready with the right amount of encouragement and critique. I am truly thankful that I was able to work with someone who, from the very beginning, seemed to understand how I envisioned this dissertation. Dr. Herrick is a wonderful advisor, and his knowledge of history and historical work is tremendous. I am thankful that he was in the school of social work, and my only regret is that I was never able to take one of his classes.

I am also thankful for the class I took with Dr. Maxine Baca Zinn. Her understanding of intersectionality and the many discussions we had about this topic, pushed me to think more critically about the theoretical framework for this dissertation. Whenever I struggled with a concept, I was always able to see it more clearly after talking with her. She encouraged me to read more and delve deeper into this very complex but critical framework. I will remain ever grateful for her assistance.

I am grateful to Dr. Lisa Fine for agreeing to read a history paper I had written early in my program, although she did not know me. This was the start of her thoughtful assistance with my work. Her reading recommendations and suggestions on doing historical work were invaluable. She often would ask critical questions, but then leave me to discover the answers on my own. After I had struggled with something for awhile I would finally see what she had meant, and I think the lessons were more powerful because of this.

Dr. Kyunghee Lee has also been very helpful throughout this process. She asked critical questions and gave important feedback from the comprehensive exam stage all the way through to the final stages of the dissertation. Her questions forced me to re-examine issues, and define concepts more clearly.

Others who have encouraged or assisted me in this work include former advisors and professors. I will always be thankful to Dr. Beth Glover Reed who, while I was in my MSW program at the University of Michigan, exposed me to scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins, Sandra Harding, Michel Foucualt, Nancy Hartsock, Donna Haraway, Pierre Bourdieu, and others too numerous to list, and also introduced me to theories as diverse as chaos theory and standpoint theory. Her classes were always full of stimulating

discussions and maddening dilemmas. I am also thankful for her continued support and stimulation of my work. I can be assured that when I think I have the answer, she will be able to ask the kinds of questions that eventually lead me "back to the drawing board". For this, I am indebted to her.

I have also met individuals who have been integral to my decision and ability to continue on my long journey. I will never forget the moment I realized that I could possibly have the intellectual capacity to complete something as mentally arduous as a dissertation. I had just received my graded essay back from Professor Jim Devries in my sociology class at Monroe County Community College. I had ended that essay, on the topic of education, by saying that I would have liked to go on in my own educational career to try to obtain a Ph.D., but I probably did not have the capacity. In the margins of the paper he had simply written, "You can do it. You have the ability to get a Ph.D." As a working class kid who had never really believed that I could do anything of importance, this was a pivotal moment for me. I soon after began to take my work more seriously, and to believe in myself. For the support and encouragement he has given me throughout my academic career, I am ever grateful to Dr. Jim Devries.

Others who have helped me in this work include Dr. Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore, who although her policy class was one of the toughest courses in my Ph.D. program at Michigan State University, had a way and continues to have a way of pushing me to be my best. She is my unofficial committee member, and someone who has an innate ability to always be pragmatic and succinct. Her suggestions are always to the point, and helpful to an idealist such as myself.

Dr. Marya Sosulski has also served as my unofficial committee member at Michigan State University, throughout this journey. Her suggestions on my writing have been enormously helpful, and so has the emotional support she has provided. She has also served as an important traveling companion for research trips and conferences. She is truly a colleague and a friend.

I am also grateful for the research funding I received from the Graduate School at Michigan State University. I was fortunate to receive a Summer Acceleration Fellowship during the summer of 2005, and was awarded the Dissertation Completion Fellowship during the fall of 2005. I also received two Research Enhancement Awards from the graduate school during my tenure in the doctoral program. This financial support was critical to my completion of this dissertation.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the critical support that I have received in the past from the late Dr. Carol T. Mowbray, who served as my advisor at the University of Michigan. There are no words to express how important she was to me in developing my work and in modeling what a truly wonderful teacher, researcher, and mentor looks like. I can never hope to even come close to living up to the example she set, but I continuously try to imagine "what would Carol do?" when faced with a difficult situation. I am saddened that she is no longer here to offer her matter of fact advice and guidance, when I feel I need it most. I will, however, always be grateful to her for steering me in the right direction in the early stages of my dissertation planning. If it were not for here sage advice, this would be a participatory action research project, and I would be nowhere near finished. Therefore, I only regret that I can not tell her, "thank-you" for that.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

AFDC- Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

CAP- Community Action Program.

CORE- Congress On Racial Equality.

ERAP- The Economic Research and Action Project.

EOA- Economic Opportunity Act.

FAP- Family Assistance Plan.

MWRO- Michigan Welfare Rights Organization.

MFY- Mobilization For Youth.

NAACP-National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

NIMH- National Institute of Mental Health.

NWRO- National Welfare Rights Organization.

OC-MWRO- Oakland County, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization.

OEO- Office of Economic Opportunity.

PRWORA- Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act.

SCLC- Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

SDS- Students for a Democratic Society.

SNCC- Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee.

TANF- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.

WIC- Women, Infants and Children.

WIN- Work Incentive Program.

WSP- Women Strike for Peace.

Part I: Contextualizing

Chapter 1

Understanding the Past for a New Approach to Community Practice

Background of the Study

Although I began my interest in the historical trajectory of the welfare rights movement as a not so young social work student pursuing my MSW degree, in many ways I began struggling with questions about how race, class, and gender intersected in women's lives much earlier. Growing up in a working class family, as the daughter of a steelworker, I was exposed early on to the belief that unions were important, and that individuals were more powerful when they banded together. Later in my life, as I experienced poverty firsthand, I finally began to understand the ways in which gender and class intersected. When I eventually entered the academy I also began the process of acknowledging my own privilege based on my social location as a white woman pursuing graduate studies. I struggled to understand just how these categories of race, class, and gender ordered individual lives as well as the macro social structures and institutions that offered opportunity for some at the expense of others. Through my early graduate work as I delved into postmodernist critiques of identity and attempted to deconstruct various categories of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, I began to wonder whether and how social mobilization of poor women was possible. Could women come together across seemingly unbridgeable divides of race, class, and sexual orientation, not to mention ability/disability status, or religion? Could this occur without essentializing the category "women"? Was my father right about the possibility of individuals coming

together to work for social change? If the answer to these questions was "No", I feared for the future of social work, particularly the kind of macro social work that I was interested in. Therefore, I attempted to find answers to these questions while still in my MSW program. I formulated an independent study that used participatory action research methods to bring together women on welfare in one small city. This project produced more questions than answers. As I witnessed African American and white women talk about poverty, welfare, and single motherhood, I saw instances of understanding as well as misunderstanding between them. They had moments of agreement about what life on welfare was like, and they had moments when they struggled to understand and clarify misconceptions or stereotypical assumptions about each other's lives. This was a small group, and their goals did not include large scale social movement building. Where would I find an example of how mobilization occurs across difference, or if it is even possible? I finally realized that I needed to look back at the large-scale historical social movements that had already occurred in order to examine how women in the past worked together for social change.

This dissertation examines how women involved in the welfare rights movement mobilized around a similar identity as women and mothers, and it argues that this mobilization was complicated by intersecting differences in race and class. It furthermore explores how these similarities and differences were evident in participants' responses to the changes in welfare policy that occurred during the Johnson and Nixon administrations. This research explores how women participated in the welfare rights movement in Detroit, and how they responded to changes in welfare policy from 1964 to 1972, across divisions and within similarities of race, class, and gender. It relies on

qualitative research methods, specifically oral histories and document analysis, and takes a feminist historical approach using a multidimensional feminist standpoint and intersectional perspective as a theoretical framework.

This study is based on concepts gleaned from the literature on women's historical participation in social movements and the ways in which women organized across difference and within similarities. The categories that are examined in this study emerge from the gaps and unanswered questions in the literature and are framed by the theoretical framework used. A feminist historical approach to the problem of women mobilizing for social change suggests that analyzing women's lives over time will yield critical and socially transformative lessons for the present. A multidimensional feminist standpoint approach assumes that knowledge can emerge from the social locations (occupation of marginalized or privileged positions in society), the social experiences (everyday lives), and the construction of a sense of community (historically embedded, geographic or non-geographic, including individual voices as they relate to others) of women (Naples, 2003).

Overview of Chapters

The chapters in this dissertation are organized into four sections. The sections are organized by the main themes of the study, with several chapters in each. Section I, *Contextualizing*, outlines the preliminary issues for the study and provides the necessary context for the research presented in this dissertation. This section includes chapters one, two, and three. These chapters describe the problem, provide a justification for the specific area of study, briefly outline women's social movement participation near the

time period of interest, and describe the development of the national welfare rights organization as well as the various changes to welfare policy that occurred at this time.

Section II, *Conceptualizing*, includes chapters four and five. This section describes the conceptual framework and the theoretical underpinnings of the study. There is a discussion of the intersectional approach and feminist historical strategy used, and an explanation of how a multidimensional feminist standpoint approach is applied, as well as an outline of the specific methods, data, and sample for this dissertation. This section delineates actual details of how the study was designed and carried out, including the type of data collected and the methods used to analyze that data.

Section III, *Intersecting Boundaries,* presents the main findings from the study. It includes chapters six and seven, and displays findings related to how differences and similarities were manifested within the movement. This section presents the places where difference was most emphasized and where sameness was highlighted within the findings. These results are presented in a way that illustrates how participants' various social locations intersected within their movement work, and how participants' indicated differing standpoints that were informed by race, class, and gender.

The last section, section IV, *Significance of Boundaries,* contains chapters eight, nine, and ten. This section concludes the dissertation, with a return to the research questions, and a discussion of the meaning of the results. It also includes an outline of the limitations and strengths of the study as well as the implications and significance of the findings for the field of social work and further research.

A Current Problem for Social Work

The 1996 passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) eliminated the program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), replacing it with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Welfare policy now explicitly promotes work and marriage as a means to eliminate dependency on the state, with strict work requirements, active encouragement for the establishment of two-parent families, and the use of numeric goals to coax states into reducing out of wedlock pregnancies (Mink, 1998). TANF is based on the assumption that work is the best means to self-sufficiency for poor women, and that the poor need to gain better work habits, rather than more education and training (Lens, 2002). Many have been quick to call TANF a success because of the large overall reduction in welfare rolls. However, according to the Census Bureau, female-headed households with children had a poverty rate of 28.0 percent in 2003, compared with 13.5 percent for male-headed households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). As these figures indicate, poverty is still very much in existence, and still disproportionately impacting women. The "success" of welfare reform does not include long term self- sufficiency and movement out of poverty for poor women (Lens, 2002). Success, as it is currently framed, means finding employment that is often unstable, most likely low-wage, and without benefits (Hagen, 1999).

Within this climate of welfare reform it is particularly important that social workers understand the issue of women's poverty and past strategies for change. The current environment of devolution, shifts to privatization, and downsizing of social services makes it even more critical that social workers develop effective and creative

community intervention strategies (Mizrahi, 2001). The obligation to promote social justice, inherent to the field of social work, necessitates an examination of methods for encouraging structural change that benefits poor women, and an exploration of the usefulness of these strategies within the context of TANF. Although the number of community organizing programs increased in the 1960s and the 1970s, by the 1980s a fiscally and ideologically conservative climate resulted in a de-emphasis of community outreach efforts (Mizrahi, 2001). Thus, large scale social change efforts were declining prior to the welfare reform of the 1990s.

Some observers have emphasized that current punitive welfare reform measures are similar to those faced prior to the gains made during the social movements of the 1960s (Piven & Sampson, 2001). Before a national welfare rights movement was established in the 1960s, welfare applicants requesting assistance were more likely to be turned down rather than helped, similar to the current kinds of diversion of applicants into job searches or privately funded services (e.g., charitable food banks) (Piven & Sampson, 2001). In the early 1960s only 33 percent of those eligible for welfare were actually receiving it, but by 1971, due to the combination of legal aid and community programs created by the War on Poverty initiatives, as well as pressure from welfare rights groups, this figure had risen to 90 percent (Berkowitz, 1991).

Past Social Work Position

There are linkages between the social work profession and the social movements of the 1960s, including welfare rights, which were forged primarily through individual activist and community work (Naples, 1998; Reisch & Andrews, 2002). In a study of radical social workers, Wagner (1989) found that many of those who became social

workers in the 1960s to the early 1970s indicated that they had entered the field through their community organizing work, and that they saw the social work profession as a vehicle though which to continue their social action work.

The official position that social work held was more complicated. The two major professional organizations, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), had very little involvement in development of the Johnson administration's War on Poverty initiatives during the 1960s (Leighninger, 1999). The Johnson administration's Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) presented itself and its policies as forward thinking and optimistic, developing innovative approaches to defeating poverty in the long run (Patterson, 2000). To those on the OEO staff, social workers represented an older more profession-oriented way of dealing with poverty, and in fact, the OEO was not staffed with any social workers, nor were there any social workers involved in the development of the new policy initiatives (Leighninger, 1999). The crux of this gap seemed to be in the administration's emphasis on community based strategies, and social work's insistence that only professionals work within these organizations, or at the very least, train the citizens who would work there (Patterson, 2000). Social workers in general, seemed to be ambivalent about the ability of citizens to initiate and run community programs without professional assistance.

Throughout the War on Poverty, social work maintained a belief in the need for professionalization of services to the poor, despite an outward stance that aligned with social justice (Leighninger, 1999). This was illustrated in a 1961 NASW fact sheet created in response to the new punitive measures adapted in Newburgh, New York for AFDC recipients. While the fact sheet strongly condemned any removal of illegitimate

children from the rolls (which was happening as part of the city's 13 point plan to deal with a welfare crisis), it also contained a comment about not approving of immorality (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 1961). We can also see the social work view of the importance of professionals to public assistance in this same fact sheet. It contained a statement that social services should only be administered by social workers, who would then help recipients become independent (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 1961).

Despite the lack of involvement in the policymaking of the OEO, some social workers did become involved in the War on Poverty through their frontline work in the many community organizations that were established by Community Action Programs (CAPs) and funded through the OEO. This is indicated in Nancy Naples' (1998) study of the New York City CAP workers in the mid to late 1960s, and their common routes to community work. Among those community workers who were not residents of the community itself, many were led to that type of work through their experiences as social workers (Naples, 1998). Therefore, while social workers may not have been directly involved in creating the programs of the OEO, on one level they served as partners in the War on Poverty, working in some of the frontline organizations of the time period.

Social workers also tended to lend their official, and sometimes physical, support to the grass-roots initiatives of welfare recipients in local struggles, on a more individualized basis (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). A 1968 welfare rights brochure published by the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) explaining how to start a local welfare rights group, illustrates social worker involvement in a directive to recipients that they should appeal to local chapters of the NASW for assistance in starting

such a group.[1] In a conference brochure from the 1973 NWRO convention, the NASW indicated their support of the organization and also their support for several NWRO initiatives.[2] Social work beliefs about how best to deal with poverty were not homogenous, but did reflect an overarching devotion to professionalism, as well as a stance in favor of social justice.

Current advocates of social work community practice models emphasize that social workers must not only understand that race, class, gender, and ethnicity act as structures of inequality, but they must also make conscious efforts toward creating social justice and equality (Gutiérrez, Alvarez, Nemon, & Lewis, 1996). In order to more successfully work with women who are currently marginalized on multiple levels, including race, class, and gender, past social movements and efforts to mobilize the poor should be critically examined.

Focus on the Welfare Rights Movement

The traditional cultural norms and ideology within U.S. society has tended to dictate acceptable political behavior for both men and women. Differing expectations for men and women have been based on accepted gender norms. When women organize and act, it is often perceived and labeled differently from men's work (Blee, 1998). While men have taken on strong and very public leadership roles in protest movements, as this has been accepted gender-based political activity, women have been perceived as violating gender norms when engaged in similar social movement activities (West & Blumberg, 1990). The welfare rights movement that occurred during the 1960s to the 1970s offers a unique opportunity to explore a movement focused on African American

[1] National Welfare Rights Organization, "How to Start a Welfare Rights Group", pamphlet, 1968, From the organizational files of the Oakland County-Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, OC-MWRO Files.
[2] National Welfare Rights Organization, "1973 National Convention", brochure, 1973, OC-MWRO Files.

women who demanded their right to receive welfare. Much of the past analysis of radical movements and protest has focused on men, leaving women primarily invisible (Blee, 1998). This lack of visibility provides a justification for examining the welfare rights movement. Researchers have largely ignored women's social movement participation, or falsely represented it (West & Blumberg, 1990). These factors have led to a false assumption that most protest participation or important political work has historically been done by men, with women only fulfilling minor and unimportant roles.

Although poor African American women were active in leading local welfare rights activities during the 1960s and early 1970s, many scholars have emphasized that the leadership at the national level was male (Davis, 1996; Kotz & Kotz, 1977; Nadasen, 2002; West, 1981). In spite of the early male leadership at the national level, the welfare rights movement became a vehicle through which poor African American women could voice their concerns, challenge assumptions about those in poverty, and examine connections between race, class, and gender (Nadasen, 2002). It is critical that we thoroughly examine the activities and roles of women engaged in social movement activity, because it may lead us to reconsider old ideas about what constituted political behavior. This knowledge may inform contemporary practice and social movement activities by social workers, suggesting alternative strategies.

By focusing on welfare as a civil right, the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) produced a movement where African American women living in poverty became a potent political force (Toney, 2000). By using an intersectional focus within this dissertation, whereby race and class are closely analyzed along with gender,

misconceptions about women's participation in the welfare rights movement are clarified, and new information is provided for the historical record.

The welfare rights movement, although considered a movement of poor African American women, was also made up of white middle class female supporters. In the 1960s and 1970s the "Friends of Welfare Rights" groups were non-recipient, white, middle class women who became active in the larger welfare rights movement. They were involved in fundraising efforts, negotiation of recipient demands from welfare officials, and some activism. However, members of the many "Friends of Welfare Rights" groups were not allowed to vote on official NWRO issues or attend recipient only meetings (West, 1981).

Since the welfare rights movement included both the recipient and the non-recipient "Friends of Welfare Rights" groups, it offers a unique opportunity to examine the mobilization of participants across divisions of race, class, and gender. For the purpose of this study race was defined as either African American or white, while class was broken down into categories of poverty class, working class, middle class, and upper middle class. The category of race was restricted through the sampling strategy, and African Americans and whites were purposively chosen. The category of class was also restricted, and either recipient or non-recipient participants were chosen, with further complications in class status also sought through the sampling strategy.

In order to produce a deeper understanding of mobilization within social movements, the causes of participants' attraction to the movement itself must be examined. The welfare rights movement created a momentum that attracted members who got swept up in the early gains (which included winning increases in basic needs

grants), and it also provided an ethnic and racial identity that made the local groups very attractive to their members (Stevens, 1978). Even though men led the movement early on, (with many of the legal aid attorneys and peripheral supporters white men) the movement itself was identified by the general public as well as by members, as a poor women's movement (Bailis, 1974). Although the recipients involved in the movement did not necessarily self-identify as feminists, the NWRO voiced feminist concerns, and it therefore provides an example of the development of theory within a grass-roots movement. More closely examining the welfare rights movement offers valuable information about how linkages across differences in race and class were formed, as well as how mobilization within the similarity of gender occurred.

Focus on Detroit and Southeast Michigan

Focusing on the Detroit Metropolitan area of Michigan offers an unprecedented opportunity to analyze a movement of welfare recipients against the rich historical backdrop of a city known for its labor movement activity. During the 1960s Detroit experienced profound change. Racial transformation occurred as white flight from the areas surrounding the inner city took hold concurrent to blacks integration of these neighborhoods. Economic transformation occurred as the auto industry's decline accelerated, resulting in increased lay-offs (Sugrue, 1996). As Detroit became more segregated racially, it also became more segregated economically. As black middle class families moved out of the city's center, facing down violent encounters in their attempts to integrate the surrounding white communities, the poorest citizens were left behind. Many black middle class families claimed that they were fleeing urban density and a concentration of poor welfare mothers in their old center city neighborhoods (Sugrue,

1996). While these trends had been occurring since early in the post-World War II period, the 1960s saw acceleration in racial divisions, economic tensions, and growing violence against blacks who tried to integrate white neighborhoods.

Racial divisions and tensions were also seen in political dynamics. While many white conservatives preferred a strictly segregated city, some white liberals, influenced by the Civil Rights Movement, fought alongside blacks for racial integration and the creation of a unified city. By 1967, growing disillusionment among the Black working class and the poor existed with the White liberal agenda in Detroit, as well as the Black middle class that supported it. Specifically, the realization that whites continued to hold a majority of positions of power in the city and the increasing racism and brutality of the Detroit police helped set the stage for the July 1967 riots in which 33 blacks and 10 whites were killed (Thompson, 2001). Due to these dynamics of race and class, and the historical shifts that occurred during this time period, Detroit offers an exceptional site to examine the questions outlined in this study.

As this research examines questions of how women crossed racial and class boundaries in order to work together in the welfare rights movement, women's lives and experiences are central to the analysis. By learning how women came together to work for social change in the past, social workers can learn valuable lessons for working with women in the present. When working with poor women it is important to start from women's lives and to understand their standpoint (Swigonski, 1996). A standpoint is a critical perspective, about the ways in which unequal power relations within society operate, that individuals who are marginalized or oppressed may have. While some scholars have indicated the importance of women's standpoints to social work, others

have advocated the use of a feminist approach or radical model of social work practice that integrates individual client needs and societal level change (Morell, 1987; Pearlmutter, 2002). Other scholars have also indicated that a shared identity within a movement can increase political motivation and empowerment for participants (Erbaugh, 2002). This dissertation is focused on exploring concepts and questions that, while historical, aim to offer usable information connected to current efforts at social change for poor women.

Understanding responses to welfare policy is also important for social workers. One possibly unintended consequence of the policy efforts during the War on Poverty was that political participation by the poor, particularly poor African Americans was greatly increased (Havemen, 1977). Many of these policies and programs created channels through which the welfare rights movement funneled their mobilization efforts. Understanding the past policies of the War on Poverty, particularly how individuals responded to these policies, can also offer social workers lessons for current community organizing efforts as well as policy advocacy strategies.

Chapter 2

Women and Social Movement Participation

This study is concerned with how women participated in the welfare rights movement in the Detroit, Michigan area from 1964-1972, and how they responded to and resisted many of the changes in welfare policy that occurred. As such, a brief review of the literature in two areas is necessary: how women historically participated in social movements, and how the National Welfare Rights Organization was established and eventually dismantled as welfare policy developed and changed throughout the War on Poverty. While these two areas offer important contributions to our understanding of how women historically mobilized across social class and racial boundaries, there are also significant gaps in the literature regarding how divisions of race, class, and gender were bridged or maintained in social movement work.

Analysis of women's social action has often been viewed only through its connection to men's movement work (Blee, 1998). Therefore it is crucial to thoroughly examine the activities and roles of women involved in past social movements on their own terms. Blee (1998) indicates that the radical nature of women's organizing is overlooked when we fail to examine the informal networks and social organization in which women engaged: "The study of women's radical protest requires a broadened sense of the spatial contexts in which activism outside the mainstream political process takes place" (p. 4). Before we examine the development of the welfare rights movement, it is important to explore earlier social movements. Perhaps the most influential of these was the Civil Rights Movement.

Focus on Race

The relationships and social networks that historically existed within the Black church provide an example of what Blee (1998) referred to when she implored scholars of radical protest to examine informal spatial contexts, or "spaces" in order to understand women's activism more clearly. In her work on African American women and their history of work and family life, Jones (1995) indicated that the Black church was a place of respite from racism for African American women, and as such offered a natural path to these women's civil rights work. It was through their participation in the church, which was male dominated, that they were able to temporarily transcend the racism of their low-wage work outside the home. These women were responsive to the calls from the pulpit for participation in the Civil Rights Movement (Jones, 1995). Although the most visible leadership positions were denied them because of their gender, the informal leadership roles and positions they occupied should not be overlooked or minimized for their contribution to the Civil Rights Movement. These social networks and connections developed within the church offer an example of women's non-traditional avenues to social protest.

Payne's (1990) examination of African American women's participation in the early civil rights activities in and around Greenwood Mississippi, illustrate the importance of informal religious and social networks. In interviews with women involved in the Civil Rights Movement in the Mississippi Delta during the summer of 1964 it was discovered that many of them were motivated to participate through strong religious convictions, as well as through ties to family members and friends involved in the movement (Payne, 1990).

Within civil rights organizations such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), there were differences in how white and African American women were treated (Rosen, 200). Many white women workers complained of "being protected" or "watched over" during movement activity, while many African American women were expected to take on informal leadership positions in the somewhat dangerous outreach work that placed them side by side with African American males on the frontlines. When white women complained that they did not have enough independence and leadership in the organization, many African American women could not relate to their complaints. Race further complicated the relationships and roles of women in SNCC and similar organizations, due to the strict social mores of the South and the taboo against interracial relationships. Much has been written about the sexual exploits of young, Northern, white female activists in the South during "The Freedom Summer" of 1964. The sexual relationships that they engaged in with African American males enraged not only racist white Southerners, but also many white Southern female activists who understood, and for the most part adhered to, the strict conservative sexual code of the South (Rosen, 2000). These differences in roles and expectations for white and African American women of the time period illustrate how gender was complicated by race.

Studies of women in The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), The Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), and The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) found that African American women fulfilled critical grass-roots leadership roles (Robnett, 1997). Their race as well as their gender allowed them to occupy more localized positions, not available to their white female counterparts. While their gender kept them out of more prominent and formalized positions in these

organizations, since they were reserved for African American and white males, their race allowed African American women more mobility in the field. The active positions they held within the community led African American women to become what Robnett (1997) refers to as "Bridge Leaders" in the Civil Rights Movement.

The term "Bridge Leader" is used to describe the types of linkages that women participants in social movements were able to form between individual members' personal identities and the movement's political identity. By using social networks and connections formed through their community work, they were able to connect members to the goals of the organization. African American women in the Civil Rights Movement were able to utilize these linkages to help sustain the movement and achieve mobilization of members from differing social locations (Robnett, 1997). The work of these "Bridge Leaders" illustrates the point that women were critical to the success of the Civil Rights Movement and the many organizations that were a part of it. This fact may be overlooked if we only focus on traditional, male forms of prominent and highly visible leadership, and assume that women were treated equally regardless of racial differences.

As the modern women's movement developed, many African American women engaged in activism that they saw as unique. Jackson (1998) notes that African American women activists were reluctant to either identify with the modern women's movement or to label themselves as "feminists." Although many engaged in activist work with organizations that could have easily been considered "feminist," based on their work, they felt that the "feminist" label held a negative connotation. They viewed the women's movement as one-dimensional, focused only on gender, and thus forcing a choice between competing oppressions of race and gender. The civil rights and social justice

work that African American women engaged in necessitated a consideration of race and class first, but also emphasized women's concerns, although they themselves did not view these concerns as "feminist." African American women activists were also reluctant to separate from their alliances with men in efforts to promote racial and economic justice (Jackson, 1998).

The rise of the Black Power movement in the late 1960s encouraged greater ties to race than gender, exploiting black women's reluctance to separate from men in their work towards racial equality. According to Black Power adherents, African American male leadership needed to be reasserted in order to fight for racial liberation. Part of this new leadership emphasized a sharply gendered division of labor for African American households. While some African American women admired the Black Power movement for its ability to instill a new sense of racial pride and self-confidence, many did not agree with its sexist message that the proper place for African American women was in the home reproducing the next generation (Jones, 1995). Questioning how race and gender intersected led some African American women to identify sexism in the Black Power movement and search for a kind of movement that would address both racial and sexist systems of oppression.

The number of women's liberation organizations in the modern women's movement grew in the early 1970s with African American women working to develop organizations committed to emphasizing their own agenda, expanding their focus to include issues of both race and gender (Papachristou, 1976). In 1973, the Black Women Organized for Action and the National Black Feminist Organization were both established. They placed race alongside gender as a critical social location. In the 1973

statement of purpose for their organization, the National Black Feminist Organization criticized the women's movement heavily for being what they deemed a white middle class movement (Papachristou, 1976).

Focus on Gender

Feminist Scholars have advocated using a gender lens to study social movements in any time period (Kuumba, 2001). Instead of taking an approach that attempts to simply add women to the analysis, this approach offers a way of assessing how structural inequalities faced by women impacted their organizing attempts. If we analyze a movement through the lives of the women who participated in it we can better understand how gender operated on both a structural level and within the relational "micro level" processes of women's everyday interactions. Many scholars have argued that it was at this micro level that recruitment processes and sustenance of past social movements actually occurred (Evans, 1979; Kuumba, 2001; Robnett, 1997).

Some scholars have indicated that the civil rights, student, and New Left movements have themselves contributed to the creation of the modern women's movement, or "Second Wave Feminism" (Evans, 1979; Rosen, 2000). Although the women's movement was barely in its infancy during the time period examined in this study, some critical observations can be made that inform an analysis of the welfare rights movement. Evans (1979) argued that the seeds of women's liberation and the modern women's movement were sewn specifically from the work of women activists in the Civil Rights and New Left movements. She posited that women equated the separate spheres of women and men with the "separate but equal" rhetoric of the Jim Crow era, and having worked to dismantle the inequalities of race, they were in key positions to

deconstruct the gender-based divisions that they experienced as members of earlier social movements. In her interviews with key social movement participants she uncovered a connection between their work in these earlier social movements and their later establishment of organizations that were critical to the development of the early women's movement. Similar to later scholars (Blee, 1998; Jones, 1995; Robnett, 1997), Evans (1979) emphasized the informal social networks of women as critical sites for community organizing work. The activist women that she interviewed had long been involved in the Civil Rights and New Left movements and it was through connections made with women in these earlier movements that they began to organize for women's rights.

