

WALKING AGAINST THE GRAIN: A CASE STUDY OF CATHOLIC WOMEN'S
SOCIAL JUSTICE DISCOURSE, PRACTICE AND SPIRITUALITY
IN POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS

by

SHERRI K. GRIFFIN LAWLESS

(Under the Direction of Talmadge C. Guy)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the relationship between Catholic women adult educators' understanding of social justice and their engagement in anti-poverty activist practice with Hurricane Katrina survivors, in the context of a religiously-affiliated organization. The research design was a case study that blended elements of narrative and critical discourse analysis. Three research questions guided this study: (a) What is the social justice discourse of Catholic women with a sustained commitment to social justice?, (b) How does the social justice discourse of Catholic adult educator women align with how they describe their activist practice?, and (c) How does spirituality influence the meaning of social justice for Catholic adult educator women engaged in work with the poor?

The key findings were one meta-theme, (a) predominance of the privilege discourse, and seven themes: (b) eyes opened with the two dimensions of people overlooked and injustice exposed, (c) acknowledging privilege with the two dimensions of unblamed and made and kept poor, (d) struggling together, (e) getting clean, (f) finding teachable moments, (g) called to walk against the grain with the two dimensions of touched emotionally and physically and sharing

stories, and (h) tempered activism. While the privilege discourse was predominantly used by the eight activists interviewed, analysis also revealed that they understood social justice in multiple and layered ways. The first of three interrelated conclusions is that Catholic women adult educator activists' enacted practice has a complexity that does not conform neatly to traditional adult education conceptualizations of social justice. The second is that Catholic women adult educators stress that their engagement in anti-poverty activist practice results in their own significant informal learning. The third conclusion is that an iterative relationship exists between Catholic women adult educator activists' spirituality and their practice that informs what social justice means to them that, in turn, has shaped their spirituality.

INDEX WORDS: Adult educator activists, Anti-poverty activism, Catholic social thought, Catholic women, Critical theory, Economic inequality, Homelessness, Homeless people, Hurricane Katrina, Katrina, New Orleans, Poor, Poverty, Spirituality, Social activism, Social justice, Social justice discourse, Systemic injustice

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SHERRI K. GRIFFIN LAWLESS

A.B., Georgetown University, 1978

M.P.A., Columbia University, 1980

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SHERRI K. GRIFFIN LAWLESS

Major Professor:	Talmadge C. Guy
Committee:	Laura L. Bierema Juanita Johnson-Bailey Elizabeth J. Tisdell

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2011

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to all those in past and present association with

The Rebuild Center of New Orleans

including collaborators, staff, volunteers, and guests.

Ubi caritas et amor

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

All through my life she remained with me. And though I became oppressed with the problem of poverty and injustice, though I groaned at the hideous sordidness of man's lot, though there were years when I clung to the philosophy of economic determinism as explanation of man's fate, still there were moments when in the midst of misery and class strife, life was shot through with glory. Mrs. Barrett in her sordid little tenement flat finished her breakfast at ten o'clock in the morning and got down on her knees and prayed to God.

-Dorothy Day (Day, 1978, p. 25)

Anti-poverty activism is as relevant today as it was in 1933 when adult educator Dorothy Day co-founded the Catholic Worker Movement and began aiding the poor by providing food and lodging. This is because, in today's America, the socio-economic divide between the haves and have nots or those with economic means and those without is undergoing a dramatic and progressive widening. In fact, recent national political discourse has directed attention to the issues of health care, employment, housing, and education, all issues with economic implications that disproportionately affect those living in poverty, issues that anti-poverty activists are addressing.

The United States (U.S.), a leader among first world nations, possesses a socio-economic landscape that mirrors our globalized world. On a global scale, the differences between the first world of developed or industrialized nations and the third world of developing or underdeveloped nations are stark. While there are varying political economic interpretations of globalization (Holst, 2002), it is agreed that global economic integration (Barrera, 2007) is the combination of technological advances and concentration of wealth and power across national borders (Marcuse, 2004). The effects of the globalization trend were overtly manifested in the

1990s with significant wealth created globally accompanied by a “shockingly distorted and unfair maldistribution of wealth among and within nations” (Bhola, 2006, p. 239). Belle (2006) claims that, among wealthy countries, the United States’ economic inequalities are the most pronounced. While the U.S. average standard of living rises, the gap between those of economic means and those of limited means continues to widen. According to U.S. Census Bureau data (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2008), between 1980 and 2007, adjusted income for the lowest 20 percent of U.S. households increased by 12% while the income of those in the highest 20 percent increased by 51%. This means the increase for those in the highest household income bracket (represented by quintile) during this twenty-seven year period was over four times the increase experienced by those in the lowest. Further, the U.S. Census Bureau data (DeNavas-Walt et al.) indicates that, in 2007, 45.7 million Americans did not have health insurance coverage. These national statistics offer evidence of a profound and persistent gap between those individuals of economic means or privilege and those without such privilege.

New Orleans, Louisiana, this research study’s site, offers a localized example of the socio-economic divide. New Orleans is where in 2005, Hurricane Katrina, after making landfall on the Gulf Coast, caused rising water to overcome the city’s levees resulting in severe flooding, loss of life, extensive property and infrastructure damage, and citizen dislocation. While the estimated death toll is a number that continues to be subject to variation and debate, a 2006 U.S. Commerce Department report claims that 1,833 lives were lost and over 250,000 people were displaced from their homes (Graumann et al., 2006). Noting the severe racial and economic inequality of suffering caused by Katrina, Sharkey’s (2007) analysis of empirical data revealed that “the group of neighborhoods with the highest death counts and highest numbers of residents

who are still missing were, on average, about 80% African American” (p. 498). Thus, Katrina and its aftermath exposed a history of systemic injustice.

This study examines the social justice discourse of adult educators working directly to assist Katrina survivors because, while adult education practitioners and scholars have historically demonstrated a commitment to social justice, little is known about how social activists understand the meaning of social justice and their work. Katrina is widely regarded not only as the United States’ largest natural disaster, but also as the symbol of government failure in crisis response (Jurkiewicz & O’Keefe, 2009). Whether New Orleans’ ethnic geography of catastrophe is assessed in absolute or relative terms, poor African Americans were those who suffered the most, stranded and subjected to long rescue delays (Campanella, 2007). Sharkey (2007) argues that “the social isolation that results from persistent segregation, economic disinvestment, a lack of political influence, and violence makes the residents of America’s disadvantaged urban neighborhoods even more vulnerable to an environmental disaster such as Katrina” (p. 499).

Thuesen (2008), in noting the distortions presented by the media during the reporting of Katrina, points out that New Orleans’ poverty represented part of a larger regional pattern and was not a tragedy in isolation. Similarly, Moore (2006) describes the circumstances of this hurricane as “an acute, natural disaster that landed on top of a chronic social, economic, and political disaster years in the making” (p. 26). Prior to Katrina, New Orleans had a higher percentage of minorities and lower income households compared to the state and national averages (Masozera, Bailey, & Kerchner, 2007). In addition, Masozera et al. further note in their case study of New Orleans that the distribution of income in the city is skewed, about 22% of those living there earn less than \$10,000 per year and only 2% earn \$200,000 or more. Thus, as

these researchers note, a large percentage of the New Orleans population is below the poverty line while a very small percentage comprises high income earners.

Individuals respond and interpret conditions in a variety of ways once public attention is directed to a situation such as the Katrina disaster. There is a prevailing belief among many Americans that disaster relief is best provided by nonprofit social welfare agencies (Smith, 2006). This was demonstrated in the aftermath of Katrina where nonprofit organizations, a few created in response to this event but mostly those pre-existing at state and local levels, stepped in where government failed (Jurkiewicz & O'Keefe, 2009). While nonprofit organizations may be secular or religious with many of the larger ones receiving some government support, many individuals chose to respond to this disaster by working through religiously affiliated organizations; nine months following the disaster it was reported that \$3.27 billion for Katrina had been raised, a significant portion via faith community means. In an extensive array of responding aid organizations, the top fund raisers included the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, Habitat for Humanity, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, and the Clinton-Bush Katrina Relief Fund (Smith). Further, over 10,000 religious people, both formally and informally organized, have assisted in Gulf Coast rebuilding (Smith, 2006). A broad question that arises, and this study addresses is how do adult educators, who are engaged in anti-poverty activism, understand social justice and their commitment to it?