Maternalist Perspectives

When analyzing the connections made based on a shared identity as "woman", it is important to understand that the category gender may contain a maternalist perspective. Maternalist movements began in earnest in a variety of countries during the early nineteenth century. This was an age when women reformers began to organize around society's moral obligations to women and children. These early maternalists structured their social concerns within the context of their difference from men, and shifted a moral vision to political action with their attempts at social reform for women and children (Koven & Michel, 1993). This use of maternalism was seen in more modern social movements as well. Women Strike for Peace (WSP), which began on Nov. 1, 1961 as a one day strike by women in order to demand an end to nuclear arms proliferation, has been called a maternalist movement. WSP's activities throughout the 1960s expanded into a general movement for peace, carried out by white middle class mothers (Swerdlow, 1993). While the movement goals were radical, and could have even been denigrated as

communist (considering the level of Red baiting that occurred during this time period), the women gained some legitimacy and respectability through their status as concerned white middle class mothers (Swerdlow, 1993). However, although their images represented white middle class motherhood, these women defined motherhood in terms of a concern for all children, not just those within their own families. They used the language of concerned mothers in protesting the war in Vietnam, advocating for the children and mothers of the foreign communities being bombed and burned.

Maternalism was also integral to Northern white women's participation in the Civil Rights Movement, as the ideal of "motherhood" played a critical role in women's motivation to become involved (Blumberg,1980). Although other scholars (Collins, 1994; Naples, 1998) have identified a sense of "motherwork" or "activist mothering" as associated historically with African American women, the Northern white women civil rights activists that Blumberg (1980) studied also indicated a similar feeling of responsibility for the larger society and social justice goals as coming from their roles as mothers. They had a goal of creating a less racist society that they identified through their motherhood (Blumbeg, 1980).

In Polatnick's (1996) study of women's liberation groups from the 1960s some insight into the intersection of race and maternalism is provided. The study examined women's views of motherhood, and explored how these views related to their activist work and the prioritization of goals for the women's liberation movement overall. While Blumberg's (1990) research on Northern white women's participation in the Civil Rights Movement found maternalism as a motivating factor, Polatnick discovered striking differences between poor and working class African American women's and middle class

white women's motivations for their social movement work. While the African American women in the women's liberation groups acknowledged the need for access to birth control, for example, they identified having too many children, rather than the choice of whether or not to have children, as a high priority women's issue. They held a positive view of motherhood, seeing it as a powerful identity from the perspective of their own families and social neighborhood networks. They viewed their own children as primary to their lives and much of their activism emphasized a concern for all children within the community. They saw the education of children in their community as a highly political act and a way to promote social change. In contrast, the white middle class women in the women's liberation groups held a somewhat negative perception of motherhood, seeing it primarily as a means of oppression, and birth control as a way to prevent having any children, rather than simply controlling numbers of children. They held somewhat condescending attitudes towards those who would place their children first. They equated having children with dependence on men, rather than viewing women's ability to reproduce as a site of power, as the African American women did. White women activists focused on reproductive rights and workplace equality rather than work with children and economic justice in contrast to the African American women. As these findings indicate, race and the type of social movement women participate in can intersect with their use of maternalism.

In writing about the concept of motherhood and the use of what she refers to as a maternalist standpoint, Sara Ruddick (2004) uses the term "maternal thinking" to describe the contribution of the values of women's caring labor to feminist standpoint thinking. She imagines that through the mothering work that women have historically

engaged in, a specific value of peace, as opposed to militaristic values might be gained (Ruddick, 2004). However, she does warn that this vision is not automatic by virtue of a woman's motherhood status, but rather it must be achieved through the daily struggles and caring work in which mothers are engaged (Ruddick, 2004). The view of maternalism that is embedded in the maternalist standpoint is not without controversy. Some claim that maternalism essentializes women or assumes all women are the same (di Leonardo, 1985), while others have presented it as a successful method used in many of the social movements of the early twentieth century (Koven & Michel, 1993).

As these examples indicate, the ideal of motherhood has been constructed somewhat differently by poor women, middle class women, white women, and women of color. Therefore, race and class provided a complex interaction within past maternalism, maternalist strategies, historical images of motherhood, and women's social movement work.

Focus on Class

When assessing previous social movements in relation to the welfare rights movement, there were linkages discovered between the initiatives of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the welfare rights movement. The Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) was created by SDS in 1963 to focus on economic issues in Northern cities. While ERAP failed in its efforts at large-scale structural level change and in bringing about what organizers called an interracial movement of the poor, it was successful in small concrete ways. By helping ameliorate some of the specific problems that the poor were facing in a variety of communities, and by instilling a desire for

activism and community organizing in both the leaders of the movement as well as the community members involved, it did have a lasting impact (Frost, 2001).

Within ERAP, many women activists proved particularly effective at using community organizing techniques (Evans, 1979). They saw the community organizing work they engaged in as assisting them in making direct connections between poverty, gender, and activism. The men in the project had unsuccessfully tried to make connections with poor males in the community, but the women activists believed that reaching poor women was necessary to build a successful organization. Women activists stood in food stamp lines and talked to mothers in welfare offices in order to try to form relationships with poor women in the community (Rosen, 2000). Many of the concerns that ERAP focused on were "women's issues," such as child-care, welfare, and the day-to-day living needs of the poor. Much of their work necessitated organizing women on welfare (Evans, 1979). Casey Hayden, former leader of SNCC and later SDS, worked in ERAP and recalled how working with the women on welfare helped her conclude that organizing women was the key to social change. Hayden went on later to co-write "A Kind of Memo," the famous manifesto calling for women in the civil rights, student, and peace movements to come together to examine the roles they had been occupying within these groups. The manifesto eventually reached a wider audience, and many consider it pivotal in the development of the modern women's movement (Rosen, 2000). Other women working in ERAP at the time also indicated that working on welfare rights brought them a renewed sense of the importance of women to social movement work (Evans, 1979). An examination of the specific tactics used to organize women as well as an assessment of women's leadership opportunities are both critical to the analysis of

how race, gender, and class intersected in welfare rights organizing, as the examples of these social movements illustrates.

It is important to note that there were class differences in many of these earlier social movements that have not been critically analyzed, although racial differences have been studied. This leaves the question of how class intersects with race and gender in social movement participation. It also leads us to question why the Northern white women activists involved in the Civil Rights Movement that Blumberg (1980) studied viewed their movement participation as motivated by a sense of maternalism, while the women's movement participants that Polatnick (1996) examined indicated race-based differences in motivation. This indicates that maternalism, and the category of gender itself, is complicated in social movement participation by race, class, and the type of movement. An analysis where race, class, and gender are simultaneously viewed as critical sites of inquiry and where participation in the group itself is complicated by these intersections is missing from these examples. This omission leads to false assumptions about social movement work, including misunderstanding how women mobilized across differences and within similarities.

Chapter 3

Welfare Rights, Welfare Policy, and the War on Poverty

In looking at the history of the War on Poverty, it is important to assess the complex changes made in welfare policy. Gordon (1996) argued that most research on the development of the early welfare state and continuing welfare policy assumed a gender neutral stance, resulting in distortions to our understanding of poverty and how welfare policies affect, and are affected by, women. Examination of the welfare state should be embraced as a legitimate feminist topic, one that includes an analysis of the classed, raced, and gendered structures of welfare policy, and assesses resistance to these structures by subordinate groups (Gordon, 1990).

The National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) and Changes in Welfare Policy

The development of the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) occurred parallel to specific changes in welfare policy from 1964-1972. (Figure 2, on page 150 shows a historical timeline of both). A major focus of this dissertation is how participants in the welfare rights movement responded to policy changes. This makes it necessary to review literature on the establishment and the dissolution of the NWRO as well as the changes in welfare policy that occurred during this time period.

Writing in 1977, Friedman argued that the Great Society programs of the Johnson administration did not come out of any social movement, and that this contributed to their eventual demise. This perspective assumes that without a consistent sustained movement to maintain pressure and support, anti-poverty initiatives will be modified by existing power holders representing the middle class. Since Friedman did not acknowledge the contributions of the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) as being equivalent

to that of a large scale social movement such as the Civil Rights Movement, this view threatens to erase the already obscured social movement work of women, particularly poor African American women, in the welfare rights movement.

Beginning of the NWRO

The establishment of a National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) to assist in mobilizing welfare recipients was an important step in the process of empowering poor, mostly African American, women. In May of 1966 George Wiley, a tenured professor of chemistry at Syracuse University, and an active member of the civil rights group the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), left his faculty position to found the Poverty/Rights Action Center in Washington, D.C. (Davis, 1996). Although this officially marked the beginning of a national movement for welfare rights, many welfare recipients had already been informally gathering and organizing in various cities across the United States (Abramovitz, 1996). There were also initiatives such as the Mobilization for Youth (MFY) neighborhood centers in New York City that were informally organizing welfare recipients in the early 1960s (Rabagliati & Birnbaum, 1969). Organizations coming out of the civil rights and New Left movements, such as the Students for a Democratic Society's (SDS) Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP), also engaged in organizing welfare clients from 1963 to 1965 (Evans, 1979; Rosen, 2000).

Some of the grass-roots groups that were initiated by the women recipients themselves seemed to occur almost simultaneously in various parts of the country (Pope, 1990). Sometimes the small local groups were formed after a welfare recipient had attended one of the newly established NWRO conferences. In analyzing the development

of the Brooklyn Area Welfare Rights Organization, Pope (1990) noted that local women who had attended NWRO conferences in other cities came home and began the group in Brooklyn. The connections they made with other women who were dealing with problems with welfare similar to what they had experienced, provided the spark needed to begin organizing within their own communities. In store-front organizations in communities across the United States women gathered informally to fight the welfare system (Abramovitz, 1996; Pope, 1990; West, 1981). In August of 1967, NWRO held its first national convention in Washington, D.C., with 300 delegates attending, from twenty-six states. During that first convention there was much discussion and debate about the appropriate rules for the organization, as well as voting on delegates. Throughout much of this debate George Wiley was heard very little, only offering occasional suggestions about procedures. At one point, Johnnie Tilmon, an African American welfare recipient from California who had not yet been elected chair of the NWRO, addressed the group. She spoke in a very powerful and commanding voice, telling the group of women who were questioning Wiley's role that, "George Wiley does not run this organization, we run the organization, George has to do what we say".[3] This first convention mainly focused on nominating and electing delegates and establishing rules for the organization. Later in the first session of the convention, a woman from Brooklyn, New York stood up and stated that she had traveled a long distance with her five children, and that her friend had come with her fourteen children, and since they fought the rats and cockroaches at home, they came to the convention to fight for their rights, not to worry about rules and

[3] National Welfare Rights Organization, "First Convention", tape recording of National Welfare Rights Organization's first convention held August 26-27 of 1967 in Washington, D.C., afternoon plenary session of August 26, 1967, Wiley Papers, reel 22-part I of side one.

regulations.[4] Despite the spirited debate about rules at that first meeting, the NWRO continued to attract new members. By 1971 there were 900 local welfare rights organizations affiliated with NWRO (Abramovitz, 1996).

After George Wiley established the Poverty/Rights Action Center, he began working with Ohio welfare rights groups to plan a 155 mile "Walk for Adequate Welfare" in June 1966. The media attention that this march garnered helped support the growth of the National Welfare Rights movement, with more local and state level groups affiliating from across the country (Gilbert, 2001). Early on, various local affiliates focused on the grievances of individual welfare recipients, such as the need for funding to buy basic necessities, claims of unfair treatment by caseworkers, and unfair termination of benefits (Nadasen, 2002). This early emphasis on individual grievances helped drive the specific tactics that became the trademark of welfare rights groups all over the country.

Women's Roles in the NWRO

Some of the tactics that welfare rights participants, the majority of whom were women, used were controversial because of their level of militancy. The activist tactics that were so controversial outside NWRO came to be called the "street strategy" by members (West, 1981). An example of the usefulness of these activist tactics is illustrated in a 1968 *New York Times* article that reported on an organized flurry of demonstrations and sit-ins by welfare recipients at various social service agencies around New York City which resulted in an increase of three million dollars in grant monies for recipient clothing and furniture (Kifner, 1968).

---

[4] National Welfare Rights Organization, "First Convention", tape recording of National Welfare Rights Organization's first convention held August 26-27 of 1967 in Washington, D.C., continuation of plenary session from August 26, into August 27, 1967, Wiley Papers, reel 22-part II of side one.

Although successful in many instances, activist tactics used by welfare rights participants alienated the movement from the support of the Black church. Leaders of various Black churches expressed concern for those living in poverty, but many chose not to affiliate with the welfare rights movement, due in part to a dislike of the women's militant tactics (West, 1981). A middle class African American member of a friends of welfare rights group in Detroit gave the example of a male member of her church who knew of her involvement with the movement and asked her to make the women stop protesting, saying that he would gladly give the mothers some money if they would just stop picketing.[5] Other religious organizations were very involved in the welfare rights movement. Two of the most involved were United Methodists, and Roman Catholics, with their white middle class members becoming most visible (Pope, 1990). The Catholic diocese was also integral to some local level organizing. Typical of this was the Brooklyn Area Welfare Action Council (B-WAC), established in the late 1960s. This group had the support of both nuns and priests in the community, and they were initially funded by Catholic Charities of Brooklyn. In Jackie Pope's (1990) research on this organization, she indicates that many times it was the white male priests who organized meetings, arming the women recipients with information about minimum standards and special needs welfare grants. The priests and nuns also marched alongside the women in their direct action attempts to receive special needs checks at the local public welfare offices. According to Pope's (1990) analysis, it was the nuns who overcame divisions of race and class to help the women recipients organize and eventually take full control of the groups themselves. Across the country many women church members ended up joining the

[5] Evelyn, African American middle class member of Detroit welfare rights group, phone interview, Oct. 22, 2005, California.

"Friends of Welfare Rights" groups that were being established as places where non welfare recipients could offer their support for the movement (West, 1981).

Common strategies used by welfare rights participants in Detroit included requests for fair hearings, and demonstrations at the main welfare office downtown. The local Welfare Employees Union responded to these actions. In a document titled "Welfare Employees News Bulletin" dated April 5, 1968, it was stated that the use of lawyers by welfare recipients who were pursuing fair hearings was causing abuse towards the welfare workers, and the union was suggesting that legal representation also be provided for the workers during these fair hearings.[6] However, this type of response by welfare workers to welfare rights members' tactics was not uniform. In a document written by a Welfare Employees Union member in response to recent large scale demonstrations at Detroit's main welfare office, the author asked fellow union members to consider that the clients had a right to demonstrate and that they shouldn't deny these women the same rights to protest and organize, that they themselves were entitled to.[7] The document illustrated sympathy with the Detroit area welfare rights groups, but it was also pointed out that although workers may not agree with the women, they should respect their right to protest.

The Importance of 640 Temple

Detroit based welfare rights groups engaged in many demonstrations and protests within the city of Detroit as well as at the state capitol. One event was so important that it gained an almost mythical reputation with participants in the welfare rights movement in

---

[6] Article written by an unknown member of the Detroit Welfare Employees Union, titled "Welfare Employees News Bulletin", bulletin, WEU Collection, box 2, folder 14.
[7] Statement by an unknown member of the Detroit Welfare Employees Union in response to Detroit area welfare rights groups' demonstrations at the main welfare office in Detroit, newsletter, n.d., WEU Collection, box 18, folder 4.

Southeastern Michigan. This was a protest aimed at increasing school clothing allotments. Welfare rights members occupied the Wayne County Department of Social Services headquarters at 640 Temple St. in order to protest the small school clothing allowance for their children ($22 a year, as opposed to the women's demands for $75 yearly).[8] Prior to this final occupation, welfare rights members had engaged in a three day "camp-in", but then called a moratorium on protests so that the governor could have time to respond.[9] The final demonstration led to more than 59 arrests and the temporary closing of the Department of Social Services office.[10] This event was mentioned by many of the welfare rights participants who were interviewed for this study and was an important historical marker for the kinds of tactics and roles that the women involved in the welfare rights movement engaged in.

There were divisions by race and class in the types of strategies used by the recipient members and the non-recipient "Friends of Welfare Rights" groups. For example, there was a desire from both the NWRO as well as local level welfare rights groups to keep the strategies and responsibilities of the Friends of Welfare Rights separate from those of recipients. The NWRO's official stance on non-recipient groups was that they should not be allowed to vote or attend NWRO meetings. In an article titled "Why Welfare Rights?" that was printed in Wayne State University's *The South End* newspaper, a community organizer named Pamela Blair talked about the need to mobilize not only recipients but also friends of welfare rights, as long as they understood their

---

[8] "Welfare Protests Resume", Article in the *Detroit Free Press*, Sept. 16, 1969, DCCR Collection, box 78, folder 33.
[9] "Until ADC Demands are Met: Mothers Vow Long Camp-In", Article in the *Detroit News*, Sept. 2, 1969, DCCR Collection, box 78, folder 33.
[10] Commission on Community Relations, "Demonstrations by National Welfare Rights Organization", memo to field staff, Sept. 15, 1969, DCCR Collection, box 78, folder 28.

proper place within the movement.[11] Friends of Welfare Rights groups were only allowed to assist in funding efforts and in presenting recipient's demands to welfare officials. This separation of roles and responsibilities by race and class stemmed from a fear by members of the recipient groups that their movement goals and agenda would be co-opted by middle class whites (West, 1981). In many instances this was a justifiable fear. A black, male, outside observer to a 1969 meeting of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization (MWRO) noted that the non-recipient leaders in attendance at the meeting (who, he noted, were both black and white) constantly interrupted and attempted to control the direction. He concluded that they were attempting to impose their own middle class values on how the welfare rights organization was run.[12]

Questions of leadership and proper roles for the "outside" groups of the movement increased as the NWRO gained strength. Eventually tensions between the white, middle class non-welfare-recipients in the Friends of Welfare Rights groups and the welfare recipient members, primarily African Americans, escalated. Many of the Friends of Welfare Rights members were frustrated at being held back from more politically active roles. While they were originally content to stay in the background, mostly doing fundraising, they soon began to initiate and participate in decisions about direct action and policy advocacy, which caused conflict with welfare recipients (West, 1981).

The national leader of NWRO, George Wiley, received increasing criticism for hiring white, middle class organizers and workers at the national level (Kotz & Kotz, 1977). African American women welfare recipients felt increasingly threatened by the white organizers and supporters of the movement (West, 1981). Within some of the local

---

[11] Pamela Blair, "Why Welfare Rights?", Article in Wayne State University's *The South End* newspaper, WEU Collection, box 17, folder 8.
[12] "Observation of Michigan Welfare Rights Organization Meeting", 1969, Wiley Papers, box 25, folder 5.

welfare rights groups, racial differences were only emphasized around concerns over leadership. As welfare recipients began to gain knowledge and training about securing their rights, they began to demand more leadership and control over the movement.[13] In Michigan, conflict ensued over the appointment of a white student community organizer to work with the out-state welfare rights groups. NWRO finally intervened by surveying all of the groups in Michigan in order to determine whether this organizer should be removed from her position.[14] At issue seemed to be the Detroit based groups' desire to have someone who was a recipient take over this NWRO supported position.[15] Tensions occurred frequently at the national level, and George Wiley's desires for more coalition building with outside groups caused much resistance (Kotz & Kotz, 1977). In 1972, he left his position with NWRO to form the Movement for Economic Justice, handing the top leadership position to Johnnie Tilmon, an African American woman who had established one of the early local level welfare rights groups in California, and who had served as one of Wiley's top aides (Gilbert, 2001). The NWRO did not survive the tensions, internal rifts, and the changes in welfare policy of the Johnson and later Nixon administrations, and it disbanded completely in 1975 (West, 1981).

The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and Specific Programs

In March, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson officially announced a War on Poverty with ambitious policies aimed at tackling poverty in the United States. The poverty level stood at 22 percent in 1960, and eventually fell to a low of 12 percent in

---

[13] Anita, white middle class member of a welfare rights group in Southeast Michigan, personal interview, Oct. 24, 2003, Detroit, MI.

[14] George Wiley, "Letter to all Michigan Welfare Rights Organizations", July 31, 1969, Wiley Papers, box 25, folder 5.

[15] NCC Delegate Mamie Blakely, telegram to George Wiley, June 11, 1969, Wiley Papers, box 25, folder 5.

1972 (Abramovitz, 1996). Johnson's declaration of a War on Poverty represented a new approach to fighting poverty. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, administered through the newly created Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), focused on involving the poor in programs aimed at solving the problem of poverty (Lynn, 1977). Writing in 1977, Economist Robert Haveman identified multiple factors that led to the development of a war on poverty and the initiatives of this time period, including widespread fear of violence and rioting as a reaction to the growing inequality in the United States, the newfound confidence in social planning based on social science research, and an administration with a somewhat progressive approach to poverty (Haveman, 1977).

The Mobilization for Youth (MFY) program, created in 1962, was an example of the grass-roots initiatives that became common during the OEO's tenure. MFY was funded in part by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the Ford Foundation, and former President Kennedy's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency as an attempt to combat juvenile delinquency by increasing the opportunities and local power provided to low-income citizens (Heifetz, 1969). MFY was based on the sociological theories of Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin, who were both teaching at Columbia University at the time. Cloward and Ohlin theorized that juvenile delinquency was caused by the differential between poor youths' desires and the societal opportunities that existed for them (Heifetz, 1969). Many of the youth studied by Cloward and Ohlin were poor African Americans. An end result of many MFY programs was that they provided grass-roots leadership opportunities to disaffected citizens.

By the summer of 1965, Mobilization for Youth (MFY) workers began attempting to organize welfare clients in New York City, as they saw a common thread in their

clients' complaints about the welfare system (Rabagliati & Birnbaum, 1969). Some viewed MFY's community development programs as having the overt goal of organizing the poor in order to promote social change (Weissman, 1969).The framework for MFY was used in other anti-poverty programs developed through the OEO.

The OEO initiated Community Action Programs (CAPs) in key urban areas. They were expected to create anti-poverty initiatives at the grass-roots level in some of the most impoverished communities (Patterson, 2000). The existence of CAPs and the OEO programs in general have been heralded for providing a critical contribution to the development of many of the grass-roots organizations that were agitating for social change for the poor throughout the decade of the 1960s (Hertz, 1981). This new anti-poverty approach called for community involvement with unprecedented and innovative "maximum citizen participation". CAPs and legal services programs had an explicit goal of increased political participation by the poor. This strategy was used because it was assumed that if the poor became more explicitly involved in decision making within the social organizations that provided access to jobs, goods, and services, this would automatically lead to demands that these institutions, and not larger scale social institutions, be restructured in order to better meet their needs (Haveman, 1977). Some scholars have thus concluded that large scale structural change was never a goal of the OEO programs and the War on Poverty (Haveman, 1977; Patterson, 2000; Peterson & Greenstone, 1977, Piven & Cloward, 1979), although they did provide some political power to the disenfranchised.

The War on Poverty in Detroit

Early in the War on Poverty citizens and officials in the Detroit area were particularly responsive to the OEO initiatives (Thompson, 2004). Both white middle class leaders and the Black middle class community were supportive and involved in virtually all of the War on Poverty initiatives in Detroit. Jerome Cavanaugh, the white mayor of Detroit, supported the War on Poverty, and his administration was very involved in planning numerous anti-poverty initiatives around the city. Detroit's War on Poverty was comprehensive, spanning a wide range of programs and services for the poor (Thompson, 2004). Detroit actually began developing anti-poverty initiatives six months prior to the Economic Opportunity Act's implementation. It had received the largest grants for these initiatives, among all cities in the nation, as of December 1964.[16] Mayor Cavanaugh's Total Action Against Poverty (TAP) program was quickly launched after the Johnson administration's announcement of a War on Poverty. Detroit was seen as a leader in the development of anti-poverty initiatives, by many officials in other cities.[17] Although much of Detroit's TAP initiatives were aimed at job training, services for youth, and structural issues, one of the early programs aimed at women with children, focused on helping them become better homemakers. A 1965 article in the *Detroit News* spoke glowingly about a TAP program that trained middle class women to go into poor women's homes and assist them in learning how to cook, make curtains, restore furniture, do better grooming, and learn about money management. The article states that the program "...is based on the belief that poor home environment helps perpetuate poverty

[16] City of Detroit, "Department Report and Information Committee", report, Dec. 17, 1964, Cavanaugh Collection, box 178, folder 16.
[17] Mayor of Fort Worth, Texas, letter to Mayor Cavanaugh, December 4, 1964, Cavanaugh Collection, box 178, folder 16.

in succeeding generations.".[18] This is in spite of the fact that a February 1965 study of low-income families on public assistance in Detroit found that inadequate income and unemployment were among the most significant problems they faced.[19]

Nationwide, programs such as CAPs became particularly important to racial minorities living in low-income communities, since they were the population specifically targeted for these initiatives (Patterson, 2000). African Americans responded to these programs in great numbers because they had been excluded from the political process for so long. Participants in the CAPs ultimately politicized the issue of poverty so that racial and political inequality became intertwined in the discourse on poverty (Peterson & Greenstone, 1977). These community based programs subsequently offered natural avenues for the social mobilization of the poor.

Although Detroit's War on Poverty initiatives were widely supported early on, as conflict and unrest within the city increased they began to be criticized by the public. In the aftermath of the Detroit riots of July, 1967, Mayor Cavanaugh received a growing amount of criticism and faced new difficulties amassing support for ongoing, as well as new anti-poverty initiatives. Reports to the city commission in the summer of 1967 blamed the riots on continued racial segregation in employment and housing, persistent poverty, and Detroit police as symbols of white power, among other factors.[20] Mayor Cavanaugh's answer to the riots was to create more War on Poverty type programs. Recommendations made to the commission charged with studying the riots included a

---

[18] Judy Rose, "Fight the Cycle of Poverty: Train to Help Homemakers", article in the *Detroit News*, Wednesday, March 24, 1965, Cavanaugh Collection, box 264, folder 10.
[19] Greenleigh Associates, Inc. New York/Chicago, "Home Interview Study of Low-Income Households in Detroit, Michigan", report, February 1965, Cavanaugh Collection, box 249, folder 11.
[20] Detroit City Commission, report on Detroit Riot, Summer of 1967, Cavanaugh Collection, box 393, folder 1.

call for more intensive federal programs aimed at eliminating or reducing poverty, more research into the problems of urban communities, more programs to create jobs (including those from private industries), encouragement of black owned businesses, and a focus on more effective education programs. Mayor Cavanaugh indicated that any of these solutions that were implemented should also be an attempt to ameliorate years of discrimination.[21] He insisted that programs aimed at addressing structural level inequalities were necessary to combat poverty and racism within Detroit. Unfortunately, after the 1967 riots, it became increasingly difficult to convince others that anti-poverty programs were working.

Public Perception

The political climate overall during the mid to late 1960s was conducive to organizing, thanks in part to the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and the implementation of many community based programs and initiatives that allowed welfare recipients a place to meet, find common ground, and take action (Davis, 1996). Poor women began to see welfare as a right and to fight for their access to all the legal benefits they were entitled to (Abramovitz, 1996). It is important to note that the view of welfare as a basic "right" was not something with which the general public agreed. Unemployment rates and inflation were low, GNP was increasing, and many began to question why poverty still existed amid such levels of affluence (West, 1981).

As early as 1960 welfare was portrayed by the media and viewed by the public in gendered, racialized, and sexualized terms (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001). A 1960 article in *Atlantic Monthly* titled, "Detroit's Welfare Empire", was indicative of the public's

[21] Mayor Cavanaugh, "Recommendations to the Kerner Commission", report on Detroit Riot, summer of 1967, Cavanaugh Collection, box 393, folder 2.

derogatory view of welfare recipients. It complained of a welfare explosion in Detroit, and blamed it on the promiscuous and lazy lifestyles of poor African American women who were accused of having illegitimate children, partying and prostituting all night, and sleeping all day. The crux of the author's argument was that the poverty of these women was behaviorally driven and related to moral failings (Mosley, 1960).

The Moynihan Report[22], authored by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Assistant Secretary of Labor under President Johnson, portrayed African American family structures as pathological. Illustrating the connection between the breakdown of the African American family and the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC), Moynihan argued, "The steady expansion of this welfare program, as of public assistance programs in general, can be taken as a measure of the steady disintegration of the Negro family structure over the past generation in the United States" (p. 14). [23] He saw African American families as highly unstable and led by black matriarchs with illegitimate children or children who were overwhelmingly the product of divorce. The only solution to this pathology, he felt, was a concerted effort to strengthen the Black family. Moynihan viewed the structure of African American families as the measuring stick used to determine whether or not civil rights and social welfare policy were working (Rainwater & Yancey, 1967). In his assessment, welfare policies, especially AFDC and its support for African American female headed households and their illegitimate children, had contributed greatly to the problems of the Black family.

---

[22] Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action", Report, Published in March 1965 by the United States Department of Labor Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor.

[23]Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action", Report, Published in March 1965 by the United States Department of Labor Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor.

Welfare and Reproductive Control

Even before the Moynihan Report, race strongly influenced perceptions of illegitimacy. Regina Kunzel (1993), in her examination of out of wedlock pregnancy and the connection to social work, found that as early as the 1940s race was becoming more salient than class in the perception of illegitimacy. Beginning in the 1940s individual African American women's out of wedlock pregnancies were seen as symptoms of cultural pathology, while white women's illegitimate pregnancies were seen as symptoms of an individual psychiatric neurosis (Kunzel, 1993). This discourse on illegitimacy assumed that white women could change their behavior, since it was individually motivated, and implied that African American women's illegitimacy was caused by the intractable pathology of black matriarchal families which were threats to society (Kunzel, 1993).

Assumptions about poor women's sexuality were routinely involved in denials of welfare benefits or in termination of cases. Before welfare rights groups and their demands for fair hearings were an established force in Detroit, many of the letters to the mayor's office and subsequently forwarded on to the City of Detroit Department of Public Welfare complained of having cases terminated or denied based on allegations of illegitimacy.[24] A 1964 letter argues that a woman was denied assistance because she had a "continued pattern of promiscuity" and "continued intimacy" with the father of two of her children (whom she was not married to). The communication from both the mayor's office and the Department of Public Welfare in this case pointed out her possible support

[24] Complaints by individual citizens of Detroit, various letters to Mayor Cavanaugh's Office, 1964, Cavanaugh Collection, box 151, folders 7, and 15-28.

from the man she was currently involved with as a reason for termination.[25] In another letter from 1964, the explanation for case termination was the woman's illegal co-habitation, since she had re-married without properly divorcing her first husband.[26] Another case termination was explained by a woman having five illegitimate children and a man found in her house.[27] All were seen as legitimate reasons for termination of welfare benefits. A letter written by an African American woman complained that ADC benefits were terminated because her sister's caseworker had seen her with the white man that she had been dating, who was also the father of her child. In this woman's view she had been reported not only because she was seeing a man, but because she was seeing a white man. Her case was eventually reinstated, but only after the State of Michigan's Department of Social Welfare was certain that she was cooperating with eligibility requirements and no longer seeing the man in question.[28] One could dismiss these as small examples of egregious views of poor women, but other scholars have provided similar examples, indicating that welfare policy developed within these raced, classed, and gendered assumptions (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001; Quadagno, 1994; Solinger, 2000).

According to Solinger (2000), when oral contraceptives first became available in 1960, there was much discussion by policy makers and service providers about whether or not their distribution to poor women should be supported. Much of this debate reflected fears that supporting the distribution of oral contraceptives would give an impression of approval of promiscuity or, conversely, that lack of support would lead to

---

[25] Mayor Cavanaugh's Office and Detroit Department of Public Welfare, correspondence between offices regarding a citizen denied public assistance, 1964, Cavanaugh Collection, box 151, folder 21.
[26] Detroit Department of Public Welfare, letter to citizen whose welfare benefits were terminated, 1964, Cavanaugh Collection, box 151, folder 28.
[27] Detroit Department of Public Welfare, letter to Mayor's Office explaining why a citizen's welfare benefits were terminated, 1964, Cavanaugh Collection, box 151, folder 28.
[28] A Detroit citizen, letter to Mayor Cavanaugh's Office complaining of termination of welfare benefits, 1965, Cavanaugh Collection, box 230, folder 5.

an increase in illegitimate births to African American poor women. A fear of African American illegitimacy and a view of African American women as sexually promiscuous pervaded the ambivalence around contraception. Many of the letters to Mayor Cavanaugh's office during 1964 discussed the provision of birth control advice to welfare recipients. Letter writers often identified themselves as "taxpayers" and most were in support of providing advice on birth control. One stated that although he was Catholic he still felt that something had to be done and that birth control should be given to women on welfare.[29]

The issue of birth control for welfare recipients was a point of contention between the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit during the mid 1960s. A February 16, 1965 article in the *Detroit News* indicated that the Michigan Catholic Conference was requesting that the state level birth control policy be limited so that social workers would be forbidden from initiating conversations about birth control or making referrals for women on welfare to receive birth control.[30] In Detroit, the city welfare commission had adopted a liberal policy that allowed case workers to initiate conversations about birth control and family planning with welfare recipients. Interestingly, it was noted that in working with single women, "...it should be recognized that family planning or limitation should not in itself be viewed as resolving the basic problem".[31] The "problem" for unmarried women on welfare was not defined by policymakers and the public as a lack of birth control, but rather as promiscuity and illegitimate children. Although the Detroit policy was seen as liberal by the press and public since it allowed

---

[29] A Detroit citizen, letter to Mayor Cavanaugh's Office in support of giving birth control to welfare recipients, 1964, Cavanaugh Collection, box 151, folder 13.
[30] Jo Ann Hardee, article in the *Detroit News*, February 16, 1965, DCCR Collection, box 78, folder 27.
[31] The City-County Bureau, article in the *Detroit News*, Wednesday, June 16, 1965, DCCR Collection, box 78, folder 27.

for a discussion of birth control, and although many of the letters to the Mayor's office took a stance that birth control should be offered to women on welfare, it is important to examine the racialized and sexualized assumptions of these positions. According to a February 1965 study of low-income households in Detroit, 83.7% of those on public assistance at the time were black, and 15.9% were white (0.4% indicated "other").[32] The definition of the real "problem" for women on welfare occurred through the intersection of racist, sexist, and classist stereotypes of poor black women as promiscuous. A compromise on birth control was reached during the summer of 1965 when the state Department of Social Services allowed caseworkers to inform recipients of the availability of birth control only when requested by recipients themselves. It also mandated that all city and county policies be revised in order to conform to the new requirements.[33] The birth control controversy strongly illustrates the intersection of race, class, and gender in policies that impacted women's everyday lives.

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)

During the postwar years white women were warned not to enter the paid work force, since it was believed that working outside the home would cause problems for their children (Solinger, 2000). Popular magazines of the day as well as many psychiatrists, presented negative views of work and self-sufficiency for white middle class women, and advocated dependency on men. The strength of racial assumptions led to a different belief about black women in the workforce. African American and poor women's children were not portrayed as being psychologically damaged by their mother's necessity of working

[32] Greenleigh Associates, New York/Chicago, "Home Interview Study of Low-Income Households in Detroit, Michigan", report, February, 1965, Cavanaugh Collection, box 249, folder 11.
[33] Robert L. Pisor, "Welfare Board OK's Birth Control Policy", article in the *Detroit News*, August 31, 1965, DCCR Collection, box 78, folder 27.

outside the home. In fact, African American and poor women were not given the same opportunity for dependency as white middle class women (Solinger, 2000). The issue of dependency was seen in a positive light for middle class white women, and viewed very negatively for poor African American women. While the "family ethic" and an idealized conception of a male breadwinner and female stay at home mother (Abramovitz, 1996), were certainly part of the social construction of the family that all women had to contend with, African American and poor women were historically held to very different standards in practice.

Mothers' employment was also treated quite contradictorily within the Aid to Families with Dependant Children (AFDC) program (Abramovitz, 1996). The stated purpose of AFDC was to allow mothers without male support to stay home to care for their children. The reality was quite the opposite as work incentives were built into the policy as poor women, particularly poor women of color, on AFDC became more stigmatized (Gordon, 1994).

During the War on Poverty, AFDC contained harsh sanctions. "Man in the House" rules and "Suitable Homes" policies allowed public welfare officials to terminate assistance for women suspecting of having a man in the house, or for women who had children out of wedlock (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001). Welfare recipients involved in welfare rights organizing were put on the defensive by these sanctions, as illustrated in the information included in a Michigan Welfare Rights Organization's (MWRO) 1968 handbook. It outlined a recipient's right to have a man in the home as long as the financial support he gave her did not exceed her eligible income level for AFDC.[34]

[34] Wayne County Welfare Rights Organization, "Welfare Rights Handbook", handbook, 1968, OC-MWRO Files.

Eventually, the Man in the House rule and the Suitable Homes policy were struck down by the courts (Quadagno, 1994). The Man in the House rule was commonly used as a way of reducing the welfare rolls (Nadasen, 2005), and after it was struck down, welfare rights groups printed details of the ruling so that recipients would know it was no longer legal.[35]

The Welfare Explosion

Many of these sanctions and tough work requirements were thought to be a reaction to the "welfare explosion" of the 1960s (Quadagno, 1994; Solinger, 2000). The "welfare explosion" also had racial implications. The dramatic increase in welfare rolls between 1965 and 1970 occurred from adding African Americans to the rolls, so that by 1970, 45 percent of those receiving AFDC were African American (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001). Taken together with the number of Latino/a families receiving AFDC, for the first time a majority of those receiving welfare were people of color (Abramovitz, 1996).

Piven and Cloward's (1979) analysis of the growth in welfare rolls attributed this increase to the mobilization of the poor by groups such as the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO). They contended that the poor used direct action techniques learned from the Civil Rights Movement and that their militancy was rewarded with increases in federal welfare assistance as a way to control or appease this unrest (Piven & Cloward, 1979). This view has been challenged. Some scholars claim that the pressure to create new anti-poverty initiatives occurred from *both* below and above, from grassroots organizations and from elite policymakers (Patterson, 2000). Mobilization of the poor was also accompanied by federal level policies and programs of the War on Poverty.

[35] Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, newsletter, n.d., OC-MWRO Files.

Since these factors did seem to occur almost simultaneously, their impact was more dramatic and substantial (Patterson, 2000). During the mid 1960s these multiple factors coalesced to produce a climate conducive to organizing as well as a welfare backlash.

Some have claimed that President Johnson set unreasonably high expectations for the War on Poverty programs by arguing that poverty could be eliminated. When the welfare rolls began to increase during the "welfare explosion", the War on Poverty programs were seen as failures (Berkowitz, 1991). Between 1962 and 1967 AFDC payments increased from $1.2 billion to $2.0 billion as welfare caseloads increased (Lynn, 1977). AFDC benefits also increased 36 percent from 1967 to 1970 (Abramovitz, 1996). These factors occurred against the historical backdrop of racist attitudes towards the poor, inviting a welfare backlash (Quadagno, 1994). The AFDC program was criticized as being supportive of welfare cheats and mothers with illegitimate children. In response to these concerns, Congress initiated the 1967 amendments to the Social Security Act, which emphasized work requirements for AFDC recipients, establishing the WIN program (Lynn, 1977).

The Work Incentive Program (WIN)

In 1967, when AFDC was modified, the Work Incentive Program (WIN) was initiated. The WIN program was intended as a means of encouraging more recipients to work. WIN contained an encouraging as well as a punitive component. Work training, increased funding for day-care assistance, and allowing recipients to keep the first $30 of monthly earnings and one-third of the amounts over $30 were meant as encouragements to work. Prior to WIN, recipients' income from work was directly subtracted from their welfare allotments. The punitive feature of the program was the workfare component,

which allowed States to deny welfare to any "appropriate" person who refused work or training "without good cause" (Patterson, 2000). Welfare rights participants generally opposed the WIN work requirements, and the NWRO officially opposed the workfare component of WIN because they felt that it forced women to work (Nadasen, 2005). Many tensions developed between local welfare rights groups and the national chapter at this time. A 1969 *New York Times* article reported contention between local affiliates and NWRO around the issue of WIN, because of NWRO's acceptance of a $434,930 federal contract to provide assistance to recipients in the WIN program (Clines, 1969). This reflected tensions around leadership and control within the movement at the national level as well as concern over its direction. Because of its strong work component, WIN was seen as an egregious program overall. Any sign that the national level movement was aligning itself with WIN was viewed by some local welfare rights groups as betrayal to movement goals (Gilbert, 2001).

The Family Assistance Plan (FAP)

The welfare crisis set the stage for the Nixon administration's dramatic plan to end welfare. In August 1969, President Nixon proposed eliminating AFDC and replacing it with a guaranteed annual income, the Family Assistance Plan (FAP). FAP would have provided a guaranteed income of $1,600 per year for a family of four. The FAP proposal represented 42.7% of the poverty threshold for a family of four in 1969.[36] In 2005 dollars 42.7% of the 2005 poverty threshold would be approximately $8,486. [37] Since FAP

[36] According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the poverty threshold for a family of four during 1969 was $3,743, data available from the U.S. Census Bureau's website displaying historical poverty tables, http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/histpov/hstpov1.html.

[37] This is according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau on the 2005 poverty threshold for a family of four, comprised of one adult and three children, last updated February 1, 2006, available at, http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/thresh05.html.

would have allowed some of a family's earnings from work to be disregarded when estimating a family's benefit, the program was aimed at the working poor as well as the non-working poor (Lynn, 1977). Nixon was interested in not only dismantling AFDC, but in supporting low-income working families. The President was strongly influenced by Daniel Patrick Moynihan who, although a Democrat, was a respected advisor in his administration. Moynihan encouraged Nixon to move away from a service based strategy for solving the problem of welfare and to move toward a cash based approach that would also support families of the working poor. The FAP contained a $720 work disregard for a family of four in determining support payments. Nixon wanted to disentangle welfare policy from the image of the single-parent non-working family that AFDC had symbolized (Berkowitz, 1991).

One of the factors in FAP's eventual demise was that conservatives believed it contained a strong work *dis*incentive (Lynn, 1977). This work disincentive would have appeared at the break even point for FAP eligibility, since those who were working would not have qualified for the additional benefits of food stamps, Medicaid, and housing subsidies, creating an imbalance for some families. The FAP did not appeal to either conservatives or liberals. Besides believing that FAP contained work disincentives, conservatives feared it would be exorbitantly expensive. Liberals disliked FAP because they thought annual income limits were set too low. Others felt that FAP would be difficult to administer and that it would require an overhaul of several social service programs associated with welfare (Berkowitz, 1991).

The FAP proposal was of major importance to the NWRO. The fight for a guaranteed annual income for the poor was a pivotal point in the ending of the War on

Poverty, as well as the ending of the NWRO. The NWRO almost immediately began mobilizing against FAP after it was announced (Patterson, 2000). While it supported the concept of a guaranteed annual income, it argued that proposed income levels were too low. The NWRO subsequently offered an alternative proposal with a $5,500 guaranteed annual income for a family of four, which was significantly above the poverty threshold for 1969 (West, 1981).[38] Again, in 2005 terms this same percentage above the poverty threshold would be equivalent to $29,214 as a guaranteed family income for a family of four in 2005. A major difference in the NWRO proposal was that it would have placed families above the poverty threshold in 1969. This alternative to FAP would have also allowed families with annual incomes under $10,000 to receive some level of assistance, and would have provided for fair hearings, legal services, emergency grants, and day-care assistance as part of the overall plan (Nadasen, 2005).

Social Service employees also took an official stance against FAP. The president of the National Federation of Social Services Employees felt that FAP would destroy the family and create a new slave labor force consisting of the poor, and that it would also destroy organized labor.[39] In a letter to the Detroit Commission on Community Relations the Detroit area Welfare Employees Union officially leant their support to the NWRO's proposal in response to FAP.[40] Much of the support that NWRO received from social service employees unions was due to the fear that FAP would result in unemployment or

---

[38] It is important to note that the NWRO's proposal, in contrast to FAP, was significantly above the poverty threshold for a family of four for 1969, and in fact represented 147% of the 1969 poverty threshold. Data on historical poverty thresholds is available from the U.S. Census Bureau's website, http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/histpov1.html.

[39] Ozzie Edwards, "FAP is Back", n.d., WEU Collection, box 18, folder 12.

[40] James Bish, President of the WEU, letter to the Detroit Commission on Community Relations, March 8, 1972, WEU Collection, box 2, folder 20.

loss of seniority for state and local welfare employees.[41] Despite this support, the fight lasted from 1969 until FAP's final defeat in 1972, and it proved to be a strong factor in the weakening of the NWRO due to the depleted resources and increased internal conflict in the aftermath of the battle (West, 1981).

Although members of the NWRO actively enlisted help from their white middle class allies in the Friends of Welfare Rights groups in order to advocate against FAP, the response was not uniform. Many of the non-recipient welfare rights supporters felt that the NWRO should have accepted the initial version of FAP, in hopes of creating a foundation or precedent that could be built on.[42] Increased reliance on outside groups' assistance in the fight against FAP marked a shift in national welfare rights tactics and member roles. Non-recipient participants were taking on more decision-making and policy work within the movement (West, 1981). This shift was not viewed favorably by recipient members and many thought the non-recipient participants of the welfare rights movement were taking the movement in unwanted directions (Gilbert, 2001).

Ending the War on Poverty

While the NWRO may have seen their goals partially realized with the defeat of FAP, they did not see implementation of their own more substantial guaranteed annual income policy. They also lost the battle over work requirements, although they fought hard against the WIN program (Kotz & Kotz, 1977). In 1971, AFDC work requirements became even more stringent when the "Talmadge Amendments", mandating work requirements for mothers caring for children over six years old, were enacted (Berkowitz,

---

[41] AFL-CIO, "Legislative Brief H.R. 1, Welfare Reform- the Need for Employee Protection Provisions", 1971?, WEU Collection, box 18, folder 12.

[42] Anita, white middle class member of a welfare rights group in Southeast Michigan, personal interview, Oct. 24, 2003, Detroit, MI.

1991). When WIN was originally implemented, registering for this work component was voluntary, now it had become mandatory (Patterson, 2000).

The OEO programs and the EOA created a complex mix of federal mandates and localized control (Friedman, 1977). Although Detroit had developed its own initiatives and received large OEO grants early in the War on Poverty, by 1967 Mayor Cavanaugh was demanding more localized control over how OEO funds were allocated.[43] While decentralization of power within programs such as CAPs had been posited as a key mechanism allowing for participation of the poor, this localized control may also have produced vulnerability in War on Poverty programs. "Local forces" could co-opt and control local programs either for the good of the community or for their own more narrow interests (Friedman, 1977).

Considering this criticism of localized control within the War on Poverty, social work offers a different perspective. Empowerment practice in social work views grass-roots localized control as a critical factor in macro interventions (Parsons, Gutiérrez, & Cox, 1998). When empowerment practice is employed in work with individuals or with groups, critical knowledge is gained for the individuals and groups involved, as well as for the field of social work (Gutiérrez, Alvarez, Nemon, & Lewis, 1996). Fostering localized control in macro interventions is tantamount to engaging in empowerment practice for oppressed groups or populations. Knowledge created by oppressed groups through their own political struggle constitutes a particular "standpoint" (Hartsock 1998). Social workers should be able to obtain radical insights for social change by locating and

[43] Remarks of Mayor Cavanaugh before the Senate Sub-Committee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty, Cavanaugh Collection, box 385, speeches folder.

utilizing the "standpoint" of poor women in all community organizing or social movement work.

Part II: Conceptualizing

Chapter 4

Understanding Women's Standpoints within a Past Social Movement: A Conceptual Framework for the Study

A feminist historical and a multidimensional feminist standpoint approach, as well as the literature, informed the conceptual framework for this study (see Figure 3, on page 152 for a diagram of the conceptual map). This framework was developed in order to illustrate all of the factors to be examined in the study, and to depict how various components interacted in women's social movement work. The conceptual map is organized into three chronological phases: 1.) before participants were involved in any social movement activity or activism; 2.) when they were involved in other social movement activity or activism before welfare rights, and; 3.) when they were involved in the welfare rights movement. The theoretical framework used, as well as the literature in social work, history, sociology, and women's studies, informed my development of this conceptual map. The interview questions and categories for analysis emerged from this framework.

A Feminist Historical Approach

Since this research examined a specific time period it is considered historical research. Historical methods attempt to bring together several sources from the past in order to form a cohesive narrative account of events and/or processes (Gottschalk, 1967). Examining the everyday lives of women is a major goal of feminist research, always remembering and making visible the fact that their lives were shaped by social forces and social structures which they simultaneously helped to shape (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld,

1996). This research uses an historical approach, emphasizing feminist methodology which is most appropriately suited to the research questions that are addressed.

While there is no single research method that is universally considered feminist, a conscious feminist approach or methodology can be utilized regardless of the methods chosen (DeVault, 1996). Feminist researchers have critiqued traditional science for viewing humans as made up of facts, and subsequently objectifying those studied. In contrast, a feminist methodology consciously attempts to avoid exploiting the subject and objectifying participants (Gorelick, 1996).

A feminist methodology emphasizes action leading to social change (DeVault, 1996). This means that the goals of the research must be emancipatory, since it is understood that women's lives are shaped by the larger dominant power relations, based on racial, class, and gender statuses, that are inherent in our society (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1996). Olson & Shopes (1991) speak of the researcher acting as a "citizen-scholar-activist" who approaches his or her research as an engaged member of a community and works towards social change while maintaining a critical focus on power and inequality (p. 201). My research is consistent with my ongoing concern for women in poverty. It also acknowledges my previous activist work for social justice for poor women. The goal of this research is not simply academic. It is embedded in my concern for social justice and my emancipatory goals for the participants in my research, particularly poor minority women.

Feminists have noted that studying women's lives from women's perspectives can produce information on how social policy shapes women's everyday lives, and how women resist as well as reinforce this. DeVault's (1991) study of women and the work

they engaged in to feed their families discovered that poor women were much more restricted in their daily life choices than middle class women. Those on AFDC and receiving food stamps and/or WIC (the Women, Infants, and Children program) coupons (for food and infant formula) received strict guidelines about proper mothering and family nutrition. These guidelines were based on socially constructed assumptions about what constituted proper care, acting as strong influences in poor women's lives. Middle class women who did not use these forms of assistance in feeding their family were not subject to these same assumptions, and were in fact allowed more choices in how they would provide meals for their families (DeVault, 1991). These revelations about differences in women's lives based on social class are understood when the researcher *starts* from women's lives as they are lived within their unique contexts.

In order to utilize a feminist approach to research, one must also strive to understand knowledge constructed by women themselves, particularly those whose voices have not been heard or have been silenced in many ways. Nadasen (2005) claims that the welfare rights movement itself offers an opportunity to examine how a unique form of feminism developed based on the day to day lives of poor black women. A feminist approach would attempt to more closely examine these women's lives, through their own perspectives, and then disseminate this knowledge so that it may become socially transformative for all women.

The Use of Standpoint

Examining the standpoint of women as Smith (1987) articulates, means obtaining understanding through the analysis of women's everyday lives as they exist in a particular historical moment, and as they are shaped or influenced by the "ruling

apparatus" of a male dominant society (p. 108). Within this structure of dominant power relations women have been viewed as objects, and their voices have not been heard or understood through their own subject positions. A standpoint of women strives to provide an honest and accurate understanding of women's lives through the lens of their own experience (Smith, 1987). In this dissertation I examine women's standpoints, as reflected in interviews with women who participated in the development of the welfare rights movement in Southeast Michigan. Although I am interested in exploring women's standpoints, and examining whether or not gender was a key organizing factor, or commonality, I am also interested in investigating the various positionalities of participants, and thus how race, class, and gender converged to shape their lives.

I define standpoint theory as found within Harding's (2004) discussion of the emergence of standpoint thinking. She refers to standpoint theory as "...a kind of organic epistemology, methodology, philosophy of science, and social theory that can arise whenever oppressed peoples gain public voice" (p. 3). This perspective also relates to feminist standpoint theory as articulated by Hartsock (1998), who assumes that those who are oppressed live in material worlds created by structures of domination developed by oppressors, and that it is through their struggle to comprehend this world that "partial perspectives" (Haraway, 2001; Harding, 2001), representing critical knowledge are created. "Standpoints" are not automatic, and they must be uncovered through the oppressed group's political struggles. Through these struggles, poor women, particularly women of color, can make visible to the larger society the ways in which systems of domination have structured their lives and can allow the oppressive "insane" features of these systems to be known (Hartsock, 1998). Social theories without this key component,

which assumes that knowledge is created by those who are oppressed, will risk reproducing systems of domination and oppression. Collins (1998) argues that many past social theories that have been produced by elites, or those occupying privileged race, class, or gender positions, actually maintained hierarchical and unequal power structures. Critical social theory that is in true opposition to oppression is only produced when conscious efforts are made to make clear the unique contribution and knowledge of those occupying marginalized positions in society.

For the purpose of this study I identify the "standpoints" of participants as they emerged through their political struggles based on their existence within lives structured by the power relations inherent in the historical social locations they occupied. I define their standpoints as the unique and critical knowledge that they indicated possessing based on their own political struggles. I define "social location" as the existence within privileged and oppressed positions within society, based on gender, race, and class. Individuals who occupied specific social locations may have actively achieved particular standpoints informed in part by their social location. However, the use of standpoints in this study represents an assumption that critical insights are not automatic, but struggled for and achieved and subsequently emphasized by those occupying marginalized positions in society. Standpoints were identified in this study where individuals indicated that they possessed critical insight into the unequal systems of social relations that structured all of their lives. This insight was evidenced in the ways that women in this sample emphasized or focused on a unique knowledge that they had achieved based on their social location, their social experience, and their political struggles. "Standpoints" are also identified within the documents analyzed, where this insight, or a certain unique

perspective, is posited based on an assumption of a shared standpoint. This is typically where a "better" or "clearer" view of policy changes is presented in the documents, based on a certain shared standpoint, or as a strategic way of targeting other members of certain oppressed groups.

A Multidimensional Feminist Standpoint Approach

In Naples' (2003) attempt to outline a "materialist feminist conceptual framework" for researching women's lives, she presents a "multidimensional standpoint analysis" as a way of investigating the diversity of women's standpoints and the shifting nature of the social dynamics in which standpoints may be identified. She presents a multidimensional feminist standpoint approach from her attempts to understand women's experiences within varying social locations at varying points in time within her own research. This framework illustrates how standpoints represent individual knowers' experiences. These experiences both shape and are shaped by the macro societal level, as well as the smaller community level, and are also a site of inquiry.

Although in Collins (1998) view of standpoint thinking, group membership is defined mainly through a historically structured social location, a multidimensional feminist standpoint approach allows for a geographic or non-geographic construct of "community" which individuals can achieve through participation and interaction with others in that "community" (Naples, 2003).

In research on community activists, Naples discovered that participants occupied simultaneous "insider" and "outsider" positions that were dependent on different geographical and historically embedded contexts. Using a multidimensional feminist standpoint perspective allowed her to thoroughly examine various and relational

experiences of individual knowers as well as to investigate the shifting nature of the standpoints they emphasized. An analysis of race, class, and gender within the welfare rights movement should focus on the multiple social locations of those who were involved, and must recognize that participants simultaneously occupied outsider and insider locations within the larger society and the movement.

Since this study focuses on both African American and white women in the Detroit area who were recipients of welfare and who were middle class or working class members of the "Friends of Welfare Rights" groups, the framework of a multidimensional feminist standpoint approach is most appropriate. The use of a multidimensional feminist standpoint approach and an intersectional analysis allows for an emphasis on standpoints of race, class, and gender when analyzing women's responses to changes in welfare policy, as well as their participation in the welfare rights movement.

The results of this study are organized according to how these standpoints emphasized difference or similarities among women. The concept of difference is meant to include historical socially constructed categories of power and domination in which women lived. There is a conscious effort in this work to move away from the essentializing idea of "woman" as a homogenous group. Thus, the idea of a ***multiracial feminism*** is also important to the analysis used in this study. The construct of ***multiracial feminism*** allows for a critical emphasis on the socially stratified categories of race and the subsequent power relations that this represents, when examining women's lives (Baca Zinn & Thornton Dill, 1996). Since this study examines how white and black women of varying social classes came together to participate in a social movement, as well as how

they responded to changes in welfare policy, the categories of race, class, and gender are the main foci. These categories are first and foremost understood as structural, historically embedded social locations, which were simultaneously experienced although not necessarily simultaneously expressed or acknowledged.

The Use of Intersectionality

Collins (1998) advocates using an intersectional approach to the analysis of groups, arguing that "... race, class, and gender mutually construct one another in historically distinctive ways" (p. 209). By using an intersectional approach to examine groups, the group itself remains a shaping feature, placing individuals within a specific, hierarchically structured, unequal social location. Simultaneously, a deeper understanding of how these oppressive mechanisms work can be achieved as we explore variations in group membership based on other positionalities (Collins, 1998). An intersectional approach allows researchers to explore the history of women as lived within the social locations of race, class, and gender. It allows us to discover how women impacted and were impacted by their social locations. Crenshaw (1995) offers a powerful example illustrating the importance of intersectionality when she outlines the case of a Latina non English speaking woman who was denied entrance to a domestic violence shelter due to the shelter's policy requiring English proficiency. This example highlights the danger in an assumed generic model of "domestic violence victim" which does not include or take into account the lived experiences of many immigrant women. It illustrates the importance of understanding differences among the category of "woman", and the need to view gender as it intersects with race and class, as well as sexuality.

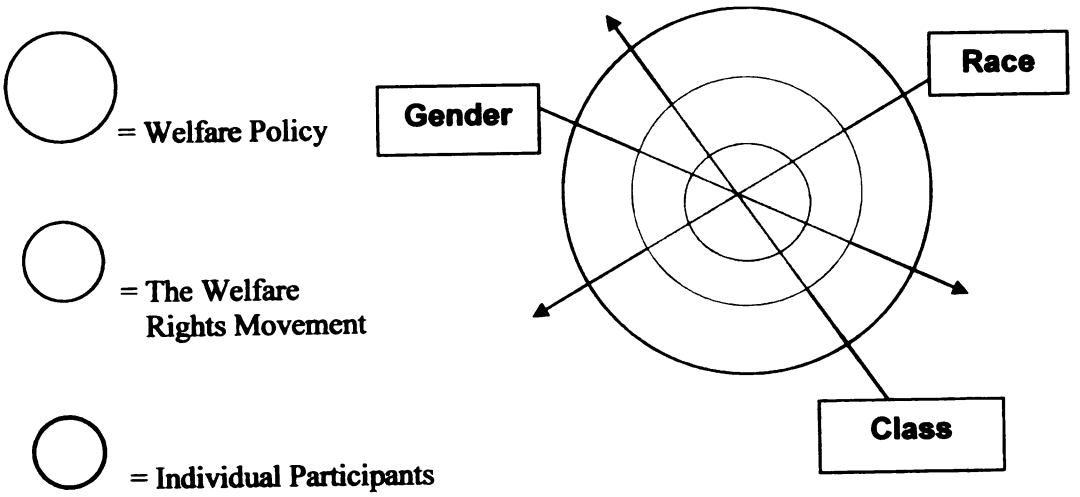
Baca Zinn and Thornton Dill (1996) indicate that an intersectional analysis examines the agency of women, as it exists within and in response to, the converging categories of race, class, and gender, and the dominant power relations therein. Collins also (1993) explores the concept of intersectionality as a category of analysis that moves away from seeing race, class, and gender as dichotomous either/or categories and moves towards analysis that acknowledges them as ever present categories simultaneously shaping and influencing, acknowledging that one particular category may be emphasized more than others at certain points in time. Intersectionality refers to the socially constructed categories of race, class, and gender as converging and interlocking dimensions that contain specific power relations which impact and structure all of our lives (Weber, 2001). A key feature of intersectionality is that each of these categories converges and impacts the other, and thus, can not be separated and examined individually or additively (Anderson & Collins, 2001). This is the crux of how difference and similarities are examined in this study. There is an understanding of simultaneous race, class, and gender categories that position women within certain power domains, as well as an examination of how these categories are expressed, experienced, and responded to, at certain points in time, through interaction in a specific social movement.