Social Activism, Social Justice, and Adult Education

Social activism is the purposeful engagement in actions to bring about broad societal change as a way to mitigate conditions, problems, or injustices. Social activism encompasses a wide range of activities and might include provoking or inspiring change through verbal or written discourse, facilitating a discussion group, leading civic education classes, teaching others

community organizing skills, or leading a grassroots social movement or engaging in one (Baumgartner, 2006). Righting social injustices or inequities has been the *raison d'être* for much social activism and many social activist movements. Social justice is broadly understood as the existence of equality of participation for all of society's members where no individual or group of individuals is marginalized on the basis of factors such as gender, race, socio-economic class or sexual orientation. Anti-poverty activism, a form of economic justice activism, is primarily concerned with individuals marginalized because of their lower socio-economic status; this includes both the working poor as well as those living in abject poverty without employment. Seeking to alleviate poverty and its deleterious effects, anti-poverty activists may focus on equality regarding access to such resources as adequate and safe housing, nutrition, employment, fair living wages, health care, or quality education.

Similar to the construct of social justice, adult education is a broad field with many topical and specialty areas. It is therefore not surprising that adult educators who have pursued social justice represent a wide spectrum of interests and methods; there is a significant body of literature addressing many of these adult educators and their vocations. The notion of social justice as a mission has been historically associated with the field of adult education. In their history of adult education practice, Stubblefield and Keane (1994) discuss Benjamin Rush, a Philadelphia physician, whose work began in the eighteenth century. A signer of the Declaration of Independence, Rush campaigned for a comprehensive program of social reform that addressed many issues including women's education, temperance, the emancipation of slaves, and prison reform. Practically and philosophically, social justice is a theme that runs deep in adult education, coinciding with the field's earliest roots.

Adult Education Social Justice Frameworks and Social Justice Discourse

Social justice can be conceptually outlined in three frameworks: conservative, liberal, or radical. These conceptualizations respectively align, in a somewhat parallel and inter-related manner, to three of adult education's traditional philosophical orientations: humanism, progressivism, and radicalism. The conservative, liberal, and radical social justice frameworks and their companion adult education orientations further correlate to three social justice discourses described by Choules (2007). After summarizing the alignment of these three frameworks with the adult education orientations identified, I continue this section by outlining the discourse platforms that Choules presents, relating them to the framework/orientation correlations.

The first of the three social justice frameworks to be summarized is conservatism. A conservative conceptualization views justice through an individual *vs.* societal lens; this is similar to the humanist frame of adult education which posits the learner centrally without socio-cultural context (Tisdell & Taylor, 1999) and the vocational progressive perspective which is also learner-centered. This autonomy-driven philosophy emphasizes rationality and learner or individual responsibility. The next framework is liberalism; this perspective of social justice is grounded in Rawls' (1971) theory of justice and draws from the social contract tradition represented by Locke, Rousseau, and Kant. This perspective correlates to progressivism which aims to transmit culture and societal structure to promote social change through individual self-improvement and equity principles, it also shares those elements of humanism concerned with the common good; it is commonly understood within the context of distributive justice. The third conceptualization of justice, radicalism, has founding origins in eighteenth century anarchist tradition and Marxist thought, the radical perspective most notably theorized by Paolo

Freire (2004) and practiced by Horton and Freire (1990), Michael Newman (Newman, 1994), and bell hooks (hooks, 1994) seeks to challenge, disrupt, and change society's structural inequities; it is often described as liberatory or emancipatory. Radical adult education's purpose is to bring about fundamental social, political, and economic changes in society through education as well as to change culture and its structure. As has been mentioned, these conceptualizations can also be paired with three social justice discourse platforms.