The concept of intersectionality is important to this study since it moves away from a dichotomous perspective that sees individuals as either oppressed or privileged, and encourages an analysis which assumes that individuals can occupy simultaneous insider and outsider locations, which may shift over time. My work takes an intersectional approach to the analysis of race, class, and gender, examining not only how these categories shaped women's lives, but also how women indicated shifting standpoints that

were used or expressed within their social movement work and within responses to welfare policy that occurred during the War on Poverty.

Although the use of "difference" and "sameness" is explored in this study, these constructs are defined as the ways in which participants themselves emphasized these concepts within their participation in the welfare rights movement, and how race, class, and gender intersected within their perspective of "difference" and "sameness". In order to truly utilize an intersectional framework, even as race, class, or gender are emphasized individually within concepts of "difference" and "sameness" in participants' responses, at times representing their differing standpoints, it is also necessary to explore the unspoken ways that race, class, and gender simultaneously converged to shape their lived experiences and structure their lives. Since systems of race, class, and gender are interrelated and operating at all times, even those which were unmentioned were still impacting, shaping, and influencing all of the participants in this study's lives. Therefore, examining the impact of race, class, or gender by itself, even as it was emphasized within participants' standpoints, does not provide sufficient understanding of how women participated in the welfare rights movement. Categories of race, class, and gender converged to produce the specific experiences and interpretations of social movement participation, and responses to welfare policy that are outlined in this dissertation. Figure one, below gives a graphic representation of the intersectional framework for this study.

Figure1. Intersectional Diagram



Chapter 5

Methodology

This study examines the following overarching questions. How did women involved in the welfare rights movement mobilize across differences and within similarities? How did women's responses to changes in welfare policy reflect differences and similarities? To answer these questions, I focused on those participants involved in welfare recipient groups as well as those who were involved in non-recipient groups in Detroit and Southeast Michigan. I also examined archival records such as newsletters, brochures, manuals, correspondence, flyers and other materials created by those involved with the overall movement in order to analyze participants' responses to changes in welfare policy.

My research questions are:

1. How did women mobilize across difference in race and class within the welfare rights movement?
2. How salient was gender as a mobilizing factor in the development of a welfare rights movement in the Detroit, Michigan area?
3. How did race and class manifest in welfare rights movement participants' responses to changes in welfare policy?
4. How salient was gender in welfare rights participants' responses to changes in welfare policy?

Research questions 1 and 2 are answered by oral history interviews. Research questions 3 and 4 are answered through analysis of archival materials produced by participants in the welfare rights movement.

Sample

For the oral history interviews, the sampling frame included women who participated in the early form of the welfare rights movement in the Detroit, Michigan area between 1964 and1972. African American and white women who were poor, working class, middle class, or upper middle class at the time of their participation were included. Race was purposively dichotomized for this study, as either African American or white. This was done because most of those receiving welfare in the Detroit area at this time were African American,[44] and most of those involved in the "friends of welfare rights groups" during this time period were white (West, 1981). This is not assumed to represent the full category of race, as the author understands that race is indeed a broader category and should not be dichotomized in most cases. The concept of class was identified through participant self-identification as well as other factors such as occupation, education, father and mother's occupation, and father and mother's education.

Twelve women and one man who participated in the welfare rights movement in the Detroit, Michigan area between 1964 and 1972 were interviewed. African American and white women who were poor, middle class, or working class at the time of their participation were included. Small samples used in qualitative research have been criticized for not being heterogeneous and specifically for not including women of color and working class women (Weber Cannon, Higginbotham, & Leung, 1991). Taking this criticism into account, and considering the research questions in this study, a strong

[44] Greenleigh Associates, New York/Chicago, "Home Interview Study of Low-Income Households in Detroit, Michigan, report, February, 1965, Cavanaugh Collection, box 249, folder 11.

attempt was made to obtain diversity within this sample. The sample achieved for this study does represent diversity in race and class.

A snowball sampling method was used to locate participants, using information obtained from key informants chosen for their leadership roles in the movement. A purposive theoretical sampling strategy was also applied, as women of different classes and races were interviewed in order to examine how different social locations impacted the organizing attempts of participants, and to prevent essentializing the category of woman. As Higginbotham, Weber Cannon, and Lueng (1991) point out, more time may need to be allotted for sampling strategies used to reach women of color and working class women as they may be more reluctant to participate in research studies than white middle class women. The white middle class non-recipients in this sample were found much more quickly and agreed to participate more readily than did the welfare recipients, working class women, and African American women. Considerable time was needed to contact them, and it took persistent efforts before they agreed to be interviewed. Because of the particular difficulty in locating welfare recipients, the sample consists of a majority of middle class participants, and only one working class participant. Nevertheless, sufficient heterogeneity was achieved for the purpose of examining the research questions. This is a particularly positive outcome since a major component of this study was to examine how differences in race and class manifested and intersected.

Researchers using a purposive, theoretical sampling strategy attempt to choose cases in relation to the theory, examine deviant cases, and understand that the sample size may need to change when and if new factors emerge during the research (Silverman, 2000). I specifically sampled women of different classes and races in order to examine

how different social locations impacted the organizing attempts of participants in the welfare rights movement in the Detroit, Michigan area. Thus, I followed the demands for stratification that the theoretical framework indicated.

In order to begin obtaining the sample I initially contacted a former legal-aid attorney for Detroit area welfare rights groups. He gave me several names of members of "friends of welfare rights" groups and welfare rights members who were active from 1964-1972. I then began contacting individuals, who referred me to others.

The sample included five women who were welfare recipients and eight non-recipients (seven female, one male). Although my interest was in interviewing only women who were involved in the welfare rights movement, since several participants that I contacted referred me to the same male, I felt it necessary to include him in the sample. The age of participants ranged from 59-83, with most in their 70's when I interviewed them. All of the women in the sample had between one and eight children, with 3.5 as the average number of children. There were no differences in the numbers of children that non-recipients and recipients had. Table one, below, describes the sample in terms of several basic factors.

Table 1. Basic Description of Sample

Pseudonym	Recipient Status	Race	Class	Gender
Anita	friend	white	middle class	female
Delores	recipient	black	poverty class	female
Patricia	friend	white	middle class	female
Anna	friend	white	middle class	female
Martha	friend	white	u. middle class	female
Ruth	friend	white	middle class	female
June	friend	black	working class	female
Victoria	recipient	white	poverty class	female
Robert	friend	white	middle class	male
Evelyn	friend	black	middle class	female
Gladys	recipient	black	poverty class	female
Vivian	recipient	black	poverty class	female
Helen	recipient	black	poverty class	female

All of the interviews were conducted by the author between the fall of 2003 and the fall of 2005. Table 2, below, provides more information on the sample.

Table 2. Further Description of Sample

Pseudonym	Interview Date, and Interview Location	Age	Place of Birth	Initial Year of Involvement in Welfare Rights
Anita	10/24/03, Detroit, MI	63	Indiana	mid. to late 1960's
Delores	11/07/03, Detroit, MI	59	Louisiana	between 1966-1968
Patricia	11/14/03, Farmington, MI	76	Illinois	early 1970's
Anna	11/19/03, Berkley, MI	73	Michigan	mid. 1960's
Martha	9/06/05, Bloomfield Hills, MI	78	New Jersey	1968
Ruth	9/09/05, Detroit, MI	82	Michigan	mid. 1960's
June	9/27/05, Bloomfield Hills, MI	79	Tennessee	mid. 1960's
Victoria	10/11/05, Pontiac, MI	75	Michigan	1970
Robert	10/12/05, Detroit, MI	75	Michigan	1968
Evelyn	10/22/05, Spring Valley, CA	74	Ohio	1969
Gladys	10/25/05, Detroit, MI	83	Alabama	late 1960's
Vivian	10/26/05, Detroit, MI	66	Mississippi	1969
Helen	11/17/05, Dearborn, MI	72	New York	early 1970's

All interviews were conducted in person, by the author, except the California interview, which was conducted over the phone, by the author. For the purpose of simplifying the discussion of findings from this study I refer to all non-recipient members in the sample as "friends" and all welfare recipient members as "recipients". Most of the non-recipient members interviewed for this study were members of various friends of welfare rights groups throughout Southeast Michigan. One was a CAP worker, one worked as an organizer for the NWRO during involvement in the welfare rights movement, and one worked extensively with a welfare rights group in Detroit.

Most of the participants interviewed first became involved in welfare rights organizing in the middle to late 1960's and all continued their involvement throughout the 1970s. Most were in their 30's and 40's when they were involved, and two women were in their 20s. Only three participants did not begin their involvement in the welfare rights movement until 1970-1972, and all three of these women were approximately 35-40 years old at the time of their initial involvement. Although it is understood that women's roles and place in society were historically beginning to change during this time period, there were no real differences in the ways that the three women who became involved later talked about gender roles in society as compared to those who became involved earlier. As far as the impact that changing roles for women had on the NWRO, it wasn't until after Wiley left, in 1972, that women leaders in the NWRO began to more clearly connect the welfare rights movement to the Second Wave Women's Movement. In July of 1973 the NWRO's female recipient leaders issued a press release that explicitly stated their intent to make major changes in the welfare rights movement, and to more directly connect their work to the women's movement (Nadasen, 2005).

All of the participants in this study were involved in one of two major welfare rights groups in Detroit that were affiliated with the NWRO during the 1960s and 1970s, or one of two major friends of welfare rights groups in Oakland County that were affiliated with the NWRO at that time (see Appendix C, on page 154, for a map of Detroit and Southeast Michigan).

Data

In historical research, oral history interviews allow the researcher to actively resist the idea of simply gathering historical facts and instead focus on a more interactive process whereby the researcher attempts to understand the participants' own constructions of their lives and historical events (Gluck & Patai, 1991). When conducting oral history interviews, careful attention must be paid to how dominant ideologies of race, class, and gender have shaped women's meanings as well as how this dominant discourse individually constructs the concepts of race, class, and gender themselves (Sangster, 1998). In my use of oral history interviews I set out to understand how the dimensions of race, class, and gender shaped women's experiences historically as well as the meaning that individual women gave to these categories.

Feminist oral historians have made significant contributions not only by making women's lives visible but also by contributing to the development of feminist theory (Perks & Thomson, 1998). By utilizing oral history as one of the methods in this study, I was able to gain new insights into our understanding of how women came together across differences and within similarities to work for social change. The use of oral history interviews and document analysis analyzed through a feminist lens allowed me to emphasize the social action and social change that these women worked toward.

Women and the women-focused organizations or movements that have been historically ignored can be examined and given voice through a qualitative feminist analysis of their documents, records, and lives (Reinharz, 1992). Oral history methods are well suited to social work research since they are compatible with social work's mission to those from oppressed populations, to give them a voice by allowing them the space to ascribe their own meanings to particular events and experiences from the past (Martin, 1995).

The oral history interviews used in this study produced knowledge about the meanings that women who participated in the welfare rights movement attributed to their involvement as well as the ways that race, class, and gender interacted in these meanings. The data collected led to an understanding of what factors were involved in women's decisions to engage in activism as well as the ways that their different social locations affected their decisions. My goal was to learn how women of different races and social classes perceived their involvement in the movement. The interviews also provided insight into the importance that other social movement activity played in their decisions to become involved in welfare rights organizing.

The instrument used for the in-depth oral history interviews was a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix D on page 156) that had been refined after initial piloting of the instrument. The interviews lasted from one and a half to three hours. The in-person interviews were conducted in the interviewee's home or office. I took notes while conducting all of the interviews and they were all tape-recorded. The tapes were then transcribed. The most recent UCRIHS (Human Subjects) approval for this study was granted on December 5th, 2005, and it expires on December 4th, 2006.

Interview transcripts were entered into Nvivo, a software package for qualitative analysis (QSR International, 2002). All transcripts were initially coded using the study's conceptual framework categories as a guide. As common themes developed more fully, and similarities in descriptions emerged, subsets were then coded. Because I had the entire interviews transcribed and transferred to a database created within the computer analysis program, I was able to employ the constant comparative method of analysis (Silverman, 2000), analyzing and comparing within case data before moving on to examine between case comparisons. The final themes which emerged after re-coding were then organized into matrices, based on the study's conceptual framework, in order to see larger patterns and relationships (see Appendix E, on page 159, for examples of cross-case matrices used in the analysis). I also employed deviant-case analysis strategies when examining those cases which did not seem to fit the emergent themes (Silverman, 2000). The cases of "boundary crossing" that are discussed in chapter eight provide examples of the results of this analysis strategy. Data from the analysis of oral history interviews were used to answer research questions 1 and 2.

The second method used in this study was an analysis of documents from various archival collections that were created by participants in the welfare rights movement. Most of these documents came from the Michigan and Detroit area. Others were produced by the national welfare rights organization and prominent individuals. The major criterion for inclusion was whether the documents were written or created by those who participated in the movement and whether or not the documents focused on welfare policies. Primary sources, including manuscript collections from various archives were analyzed. See page162 for a detailed description of primary sources.

Since the focus of this study is an examination of the intersection of race, class, and gender in movement participants' responses to welfare policy, analysis of documents encompassed more than simple, quantitative counting or content analysis. If one is interested in more than a simple counting procedure for proposed research, one can attempt a more complex analytic strategy in order to examine the function and deeper meaning of documents (Prior, 2003). The documents were analyzed using the conceptual framework of the study as a guide and were assessed through an intersectional approach. A matrix was designed in order to categorize the documents according to the conceptual framework for the study (see Appendix E, on page 159 for examples of matrices used in the analysis).

In feminist research, qualitative analysis of documents and newspaper accounts have been used in conjunction with interviews as a way of broadening insight into the research topic (Reinharz, 1992). In this dissertation the methods of document analysis combined with oral history interviews were used in order to gain a more insightful and rich understanding of the past mobilization attempts of women. A feminist approach to analysis of documents focuses on dissecting the patriarchal assumptions in views or images of women, and/or the ways that these images are structured in relation to societal power and control (Reinharz, 1992). This feminist approach to document analysis fits cohesively with this study, since an explicit goal was to understand the ways in which the locations, identification, and power relations embedded in the dimensions of race, class, and gender acted on the mobilization efforts and the responses to welfare policy by women.

The conceptual map for this study contains square boxes that represent the document analysis phase of the study. Documents were assessed as they represented the policy phases identified in this study, such as "welfare policy during Johnson Administration-early war on poverty initiatives" and "erosion of War on Poverty initiatives- late Johnson administration, early Nixon Administration". The documents were organized in a matrix, according to specific policy focus (i.e. "FAP", "WIN") and emphasis on race, class, and gender. Using the categories that came from the conceptual map, the theoretical framework, and the literature, participants' responses to welfare policy, as they were evident in the documents collected, were analyzed and organized. As with the data from the interviews, patterns and themes both within similarities and across differences of race, class, and gender were assessed. Data from the analysis of the documents is used to answer research questions 3.and 4.

Part III: Intersecting Boundaries

Chapter 6

Emphasizing Difference

> "I am an expert on poverty. I have been poor all my life. I was born poor and Black and unless things change a lot in this country I'm going to die the same way. Everyday I live with this knowledge. Everyday I see, feel, taste, smell and touch the poverty of my people and my community, Everyday I live with the knowledge that you want us poor—just in case you need your bedpans emptied, your shirts ironed, your yards mowed, your houses cleaned and your children tended—and just in case General Motors should need some cheap and temporary help. You brought my people to this country to use our men for labor and our women for housework and pleasure, and little has changed. Today my caseworker denies me help with my college expenses because she says that I have a job skill and need no more education. I understand that—after all who will empty the bedpans when I become a nurse? I understand what you are, I understand what you think of me and my people and I know how you intend to continue to use us."
>
> -Joycelyn Hubbard, Leader in Michigan's Welfare Rights Organization,1972[45]

The analysis of data from both interviews and documents are presented in this section in order to produce a better understanding of how women in the welfare rights movement participated within similarities of gender and across differences in class and race. Direct quotations from the interview transcripts are used to highlight specific findings or themes. Following the confidentiality agreement in the study protocol, each participant was given a pseudonym. Quotations are cited by the pseudonym, race, and class (at the time of their involvement in welfare rights) of participants, with the transcript page number for the quotation included.

Findings presented in this chapter relate to the emphasis participants placed on difference. It is important to note that the concept of difference is not being used here as simply one of superficial differences or individual differences in identity. Rather, similar

[45] Joycelyn Hubbard, testimony given at a hearing on federal welfare reform legislation at the city-county building, Detroit, sponsored by the Leadership Conference for Welfare Reform, January 17, 1972, OC-MWRO Files.

to what Baca Zinn and Thornton Dill's (1996) concept of *multiracial feminism* advocates, difference here moves beyond the idea of diversity among women to place the construct of gender squarely within the racial/historical structures of domination that are inherent in our society. Therefore, when differences are presented, they are simultaneously understood within the interlocking systems of domination that structure our society as well as through the women's own understanding and emphasis on difference within their participation in the welfare rights movement. The ways in which participants' themselves emphasized difference are illustrated, as well as the ways in which race, class, and gender intersected in participants' lives.

When all the participants mentioned difference, they most frequently focused on class-based differences, emphasizing a dichotomy between ***welfare recipients*** and ***non-recipients***. Recipients and friends spoke very distinctively about their own social class as well as those of others; however they emphasized very different things. When recipients talked about class as difference they emphasized the differences between themselves and the friends, privileging their own "insider" positions within the movement and emphasizing their control over decision-making. The one white recipient in the sample, Victoria, indicated the different worlds that the friends lived in based on their class status:

> [The friends] "I don't think ever knew any...any want in their life, you know? It's, it's a different world when you've never...needed anything that you couldn't obtain." (Victoria, w, pc, p. 37).

Vivian, an African American recipient also talked of division around decision making in the movement:

> "They got involved, but we would TELL them. You know, we would tell them what...we wanted, or how, you know....things like that." (Vivian, b, pc, p. 19).

Victoria also spoke about the members' control over decisions:

> "Well I think that they [the friends] acted more as advisors, but they didn't make decisions you know? And when we [the recipients] decided to...march...that's what happened." (Victoria, w, pc, p. 33).

The recipients spoke of the difficulty in making the non-recipients understand what it was like to be on welfare, as Vivian illustrated in the following:

> "We would...try to explain to them what it's like on welfare. And like, on the end of the month, when your food stamps, or your food is you know, at the end of the month, you don't have that much, try' in to stretch it to the next month. We had what we call a 'welfare meal' and they would come and eat some beans and rice, and (chuckles)....beans and rice and Jell-O." (Vivian, b, pc, p. 11).

What remained unsaid within their discussions of class as difference, was that race and gender also intersected class within all participants' lived experiences. Although recipients emphasized the ways in which class formed a division between themselves and the friends, their poverty class status was also shaped, for most of them, by their status as black women. These locations influenced and structured their lives, choices, and opportunities. However, it was the immediacy they felt at being on welfare, and their desire to maintain control over the direction of the movement, that interacted with their strong focus on class as a form of difference. As recipients they needed to maintain their power over decision-making within the movement, since only they were experiencing the day to day indignities of life on welfare. This was their focal point within the movement, and this was where they needed to exert power and control.

When the friends talked about class as difference, they emphasized the division in tactics that were used within the movement, focusing on how they raised the money and the recipients were more militant. The only upper middle class friend in the sample, Martha, stated:

"And that funded the office. And so that's what Friends were for, to keep the office. Cause of course, the members of welfare rights only paid five dollars a year." (Martha, w, umc, p. 16).

A white middle class friend, Anita, also noted the widening division between how policy decisions were made within the movement:

"The people who then went in the office really started to analyze policy and make decisions on where we were going to come down on policy. And they did not do it in a way where they invited the welfare rights mothers in to vote on it, or...or be an integral part of that decision making." (Anita, w, mc, p. 22).

The fact that the friends' own race and gender were not focused on within their perception of class as difference in tactics within the movement, allowed them to obscure the ways in which their own privileged race and class offered them more access to policy information and resources within the movement. Rather than a difference in tactics based on class status alone, the difference in tactics emphasized by the friends reflected differing power relations inherent within the intersecting categories of race, class, and gender.

Poverty-Class Lives, Poverty-Class Standpoints

Interestingly, although recipients indicated poverty class status as being the most important motivator for their involvement in the welfare rights movement, friends also talked about class as motivation. However, when the friends that did mention social class spoke about it, they most often mentioned ideals like social justice, and understanding of their own class privilege and the need to give back. This represented their own class and race privilege as it intersected within their participation. Martha summed up her motivation to get involved this way:

"To whom much is given, much is required. Because really I've had such a wonderful life. And...was given ALL these opportunities, these pleasures, these trips you know."

(Martha, w, umc, p. 27-28).

When talking about her motivation to get involved in social movement work, Martha also talked about the importance of growing up in a privileged family and seeing how her mother gave back to the community:

> "Well, I thank goodness my mother, way back in the depression years, she would regularly, about once a week anyway, would load up the car with food and clothing, and go around to some of these back woodsy places where they were living in shacks, and distribute food and clothing. And I think some of that rubbed off, you know? Concern for the poor in general. At one point, we had to have Saturday lunches of white bread, one slice of cheese, and water...to simulate what the poor were going through, you know?" (Martha, w, umc, p. 6-7).

Robert, the only male in the sample, also talked about poverty and his religious background:

> "But my motivation really came from getting to know people. And being in situations where...you actually were talking to someone that was poor. Really poor! And...(pause)...I think a motivation of my...religious background, too. I mean, the Scripture's always talking about...amazing how much it talks about...the poor." (Robert, w, mc, p. 22).

June, the only working class friend, who was a CAP worker at the time, talked about her own class status and the need for an income as her motivation:

> "My paycheck. (Laughs)..I was workin' for OEO and they paid us mileage, 'cause we had a lot of mileage, and then they paid us a salary, a bi-weekly salary, which was very good." (June, b, wc, p. 11).

In June's case, she was very pragmatic about the need to earn money, but also doing it by engaging in something that she firmly believed was important. These examples offer a glimpse into the ways that the friends' more privileged race and class status structured the ways in which they viewed poverty and the need to assist those who were less fortunate. In many cases the experience of witnessing or viewing poverty for the first time was a powerful motivator for their involvement.

In contrast to these examples, when recipients talked about class as a motivating factor, they were referring to their lived experiences as poor women on welfare. Recipients spoke about being drawn to the movement based on their need for concrete assistance, but continuing in the movement because of wanting to help other poor women on welfare. Vivian talked about how she first got motivated to become involved with welfare rights:

> "We didn't have any furniture, we didn't have anything. Just the bag that we brought [when she and her children came up from the South, fleeing an abusive husband]. So I ended up goin' to the Welfare Department. And my first worker, I don't know how to say it (chuckles), but I wasn't getting' anything done. And so that's how I ended up at the _____ group. So, I went to their meeting, and you know, continued, because Mrs. _____, she was real nice to help me get a...at the time you could get appliances- from the Welfare Department...like stoves and refrigerators. It took some time for me to get it, but after I got in their group that's what they helped me with." (Vivian, b, pc, p. 2-3).

Recipients were also motivated by the need to counteract the stigma and poor treatment they received as welfare mothers. Gladys explained:

> "I heard about it, I had heard about the organization, so one day I decided to go to the meeting. And...I liked it, and that's how I got involved. It was...teachin' us about how bad the social workers [welfare case workers] were. And how they were treating us. You know? And that we had a right to live just like anybody else." (Gladys, b, pc, p. 10).

Another recipient, Delores, spoke about her involvement in terms of what she had to lose or gain:

> "But it was nothin' for us to go into a welfare office and scare, and take it over. Because we have nothin' to lose, but we got a world to gain, because we got to break the ice, that recipients understand, that they can't keep you in the closet like they did." (Delores, b, pc, p. 42).

Although many recipients joined the movement out of concrete needs, they stayed in the movement for more complicated reasons. Here, Vivian, who had needed the stove and refrigerator, talked about what kept her participating:

"That's how I got in, cause I was so NEEDY. But once I got into it, I liked it, and...we would go around and try to help others with whatever their problem was, you know? And we would go to the Welfare Department to...try to get new...you know, members to come in, with the group. Well, I was excited about...after I got...you know...IN the group, that I could help others. That was kinda exciting. They would cut their lights off, and their gas off in the wintertime, and we had to make calls to try to get it back on. And so just helpin'....you know...and there was always somethin' to do.(Vivian, b, pc, p. 7).

When the friends talked about their own class status they spoke about it in a way that acknowledged their own lack of information or lack of real knowledge about the difficulties of recipients' lives. They frequently mentioned the shock of seeing or witnessing poverty for the first time. However, although they indicated outrage at the existence of real poverty, the fact that they were able to remain unaware of these realities for so long speaks to the intersection of their own race, class, and gender. Here, Martha, the only upper middle class friend in the sample told a story about the time that a community activist who she was working with had taken her to visit some of the poor areas in the community:

"And so he took us to this HOUSE, where the water had been turned off, for like, two weeks, because of inability to pay the bill. There were cockroaches everywhere, and some were dropping down from the ceiling onto our heads...So I came home to...(chuckles), first of all I came home and tore off all my clothes and jumped in the shower (chuckles) you know, to make sure I hadn't brought any cockroaches in. And then I got on the phone and started calling the water department, and demanding (chuckles) that their water be turned on. Well, of course they needed money, so I had to come up and give something like 200 dollars to turn their water back on, and...so I saw it firsthand. I saw poverty firsthand, and it just...it just blew me away." (Martha, w, umc, p. 4).

Patricia also talked about the impact of seeing the recipients' problems on a day to day basis:

"I could just see what was going on, you know, and...see what was, I mean, when you're in the welfare rights office, it's people constantly calling and saying, 'My electricity's shut off.' Or, 'What do I do? My worker just closed my case', and so on

and so forth."(Patricia, w, mc, p. 8).

The friends tended to talk about class in a way that sometimes indicated understanding of their own privilege, and they also spoke about their attempts to understand what a life of poverty was like. However, the recipients seemed to speak about their daily lives through the lens of being poor and being on welfare. They presented a poverty class standpoint that was informed through the daily struggles and discrimination they endured due to their race, gender and welfare status. Vivian spoke powerfully about the difficulties with housing that she endured because she was poor:

> "And it was terrible, the places that you had to rent, you know...The place I lived in, finally I got this place, and it...you know we lived there, but it was terrible. And then they started breakin' in...But I think it was really the neighbors. Every time you leave... [it was broken into]. But I didn't HAVE anything, so sometime they would just come in the house (chuckles), and...and go leave out! So that's how it is, you know, up here in the projects." (Vivian, b, pc, p. 14-15).

Gladys also talked about the daily strife and stigma she experienced by being on welfare:

> "They'd [caseworkers] treat, talk to you so bad...that's what would hurt mostly, is the way they would talk to you, you know, like you're dirty, nasty, lazy, didn't want to work, and all kinda stuff. Where, you take a woman that has six or seven children, how could she work?...and back in those days, the jobs wasn't payin' that much. The only thing they could do was day work. 'Cause I did it on many a day. You know? So...they just...I just really can't explain how bad it DID feel." (Gladys, b, pc, p. 27-28)

This last example illustrates what Harding (2004) refers to as the "epistemic privilege" that comes from standpoints, or the particular insights that oppressed groups may attain (through political struggle, as standpoints are achieved rather than ascribed) about the social systems which structure their lives. Thus, she indicates that standpoints have the potential to transform "...a source of oppression into a source of knowledge..." (p. 10). Recipients in this study possessed a struggled for and unique knowledge, which informed their strong poverty-class standpoint. Their understanding of the fact that they held a

clearer view of their lives, based on their shared class status, represented the standpoint they indicated. Although this was the standpoint they emphasized within their participation, it must be noted that their own race and gender also converged with their class status to help shape their experiences and influence their lives.

When documents that responded to policy changes during this time period were examined, a more ambivalent view of poor women was often seen. These documents were created by participants in the overall movement, not necessarily by the actual participants in the oral history interviews. Some of those who created the documents were recipients and some were non-recipients. In many cases specific authorship was not known. Nevertheless, these sources showed how race, class, and gender were emphasized in response to policy changes.