Discourse, for Foucault, is a "system of possibility for knowledge" (Philp, 1985, p. 69). For the purposes of this study, social justice discourse is defined as how, through verbal expression, individuals organize their knowledge and experience about social justice. Social justice discourse offers a lens to view individuals' understanding of any social rights issue. Choules (2007) examines discourse platforms that convey our competing understandings of injustice, that is, how individuals are situated in relation to unjust systems. Choules writes from the perspective of an educator interested in engaging concern and action for a just world. She outlines broad social justice discourses which inherently offer differing perspectives about the nature of the identified social problem and, therefore, the remedy. The social justice discourses Choules outlines are: charity, human rights, and privilege. These three discourses respectively align with adult education's social justice frameworks (conservative/humanism, liberal/progressivism, and radical/emancipatory) and can be considered within the context of these frameworks. Choules refers to the charity discourse as business as usual because it makes nominal difference in social change and allows (without examination or challenge) the established underlying social system to remain in place. This discourse aligns with the conservative view of justice. Choules argues that those expressing a charity discourse see the object of charity as the social problem rather than as a victim of injustice. Thus, this is one of the

two discourses that she describes as maintaining the prevailing power structure. According to Choules, the human rights social justice discourse, like the charity discourse, also allows prevailing power structures to remain intact. The human rights social justice discourse aligns with the liberal perspective of justice. Founded on the principle of shared humanity and basic protections, this discourse does have the potential to challenge systemic or structural injustice but its potential is often unfulfilled. For Choules, the social justice discourse of privilege is the most valued interpretation because it entails an explicit analysis of power, position, and systemic structure and situates the social problem appropriately. While the human rights discourse considers equality and respect, the privilege discourse emphasizes resource need and allocation and challenges prevailing power dynamics. The privilege discourse “obliges the privileged to take action to change the inequality caused through their exclusive or inequitable over-enjoyment” (Choules, p. 474). Using this discourse, which matches the radical framework of social justice; beneficiaries of privilege understand their implication in systemic injustice and are compelled to take collective responsibility for it.

The literature provides evidence that adult educator activists’ understanding of social justice aligns with social justice discourse as outlined by Choules (2007). While the charity discourse is absent, both the human rights and privilege discourses are in evidence, with the privilege discourse seeming to predominate among the most notable adult educator activists. The observation that both the human rights and privilege discourses are in evidence for adult educator activists is not surprising, implicit to each of these social justice discourses is the need for social change.

Myles Horton and Paolo Freire are among the most notable radical adult educators; each respectively offered training for economic justice through literacy and civic education programs

(Horton & Freire, 1990). By advancing the idea of education as the practice of freedom and describing those living in poverty as the oppressed (Freire, 2004), Freire clearly uses the social justice discourse of privilege. This is also the case for Horton, co-founder of the Highlander Research and Education Center, who argued that going outside the system allowed for a way to experiment with social education in the absence of societal conformity (Horton & Freire, 1990).

Dorothy Day and Wangari Maathai offer two other examples of the privilege discourse. Day was a journalist and co-founder of *The Catholic Worker* publication and the Catholic Worker Movement which extended hospitality to the impoverished with meals and lodging (Thorn, Runkel, & Mountin, 2001). Day spent her early adulthood as a Communist and while she later embraced Catholicism, she did not reject all of Communism's tenets saying "I still believe that our social order must be changed, that it is not right for property to be concentrated in the hands of the few" (Day, 1978, p. 145). In 1977, Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement, a non-profit grass roots non-governmental organization based in Kenya devoted to conservation and community building which today continues to cultivate leadership skills for young girls and women (Baumgartner, 2006). Some of Maathai's expressions seem to bridge human rights discourse to privilege discourse. In her Nobel Prize lecture, she emphasizes the importance of embracing democratic governance, protecting human rights, and protecting the environment (Maathai, 2004). These ideas point to human rights discourse but her interest in women and acknowledgement that they have the knowledge and skills to create solutions and that power injustices exist within the international community are emancipatory veins that inform privilege discourses. Septima Clark is an African-American educator who fought for civil rights during most of the 20th century and co-established the Citizenship School Program in Johns Island, South Carolina (Baumgartner, 2006). In her narrative analysis of Clark's writings, Baumgartner

describes the Freirean approach that Clark used in her citizenship education programs; however, much of the narrative excerpts seem to represent a human rights discourse, a divergence from Clark's radical or emancipatory practices but perhaps in keeping with historical context. A final discourse example is found with the writing of Jane Addams, who in 1899 co-founded the Settlement House movement and the Hull House, a settlement facility serving mostly immigrants in Chicago, Illinois (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). Addams (1899) wrote about the subtle problems of charity and noted a shift from the past when the poor were considered lazy. Her pointed rejection of the charitable discourse and interest in furthering democracy situates her understanding of social justice on the human right discourse.

Spirituality and Adult Educator Activists

Throughout history, many adult educators have expressed their religious and spiritual beliefs. Indeed, Basil Yeaxlee, author of *Lifelong Education* (1929), wrote *Spiritual Values in Adult Education* in 1925. Of relevance to this study is the pronounced, historical connection between spirituality and adult educator activists.

Fenwick and English (2004) observe that "liberation theology and emancipatory pedagogy share a long tradition of uniting the spiritual search with critical thinking and social action" (p. 58). Paulo Freire is among those who have expressed an abiding spirituality. His *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2004), which describes his teaching philosophy and methods used during his literacy training in South America, was first published in 1970. It is internationally recognized as a foundational work which has (and continues to) profoundly inform and influence many adult educator activists with its emphasis on emancipatory pedagogy of critical consciousness and action.

Scholars have written extensively about the religious influences evident in the work of other adult educators involved in social activism such as Jane Addams, Septima Clark, Dorothy Day, and Moses Coady and Jimmy Tompkins, leaders of the Antigonish Movement in Nova Scotia (English & Tisdell, 2010). Wangari Maathai is referred to as the mother of trees which is significant because animism or the belief in spirits is at the core of sub-Saharan African religions with trees as special dwelling places (Kimmerle, 2006); the relationship between adult educator activists and spirituality is evident throughout history and around the world.

Spirituality as a research topic is of increasing scholarly (and popular) interest and attention (Fenwick & English, 2004; Murphy, 2003; Tisdell, 2007) within adult education and other fields. English (2001), commenting on this surge of interest, notes that “after a long hibernation, spirituality is no longer a taboo word in adult education and training” (p. 20). However, while the studies outlined below provide important insight into the relationship between spirituality and social justice work, none specifically explores women engaged in work with the socio-economically disadvantaged and their understanding of this work.

In their seminal study of those purposefully engaged in work for the common good (from within community organizations), Daloz, Keen, Keen, and Parks (1996), found that for the majority of the over 100 people they studied, religion was a critical factor in the formation of their commitment. Kovan and Dirkx (2003) studied environmental justice activists working in small non-profit organizations for at least ten years and conclude that the participant narratives suggest sustained commitment to their work arises from a sense of work as a calling or vocation (p. 113). Sustained commitment and passion are integral parts of these activists’ lives. Scholars (Faver, 2003; Tisdell, 2002a) who have researched women social activists and spirituality found that spirituality and social justice were integrated into the women’s lives and provided a sense of

meaning and mission. In these studies (Faver; Tisdell, 2002a), findings indicate that a sense of calling is entwined with a desire to challenge systems of oppression. Tisdell (2002a), in her qualitative study examining the spiritual development of women adult educators, observes that “for some it is individualistic in its orientation, yet for others, their spiritual commitments require that they actually work for social justice” (p. 128). These studies provide important insights into the association between spirituality and social justice activism but none specifically examines women engaged in anti-poverty work and their understanding of this work.

Studies Examining Women and Anti-Poverty Activism

A considerable number of studies have been conducted within the adult education and women studies fields that address women and economic justice issues. Feminists have recently pursued economic justice scholarship in the areas of transnational labor activism (Franzway & Fonow, 2008), the marginalization of homeless mothers (Cosgrove & Flynn, 2005), welfare (Naples & Dobson, 2001), and the integration of feminist agendas related to economic justice (Barton, 2005). Consistent with Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s call for feminist scholars to respond to globalization as a colonization of men and women (Mohanty, 2002), there are a growing number of adult education studies published that address women’s poverty in the developing world (Ghose, 2007; Khawar, 2005; Lykes et al., 1999; von Kotze, 2007; Walingo, 2006). However, this scholarship does not focus on women engaged in work on behalf of those in poverty and how they understand social justice. Recently published historical accounts of women working for the poor also exist such as one exploring women and learning in the Catholic Workers’ movement during the 1930s and 1940s (Parrish & Taylor, 2007) and another about Sadie T. M. Alexander, the black economist, lawyer, and worker advocate whose career

launched in the 1930s (Banks, 2008), but very few studies have examined contemporary women working for the poor.