The use of a well defined poverty class standpoint in the documents was not always clear. Many of the responses to changes in welfare policy did emphasize class and attempted to focus on how the change would harm the poor as well as present the unique perspective that those in poverty possessed. However, this seemed conflicted, as phrases such as "working families" or "working poor" were also included. In an informal letter to citizens of the district, a leader of one of the Oakland County Friends groups claimed that proposed federal level cuts would result in only those on welfare being eligible for services such as day-care and family planning, thereby reducing assistance for the "working poor".[46] Another example of a more complex appeal to class is found in documents responding to Michigan's attempt to pass new residency requirements for welfare recipients. A document from the group Citizens for Welfare Reform describes

[46] Marguerite Kowaleski , "What Federal Cutbacks Mean to the Poor", Open Letter to Citizens of Oakland County, April, 1973, OC-MWRO Files.

residency requirements as uprooting poor working families, and asks whether "...poor working people who aren't earning enough- should be pulled from their jobs...".[47] Those working in the welfare rights movement seemed to emphasize a strong class-based standpoint at times informed by the critical knowledge gained from a life in poverty, but reached out across divisions of class at other times. In a press release of a speech given by George Wiley in 1970, he clearly made an appeal for the middle classes to join in the movement.[48] Therefore the conflicted portrayal of class is understandable, as the welfare rights movement needed to reach out across class lines in order to build support and sustain itself, while it simultaneously needed to maintain a sense of class solidarity or insider status for recipients.

Importance of Family of Origin Class Status

Another example of the emphasis on working poor or working families as opposed to the poor or welfare recipients, can be seen in the ways in which the friends and the recipients in this study talked about their family of origin class status. Most friends in the study indicated (by their own identification as well as by the occupation and educational status of parents) that they were either poor (4) or working class (2) growing up. Only two friends indicated growing up in middle class or upper middle class homes. Of those who grew up poor, their fathers worked as either farmers or scrap collectors. Of those who indicated that they were raised in working class families, their fathers worked as bus drivers, or factory workers. Their mothers rarely worked outside the home, or only worked later in life. When mothers did work they most often worked as seamstresses or

[47] Norm Thomas, "Justice to the Poor vs. the Residency Requirement", press release. June, 22, 1971, WEU Collection, box 2, folder 11.
[48] George Wiley, "Welfare Rights Speech", press release, March 19, 1970, Wiley Papers, box 17, folder 3.

in other domestic work. Those friends who were raised in poor or working class families were careful to indicate that they never received any welfare assistance and that their fathers had always worked.

One white friend was brought up in a middle class household, and another in an upper middle class household. Patricia, from a middle class background, had a father who was an accountant. She said that although she came from a solid middle class family, the presence of a disabled family member influenced her desire to help others who were less fortunate. Martha, from an upper middle class background, had a father who was an executive. She talked about the need to help others, and spoke of that need coming from the fact that she had been granted much privilege in her own life.

Recipients in this study were raised in working class or poor families. Their fathers' jobs ranged from coal miner to cab driver to carpenter to truck driver and night watchman. Vivian indicated growing up in the rural South as a poor black farmer's daughter. Their mothers occasionally engaged in jobs such as notary public or nurse's aid. The recipients did not typically talk about whether their family had ever received welfare assistance, and did not emphasize that their fathers had always worked. This was something that only the friends who indicated being raised in either a poor or working class family felt the need to highlight. Friends frequently told me that their families did not have much, but they were never lacking and never received any type of welfare.

Both Patricia and Martha, who were raised in a middle class and an upper middle class family, acknowledged their own class privileged upbringing, and tried to link this understanding to their desire to participate in the welfare rights movement. Family of origin class status was visible as a motivating feature only for Patricia and Martha, who

both admitted their class privilege growing up, and talked about how this awareness was linked to their dedication to working for those less privileged. Although all of the participants' early lives were structured by the intersection of their race, as well as class status and gender, only Martha talked about how race, class, and gender intersected in her experiences growing up.

> "I HAD been always interested in Civil Rights, since I learned that a woman my grandmother's age couldn't read or write – she was black – one of our servants in _____- - not mine, but my parents'. My parent's servant. And so I used to... teach her her ABCs and numbers, when I was about eight. And so when I was a child, I realized there was 'something wrong in Denmark,' (chuckles) with somebody my grandmother's age that couldn't read or write. So I always had an interest in working with blacks. And the NAACP used to have big meetings, the early meetings, in [my hometown], and I would read about them in the paper. And I'd sort of want to go there, but of course, it was in the, in the Negro section, so you didn't dare go there....and... so it wasn't until I came out here that I joined the _____ branch of the NAACP. And I've been a board member ever since." (Martha, w, umc, p. 2).

Martha's story highlights her childhood discovery of her own privilege. Her awareness as a young child that unequal opportunities existed based on race, class and gender, impacted her desire to work with civil rights groups later in her life.

Race as Difference/ Race as Sameness

In the interviews, race could be talked about in a way that emphasized difference. It was most often brought up by the friends rather than the recipients, and the African American friends specifically talked about race as a form of solidarity with recipients rather than difference. The African American friends illustrated a strong race based standpoint that emphasized their shared experiences of racial discrimination, allowing them to form linkages with recipients. June, the only working class friend, claimed an insider status when working with the recipients:

> "Sort of, a insider, Cause most of a lot of peoples I had known down through the

years. And...and...either known them through the years or either worked in some sorta organization with them. They, some of 'em looked at it as, one of them...(chuckles) that had got a job with the County." (June, b, wc, p. 15-16).

However, this race based standpoint was also informed by their experiences as women, mothers, working class and middle class. Although June shared a historical legacy of discrimination that seemed to grant her insider status with recipients, she also remembered that when she drove recipients to their meetings they made her stay outside in the car, since she was not on welfare. The non-recipient status she occupied acted as a barrier on one dimension of participation, while a shared racial status simultaneously acted as a connection on another level.

Evelyn, the only African American middle class friend in the sample, talked about the importance of the Civil Rights Movement and how that related to her work with welfare rights:

"It was just, we had been you know involved...very, very strongly involved in the Civil Rights Movement.....I think it was, was really...I want to say an, an out-, outreach or an out-branch of...the Civil Rights thing." (Evelyn, b, mc, p. 17).

Throughout her discussions of her past social action work, Evelyn indicated a critical knowledge that she had achieved, based on her experiences and struggles as a black woman engaged in social movement work. Although she emphasized a strong race-based standpoint, class, as well as gender also intersected in her participation in interesting ways. She became very distraught when the recipient members planned and carried out a baby shower for her:

"When I found it out, and I said, well, you can't do that, you know? You don't have enough money. And one of the mothers, and I don't, I didn't think I'd ever forget which one- but one of the mothers said, 'You don't have a choice. We're doing this.' And I had stuff for this kid, like I was working, and my husband was working, and...you know, we were not missing a, a minute of anything, not missing a penny. We both had family that was supportive, you know?" (Evelyn, b, mc, p. 16).

While it may be assumed that race and gender can converge in a shared standpoint, it may not be enough to connect women from differing class positions. June Jordan (2001) wrote about this phenomenon in an essay about her vacation to the Bahamas. She described her feeling of separateness from the everyday life of the black maid who cleaned her room. While they shared the sameness of race, their different class status made them seem as if they were each from different worlds (Jordan, 2001). The African American friends in this study did view their race-based standpoint as a source of connection with recipients, but they were unable to cross the social class chasm that made their lived experiences different. Particularly for Evelyn, the unseen ways that class intersected with gender and race in her participation acted as a barrier to connections with recipients.

While race was perceived as a dimension of solidarity with recipients for the black friend members, the white friends identified more division around race. While both the white and African American friends located their participation in the Civil Rights Movement as critical to their involvement in the welfare rights movement, white members emphasized how race was intersected in the different tactics used within the welfare rights movement. They claimed that the African American women in the movement were more militant and had a stronger sense of self than the white women. When asked how race intersected within the movement, Patricia claimed:

> "Well...as I say, the real militants were, the REAL militants were the black people in Detroit." (Patricia, w, mc, p. 17).

Anna, comparing the Detroit recipients to those from the suburbs, talked about the way blacks and whites internalized the shame of welfare. She claimed:

> "Whereas in Detroit, so many people were poor, and they were healthier in a way. These women were healthier, because they didn't so much think it was their fault. Out here, you were sure if you were poor, it was your fault." (Anna, w, mc, p. 13).

This image of the typical African American welfare rights member indicates a specific "raced" and "classed" view of the women's tactics within the movement. While no one disagrees with the fact that welfare rights members did use militant tactics, many of the friends in this study tended to talk about the different tactics that were used by recipients as opposed to friends, in raced and classed terms, making assumptions about recipients that conjured up stereotypical images of a strong black militant welfare recipient. This image contrasts starkly with the following comment made by Gladys, indicating that recipients' lives were much more complex than the stereotypical assumptions:

> "I have always been...my feelin's has always been easily hurt. You know? And I had got tired of be'in treated like a second class citizen. I wanted to be...just independent and be, and look just like everybody else. You know? I wanted to wear decent clothes. I wanted a nice place to stay. (Gladys, b, pc, p. 11).

Later in the interview Gladys continued, summing up her past experiences,

> "When I look back on my life, and think about...(pause)...oh, it hurts...you wonder how can people be so cruel? Everybody didn't have the opportunity to go to school and get a decent job. No. So...they had to make do. They didn't have no way to protect themselves" [from hurtful treatment]." (Gladys, b, pc, p. 18).

All of the recipients in this study talked about the stigma associated with being on welfare and the poor treatment they received from welfare workers and the general public as being major motivations for their continued involvement in welfare rights. Occupying leadership roles in the welfare rights movement and helping other poor women allowed them to combat some of the negative treatment they had received, but they still remembered this poor treatment for the way it felt.

Victoria, the only white recipient in this sample, also provides a contradiction to the friends' view of the racial division in types of tactics and level of militancy. She offers a very class conscious and militant view of her own involvement in the movement. Here she talked about when she first applied for welfare and how she soon became active with welfare rights:

"So I went in and applied for ADC. And I... for a while there, I did not...you know, I didn't work at all. And I was very politically active (chuckles) during that time. I guess they created a monster." (Victoria, w, pc, p. 23).

This participant, although she was white, immediately felt a "right" to welfare and actively rebelled against the assumptions and stereotypes of caseworkers. These examples show that the reality of how recipients experienced welfare rights activism was much more complex than the essentialized raced and classed images that were sometimes assumed. The image of extreme racialized "difference" was frequently emphasized by the white middle class friends in this sample, in a way that created more division between recipients and non-recipients, and increasingly led to a separation in duties and roles within the movement. It was this kind of dichotomous thinking, division, and increasing divisiveness within the welfare rights movement overall that tended to make it weaker in the long run. At the national level, when infighting and conflict increased within the NWRO, membership levels and overall momentum declined (West, 1981).

Race could also be emphasized separately and divisively within the documents that responded to welfare policy changes. When FAP or work requirements were fought against, many times the issue was framed in strong race-based language. In a NWRO publication to protest FAP, the plan is called "anti-black" and a form of "institutional

racism".[49] In a document created by the Detroit area Citizens for Welfare Reform titled *Work Requirements*, forced work requirements are defined as a "...way that the government is advocating slavery and supporting slave wage industries".[50] George Wiley would commonly use race in documents aimed at a black audience. In a letter to Congressman Charles Diggs and members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Wiley asked for their help in defeating FAP, calling it racist and claiming that it represented the "brutal repression against five million black welfare mothers and children".[51]

Although race was sometimes used strategically when targeting specific policy changes that the movement felt were egregious, it was also emphasized by African American participants in the movement in a way that indicated a strong racialized standpoint, but also indicated the intersection of class. In a 1969 newsletter to all Michigan welfare rights groups, the Co-Chair for one of the Detroit groups made the following statement as a response to threats to decrease monies allotted for welfare recipients:

> "We had nothing to say about being brought back to this country. By this, I mean, we, the Black people, but the poor whites have it bad also. We that are Black are the best that Africa had to offer. We had to be the best, to survive the trip over, under horrible conditions, and have survived the agonies and hardships of the last 300 years."(p. 3).[52]

Within the sample used for this study, white middle class and upper middle class friends focused on race as difference, and as a form of division when speaking about the differences in roles and responsibilities of those participating in the movement. Their own privileged race and class statuses converged within their experiences as women and

---

[49] NWRO, "The Nixon Plan is Inadequate", press release, n.d., Wiley Papers, box 17, folder 3.
[50] Detroit Area Citizens for Welfare Reform Steering Committee, "Work Requirements", minutes, April 2, 1971, DCCR Collection, box 82, folder 14.
[51] George Wiley, "Welfare Reform", letter to Congressman Charles Diggs and members of the Congressional Black Caucus, May 27, 1971, Wiley Papers, box 16, folder 3.
[52] Mrs. Dawn Williams, Jeffries Welfare Rights Organization Co-Chair, Mother Power: Michigan Welfare Rights Organization newsletter, June 1969, George A. Wiley Papers, box 25, folder 5.

mothers, allowing for an emphasis to be placed on race in the difference in tactics, while their own higher level of access to power and resources was obscured. Race was emphasized as a form of solidarity for African American friends and recipients. When recipients (both black and white) spoke of race they seemed to indicate an understanding of the convergence of class as well as gender. This illustrates a form of shared poverty-class standpoint.

Other Social Movement Activity

Historian Sara Evan's (1979) research on the development of the Second Wave Women's Movement, identified women's work in the Civil Rights Movement and New Left movements as key connections to the subsequent establishment of second wave feminism. The conceptual framework for this dissertation also identifies possible connections between participants' past social movement activity and their involvement in the welfare rights movement. All of those interviewed in this study were asked questions about their previous social movement activity. All of the friends indicated involvement in other social movement work prior to becoming involved with welfare rights. Only two of the recipients indicated involvement in previous social movement activity. Race was a stated major focus of participants' involvement in other social movement activity.

Friends indicated their participation in a variety of civil rights groups prior to their involvement in welfare rights. All eight had been active in groups focused on racial equality, including the nationally focused C.O.R.E., the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the migrant farm workers movement, and smaller local groups focused on the open housing movement and integration of Detroit's

suburbs, church based civil rights groups, and groups they had formed themselves in order to combat housing discrimination, police brutality, and school segregation.

Two of the recipients, one African American (Delores) and one white (Victoria), indicated that they were also involved in the Civil Rights Movement prior to becoming involved in welfare rights. Delores spoke of heavy involvement in southern based civil rights activities as well as later involvement in Detroit activities. Victoria talked about her involvement in a local civil rights group as well as the NAACP.

When speaking about their motivation to become involved in civil rights activities, two of the friends indicated that their race motivated them, but in differing ways. Evelyn spoke of the segregation in her hometown that her parents and grandparents had endured:

> "Part of it was just that the things that were going on were unfair. And I remember hearing stories from my parents and grandparents, about some of the things that had happened during their lifetime, which sounded, you know, just totally insane. Like my mother had told me that they lived in _____ for a number of years. But I remember her telling me at one time, we were riding somewhere, and she said, "Well you know we weren't able to...black people didn't live past this street." And I was growing up there, and people lived wherever they wanted to. When they first came there, they moved from Illinois to Ohio, she said that you just didn't live past here, but you didn't say anything to anybody. You just, wherever you were supposed to be, that's where you were!" (Evelyn, b, mc, p.7-8).

She continued:

> "We had heard stories of different things that had happened to families and black people, so we were aware of the discrimination that went on. And although the times were a little different, there was still discrimination. And when you hear your parents talk about it, and talk about [how] they couldn't live this place, or they couldn't work that place...and when you grow up knowing that, when it comes up like the focus came up on it...My, my brothers were involved [in the Civil Rights Movement], and you know, that's just a part of your life, because you can't keep saying, 'well it's okay this doesn't effect me.' It effects everybody." (Evelyn, b, mc, p. 8).

Evelyn talked about how stories from her childhood as well as current discrimination and racism politicized her and gave her no choice but to become involved in the Civil Rights Movement.

Anna, a white middle class friend, talked about her involvement in church based groups that critically examined racism in the community, and how this helped her and other non-recipients become politicized:

> "There was a movement at the time, called the Christian Family Movement. And we had study guides. And we looked at race. And they changed the subject every couple years, but we looked at race for a couple years, and there must've been about 25 groups in that parish that would meet every couple of weeks. And it was an observe-judge-act approach. In other words, there would be some questions to look at in your community, or your state or whatever, on a question of race, and segregation, and then people would take assignments, and they would come back, and we would talk about what they had found out, and then we would talk about what we can do. It politicized thousands and thousands of Catholics, I can tell you that." (Anna, w, mc, p. 4).

The two recipients who spoke about race as a motivating factor in their civil rights work were both very active in this movement. Similar to how Evelyn spoke of her involvement; Delores, the African American recipient who was very involved, spoke about her family's profound experiences with racism in the segregated south, recalling:

> "We had to be in it, 'cause we were by default. 'Cause we ended up in Texas 'cause my grandfather got sick and tired of his little boss (who was young enough to be his grandson) takin' advantage of him. And he slapped Dad [her grandfather] for the third time, and Dad stabbed him. He said, "Three times, you're out." And so we had to get Dad out of Louisiana." (Delores, b, pc, p. 2-3).

She continued with a story about her favorite teacher:

> "In Dallas, Supervisor _____, head of the school board, had forbid any black teachers from movin' into _____ Heights...which was an all-white area that was beginning to change...And what happened during that period of time...my teacher and her husband moved into the subdivision. She was the teacher for the Dallas public school system. An art teacher an EXCELLENT art teacher. And he I think was a salesperson for women's girdles and stuff like that...And they moved in, and she lost her job." (Delores, b, pc, p. 3-4).

She also felt her family encouraged her to be involved:

> "My grandfather, my mother's father, said, "Look. I had to act like an Uncle Tom in order to survive. You don't. Stay involved." (Delores, b, pc, p.8).

Victoria, the white recipient who was also involved in civil rights activities, talked about her motivation coming from learning from others about the kinds of discrimination they faced on a daily basis, and then realizing that action needed to be taken:

> "The point of _____ [a local civil rights group] was to let US understand what they were...about! What their problems were. And it...it did a lot of good. Of that group, that was the goal... "This is what's, what we are faced with." And... "What we can't really...overcome, just from the black point of view." That was the purpose of _____. It's just that, once it got started, and you started seeing all the problems...then it was felt, "We need to do something about the problems." It's just not enough to say, 'oh they don't pay any attention to you when you go into Welfare and tell them something, because, you feel it's because you're black.' You know? And then to say, 'Well, gee that's really a problem. Now I understand.' Because now I understand, we've got to do something about it." (Victoria, w, pc, p. 45).

Overall, participants in this study most frequently cited the Civil Rights Movement as the social movement they were involved in prior to welfare rights work, with all the friends and two recipients indicating involvement. Race, as lived experience, seemed to be a strong motivational factor for both the African American friend and the African American recipient, as they talked about their family's experiences of discrimination and its strong impact on them. When the white friends and the white recipient who were active in the Civil Rights Movement spoke about their own motivation, they, too, spoke of race. They talked about the experiences of hearing about or seeing racism within their communities, rather than any experience of racism. The middle and upper middle class white friends, as well as the white poverty class recipient spoke of their motivation in the same way. They emphasized the importance of learning about discrimination and

witnessing discrimination within their own community in their burgeoning sense that they needed to become involved in civil rights work.

Gender simultaneously intersected with both race and class within civil rights work, although all of these dimensions may not have been visible at all times. In speaking about their participation in the Civil Rights Movement, one friend and one recipient talked about the impact of gender. Ruth indicated that there were problems with men in the movement trying to control the women, and make all of the decisions:

> "We were having...very bad feelings between the men and the women, in C.O.R.E....It, it really wasn't racial it was female...I think it was some personalities, you know? Some of these men...who really felt they should tell us what to do. They were outrageous." (Ruth, w, mc, p. 6).

Delores also spoke of the impact of gender in her own participation in the Civil Rights Movement. When asked what roles the women in the movement fulfilled, she claimed that the women did much of the work:

> [women's roles were] "same as a lot of the men. You know...they mighta' had a lot of the men over the projects...but, when it got really down to doin' the work, and stuff like that, you know, the women did a lot of that work. But I would be in the office a lot. That's when I first started learning how to deal with mimeograph machines, and...So we, we did a lot of...clerical work, but we was out in the field too. And we did a lot of the testing, and you know, runnin' the campaigns, and stuff like that." (Delores, b, pc, p.13).

She later told a story about how the male leadership tried to give her and her female friend a less risky assignment:

> "And then all of a sudden they gave us our assignments. And we called a meeting, to boycott. We get in there in the morning, we all sit at the table with one another, and refuse to talk. Leadership was was startin' to say, "Oh SHIT, what done happened?" And they called us into the room. And we began to tell 'em, "We're not gonna accept the assignments. Check this- we'll go back. NOW what you gonna do?" One told me, I'll never forget, [he said] "I'm gonna call your husband." I said, "Call his mama too, hear? 'Cause ain't no husband, no brother, no daddy, or none of 'em controls me." And then I said, "By the way, [my husband] sittin' right here by me, 'cause he knows where his bread is buttered at." So, you know, we broke 'em, and we got re-

assigned." (Delores, b, pc, p. 19).

It is interesting to note that only Ruth and Delores mentioned the intersection of gender in their civil rights work. They spoke of their own dissatisfaction at times with women's roles in their past social movement work for civil rights.

While race seemed to be an important motivator for involvement in other social movement activity, the African American participants framed this motivation from within their own lived experiences of racism, while the white participants spoke of being motivated through witnessing racism and discrimination against others within their communities. This illustrates the ways in which race converged with gender to structure the earlier social movement work that women engaged in. While African American and white women in the welfare rights movement, as well as middle class and poverty class women, indicated participating in the Civil Rights Movement, the ways in which they experienced their participation and motivation to become involved was clearly different based on the varying ways that their own race intersected with their gender.

Use of Difference

An overarching question of this study was how difference was manifested and used in past mobilization efforts of women in the welfare rights movement. A major finding is that difference was most often emphasized around class, with a dichotomy of *welfare recipient* and *non-recipient* created by both friends and recipients. Race was emphasized as difference most often in discussions of leadership or control of the movement with white friends mentioning racial differences most frequently. The two African American friends focused on race as a way of reaching solidarity with recipients. The points at which difference was used by both friends and recipients most frequently revolved

around identity and experiences of living on welfare as well as beliefs about the proper roles for friends vs. recipients. When we analyze the ways that race, class, and gender formed interlocking categories which structured women's lives, we can see that even categories left unsaid or unmentioned served to shape how difference was emphasized. Due to their specific experiences as poor black women, difference was an important concept that recipients purposely used in order to legitimize and assert their rights to control the movement. Within the context of the unequal power relations they struggled within, the need to maintain control and leadership were understandable features of their participation impacting how difference was defined. This represents how they responded to their social location and placement within these unequal power relations, and illustrates their own agency. Friends purposely used difference to distinguish themselves as separate from those on welfare. Their privileged race and class positions structured their assumptions and use of difference as separation.

Documents that responded to changes in welfare policy indicate that difference was used in a way that encouraged separation of poor women's issues, noting that policies targeted certain groups, and thus were only of concern to these groups. If welfare policy is perceived as only affecting a small group of people, it may make attracting a wider base of opposition to the policy more difficult. These uses of difference did allow recipients to claim and emphasize their own standpoint as poor women, and poor black women particularly, but it also allowed the white middle class friends to keep themselves separate, thereby viewing their own needs and goals as segregated from those of whom they were trying to help. In the long term this separation may have led to a less unified and possibly weaker welfare rights movement.

Chapter 7

Focusing on Similarities

> "But a lot of the people that did support it, and worked with the Metro Coalition and the Friends of Welfare Rights, these were mothers. And they were very sensitive, very sensitive to that. Much more so, probably, than me, who did not have children, not a mother."
>
> -Robert, member of a non-recipient welfare rights group in Detroit[53]

The idea of similarities or sameness presented in this chapter is meant as a way of examining race, class, and gender not only as individual categories of analysis, but as possible categories of connection in women's social movement work (Collins, 1993). In this chapter places where similarities were emphasized are analyzed within the sample and the documents. However, it is important to note that an individual's lack of emphasis on one or more categories does not negate the influence of those categories in shaping their experiences and ordering their lives.

Friends emphasized the similarities among all movement participants more often than recipients, focusing on shared gender. Although maternalism was present in both friends' and recipients' participation, how each group viewed, experienced, and constructed maternalsim was different. Gender intersected with class and race within the differing constructs of motherhood presented by friends and recipients.

Gender

Although there is no woman's standpoint that can refer to all women's experiences, Jaggar (2004) posits that as women begin to deconstruct and re-evaluate the world and its assumptions based on gender, they will logically need to include the standpoints and experiences of all women. By examining how gender was lived and

[53] Robert, white, middle class member of a welfare rights group in Southeast Michigan, personal interview, Oct. 12, 2005, Detroit.

experienced for both the recipients and the friends of welfare rights, and how race and class intersected gender, we can begin to work towards understanding women's standpoints in a way that allows variation. In this study, gender was most frequently noted as a motivating factor for the friends' involvement in welfare rights. This was illustrated by Anna:

> "So it was a, you know...it was a short move to see that women were being manipulated around their economic security. In other words, women were in bad marriages because they had no economic options. Women were in abusive marriages because they had no economic options. And then when they moved, to take the only option open to them, which was state support, some kind of state support...[they were stigmatized]" (Anna, w, mc, p. 5).

Although friends indicated that gender and their shared experiences as women were important motivations for their involvement, gender was specifically intersected with race and sexuality in friends' spoken beliefs about women's behavior. While those friends who mentioned gender indicated that recipients (as well as all women) should have the right to control their own sexuality, they also evidenced conflicted beliefs and assumptions about women on welfare. When pointing out stereotypes about welfare mothers' sexuality, they also indicated their own assumptions. Here, Anna also talked about the abolishment of the "man in the house" rule and the intersection of sexuality:

> "I remember when there was litigation around that. I think it is subtle, but it has always been there. Like, you know the very people that would rage against contraception...would say, 'Why are you havin' these kids anyway?' Or there was a certain view that you were dealing with promiscuous women. I also think that women...worked the streets a little bit, because they didn't have food for their kids. And I don't just believe that because, you know, it's sort of...what? Dramatic or something. I believe that it happened. Exactly how is it, if you have no car, and no skills, you're supposed to survive? You either attach yourself to some male who can, you know, help you, or you are on the streets essentially. So, I think that sexuality has ALWAYS been in here. I think that it has been a way of controlling women. I think that our really...difficult and impressive assistance systems, indeed have been a

way to control women and their sexuality, which is a threat to a lotta people." (Anna, w, mc, p. 18).

Martha illustrated the importance of gender intersected with sexuality in her motivation for involvement when she emphasized her view that poor women were having so many unwanted children:

"Because I saw so MANY poor women just dragged down by having these GIGANTIC families to take care of...I became a BIG advocate for abortion rights..." (Martha, w, umc, p. 22).

She continued, emphasizing her strong stance on abortion rights:

I just can't see a poor mother being forced to have another BABY just because her husband is amorous or something. You know? I just...I just think it's wrong...." (Martha, w, umc, p. 26).

An African American middle class friend, Evelyn, talked about gender and sexuality within the movement, indicating her own ambivalence about black women on welfare. Although she claimed being opposed to the common stereotypes that even she herself had to battle to some extent based on her social location as an African American woman, she was conflicted:

"And then there were some people, just because of the bias or the stupidity...that thought they had...you know, 'They all have boyfriends.' And I told somebody, I said "You know, if they do have friends...then they aren't the ones that are in the group." And that's the truth. The ones that came to the welfare movement, the ones that were working with us you know, there weren't boyfriends waitin' in the car to take them someplace. There weren't, you know, boyfriends at the homes when we called. You know, I said, "There are people on welfare that have boyfriends, because the system won't let 'em be together and still get support for their children...but the ones that were doin that, weren't coming to the group." (Evelyn, b, mc, p. 20).

These examples of how gender intersected with sexuality, class, and race within the beliefs held by some of the friends provide a backdrop for the following story. Gladys

spoke about her difficulty finding and securing birth control and her subsequent involuntary sterilization:

> "And the minute I got here....The stuff that I was usin' in the South to keep me from getting' pregnant, when I got here, I couldn't find it! So I got pregnant! But after I had my child, the doctor came in, and he said...(I had a C-section, 'cause I had a hernia)... the doctor said I was too weak to have the baby, because they gonna do a Cesarean and correct the hernia...So...he came in that evenin', after he did the surgery. And he asked me, you know, how many children I had. I said, "Well I got three now." He said, 'You want any more?' I said, "No, I didn't want the last one." And he said...[she stops and says retrospectively]...But it was, I guess the Lord's will for me to get her, cause I always wanted a girl you know? So, he said, 'Well, I'm gonna tell you somethin', I let myself be allowed to- you can sue me- I tied your tubes.' He said, 'Because if you have another child its gonna kill you.' I said, "You know what? If I could I would get up and hug your neck. Cause that was the best thing in the world you EVER could've done to me was tie my tubes." (Gladys, b, pc, p.17-18).

Although Gladys relayed this experience as having a positive outcome, the reality is that her consent for the sterilization was never obtained. The fact that she struggled to find access to birth control on a regular basis before she became pregnant with her third child, and that the sterilization was done without her knowledge or consent, illustrates the ways that her own race and class status intersected with gender in her access to birth control and power over her own sexuality.