In sum, while adult education researchers have investigated spirituality and social justice as well as women and anti-poverty activism, scant attention has been accorded to the specific relationship between spirituality, women engaged in anti-poverty activism, and their understanding of social justice and their work. This study examines contemporary women adult education activists engaged in anti-poverty work within the context of a religiously-affiliated organization.

Statement of the Problem

The United States has not escaped the global phenomenon of widening disparity between societies' haves and have nots. A single American city, New Orleans, has come to embody the United States' socio-economic divide as both reality and symbol. As Hurricane Katrina's storm clouds dissipated in 2005, the overwhelming needs of one city's marginalized population, its poor, emerged in stark contrast to a prosperous society. The "hardened contours of racialized impoverishment" (Katz, 2008) have been revealed and with them, calls from some for social justice. Today, in New Orleans and in its surrounding areas, there are adult education activists, many associated with religiously-affiliated organizations, who continue the work they began when the flooding abated. With a sizable Catholic population, 46% according to Association of Religion Data Archives (2008), it is not surprising that there are many Catholic-affiliated organizations working with Katrina survivors in New Orleans.

Social justice is recognized as one of the adult education field's core missions and, throughout history, some key adult educators have participated, to varying degrees, in social activism, from participating in life's daily social struggles (Gouin, 2009) to leading social

movements. Many adult educator activists engaged in social justice work have expressed their religious and spiritual beliefs; there exists an extensive amount of adult education literature generally exploring adult education and spirituality and a growing amount concerned with spirituality, commitment, and adult educators working for social justice. Yet, while research studies have examined the work of anti-poverty activists, there are virtually no studies that examine the meaning of social justice among these adult education activists. This is a glaring absence in the literature in light of the conflicting interpretations and various social justice discourses (charitable, human rights, and privilege) as discussed by Choules (2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between Catholic women adult educators' understanding of social justice and their engagement in anti-poverty activist practice with Hurricane Katrina survivors, in the context of a religiously-affiliated organization. It is hoped that useful insight into adult education activism, particularly among those who may not self-identify as either adult educators or activists, can be gained with particular focus on how social justice is comprehended be it from a charitable, human rights, or privilege social justice discourse. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What is the social justice discourse of Catholic women with a sustained commitment to social justice?
2. How does the social justice discourse of Catholic adult educator women align with how they describe their activist practice?
3. How does spirituality influence the meaning of social justice for Catholic adult educator women engaged in work with the poor?

Significance of the Study

This research study's significance will be reflected in its theoretical and practical contributions. While there is a significant body of adult education literature (theoretical and practical) on the topic of social justice, the topic is defined variously and sometimes referenced in contradictory ways. Further, little is known about how adult educator activists understand social justice. This study, in its examination of social justice discourse among activists, brings some clarity to the literature on social justice by identifying what social justice means to adult educators engaged in activism. Over the last 15 years, some adult education scholars (e.g., Baptiste, 1999; Brookfield, 2005; Cunningham, 1996; Foley, 2001; Holst, 2009, 2010; Johnson-Bailey, 2006; Mezirow, 1991, Quigley, 2000) have critiqued or questioned the field's commitment to social goals. These scholars argue that the adult education voices and scholarship concerned with social justice and activism are diminishing as the field's interest flags. Johnson-Bailey (2006) reminds us that "as adult educators we are persistent in acknowledging our roots for social change. Yet, programs such as Highlander are part of our history rather than part of our present" (p. 116). This study also contributes to the field of adult education by answering the challenge of these scholars. Grayson (2005) notes that the emerging environment of concern for globalization and poverty creates an opportunity to return social justice back onto the mainstream adult education agenda. Further, little adult education research has been conducted in this very specific context, an examination of the intersection of social justice interpretations and spirituality for women adult educators with a sustained commitment to anti-poverty activism. Over 25 years ago, Ilsey advanced the idea that adult educators could learn from those working for voluntary agencies, to be advocates bringing "voice to disenfranchised groups of people" (Ilsey, 1992, p. 28). This study provides some insight into

those working on behalf of the socio-economically disenfranchised, illuminating the advocate voices and, additionally, adding insight to the voices of those disenfranchised. Fields other than adult education can also benefit from this study. The focus on contemporary women activists will contribute to the women's studies literature in the area of those working on behalf of the impoverished. The fields of social work and religious studies will also benefit as each shares adult education's interest in social justice issues. Political economics might also benefit by giving voice to those engaged in anti-poverty activism in terms of how they understand their work and the poor.