This example illustrates that while the white friends in this study were motivated to get involved in welfare rights through their shared standpoint around gender and that they were concerned about women's control over their own sexuality; their privileged race and class status converged to produce lived experiences that were different from those of the recipients. Their privileged class and race allowed them to view gender and motherhood in a more idealized way. They indicated a strong gender based standpoint that was produced through their own awareness of being a woman and a mother and the unequal

power relations that this represented compared to men. However, their own privileged race and class intersected with their experiences as women, allowing them to obscure the importance of race and class within their own lives and to emphasize a shared "sameness" of gender, in their participation in the movement.

Recipients experienced their gender status through lives intersected by racial and class based discrimination. This discrimination represented the "everyday lives" of recipients. In contrast to friends, recipients emphasized a strong poverty class standpoint. This was informed by their struggles and experiences of discrimination as poor, and in most cases black, women on welfare. They illustrated a standpoint that emphasized their class status, but their lives were also structured by the convergence of race and gender.

The different perspectives that white middle class and upper middle class women held compared to those of poor black women supports Polatinick's (1996) research on white and black women's liberation groups of the 1960s which found that poverty and working class black women talked about access to birth control and decisions about the number of children to have as critical women's issues (Polatnick, 1996), rather than decisions about whether to have children at all. The different perspectives discovered in this dissertation also support Blumberg's (1980) study of white women civil rights activists, and the finding that those studied were motivated through maternalism. The white friends in this dissertation were motivated to participate in the welfare rights movement through a shared gender and motherhood status, and also a use of maternalism that reflects what Blumberg found.

The white friends in this study viewed women and motherhood through the lens of a privileged social location based on race and class. Due to these statuses they were

allowed more choices around sexuality than recipients were allowed. While the friends did share the socially constructed category of woman, due to the intersection of race and class in recipients' as well as friends' lives they did not experience gender in the same way. While issues of birth control and access were something that all women confronted during this time period, recipients experienced further lack of access based on being poor and being black.

Gender and gendered images of mothers and their children were often used in attempts to combat the negative changes to welfare policy that occurred during the War on Poverty. Documents that responded to changes in welfare policy frequently emphasized gender. Gender was used to portray changes in welfare policy as harmful to poor mothers. Images of a stay at home mother needing to care for her children were used to defeat the Family Assistance Plan and the Work Incentive program. The 1969 testimony of Beulah Sanders, George Wiley, and Carl Rachlin before the House Ways and Means Committee made the claim that Nixon's FAP would force mothers out of their homes, leaving their children in "government run centers".[54] Yet, this same testimony also included a request for adequate jobs for all women who choose to work "...in addition to their primary job as mother and homemaker".[55] This illustrates ambivalence about the use of gender within the welfare rights movement. A NWRO document initially called for the elimination of WIN because it forced mothers to work when they were needed full time to care for their children, then stated that WIN had helped some women

[54] Beulah Sanders, George Wiley, and Carl Rachlin, "Statement to the House Ways and Means Committee", testimony, October 27, 1969, Wiley Papers, box 17, folder 3.
[55]Beulah Sanders, George Wiley, and Carl Rachlin, "Statement to the House Ways and Means Committee", testimony, October 27, 1969, Wiley Papers, box 17, folder 3.

get an education and training to find jobs.[56] In a 1969 recipient newsletter, WIN is discussed as an opportunity for members to sign their children up to receive free college educations, since this could be counted as the training component of WIN.[57] Although the author was not wholeheartedly endorsing the program, there seemed to be an attempt to find positive aspects of the policy for poor women and their children. The gendered responses to social welfare policies attempted to fit cohesively with the idealized image of woman and motherhood, but the realities of the class and race differences of welfare recipients resulted in a conflicted portrayal of gender. The message was that welfare mothers should be able to stay home and care for their children just as white middle class women had been encouraged to do for decades and they should also be able to work outside the home as long as it didn't conflict with their child-rearing duties and was voluntary. Maternalism was used simultaneously to demand that mothers be given enough funding to stay home and care for their children, and that poor black mothers not be left out of the opportunity structure of education, training, and better work opportunities, as they had been historically.

Practical Maternalism

Overall, the friends most frequently focused on motherhood as an important motivating factor in their involvement. This could be seen in Anita's statement:

> "Because they had small children at the time, I had small children, and it was just something that I, I decided would be more of interest to me than to study. Which, the League of Women Voters studies issues. They don't take action." (Anita, w, mc, p. 1).

[56] NWRO, "Help Fight Workfare", newsletter, September, 1969, Welfare Fighter.
[57] "Important for Members with Children Graduating from High School in June", Mother Power: Michigan Welfare Rights Organization Newsletter, April, 1969, Wiley Papers, box 25, folder 5.

The friends tended to emphasize maternalism in their participation in the movement, the importance of motherhood, and the sense that it was a shared experience. Evelyn described motherhood in the movement:

> "We didn't we weren't doing workshops on motherhood, but you know, people were...would share experiences." (Evelyn, b, mc, P. 15).

In response to the question of whether women worked outside the home during that time period, another friend, Patricia, also described the importance of motherhood:

> "Mothering was considered something you should do. That was your first job." (Patricia, w, mc, p. 26).

Friends' use of maternalism represented an idealistic view of motherhood and childrearing that presented a strong motivation for their involvement in welfare rights organizing. Some scholars have identified this idealistic view of motherhood as related to the "family ethic" which historically constructed the idealized image of a female caregiver and a male breadwinner as standards for all families to strive towards (Abramovitz, 1996). In contrast, recipients took a more everyday practical approach to motherhood because the intersection of their parenting experiences with class and race was more clearly visible to them. While maternalism may have been used to garner white middle class support for the movement, welfare recipients viewed motherhood differently, and thus indicated what I refer to as *practical maternalism.*[58] This type of maternalism was influenced by recipients' daily struggles as poor welfare mothers, and was shaped by their race, class, gender, and motherhood status. Although race, class, and gender also intersected within friends' use of maternalism, the different social locations

[58] The concept of a *practical maternalism* was only made visible through the use of an intersectional analysis which allowed the researcher to see the ways in which race, class, and gender formed interlocking categories shaping the lens through which recipients viewed motherhood and influencing the type of maternalism that emerged from their experiences.

they occupied meant that different types of maternalism developed for friends and recipients.

Recipients' use of a *practical maternalism* can be seen in contrast to the type of maternalism emphasized by friends, as it represented a practical, pragmatic approach to motherhood as well as a way of emphasizing a desire to help other poor women and children. *Practical maternalism* was a way of viewing their social movement work through the lens of their experiences of discrimination and stigmatization as poor black women, while simultaneously being driven by the critical needs of their children. Gladys talked about the problems of a welfare mother:

> "Wasn't too many people help'in us out, 'cause they, too, thought it was a disgrace. You know, 'Got all those babies, and then you have to take care of 'em.' They really don't know how bad it made you feel." (Gladys, b, pc, p. 16).

She continued:

> "I feel like, you know, back in those days, you know...it wasn't too much...women didn't know how to protect themselves too much [referring to birth control]. And there really wasn't too much for, and they were gettin' those children and, and no way to take care of 'em, and the kids suffered along with the, with the mother." (Gladys, b, pc, p. 16).

Vivian, another African American recipient, illustrated some of the daily difficulties of being a mother on welfare:

> "And the hardest thing was, really, try' in to get a place to stay. I would call...and I would-, [the landlord would ask] 'How many kids?'- "I got five." That was the end of the conversation." (Vivian, b, pc, p. 14).

Victoria, the only white recipient in the sample also gives an example of the very pragmatic view of motherhood that the recipients held, indicating that although her privileged racial status offered her some protection from discrimination, her gender, class, and motherhood status intersected with her racial status, motivating her to fight for

her children's needs. In response to my question about whether they ever talked about motherhood, she stated:

> "Your children, but not motherhood. I mean...(pause)...you don't have to talk about what you ARE. You only have to talk about what you aspire to, or what you're trying not to be. Everybody understood that our children...needed things they weren't getting, you know?" (Victoria, w, pc, p. 40).

The realities of the poor, primarily African American, welfare recipients' daily lives left them with a less idealistic view of motherhood than that of the friends. The friends were more likely to speak about being inspired to get involved in the movement through their status as women or mothers alone. This illustrates the intersection of race and class as well as gender within the maternalism developed and utilized by the friends in contrast to that developed by the recipients. In most cases race and class privilege intersected with friends' constructions of motherhood and within their use of maternalism in ways which allowed them to emphasize their own similarities in motherhood status even as their privileged race and class statuses were obscured. This emphasis led to the idealized view of motherhood they constructed and its importance to their participation.

In contrast, the recipients were more likely to speak about the things they needed for their children as part of their drive and inspiration for involvement. For example, as Vivian indicated in her story about finding a place to rent, the issue of housing for welfare recipients, and particularly those with large numbers of children, was a critical one in Detroit at the time. An article in *NOW,* the national welfare leaders' newsletter, discussed a recent sit-in by a Detroit based welfare rights group demanding more housing for large families, and criticized the Detroit Housing Commission and the city welfare department for not giving mother's with large families money up front in order to secure

housing, claiming that by the time they got the money from the welfare department the place was already rented.[59]

For welfare recipients, the fact that their children were suffering meant that they themselves needed to become activists in order to fight for assistance for their children. Recipients employed what I see as a *practical maternalism* to achieve their goals. This was developed through the differing ways that race, class, and gender intersected within their own lives. While they may have been fighting and protesting in order to gain a better standard of living for themselves and their children, as well as for all children whose mothers received welfare, they spoke about their motivation as a result of their negative experiences and hardships as poor, primarily black, women on welfare. This is similar to, but also different from, what Sachs (2001) discovered in her examination of the intersection of race, class, consumerism, and maternalism in the welfare rights movement. Sachs examined the welfare rights movement as a whole, exploring the rhetoric of motherhood used by the NWRO and the white middle class groups who supported them. She concluded that the maternalist discourse used by the NWRO represented an attempt to educate white middle class feminists. The results of this study indicate that a *practical maternalism* was more important to recipients' continued involvement as well as in attracting other poor mothers to the welfare rights movement.

White, middle class friends became mobilized to participate in the welfare rights movement though their more privileged race and class statuses intersected with their gender and motherhood. Recipients did not use maternalism in the same way. They used a *practical maternalism,* developed through the lens of their own struggles living in

[59] "Sit-in by Mothers Spurs Search for Housing", article in the National Welfare Leaders' newsletter, titled *NOW,* November, 17, 1967, NOW-NWLN.

poverty, within their continued involvement in the movement as a way to reach other poor mothers, rather than as a conscious attempt to educate white middle class women. Delores, who had been involved with welfare rights prior to having to go on welfare, talked about how she saw things differently once she actually went on AFDC:

> "And [because of] the baby... I had to finally go apply for aid. And... and it was interesting. 'Cause now the shoe was on the other foot, right? And you know, before I was fightin' for others-now I got to fight for myself. And I walked into that welfare office... place was PACKED. And I'm sittin' up there four months pregnant, and I'm sayin' to myself, "I ain't gonna sit in here too long – I'm gonna get some services." And fifteen minutes after I been there, I walked up to the desk, and I said, "You know, I got – I need an application, I need to be seen," "And I can't be sittin' up in here too long." The lady said, "Well, you gonna have to sit over there like anybody." I say, "I want to see your supervisor." Which shocked her." (Delores, b, pc, p. 31).

While maternalism and a sense of shared motherhood or a duty to assist other mothers was a strong motivator for friends, recipients viewed their participation in the movement strongly through the prism of being poor, black, and on welfare.

These differences in maternalism are further illustrated in the ways in which participants of the welfare rights movement indicated involvement of their children. While all participants talked about their children, there were differences in whether they admitted to bringing their children with them to the protests, marches, and meetings. The friends frequently brought their children to events so that they could understand poverty and be exposed to new situations. Here, Patricia explained:

> "Oh they went to all the rallies in Lansing. They laugh about (chuckles)..they read about some of those *now*, and I used to take the younger kids there....and they said 'Oh God', they grew UP on this stuff. Well, my youngest daughter's a social worker, and...she thinks that's why. She always knew a lot of these people, you know?" (Patricia, w, mc, p. 8).

Another friend, Ruth, also talked about the involvement of her children:

> "[my] baby, yeah, I started before she was born...and then...you know, continued. She slept on many a floor, going with her mother to meetings. Yeah, whenever we had big demonstrations, all of my kids came. They've slept on many a bus, going to the overnight trip to Washington." (Ruth, w, mc, p.18-19).

It is interesting to note that none of the recipients indicated that they regularly brought their children to these events, although many of the friends did so. Again, this speaks to the *practical maternalism* that was a part of the recipients' lives. Race and class intersected with gender and mothering experiences in interesting ways. The only friend who indicated that she did not involve her children provides an example of how race and class were specifically intersected within women's childrearing experiences. Evelyn, an African American middle class friend, talked about the need to protect children from a potentially volatile situation:

> "And one of the things that was always in the back of our mind was, if we...you know, if we got picked up because they...the system didn't agree with what we were doing...there was always the possibility that they would... take the children. And you know, take the children and say, 'You're not a fit parent'. And if they were in some, in any kind of conflict, so...we were careful to keep the kids out of the spotlight." (Evelyn, b, mc, p. 10).

Ruth also indicated the risk, which recipient activists faced, of having children removed. In a discussion about one of their largest protests in Detroit, she explained how they had to be careful about the children involved:

> "And we knew they [the women who had occupied the welfare office]were gonna be arrested that day, so I said to people, 'You know, we've had people arrested all week. You can't have any kind of an outstanding ticket, even for a garbage can. Nothing at all. Now your kids'- this was the first one-'You have to be able to say your kids are okay. Because if they go pick them up and say you abandoned your kids to come down here, it's gonna work against it.' You can't believe how many people we would not allow to be arrested." (Ruth, w, mc, p. 9-10).

Evelyn talked about her cautiousness in involving recipients' children:

> "It was like, a lot of the, a lot of the mothers were, you know, single parents. A lot of them had their children by themselves. So, we didn't, they didn't involve children in

> the protests or the sit-ins or anything that they were doing, because of that. You know, they would, that's the first thing- if they were on assistance- they would say that they weren't a fit parent." (Evelyn, b, mc, p. 10).

Apparently, the fears about welfare recipients' children were warranted, as illustrated in this quote from Ruth, who explained how the police gave protestors time to remove their children from the vicinity:

> "Well, with the kids, the police went in and said, 'Look. We're going to arrest all of you. If we arrest the children, the only place we can put 'em is in Juvenile Detention. You don't want your kids to go there. Try to send your kids home.' So, you know, they gave us time, we scrambled and I think we kept one fifteen year old boy, but all the rest of the kids went home." (Ruth, w, mc, p. 9).

These examples indicate how race and class intersected with gender within participants' involvement of their children. The ways in which the white friends tended to involve their children and the purposes for their involvement were very different and less risky than the ways that recipients' children could be involved. Friends who were privileged by race and class had more freedom to involve their children in their social movement activity without fear of removal by the state. Recipients, as well as the black middle class and working class friends, were at a greater risk of having children removed due to race and class based discrimination and the heavier surveillance that women on welfare were subjected to.

All of these examples illustrate the ways in which varying social locations intersected within all participants' experiences as women and mothers, and how differing types of maternalism developed based on these intersections.

Women's Roles in Welfare Rights

Within the national welfare rights movement there were distinctions between the roles of the friends and those of the recipients. Although they occupied a shared gender

location, there were strong divisions between their roles, based on recipient or non-recipient status. As the national movement progressed, tensions around these different roles began to increase (West, 1981). All of the recipients and half (4) of the friends in this study talked specifically about the kinds of roles that women occupied within the welfare rights groups that they participated in. Recipients were very careful to point out that they engaged in both leadership and decision making roles as well as participated in actions and protests while taking care of the daily needs of other welfare recipients. Gladys recounted the kinds of roles they filled:

> "When we'd have a meeting, we would decide what we were gonna do, whether we were gonna picket or what. And if somebody was havin' trouble with a social worker, or havin' trouble gettin' their gas and lights turned on, you know? That's where we would come in. Each one of the officers of the welfare mothers group would take the case of whoever come in for help." (Gladys, b, pc, p. 26).

Of the four friends who talked about women's roles, all but one indicated that friends fulfilled strong supportive roles and that recipients held decision making roles within the movement. They talked about engaging in activities such as fundraising and providing child care for the children of recipients during meetings as well as providing transportation for recipients. Anita recalled:

> "We often would go to their meetings and baby-sit for their kids while they had their meetings. We would provide refreshments for them, we would drive them to their meetings." (Anita, w, mc, p. 3).

When asked specifically about the kinds of roles that women in the movement held, both friends and recipients tended to dichotomize their roles. Although they all claimed that women, not men, took on all of the most significant positions and did most of the work within the movement, they made clear distinctions as to the types of activities

recipients and friends engaged in, distinguishing what each member did based on recipient status.

Use of Sameness

The questions that were examined in this dissertation included how difference was manifested within the welfare rights movement and whether there was a shared standpoint of women within the movement. Results indicated that friends emphasized similarities or sameness based on gender more frequently than did recipients. White friends focused on their shared gender and motherhood status with recipients, as a form of motivation for their early participation in the welfare rights movement as well as providing them a unique perspective based on their status as women. Gender was most often the shared standpoint they emphasized in their decisions to participate in the movement, and maternalism was frequently used as a motivating factor in their early involvement. However, although gender was a motivating factor for these friends, they simultaneously occupied privileged class and race locations, and at times these statuses served to distance them from recipients. While they emphasized their shared gender and motherhood statuses as providing them with a critical perspective and as a strong mobilizing factor, they also emphasized differences in class and race in ways that ignored the intersectional nature of these categories, but instead served to create a boundary of separation from recipients.

Class and race also intersected within friends' and recipients' differing constructs and uses of maternalism. White middle and upper middle class friends most often emphasized a form of maternalism and a view of motherhood that was different from that of recipients. Recipients viewed motherhood and the drive to fight for the needs of their

own children through the lens of racial and class based discrimination that they experienced on a daily basis. Thus, they developed a *practical maternalism.* Gender and the use of maternalism could also be seen in the documents that responded to changes in welfare policy, while the idealized image of a mother needing to stay home and care for her children was used when critiquing WIN and FAP, it was often contradicted by inclusions of statements demanding support for poor women to gain education and training in order to increase their work opportunities. Although gender could be used within the documents as a shared standpoint to recruit non-recipient women to support poor welfare mothers, it is clear that gender also intersected with the realities and needs of poor, primarily black, women on welfare. In responding to welfare policy changes, a sense of a shared and idealized image of woman or mother was used; however, it was intersected with the realities of needing to provide opportunity to poor women, particularly poor African American women.

Although gender was a strong standpoint for white friends, race was an equally strong standpoint for black friends' participation in the movement. When the two African American friends in this sample talked about sameness, it revolved around their own critical insights developed from struggles inherent in their existence within a shared racial category with recipients, and the historical legacy of discrimination and racism that this category represented. This standpoint provided a sense of solidarity with recipients and spurred their own involvement in the movement. Therefore, while gender was important as an organizing feature of the welfare rights movement in the Detroit area, it intersected with race as well as class in critical ways.

Shifting Standpoints

Although sameness or a shared gender standpoint were frequently mentioned in friends' initial attraction to welfare rights work, for recipients, gender as sameness was only emphasized in their continued involvement in the welfare rights movement as they described how it felt to be able to help other women on welfare. It is interesting to note that recipients incorporated gender and their awareness of how class intersected with gender within their standpoint as their participation in the movement increased. This represents recipients' shifting standpoints from initial class based awareness to a focus on gender as well. While they were not initially motivated to join the movement based on a shared standpoint of woman, they did emphasize gender and class as important to their continued participation in welfare rights, and presented the important insights that this gave them within their later participation. Therefore, through their participation and experience in the movement itself they began to develop a shifting standpoint emphasizing the convergence of gender with class. This is similar to what Naples (2003) refers to in her multidimensional feminist standpoint approach as standpoints that may shift through the interaction with community and through the relationship with other "knowers". This indicates that while one dimension of a standpoint may be emphasized in the initial drive to participate in social movement work that focus may shift through the relational processes of participation in a community or through developing relationships to others. This highlights the importance of relationality within women's everyday lives (Smith, 2004). Understanding how standpoints are expressed by various participants may be a useful mobilizing tool within social movement work, but it is also critical to understand that participation in the movement itself may provide opportunity

for these standpoints to shift through the relational processes of women's social movement activity.

Part IV: Significance of Boundaries

Chapter 8

Crossing Boundaries

> "Well, I think we had about the biggest group. There were more, other, groups in the city, but we had the biggest group. And...I think we got more done. More, better, service than the rest of 'em, because...we had [a non-recipient member] and [another non-recipient member] to back us up."
>
> -Gladys, recipient member of a Detroit based welfare rights group, p. 24[60]

The research questions examined in this study included how women in the welfare rights movement mobilized across differences in race and class as well as how they organized around a similar gender based social location. A main goal of this dissertation was also to locate how "difference" or "boundaries" were crossed by movement participants.

While boundaries of race and class can never really be crossed in the sense that one individual could actually experience racism and class discrimination in the same way as another individual, there were examples where participants privileged by race and class were able to achieve empathy with those from marginalized social locations. "Boundaries crossed", in this sense means that some participants who had an outsider status, based on their privileged race and class, were able to achieve a simultaneous insider status in recipients' view, despite this "boundary". Where boundaries of race or class were crossed it was because of the strength of one standpoint, gender, race, or class. Few friends were able to cross the boundary of class. Race was occasionally crossed by friends and recipients, and gender was frequently used as a common standpoint.

An example of how the boundary of race was crossed through the use of a shared poverty-class standpoint was the recipients' focus on helping other women on welfare,

[60] Gladys, a member of a Detroit welfare rights group, personal interview, Oct. 25, 2005, Detroit, Michigan.

regardless of race. This can be seen in the story Ruth relayed. She told of an incident where recipients from Detroit (who were all African American) organized a protest in a poor white community on the west side of the state. They were protesting the fact that the county did not give out food stamps, but made recipients come to a local store for free food distribution. Because she indicated that this community was known for its' racist leanings and hate groups, I asked her whether the Detroit based recipients really wanted to travel there to be supportive. She replied:

> "Oh! If they filled a bus! And they knew they were going to a hostile territory." (Ruth, w, mc, p. 25-26).

Many of the recipients talked about their experiences helping other poor women on welfare, and how it sustained them in the movement. Some recipients mentioned the fact that they had also helped poor white women on welfare. One recipient stated:

> "All the groups had [some]whites in. They were all...[on welfare]. We were all bein' treated the same way, so...you know?" (Gladys, b, pc, p. 26-27).

The fact that they were all on welfare was important to the recipients. They also spoke about the experience of encountering rural white poverty for the first time.

Helen said:

> "And we found out that, in traveling around- There were more Caucasians, because they lived in the...what do they call it?...the 'back' areas or something? And they...not only didn't have anything, there was no place for them to go GET anything!" (Helen, b, pc, p. 33).

Victoria spoke of the importance placed on being on welfare, regardless of racial differences:

> "We were, we were NOT segregated [racially] (chuckles). There was a wide base. Whoever, whoever it was, there we were, and there were, there were, white, black and brown." (Victoria, w, pc, p. 42).

However, in order to indicate that cross-racial relationships were not always blissful, Victoria also stated:

> "[Race] didn't really make much difference there [within the recipient groups]. I think the important thing is, we were all activists, we all...knew what was necessary, and...yeah. Which didn't mean there was never any racial tension, because there frequently was." (Victoria, w, pc, p. 44-45).

Recipients talked about the importance of being an activist and of being on welfare, but they also did not want to leave the perception that there were never any differences or conflict between recipient members. However, in spite of occasional conflict, the solidarity achieved from a shared class standpoint and the insider status that this represented was something that they were aware of and emphasized frequently.

Two friends also provided examples of "boundaries crossed". Although most friends did not cross boundaries, the two women who did so offer interesting insights into how race, class, and gender standpoints were formed. In these exceptional cases the participants seemed to achieve empathy rather than sympathy for the recipients.

In almost all references to her, one white middle class "friend", Ruth, seemed to be considered a "member" or an "insider" rather than an "outsider" within the movement. One of the things she seemed to understand and be conscious of were the ways in which her own race and class intersected with gender in her participation in the movement. In recalling her early involvement in the welfare rights movement, Ruth described her experience organizing poor women on welfare in a predominantly African American community. She felt that her privileged status as white and middle class, as well as her geographical location as a suburbanite, made it important for her to work with someone from within the community, an insider. Her first contact should be with someone who

would be willing to speak to an outsider such as herself. Although she understood her own outsider status, throughout her work in the welfare rights movement she was willing to engage in the same, sometimes dangerous, activities that recipients engaged in. Ruth talked about a march in a small town in Michigan that was known for its' racism:

> "But I told everybody that, 'If we're gonna run into trouble, I would think it would be here.' So we walked sort of single file, 'cause it was not a wide sidewalk, through the heart of town. And then I could see up ahead, some people across the street with signs. And I knew it wasn't gonna be nice. And I went to the head of the line, just ran up and down and said, 'I don't care what they say, we keep singing and walking. Don't even look at 'em! Don't even look at 'em!' And it was something like, something about, "I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth, who are you?" "Something like that. It was...they weren't vulgar, but they were mean. And they may have even called out something...but anyway, the ones at the head of the line were singing." (Ruth, w, mc, p. 27).

She also described a long march to the state capitol where they stopped in a different "dangerous" town on the way, staying overnight in a small church,

> "We had maybe four vehicles. And they said, "Don't leave 'em here at the church", and they hid 'em. So, you know...the Ku Klux type couldn't see it. And they said, "Turn off the lights. And if you hear any shooting, get down." I mean, some people couldn't sleep. I was exhausted, I slept (chuckles)." (Ruth, w, mc, p. 29).

She gave some examples of the negative reactions she received from racist whites:

> "Oh I would occasionally get hate mail. Really terrible stuff. And occasionally get phone calls that were...as nasty as could be. And I remember once, when I was working with C.O.R.E. and on a picket line, a white man dressed in a business suit, really looking prosperous...came right up to me, and I thought he was gonna ask me a question. And he spit in my face. So...I've had the, gamut (chuckles)." (Ruth, w, mc, p. 31-32).

She also remembered getting arrested with recipients, as the following lengthy story illustrated:

> "I remember the last day of that week... we... walked into the building... carrying signs, and singing – what were we singing? Doggone it – a hymn. At the top of our voices. And we walked in – and all we did – because it was a big building, 640

Temple, an ENORMOUS waiting room, just horrible looking. And what we did is, we walked in there... and... this gal leading it had a real good voice – she sings in a church choir. And we're singing, "When the Saints Go Marching In"! So we walked through, singing at the top of our lungs... and we just walk through – slowly, though – and come out. 'Cause I didn't want people to be arrested. You're not allowed to carry something like a picket sign inside a public building. And we'd been warned ahead of time. But if no cop sees us, what can happen? So then you know... I wanted them to walk quickly! So we walked quickly, and... I'm having trouble singing, I'm laughing so hard, you know (chuckles)? And we walk through, and come back out, and JUST as we get out – I think I hadn't made the full picket line circle – the cops arrived. And the director was somebody – a guy named Mr._____, who really meant well...and he came down. And he said "Well you know, I had to call the police!" And I said, "Look. We didn't so much as break the lead on a pencil. We didn't do one thing except make your workers feel guilty." They [the workers] were... lowering their stuff out the window, leaving, – running out the back door...they refused to work! They had to close the office for the rest of the day. And ... when the 22 of us were arrested, they put all of us in– I think you would call it a holding pen... we were all together, and there was a phone in there...and _____ [another friend] takes over. And she's calling the UAW, "Get us out of jail." She's calling the national office, "They've arrested all of us." I mean, she's calling the newspapers (laughs), and...then we ran out of dimes! You know (laughs), in those days, it was a dime. Anyways... _____ [a legal aid attorney] was still a pretty young, inexperienced attorney. And it frightened him. 'Cause of the picket line, we left a picket line. And we said to those [who stayed behind], "But the rest of you, you're not being arrested, you keep the picket line going." Well, _____[the legal aid attorney] got scared... in fact, they hid us from him. He couldn't – he couldn't find us for hours! "Who's holding 'em?" You know, "which was it- the Sheriff that arrested them? Was it the City Police?" He hadn't BEEN there, which he should've been. Now I, I know better. And I would have made sure – I would have told HIM, but you know – what do I know (chuckles)?Anyway...I think we knew – that as soon as he got to represent us, they were gonna release us. So anyway, he went and told them, "Stop the picket line. Otherwise they're gonna keep these people in jail. You've gotta stop." So when we finally get out... I'm gonna guess it's 5:00, 6:00 o'clock in the evening... and we go there, and there's nobody there – or, there were some people there, not picketing, but they didn't want to go home! They said, "Well, _____[the legal aid attorney] told us to go home – otherwise, you wouldn't get outta jail." And we said "OH, that's terrible!" And I remember scolding him. You know – anyway, it didn't matter, because they closed the office [the welfare office], that was on a Friday...they closed the office the following Monday and Tuesday." (Ruth, w, mc, p. 10-13).

Ruth's participation, as a white middle class friend, in the everyday activities and actions of the recipients and her willingness to acknowledge the ways in which race, class and gender converged within her own experiences positioning her as an "outsider",

contributed to her ability to cross boundaries of race and class. By working alongside the women who were recipients and engaging in shared action, she became a member of the group. While she was careful to point out that all the officers and official leaders in her group were recipients, she seemed to have assumed an unofficial leadership role. When recipients mentioned her, they talked about her as a member and an insider. Although she was middle class and white, by acknowledging this privileged status and then engaging in the same kinds of roles that recipients engaged in, she was able to cross the boundary between recipient and non-recipient. Others within the movement viewed her as an insider, although her privileged race and class status intersected with her shared gender status, making her simultaneously an outsider.

Ruth's gender and motherhood status were important factors that actually contributed to the development of her standpoint in her early encounters with women on welfare. She indicated an awareness of the differential social relations inherent in her own status as a woman and her own struggled for knowledge. As illustrated earlier, this was evident in her awareness of the way that she was treated differently in her civil rights work based on her gender. Ruth also emphasized gender in her early motivation to become involved in the welfare rights movement, as she relayed a story about her first meeting with a poor mother on welfare. She had brought her baby with her to the woman's home, and not thinking she would be there long had not brought an extra diaper. She stayed so long, listening to all of the things that the other mother had endured during a life of poverty, that her baby soaked her diaper. She laughingly recalled how the woman had then given her a towel to put on the child. This story illustrates the personal

connection she felt in hearing about and witnessing another woman's plight due to poverty.

Although gender was an important standpoint for Ruth, it took more for her to cross boundaries within the movement. She seemed aware of the intersection of her race, class, and gender within her own experiences, and was also able to achieve an "insider" status within the movement by engaging in the same activities and actions as recipients. Most importantly she did this side by side with other recipients in the movement. This was the critical factor.

Another non-recipient in this study had success in crossing boundaries as well. Evelyn, as an African American middle class supporter, emphasized a strong standpoint informed through her awareness of being a black woman, and a mother, in a way that gave her the ability to be seen as an insider. Due to the convergence of her social location, as a black middle class woman, she maintained a simultaneous insider and outsider status. When she spoke about her involvement in welfare rights she saw herself motivated by a need to help the Black community, and to assist poor mothers. She linked her work in welfare rights to her previous Civil Rights Movement work. She too engaged in the same kinds of activities and dangerous actions that recipients engaged in, and she did this alongside them. But she did not cross the boundary of class difference. Her middle class status was used to separate herself from recipients. She placed particular importance on a baby shower that recipients had given her. She recounted how upset she was that they had bought presents for her new baby. She repeatedly told them that they shouldn't be doing it and emphasized that she didn't need gifts since she had a husband and family and enough income so that she wasn't lacking for anything. The fact that the

recipients were adamant about doing something for her and her baby made her uncomfortable:

"They had been running back and forth to the store, they bought stuff for the baby, they you know, set up the refreshments, and...they were having the mostest fun, and I was the most uncomfortable thing you have ever heard! And the, the lady said to me, she said, "You don't have a choice!" Like, I had been running it, right? I was telling people what to do. And they had done this whole shower thing... and then they invited all the mothers that was in that group." (Evelyn, b, mc, p. 16).

Although she understood and embraced the fact that her own race and gender gave her insider status within the movement, she also emphasized that her class status made her different from recipients. The strong standpoint she held around her race and gender helped mobilize her to action and allowed her to cross boundaries, but her class status served to reinforce difference. This reinforcement of class boundaries was something that she herself maintained, rather than a way that recipients viewed her as different. The socially stratified location as an African American woman that she shared with recipients strongly influenced her agency and how she saw the world, and her experience of middle class life simultaneously intersected with race and gender, shaping her views of welfare and poverty. She was able to maintain a distance between herself and recipients based on her more privileged class status. The fact that she was unable or unwilling to acknowledge the importance of class as it intersected with race and gender within her own life meant that this boundary remained "uncrossed".

The Meaning of Crossing Boundaries

These examples demonstrate that boundaries could be crossed if outsiders were able to work successfully alongside recipients. A key component of these examples of "crossing boundaries" is working alongside recipients in the same kinds of activities that they were engaged in. For the majority of friends who were not able to cross boundaries,

their emphasis on different roles and activities seemed to foster separation. When white middle class supporters talked about their roles as different from recipients, and described their movement work as different, this strengthened and reinforced divisions based on race and class. While friends were typically careful to claim that the recipients maintained leadership and control of the movement, they also described their own roles as more structural, emphasizing the policy and fundraising work they took on.

In the unique cases where non-recipients were able to decrease divisions between themselves and recipients and "cross boundaries", they also saw their responsibilities as equal. It is important to recognize that they maintained minimal "claims" to leadership, always pointing out how recipients were the official leaders. Ruth, the white middle class friend who crossed boundaries was not listed as someone occupying a leadership role, although she clearly engaged in decision-making within the movement.

Crossing boundaries only occurred when there was a conscious effort to partner with and work alongside women who were different. Ruth, who was most successful in crossing boundaries, also seemed to acknowledge her own privileged status, and consciously acted within this knowledge. Evelyn, the black middle class friend who was successful in crossing boundaries maintained a distance between herself and the recipients based on class. Although recipients were willing to allow her to cross this boundary of class she seemed unable to do so.

The concept of crossing boundaries of difference in social movement work or community organizing is an important one for social workers to understand. If cross-race or cross-class organizing is to occur, understanding why some organizers are successful is critical. Examples of "boundary crossing" also offer important insights about how

women's standpoints may be shaped and informed by their work with different types of women. The women in this study who were able to cross boundaries worked with women different from themselves. An important component of their "crossing" was not only how others perceived them, but also how they perceived themselves and their own work.

Chapter 9

Limitations and Strengths of the Study: The Dance Between Disciplines

Since the sample size in this study was small and focused on a limited geographical area, its findings can only be generalized in a very limited manner, representing an inherent limitation in the study.

The use of oral history interviews also limited the ability to make certain "truth claims" based on participants' remembrances of past events. This is not necessarily problematic since I was interested primarily in how women perceived events and activities in their lives. The use of documents may have also been problematic since their depictions of events may have been inaccurate (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Whenever possible I tried to ascertain their accuracy and looked at their consistency.

The use of multiple methods can be both helpful as well as problematic depending on the impetus for their use. The two research methods used in this study, oral history interviews and document analysis, were both qualitative, and as such did not represent an attempt to increase validity. Instead, their use was important from an epistemological standpoint. The use of multiple methods here was not from a positivistic approach, which seeks to better achieve the "one truth" that exists. Rather, the framework was constructivist, in that there was an understanding of multiple social constructions of reality (Seale, 1999). This research began without the expectation that one of the methods used would produce an absolute true and accurate historical record, and thus be privileged over other interpretations. I assumed that each method would reveal different layers of "truth". For the purposes of this research, there was active opposition to the more common positivistic approach to using multiple methods as a way to more

accurately arrive at a fixed location (Seale, 1999). Instead, I was interested in understanding how women who were involved in the welfare rights movement spoke about their own race, class and gender positions as well as those of others within the movement.

The theoretical framework used in this study, a multidimensional feminist standpoint approach and an intersectional analysis, complemented my research questions and the methods used. The use of both oral history and document analysis allowed for a more successful approach to the research questions.

The complexity of attempting an intersectional analysis is a strength and limitation of this study. In McCall's (2005) critique of the way that intersectional analyses are conducted, she saw an overuse of what she calls the *intracategorical complexity* approach, whereby social groups are examined for how they interact with other social locations, and while social categories are acknowledged they are also criticized and complicated. She advocates using an *intercategorical complexity* approach to intersectional research, whereby categories are assumed, and the relationship between unequal groups is the point of analysis. She claims that this approach allows for a fuller range of methods to be used, including large-scale quantitative studies, and for more interdisciplinary analyses to be conducted (McCall, 2005). This study fits somewhere between the *intracategorical* and *intercategorical complexity* approaches in its intersectional analysis. Since I was interested in examining a specific social movement that consisted of individuals who occupied varying social locations, and in understanding how these individuals experienced and emphasized their varying positionalities as well as problematizing these locations, the *intracategocial* approach is most appropriate.

However, the problem of interdisciplinarity that McCall claims for this approach to intersectionality is not problematic here, since social work has not embraced feminist theories, nor is it familiar with intersectional approaches in general. Thus, while this study is indeed interdisciplinary in nature, it is also an attempt to broaden the use of intersectional approaches within the field of social work.

Juggling Disciplinary Boundaries

A major strength of this dissertation is the fact that it is interdisciplinary, borrowing from social work, sociology, history, and women's studies. Although the interdisciplinary nature of the study allows for a broader understanding of women's participation in the welfare rights movement, it also introduces a degree of complexity and difficulty. Disciplinary boundaries can be firmly entrenched and difficult to navigate between. Although social work presents itself as an interdisciplinary profession (Roche, et al., 1999), there are different and unique knowledge bases among disciplines. This means that when attempting to do work that maintains a foothold in a variety of disciplines, one must be able to navigate various frameworks and boundaries. Le'le' and Norgaard (2005) write of the difficulty in doing interdisciplinary research between not only the natural and the social sciences, but especially amongst various disciplines in the social sciences. They argue that the key to successful collaboration is a willingness to use a variety of theoretical frameworks and the ability of the researchers to acknowledge the validity of these frameworks. The research presented in this dissertation relied not only on literature from various disciplines for insight and guidelines, but also approached the problem of organizing women for social change from the perspectives of history, sociology, and social work and from the various frameworks embedded within each.

Throughout social work's history, the profession has embraced social welfare history and historical methods to varying degrees. In Fisher's (1999) article on the founding of the social welfare history group in the 1950s, he identifies the conservative political economy as a key factor prompting its work. In the conservative 1950s there was a de-emphasis on social action and social change and progressive social work researchers and historians turned to the past as an opportunity to examine a less restrictive era. Fisher argued that similar conditions existed at the end of the 20th century, and that social work might be well served by once again looking to the past for solutions. This dissertation represents an attempt to do just that. By examining the social movement work and responses to policy changes that welfare rights participants engaged in during the 1960s and early 1970s, my aim was to uncover lessons about cross-racial and cross-class mobilization that may be used in current community organizing or social movement work with poor women. These experiences are especially important in the current conservative political economy.

Another important feature of this study is that it is feminist research, advocating emancipatory goals for women. Much feminist research is interdisciplinary in nature with the goal of reaching across or even blurring disciplinary boundaries in order to gain a sense of connected knowledge (Reinharz, 1992). The desire to reach across boundaries fits with the feminist goal of producing knowledge that has the ability to be disseminated widely so as to achieve the greatest level of social change for women (DeVault, 1996). This research maintains a strong commitment to social change and social justice goals for poor women. Therefore, focusing on a variety of disciplines offers the opportunity to disseminate findings in a variety of ways rather than just within social work. In order to

promote social work practice and social work teaching that is truly liberatory and aimed at advocating human rights and social justice, social work must consistently draw on other disciplines (Roche, et al., 1999). Although it was difficult to negotiate disciplinary boundaries, the goals of this study are consistent with the goals of a liberatory social work.

Chapter 10

Conclusion: Sisters Together Yet Separate in The Struggle

Returning once again to the overarching questions that were explored in this dissertation, the findings illustrate that while shared gender served as an important motivation for some women who participated in the welfare rights movement, differences in race and class also complicated this participation. These findings also illustrate the complexity of women's standpoints and provide examples of how women's standpoints were achieved in part through their struggle together within a community of social movement participants. This complexity of standpoints based on social location, participation in a historically located community, and as a site of inquiry, fits with Naples (2003) concept of a multidimensional feminist standpoint approach which allows the complexities in women's standpoints to be examined within the context of women's participation in a "community" of social movement participants.

This analysis provides examples of how gender, race, and class formed interlocking categories that acted as both mobilizing as well as divisive features of this historical movement. The results of this study indicate that while gender did function as an organizing force, particularly through common identities as mothers, or through the use of maternalism as an organizing strategy, a gendered standpoint was simultaneously complicated by class and race, even though this convergence may have been left unnoticed or unsaid. Blumberg's (1980) study of white women civil rights workers found that participants were motivated to become involved through a sense of maternalism and a need to fight against racism. Her findings are similar to what was seen in the motivations of the white middle and upper middle class friends in this study. However,

the use of maternalism and a gender based standpoint as motivation for social movement involvement was limited in its use within the welfare rights movement overall, since having a shared standpoint as woman and mother was more salient to the non-recipient members of the movement than it was to the recipient members.

The dichotomy of recipient and non-recipient within the welfare rights movement has been identified by other scholars (Sachs, 2001; West, 1981). Recipients clearly felt they differed from non-recipients because of their experiences on welfare. In testimony given in Detroit at a 1972 hearing on federal welfare reform legislation, Jocelyn Hubbard, then a recipient and leader of a welfare rights group, stated,

> "You are paying from $6,000 to $7,000 a year to a caseworker to help me with a life that maybe she has read a book about. Also she is to tell me how to live a middle-class life without the money to pay for it. I didn't pick our economic system but I have to live in it, and to do this I need money. I believe that I would spend the money as wisely as you spend yours and I would buy much the same way as you do. I also think I know enough to seek expert counseling for my problems and if I have money I will pay for the service."[61]

Her testimony spoke to recipients' views that caseworkers and others who did not experience a life on welfare could never truly understand the problems of recipients and could never possess the unique insight that recipients possessed. It is noteworthy that she countered the stigmatizing assumptions that women on welfare could not properly budget their money, and indicated that if she had more money she could manage just fine.

Recipients' in this study indicated a poverty-class standpoint that was initially central to their participation in the welfare rights movement. As the movement progressed recipients tended to acknowledge the ways in which gender intersected with class as a standpoint. The recipients talked about getting involved due to their needs for

---

[61] Joycelyn Hubbard, "Hearing on Federal Welfare Reform Legislation at the City-County Building, Detroit," testimony, January 17, 1972, OC-MWRO Files.

help or their desire to combat negative stereotypes and poor treatment of welfare mothers. They mentioned that helping and working with other poor women sustained them and they focused on their own critical knowledge of unequal power relations. This illustrates the importance that women's standpoints play in mobilization efforts early within social movement activity, but it also indicates that women's standpoints may shift through their participation in a historically framed "community" (Naples, 2003).

In records documenting movement participants' responses to changes in welfare policy, the construct of gender that was consciously used to resist policy changes seemed at times to be at odds with the needs of recipients. The documents tended to frame resistance in terms of traditional views of motherhood and full time caring for children, while simultaneously demanding child-care, education and training for women. In a 1967 letter to Detroit's Mayor Cavanaugh the leaders of Detroit's ADC-Welfare Mother's Club and Westside Mothers listed a series of demands under the category of work policies. They asked for transportation, babysitting, and more and better job training for recipients who wanted to work as long as it did not adversely affect their children.[62] This may seem at odds with welfare rights participants' main argument that poor black women had the right to stay home and care for their children, just as white middle class women had been doing for years (Nadasen, 2005). This use of gender intersected with race and class, as welfare rights movement participants sought to ensure that poor women and poor black women in particular were provided the opportunity to engage in education and training as well as opportunities for better work. A key message was the need for choices provided to welfare recipients, not mandates.

[62] Mrs. Marjorie Coklow and Mrs. Idella Yarbough, "Statement of Recipient Concerns with Welfare," letter to Director of the Detroit Department of Social Services, March, 1967,Cavanaugh Collection, box 368, folder 21.

Although gender acted as an important mobilizing feature for the friends' participation in the welfare rights movement, this study found that gender should be considered cautiously if it will be emphasized by social workers currently doing community organizing or social movement work, particularly because constructs of "woman" or even "mother" may differ based on the ways in which race and class intersect within women's lived experiences. For the friends in this historical study, maternalism was an important component of their gendered standpoint, but for the recipients, the *practical maternalism* they developed meant that they did not view gender or motherhood status in the same way. The evidence shows that for the Detroit and Southeast Michigan movement, class was emphasized as a critical standpoint in poor women's involvement. Recipients became more aware of the ways that gender intersected class within their lives as they became more involved in the welfare rights movement, indicating shifting standpoints.

Although class was an important and unifying standpoint for the poverty-class recipients in this study, the historical record reveals that class was portrayed in conflicted ways. In spite of documents that emphasized class and privileged a poverty class standpoint indicating how welfare mothers were being targeted, class was also complicated. At times policy responses purposively called out to the middle class for support, and at other times policies deemed egregious were described as harming both the poor and the "working" poor. The use of class vacillated between presenting strong solidarity with recipients, and attracting a wider base of middle class supporters. At times the welfare rights movement made conscious efforts to attract middle class supporters such as the Friends of Welfare Rights groups. A NWRO document indicated they wanted

to appeal to unemployed parents and working class members, and they also wanted to change their power base from mother power to people power as an attempt to attract more friends to the movement.[63] However, the NWRO always understood that recipient members were their base. Recipients demanded more control and leadership as the movement progressed (Nadasen, 2002). This represented a dilemma for the movement as a whole since it had always segregated the roles and responsibilities of recipient and non-recipient participants (West, 1981). In one sense the movement needed to foster a poverty-class standpoint as the core identity of the movement highlighting the unique knowledge that was produced by this standpoint, but in another sense there was a very real need to attract non-recipients to the movement.

When differences in class and race were emphasized by participants it tended to be around leadership and decision making. Although friends emphasized racial differences when speaking of roles and tactics within the movement, recipients did not emphasize race as a form of difference. White friends saw themselves as different and thus engaged in different kinds of roles, and African American friends tended to emphasize race as a form of solidarity with recipients, demonstrating a strong race-based standpoint in their work. Historical records used race in documents that responded to changes in welfare policy by purposely using images of racial discrimination in order to emphasize the negative aspects of particular policies. A race based standpoint was occasionally used to respond to welfare policy changes emphasizing a unique perspective based on a history of racial discrimination. While this may have been a strategic attempt to elicit a strong response from African Americans, it may have also unwittingly narrowed the foci of welfare policy affects, limiting the base of support for the movement.

[63] NWRO, "Mother Power", call to join Friends of Welfare Rights, n.d., Wiley Papers, box 7, folder 11.

Where differences in class and race, or "boundaries" were "crossed" it tended to be through shared participation and struggle within the welfare rights movement and the "community" that it represented. In the cases where a friend was able to cross boundaries, it was because of an ability to fully engage in the same activities as recipients, while simultaneously ensuring that recipients maintained overall control of the movement. While boundaries were rarely crossed, there was a hope that the movement would be able to reach a wider audience, as represented in this statement made by Anna, a white middle class friend:

> "We had some hope, that if we brought this stuff before the public, and if low income people would tell us what it is LIKE to live like that...And then you could get some middle class people, who had much more advantage to say, 'Yeah. THAT is not a good idea." (Anna, w, mc, p. 12).

Victoria, a white recipient also noted:

> "Well, I suppose that I was involved because I was on welfare, and I was sustained by needing...what...and needing to let people know." (Victoria, w, pc, p. 46).

Victoria continued, explaining why she granted an interview to a local newspaper explaining what it was like to be on welfare, during the time she was active in welfare rights:

> " Well otherwise, nothing changes. If nobody knows, nothing changes." (Victoria, w, pc, p. 47).

The broad-based goal of the movement was not necessarily to create more opportunities for non-recipients to "cross boundaries", but rather to encourage those who were not on welfare to support large-scale efforts at change. In a document signed by the welfare rights and friends of welfare rights groups in Pontiac, Michigan, the authors praised the local welfare rights and friends groups, claiming that they were able to successfully work

together to inform "suburbanites" and "tax payers" about the problems of poverty.[64] While the hope was that recipients and non-recipients would be able to work together to create social change for women on welfare, the stories of individuals in this study who were able to "cross boundaries" provide specific examples of powerful mobilization efforts by those who were "different". Cross-racial and cross-class work is critical to foster effective social change efforts.

Implications for Social Work

This study illustrates that there are definite lessons to be learned from the past. In a critique of Piven and Cloward's view that mobilization and disruption would win welfare recipients more gains, Roach and Roach (1980) asserted that the past emphasis on mobilization versus coalition building resulted in fragmentation of the poor. They argued that fragmentation sets one group (poor whites) against another group (poor African Americans), and positions both against the working class. It would be helpful for social workers to understand how to avoid and overcome this type of fragmentation in organizing efforts and how to "cross boundaries" of difference. My examination of the ways that multiple social locations of race, class, and gender intersected within the early welfare rights movement and in responses to welfare policy, offers insight into ways that social mobilization occurs across difference.

The results of this dissertation suggest recommendations for social workers engaged in community or social movement work. A main implication of this study is that social workers can strategically use participants' standpoints within their social change efforts as long as they are conscious of how these standpoints intersect and shift.

---

[64] Jean Payne and Emily Gibson, leaders of Pontiac area NWRO groups, letter to New Detroit, Inc., Feb. 3, 1971, OC-MWRO Files.

In community organizing or outreach work, the social worker must understand that working "alongside" participants, while fostering leadership roles and control over the direction of the intervention by participants themselves, is a critical component of "crossing boundaries". This is a difficult tact to take, and those who were successful were also able to critically assess their own race and class privilege. Thus, understanding one's own social location, including how these locations may allow for privileged and oppressed statuses in varying contexts, is an important feature of successfully working with those who are different.

Within the context of current welfare policy, such as TANF, macro social workers can explore interventions that bring women together to work for social change. This may be done using work and training centers where those receiving cash assistance are required to participate in various work preparation activities. These locations offer natural sites for macro social work intervention that social workers could utilize in order to bring women together "across difference" to work for change.

In social movement work or social movement building with diverse participants, it is important for social workers to understand that different standpoints may be emphasized in individuals' motivations for involvement. In this sample, women emphasized different standpoints at different times in their social movement work. For recipients, while a strong class-based standpoint was important throughout their movement work, this standpoint shifted to emphasize the ways that gender informed class as their participation progressed. Through their involvement with other poor women, they began to emphasize a standpoint that emphasized the convergence of gender and class, even as race, class, and gender simultaneously intersected within their participation. This

also represented the shifting nature of women's standpoints, as these shifts occurred through participation in a "community" and through the relational processes of women's everyday lives.

In policy advocacy or lobbying work, it is also important for social workers to understand that standpoints may be an important tool in garnering support or opposition for certain policies. An illustration of differing standpoints could be used with different populations in order to reach a wider audience and support base. The historical documents examined revealed there were differing focal points of race, class, or gender used in responses to various policies over time. Race, class, and gender were used in the responses to policy changes to indicate a unique or critical knowledge attained, in attempts to reach a wider audience, or to solidify and strengthen a particular group. It is important that social workers lobbying for policy changes be conscious of the ways that race, class, and gender are emphasized or portrayed within any social change effort. Currently, TANF offers an opportunity to utilize these findings when responding to increases in work requirements, or in demands for increased education and training. Understanding and acknowledging how race, class, and gender intersect within policy responses is a critical policy advocacy tool.

Welfare rights participants' responses to WIN and FAP indicated a simultaneous need to link to other groups and populations, and to re-enforce solidarity within the movement. While it may have been important within the welfare rights movement to foster a sense of recipient solidarity and illustrate the critical knowledge that only recipients' held, this emphasis on specific groups or populations may have limited attempts at creating a wider base of support. This relates to the argument about universal

or specific targeted policies which other scholars have discussed within the context of the welfare rights movement (Nadasen, 2002; Patterson, 2000). For social workers concerned about welfare policy changes, the question may not necessarily be which type of social policy is best, but rather which type of response to welfare policy will prove most effective in garnering support for change. The emphasis on race, class, or gender based standpoints alone may allow for solidification of some groups but this may dilute the notion that welfare policy affects a wider audience. Responding to welfare policy changes using a more intersectional approach to race, class, and gender, may prevent this dilution.

Implications for Further Research

This study is important because a unique framework was used, which led to the discovery of new information about how women participated in social movement work across differences in race and class. Prior studies have examined how race or gender impacted social movement work (Evans, 1979; Robnett, 1997), or have examined the welfare rights movement as a whole[65]. This dissertation offers important contributions to the literature because of its use of a feminist theoretical framework in an interdisciplinary empirical examination of how women in the welfare rights movement in Detroit and Southeast Michigan mobilized within differing standpoints, as well as how race, class, and gender intersected within their mobilization efforts. The unique framework used for this interdisciplinary study also led to important findings on how race, class, and gender were illustrated in welfare rights movement participants' responses to changes in welfare policy.

[65] See particularly, Kotz & Kotz, 1977; Nadasen, 2005; and West, 1981.

While this study offers important insights, it also indicates the need for further research. First, it would be of interest to more closely examine the lives of the women who "crossed boundaries". Perhaps, life history methods would allow for an exploration of what factors were significant throughout their lives and how various experiences before their involvement in the welfare rights movement may have shaped the ways in which they were able to "cross boundaries". Second, it would be valuable to examine the relationship between the Detroit area Welfare Employees Union and the welfare rights movement. In the course of my research I discovered that there were differences in the reaction of individual welfare case workers (who were members of the WEU) and the union's official position in response to welfare rights groups' protests. It would be interesting to use archival methods combined with in-depth interviews to examine the views of individual union members as well as union officials. Lastly, it would be helpful to build on the findings in this study by engaging in a large-scale participatory action research project with current welfare rights members interested in broadening their base of support. This would offer a unique opportunity to examine the intersection of race, class, and gender within a participant designed project aimed at bringing supporters together to work for change. The framework used for this study could be helpful in structuring such a project.

The results of this dissertation indicate that while sisterhood or a shared gender standpoint may be an important feature of women's social movement participation, differences in class and race also intersect their lives and represent critical factors that must not be overlooked by social workers attempting social change. The "sisters" in the welfare rights movement struggled together but also remained "separate" in their efforts.

Victoria noted:

> "We [the welfare rights members and the friends] were totally separate. We, met sometimes, but we were totally...separate." (Victoria, w, pc, p. 36).

Martha also stated:

> "Well...I guess they held meetings, in their homes, and...but you know, they would occasionally tell us what they were doing, but not really a lot." (Martha, w, umc, p. 19).

Evelyn summed up the role of non-recipients in the movement,

> "I think it was people that were not welfare people, but Friends, sometimes church members, and sometimes community groups that were being supportive. If we had something going on, we could get people to write letters, or...you know, we could get people to do different things that would be supportive. And it was, it was that kind of thing. They weren't...you know, on welfare. But they were middle class, and in many instances church group or community group members that were doing things that were supportive for the mothers, you know?" (Evelyn, b, mc, p. 14).

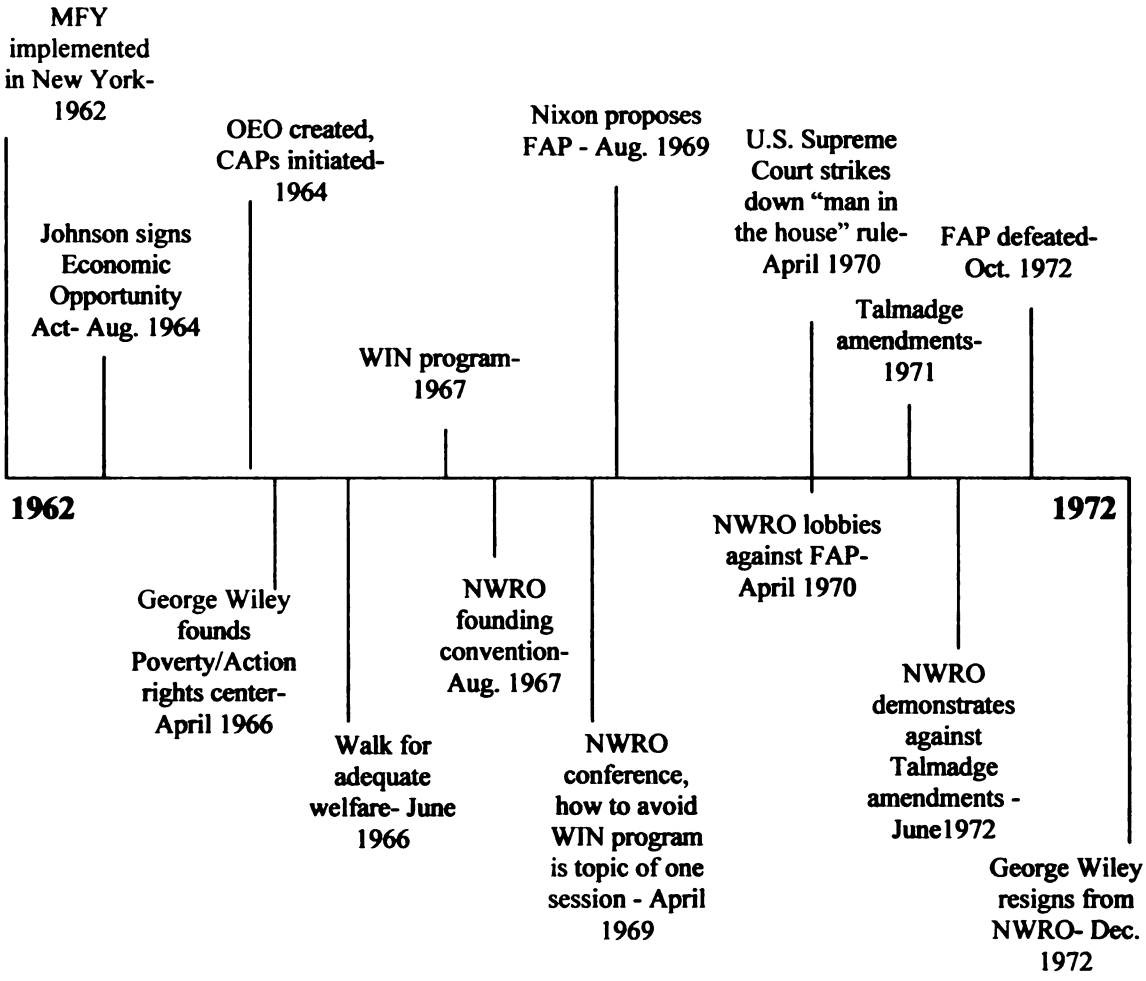
Although the women involved in the welfare rights movement worked together toward social change, their struggles must also be viewed as separate since they occurred at the intersection of race and class, as well as gender. This illustrates the point that while sisterhood is important within social movement work there are also critical boundaries that must not be ignored.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Figure 2. Historical Timeline

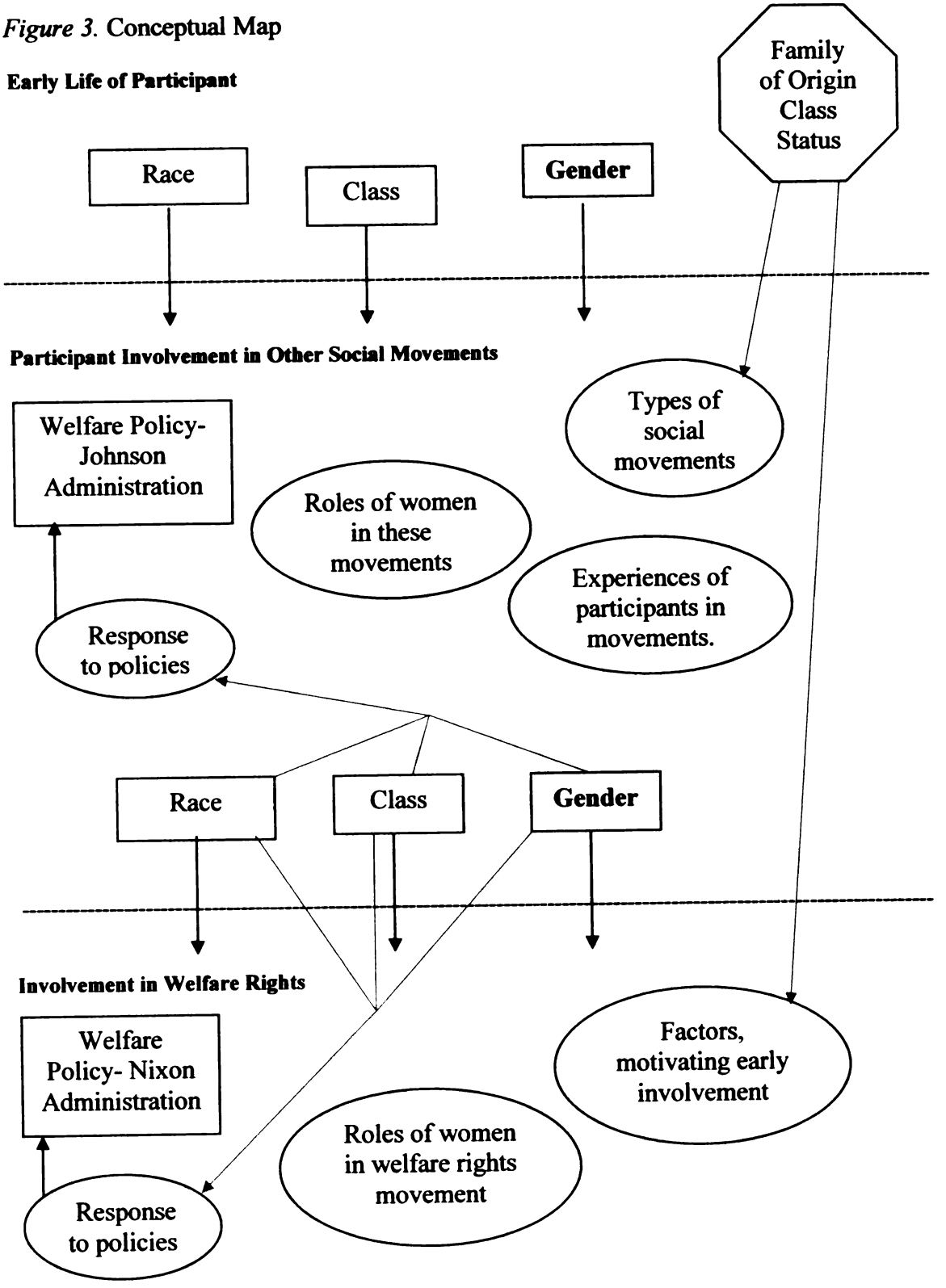
Welfare Policy



National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO)

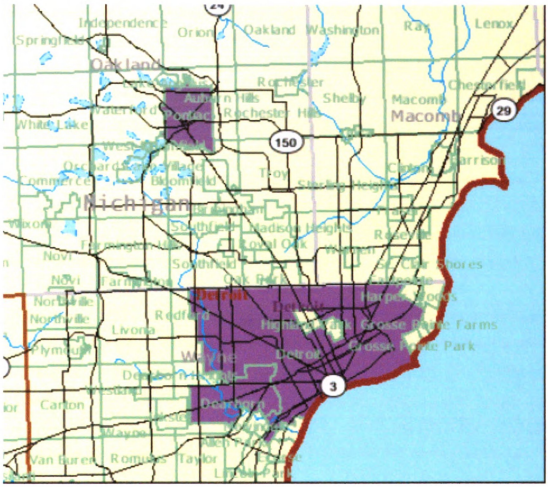
APPENDIX B

Figure 3. Conceptual Map



APPENDIX C

Southeast Michigan, Including Detroit and Pontiac



U.S. Census, American Factfinder Map, Available at:
http://factfinder.census.gov

APPENDIX D

*Interview Schedule for Oral History Interview**

I am going to ask you some questions about your involvement in some of the social movements of the 1960's, and then I am going to ask you some questions about your experiences in the Welfare Rights movement in Michigan. Please try to remember as much detail as possible.

Demographic questions: Where were you born? Can you tell me roughly what year you were born? Where did you grow up? What year did you become active in welfare rights?

1. Were you active in other social movements, organizations, or groups, before you became involved with the welfare rights movement in Michigan? Please tell me about your participation in these other groups. What do you think motivated you to join these other groups, or movements?
2. What kind of roles did women play in the other groups with which you were involved?
3. Tell me a little bit about your class status growing up, did you consider yourself poor, working class, or middle class? What kind of work did your parents do? What was their educational level? What was your educational level?
4. Tell me a little about your marital status before your involvement with welfare rights (as in single, married, divorced, living with partner, etc.). What kind of work did your spouse do? If you worked outside the home, what kind of work did you do?
5. Now tell me about how you came to be involved in the welfare rights movement.
6. What factors do you think influenced your decision to become involved with welfare rights?
7. What were the main welfare rights groups in the Detroit area during the time you were involved? What were some of the main "friends of welfare rights" groups that were around?
8. What was the relationship like between the Detroit groups and the "out-state" groups in Michigan?
9. Some people think that class has a lot to do with what motivates people to join certain groups. Did you experience anything like that with any of the groups you were involved in?

10. How did being African American/White influence your involvement in welfare rights? How do you think others perceived of your race and your involvement with this movement?
11. How was motherhood or being a single parent talked about in the groups that you were involved in? How do you think it impacted your experiences in these groups?
12. Is there anything that we have not discussed that you would like to include?

That concludes our interview, thank-you very much for your time.

*These interview questions were intended and used only as a guide. Actual questions, probes, and follow-up questions may have varied slightly. The main categories from the conceptual map for this study were the areas that were focused on, and as such the interview questions were designed to glean information in these categories.

APPENDIX E

Examples of Analysis Matrices Used

Motivation Matrix

Participant (R, C,)	**Factors Motivating Involvement in Welfare Rights Movement**	**Impact of Race**	**Impact of Class**	**Impact of Gender**
Anita, w,mc	Hearing a "friend" speak at a League of women voters meeting, about welfare rights.		Hearing about those who had been left w/ nothing.	They had small children-I had small children.
Vivian, b,pc	Someone told her about the welfare rights group and she called and they invited her to a meeting.		The need to get concrete items- fridge and stove- at first, but later enjoyed helping people.	
Anna, w,mc	Through involvement with the Catholic archdiocese, worked on a project where she interviewed poor women.		Talked about the importance of learning from her children that some of the children could not participate in gym because they could not afford tennis shoes.	Learning how anti-family, against women, welfare really is.

Sameness/Difference Matrix

Partici-pant, (R, C)	Focus on diff. between friends and recipients	Focus on sameness between friends and recipients*	Impact of race	Impact of Gender	Impact of Class
Anita, w,mc	Friends came from diff. perspectives./ Friends were eventually asked to step back/Friends began to do own thing/The recips. wanted separation.	*Friends and recip. came together.	Race was not an issue- it was more about who was in charge.	*In early days we all always had meetings together./ *Our kids played with theirs and we had picnics together.	Some were very wealthy./Friends were told to just raise the money./Friends did separate work/They wanted to keep message pure.
Gladys, b,pc	Separated the non. Leaders from the recip. Members.	*The cohesive-ness of group.			The nons. knew what to do- we didn't know what to do./ *We got more done because of them (friends.).

Both of these matrices represent Across-Case- Descriptive- Conceptually Ordered Displays, and are examples of "Conceptually Clustered Matrices" (Miles, & Huberman, 1994). The information presented here is a sample of the complete matrices. Information from each participant was included in each matrix used. I was interested in how participants perceived the importance of each category in their emphases on sameness and difference within the movement.

Document Matrix (Examples are from the Wiley Papers)

Document Description (author, date, title, publication)	**Focus on Race**	**Focus on Class**	**Focus on Gender**	**Subcategory** (Policy or Topic focus)
Author: NWRO **Date:** n.d. **Title:** Mother Power **PU:** NWRO call to join the "Friends of Welfare Rights" [Box 7, Folder 11]	Indicating that NWRO is made up of black, white, Chicano, Puerto Ricans and Indians.	Indicates that NWRO wants to attract more working class members- and wants to deal more effectively w/ poverty.	Defining the NWRO as made up of mothers on welfare. Also goes on to indicate that NWRO wants to appeal to unemployed parents.	Friends of welfare rights- states that NWRO wants to change its base of power from Mother Power to People Power.
Author: George Wiley **Date:**May 27, 1971 **Title:**Welfare reform **PU:**Letter to Congressman Charles Diggs and members of the Congressional Black Caucus [Box 16, Folder 3]	Asks for their opposition to the bill, presents the problem in terms of a "brutal repression against 5 million black welfare mothers and children. Declares the bill is racist and asks that the Black community be alerted.		States that the bill will "force the breakup of already embattled female-headed families.	Letter from Wiley in reference to H.R. 1 (FAP).

This matrix was used to organize the documents according to the conceptual framework and research questions of the study. It allowed for the visual representation of how race, class, and gender intersected in various documents. The information presented here represents a sample of the complete matrices used for each archival source.

Primary Sources

In order to simplify, I have abbreviated the titles of specific manuscript collections or papers whose material I use. The particular archives where the cited material may be found are also listed.

Cavanaugh Collection. The Papers of the Office of Jerome P. Cavanagh, 1962-1970 (W.P. Reuther Library Labor History Archives, Wayne State University).

DCCR Collection. Detroit Commission on Community Relations- Human Rights Dept. Collection: Part 3, 1940-1984 (W.P. Reuther Library Labor History Archives, Wayne State University).

NOW-NWLN. NOW, the national welfare leaders' newsletter, vertical files (Labadie Collection, The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor).

NOW-PRAC. NOW-Poverty Rights/Action Center newsletter, vertical files (Labadie Collection, The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor).

NWRO. Capitalism (US)- Reform-Welfare-National Welfare Rights Organization, vertical files (Labadie Collection, The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor).

NWRO Papers. National Welfare Rights Organization (American Radicalism Collection, Michigan State University).

OC-MWRO Files. Oakland County-Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, organizational files from 1968-1972 (OC-MWRO, Private Collection, Farmington, Michigan).

Welfare Fighter. Welfare Fighter NWRO newsletter, vertical files (Labadie Collection, The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor).

WEU Collection. Welfare Employees Union Collection,1960-1979 (W.P. Reuther Library Labor History Archives, Wayne State University).

Wiley Papers. George A. Wiley Papers ,1949-1975 (State Historical Society of Wisconsin).

References

Abramovitz, M. (1996). Aid to families with dependant children: Single mothers in the twentieth century. In *Regulating the lives of women: Social welfare policy from colonial times to the present.* Boston: South End Press, 313- 48.

_____ (1996). Part 2: A program just for single mothers. In *Under attack, fighting back: Women and welfare in the United States.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 49-82.

Acker, J., Barry, K., and Esseveld, J. (1996). Objectivity and truth: Problems in doing feminist research. In Heidi Gottfried (Ed.) *Feminism and social change: Bridging theory and practice.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 60 – 87.

Andersen, M. L., and Collins, P. H. (2001). Introduction. In Margaret L. Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins (Eds.) *Race, class, and gender: Anthology.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 1-11.

Baca Zinn, M. and Thornton Dill, B. (1996). Theorizing difference from multiracial feminism. *Feminist Studies, 22.* (2), 321-331.

Bailis, N. (1974). Accomplishments of the welfare rights movement. In *Bread or justice.* Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath Publishing, 141-49.

Berkowitz, E. D. (1991). Part II: The frustrations of welfare reform. In *America's welfare state: From Roosevelt to Reagan.* Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 91-149.

Blee, K. M. (1998). Introduction: Women on the left/women on the right. In (Ed.) *No middle ground: Women and radical protest.* New York: New York University Press, 1-15.

Blumberg, R. L. (1980). White mothers as civil rights activists: The interweave of family and movement roles. In Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg (Eds.) *Women and social protest* (1990). New York: Oxford University Press, 166-179.

Clines, F. X. (1969, May 29). Welfare group accused on pact: Affiliate says protest body has joined establishment. *The New York Times*, p. 39.

Collins, P. H. (1998). *Fighting words: Black women and the search for justice.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

_____ (1994). Shifting the center: Race, class, and feminist theorizing about motherhood. In Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Change, and Linda Rennie Forcey (Eds) *Mothering: Ideology, experience, and agency.* New York: Routledge, 45-65.

_____(1993). Toward a new vision: Race, class, and gender as categories of analysis and connection. *Race, Sex, & Class, 1.* (1), 591-605

Crenshaw, K. (1995). The intersection of race and gender. In Crenshaw, K. Gotanda, N., Peller, G., and Kendall, T. (Eds.), *Critical race theory.* New York: The New Press, 357-383.

Davis, M. (1996). Welfare rights and women's rights in the 1960's. *Journal of Policy History, 8.* (1), 145-65.

DeVault, M. L. (1996). Talking back to Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology, 22.* (22), 29 – 50.

_____(1991). Affluence and poverty. In *Feeding the family: The social organization of caring as gendered work.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 167-202.

Erbaugh, E. B. (2002). Women's community organizing and identity transformation. *Race, Gender, & Class, 9.* (1), 8-20.

Evans, S. (1979). Let the people decide. In *Personal politics: The roots of women's liberation in the civil rights movement and the new left.* New York: Vintage, 126-155.

_____The dam breaks. In *Personal politics: The roots of women's liberation in the civil rights movement and the new left.* New York: Vintage,193-211.

_____Personal politics. In *Personal politics: The roots of women's liberation in the civil rights movement and the new left.* New York: Vintage, 212-232.

Fisher, R. (1999). "Speaking for the contribution of history": context and the origins of the social welfare history group. *The Social Service Review, 73.* (2), 191-218.

Friedman, L. M. (1977). The social and political context of the war on poverty: An overview. In Robert H. Haveman (Ed.) *A decade of federal antipoverty programs: Achievements, failures, and lessons.* New York: Academic Press, 21-47.

Frost, J. (2001). An interracial movement of the poor: Community organizing and the new left in the 1960s. New York: New York University Press.

Gilbert, M. R. (2001). From the "walk for adequate welfare" to the "march for our lives": Welfare rights organizing in the 1960's and 1990's. *Urban Geography, 22.* (5), 440-56.

Gluck, S.B., and Patai, D. (1991). Introduction. In Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (Eds.) *Women's words: The practice of oral history.* New York: Routledge, 1-7.

Gordon, L. (1994). Welfare and citizenship. In *Pitied but not entitled: Single mothers and the history of welfare 1890-1935.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 287-306.

_____(1990). The new feminist scholarship on the welfare state. In (Ed.) *Women, the state, and welfare.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 9-35.

Gorelick, S. (1996). Contradictions of feminist methodology. In Heidi Gottfried (Ed.) *Feminism and social change: Bridging theory and practice.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 23 – 45.

Gottschalk, L. (1967). The relation of historical method to life and learning. In *Understanding history: A primer of historical method.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 26 -37.

Gutiérrez, L, Alvarez, A. R., Nemon, H., and Lewis, E. A. (1996). Multicultural organizing: A strategy for change. *Social Work, 41.* (5). 501 – 508.

Hagen, J. L. (1999). Public welfare and human services: new directions under TANF? *Families in Society, 80.* (1), 78 –90.

Haraway, D. (2001). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. In M. Lederman and I. Bartsch (Eds.), *The gender and science reader.* New York: Routledge, 169 – 188.

Harding, S. (2004). Introduction: Standpoint theory as a site of political, philosophic, and scientific debate. In Sandra Harding (Ed.) *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies..* New York: Routledge, 1-16.

_____ (2001). Feminist standpoint epistemology. In M. Lederman, and I. Bartsch (Eds.), *The gender and science reader.* New York: Routledge, 145 – 168.

Hartsock, N. (1998). Introduction. In *The feminist standpoint revisited & other essays.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1-8.

_____ The feminist standpoint revisited. In *The feminist standpoint revisited & other essays.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 227 –248.

Haveman, R. H. (1977). Introduction: Poverty and social policy in the 1960s and 1970s-An overview and some speculations. In (Ed) *A decade of federal antipoverty programs: Achievements, failures, and lessons.* New York: Academic Press, 1-20.

Heifetz, H. (1969). Preface. In Harold H. Weissman (Ed.) *Community development in the mobilization for youth experience.* New York: Association Press, 13-20.

Hertz, S. H. (1981). *The welfare mothers movement: A decade of change for poor women?* Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

Jackson, S. A. (1998). "Something about the word": African American women and feminism. In Kathleen M. Blee (Ed.) *No middle ground: Women and radical protest.* New York: New York University Press, 38-50.

Jaggar, A. (2004). Feminist politics and epistemology: the standpoint of women. In Sandra Harding (Ed.) *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies..* New York: Routledge, 55-66.

Jones, J. (1995). The struggle confirmed and transformed: 1955-1980. In *Labor of love, labor of sorrow: Black women, work and the family, from slavery to the present.* New York: Vintage Books, 275-321.

Jordan, J. (2001). Report from the bahamas. In Margaret L. Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins (Eds.) *Race, class, and gender: an anthology.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 35-44.

Kifner, J. (1968, May 30). Welfare sit-ins netting millions: Protest unit says city aid has risen by $3-million. *The New York Times*, p. 22.

Kotz, N. and Kotz, M. L. (1977). Part III: The birth of a movement. In *A passion for equality: George Wiley and the movement.* New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 181-306.

Koven, S., and Michel, S. (1993). Introduction: "Mother worlds". In Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (Eds.) *Mothers of a new world: Maternalist politics and the origins of welfare states.* New York: Routledge, 1-42.

Kunzel, R. G. (1993). White neurosis, black pathology, and the ironies of professionalization: 1940s. In *Fallen women, problem girls: Unmarried mothers and the professionalization of social work, 1890-1945.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 144-170.

Kuumba, M. B. (2001). *Gender and social movements.* Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Leighninger, L. (1999). The service trap: Social work and public welfare policy in the 1960s. In Gary R. Lowe and P. Nelson Reid (Eds) *The professionalization of poverty: Social work and the poor in the twentieth century.* New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 63-88.

Le'le', S., and Norgaard, R. B. (2005). Practicing Interdisciplinarity. *Bioscience, 55.* (11), 967-976.

Lens, V. (2002). TANF: what went wrong and what to do next. *Social Work, 47.* (3), 279 – 290.

Lynn, L. E. Jr. (1977). A decade of policy developments in the income maintenance system. In Robert H. Haveman (Ed.) *A decade of federal antipoverty programs: Achievements, failures, and lessons.* New York: Academic Press, 55-117.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. (1999). *Designing Qualitative Research (3rd edition).*Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Martin, R. R. (1995). Valuing the subjective experience: Oral history as Qualitative research. In *Oral History in Social Work.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 3 – 17.

McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs, 30.* (3), 1771-1800.

Miles, M. B., and Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Mink, G. (1998). Welfare as a condition of women's equality. In *Welfare's end.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1-32.

_____How we got welfare reform: A legislative history. In *Welfare's end.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 33-67.

Mizrahi, T. (2001). The status of community organizing in 2001: Community practice context, complexities, contradictions, and contributions. *Research on Social Work Practice, 11.* (2), 176 – 189.

Morell, C. (1987). Cause *Is* function: Toward a feminist model of integration for social work. *Social Service Review,* (March), 144-155.

Moseley, R. (1960, April). Detroit's welfare empire. *The Atlantic,* 43-46.

Nadasen, P. (2005). *Welfare warriors: The welfare rights movement in the United States.* New York: Routledge.

_____(2002). Expanding the boundaries of the women's movement: Black feminism and the struggle for welfare rights. *Feminist Studies, 28.* (2), 271-301.

Naples, N. A. (2003). Standpoint epistemology: Explicating multiple dimensions. In *Feminism and method: Ethnography, discourse analysis, and activist research.* New York: Routledge, 67 – 85.

_____(1998). Activist mothering, community caretaking, and civic work. In *Grassroots warriors: Activist mothering, community work, and the War on Poverty.* New York: Routledge, 109-130.

_____ Pathways to community work. In *Grassroots warriors: Activist mothering, community work, and the War on Poverty.* New York: Routledge, 83-107.

National Association of Social Workers [NASW] (1961, October). Will the Newburgh plan work in your city? As cited in Leslie Leighninger (Ed) Welfare reform in the 1960's: From the archives series. *Journal of Progressive Human Services, 10.* (1), 67-74.

Neubeck, K. J. and Cazenave, N. A. (2001). Welfare racism as a defense against challenges to white supremacy. In *Welfare racism: playing the race card against America's poor.* New York: Routledge, 69-114.

_____Welfare racism in the early years of public assistance. In *Welfare racism: playing the race card against America's poor.* New York: Routledge, 41-65.

Olson, K. and Shopes, L. (1991). Crossing boundaries, building bridges: Doing oral history among working-class women and men. In Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (Eds.) *Women's Words: The feminist practice of oral history.* New York: Routledge, 189 – 204.

Papachristou, J. (1976). The revival of the women's movement: 1960's and 1970's. In *Women together: A history in documents of the women's movement in the United States.* New York: Knopf, 216-51.

Parsons, R.J., Gutiérrez, L.M., and Cox, E.O. (1998). A model for empowerment practice. In Lorraine M. Gutiérrez, Ruth J. Parsons, and Enid Opal Cox (Eds.) *Empowerment in Social Work Practice: A Sourcebook.* Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 3-23.

Patterson, J. T. (2000). Girding for war on poverty. In *America's struggles against poverty in the twentieth century.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 122-137.

_____ The welfare explosion. In *America's struggles against poverty in the twentieth century.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 166-178.

_____ Floors and Doors. In *America's struggles against poverty in the twentieth century.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 179-192.

Payne, C. (1990). "Men led, but women organized": Movement participation of women in the Mississippi Delta. In Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg (Eds.) *Women and social protest.* New York: Oxford University Press, 156-165.

Pearlmutter, S. (2002). Achieving political practice: Integrating individual need and social action. *Journal of Progressive Human Services, 13.* (1), 31-51.

Perks, R. and Thomson, A. (1998). Critical developments: Introduction. In *The oral history reader.* London: Routledge, 1 – 8.

Peterson, P. E., and Greenstone, J. D. (1977). Racial change and citizen participation: The mobilization of low-income communities through community action. In Robert H. Haveman (Ed.) *A decade of federal antipoverty programs: Achievements, failures, and lessons.* New York: Academic Press, 241-278.

Piven, F.F., and Cloward, R. (1979). The welfare rights movement. In *Poor people's movements: Why they succeed, how they fail.* New York: Vintage Books, 264-361.

Piven, F.F., and Sampson, T. (2001). Welfare: What is to be. *Social Policy, 32.* (1), 40-44.

Polatnick, M. R. (1996). Diversity in women's liberation ideology: How a black and a white group of the 1960s viewed motherhood. *Signs, 21.* (3), 679-706.

Pope, J. (1990). Women in the welfare rights struggle: The Brooklyn welfare action council. In Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg (Eds.) *Women and social protest.* New York: Oxford University Press, 57-74.

Prior, L. (2003). Basic themes: Use, production, and content. In *Using documents in social research.* London: Sage, 1 – 29.

_____Content, meaning, and reference. In *Using documents in social research.* London: Sage, 107 - 124.

QSR International (2002). QSR Nvivo version 2.0. QSR International.

Quadagno, J. (1994). Explaining American Exceptionalism. In *The color of welfare: How racism undermined the war on poverty.* New York: Oxford university Press, 187-197.

_____ The politics of welfare reform. In *The color of welfare: How racism undermined the war on poverty.* New York: Oxford University Press, 117-134.

Rabagliati, M. and Birnbaum, E. (1969). Organizations of welfare clients. In Harold H. Weissman (Ed.) *Community development in the mobilization for youth experience.* New York: Association Press, 102-136.

Rainwater, L., and Yancey, W. L. (1967). Moynihan's strategy. In *The Moynihan report and the politics of controversy.* Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 17-37.

Reinharz, S. (1992). Feminist content analysis. In *Feminist methods in social research.* New York: Oxford University Press, 145 – 163.

_____(1992). Conclusions. In *Feminist methods in social research.* New York: Oxford University Press, 240- 269.

Reisch, M. and Andrews, J. (2002). Revival of radicalism in social work. In *The road not taken: A history of radical social work in the United States.* New York: Brunner-Routledge, 135- 165.

Roach, J.K., and Roach, J.L. (1980). Turmoil in command of politics: Organizing the poor. *The Sociological Quarterly, 21.* (2), 259-70.

Robnett, B. (1997). *How long? How long? African American women in the struggle for civil rights.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Roche, S.E., Dewees, M., Trailweaver, R., Alexander, S., Cuddy, C., and Handy, M. (1999). Principles of Liberatory learning and teaching in social work. In *Contesting boundaries in social work education: A liberatory approach to co-operative learning and teaching.* Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education, 39- 95.

Rosen, R. (2000). *The world split open: How the women's movement changed America.* New York: Viking Penguin.

Ruddick, S.(2004). Maternal thinking as a feminist standpoint. In Sandra Harding (Ed.) *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies.* New York: Routledge, 161-68.

Sachs, A.J. (2001). The politics of poverty: Race, class, motherhood, and the national welfare rights organization, 1965-1975. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 62* (03), 1096. (UMI No. 3008727).

Sangster, J. (1998). Telling our stories: Feminist debates in the use of oral history. In Robert Perks, and Alastair Thomson (Eds.) *The oral history reader.* London: Routledge, 87– 100.

Seale, C. (1999). Quality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 5.* (4), 465-478.

Silverman, D. (2000). Selecting a case. In *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook.* London: Sage, 102 – 112.

_____(2000). Validity and reliability. In *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook.* London: Sage, 175-190.

Smith, D. (2004). Comment on Hekman's "truth and method: feminist standpoint theory revisited". In Sandra Harding (Ed.) *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies.* New York: Routledge, 263-268.

_____ (1987). The everyday world as problematic: A feminist methodology. In *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology.* Boston: Northeastern University Press, 105 – 111.

Solinger, R. (2000). Dependency and choice: The two faces of eve. In Vicki L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBois (Eds.) *Unequal sisters: A multicultural reader in U.S. women's history.*

_____(2000). The population bomb and the sexual revolution: Toward choice. In *Wake up little Susie: Single pregnancy before Roe V. Wade.* New York: Routledge, 205-231.

Stevens, C.S. (1978). Organizing the poor. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 5.* (5), 744-61.

Sugrue, T. J. (1996). *The origins of the urban crisis: Race and inequality in postwar Detroit.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Swerdlow, A. (1993). *Women strike for peace: Traditional motherhood and radical politics in the 1960's.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Swigonski, M. E. (1996). Women, poverty, and welfare reform: A challenge to social workers. *Affillia,11* (1), 95-110.

Toney, M. (2000). Revisiting the national welfare rights organization. *Colorlines, 3.* (3).

Thompson, H. A. (2001). *Whose Detroit? Politics, labor, and race in a modern city.* New York: Cornell University Press.

U. S. Census Bureau (2003). People and families in poverty by selected characteristics: 2002 and 2003. In *Income, poverty, and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2003*. Available: http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/p60-226.pdf

Weber, L. (2001). Defining contested concepts. In *Understanding race, class, gender, and sexuality: A conceptual framework.* Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Weber Cannon, L., Higginbotham, A., and Leung, M. L.A. (1991). Race and class bias in qualitative research on women. In Mary Margaret Fonow and Judith A. Cook (Eds.). *Beyond methodology: Feminist scholarship as lived research.* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 107-118.

Weissman, H. H. (1969). Overview of the community development program. In (Ed.) *Community development in the mobilization for youth experience.* New York: Association Press, 23-28.

_____(1969). Problems in maintaining stability in low income social action organizations. In (Ed.) *Community development in the mobilization for youth experience.* New York: Association Press, 163-177.

West, G. (1981). *The National Welfare Rights movement: The social protest of poor women.* New York: Praeger.

West, G., and Blumberg, R. L. (1990). Reconstructing social protest from a feminist perspective. In Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg (Eds.) *Women and social protest.* New York: Oxford University Press, 3-35.