Practically, the study's findings might assist adult educators who are training anti-poverty activists and those who are activists working in the front lines themselves. The greatest practical benefit will be in contributing to methods for addressing the serious societal (and global) problem of the socio-economic divide between the haves and have nots, the systemic, structural problem of poverty. Having a better understanding of the role that spirituality plays in activist work in terms of motivating and sustaining commitment will help those whose work requires engagement over a protracted period of time. Findings will be beneficial in both religious and secular contexts. Those leading and working within non-governmental, volunteer or organizations whose missions involve charitable efforts will benefit by the insight gained about motivating workers and sustaining commitment. These leaders along with those interested in organizational development will benefit as a few of the critical organizational and contextual factors that assist in sustaining commitment are identified. Finally, some relevant policy implications might be revealed for addressing this very specific context of poverty and its associated problems in post-Katrina New Orleans.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The immediate reaction of social commentators to Katrina in the popular media posed the question: “How can this happen in America?”

-Brian L. Azcona (2006, p. 70)

For some, trying to define the term social justice is a bit like trying to nail jello to the wall, a sticky and difficult task.

-Susan Sandretto et al. (2007, p. 308)

The purpose of this research study was to explore the relationship between Catholic women adult educators’ understanding of social justice and their engagement in anti-poverty activist practice with Hurricane Katrina survivors, in the context of a religiously-affiliated organization. The adult educators central to this study do not self-identify as either adult educators or activists. The following questions guided this research:

1. What is the social justice discourse of Catholic women with a sustained commitment to social justice?
2. How does the social justice discourse of Catholic adult educator women align with how they describe their activist practice?
3. How does spirituality influence the meaning of social justice for Catholic adult educator women engaged in work with the poor?

This chapter reviews the literature and context that informs this study; it is organized into three major sections: economic inequality and its interpretations; social justice conceptualizations and discourse; and adult education activists and spirituality. These inter-related and interdependent sections inform this study’s major theoretical threads; I have braided

these threads together to identify the adult education literature gap. While interrelated, the three sections are presented somewhat progressively, each weaving with the former in an effort to demonstrate how I formulated this study's guiding research questions. Both of the first two sections are influenced by and draw from conceptual organizing frames as presented by Griffin (1987) and Quigley (2000) even though adult education and social policy, rather than adult education and social justice, are central to their scholarship. Threads from Quigley's social policy matrix, in particular, have been used as a starting point, then recast, and extended to include conceptualizations of social justice (Sleeter, 1995) and its discourses (Choules, 2007).

The purpose of this chapter's first section, economic inequality and its interpretations, is to describe the study's broad societal setting. It identifies and includes select aspects of the socio-economic context relevant to the study's narrow investigative focus and utilizes New Orleans, Louisiana, which was also the study's research site location, as a localized example. The second section, social justice conceptualizations and discourse, includes adult education conceptualizations of social justice and juxtaposes the adult education philosophies, frameworks, and social justice discourses that conceptually inform the study's design. The third major section, adult education activists and spirituality, considers the adult education field's historical social justice mission, its close association with spirituality and how spirituality has been defined; research studies linking commitment to social justice work with faith and spirituality are reviewed. This section also considers the intersection of anti-poverty activism and Catholic social teaching; in it relevant aspects of the religious tradition that informs this study's situational context are described.

Adult education literature searches, specific to the study, of all available electronic data bases for full text, peer reviewed, research study articles yielded limited results; one search,

including the subject adult education and the abstract terms social justice and activism, yielded a single study about grassroots action and program planning. The results were also limited when adult education and social justice were used with terms such as spirituality, women, poverty, and discourse. While the adult education research-based literature is lacking in the specific area under consideration, several strands of scholarship both conceptual and research-based (some from other fields) contribute to this study's framework and serve as background and context. For this reason, some literature relevant to this study and identified in this chapter are from the fields of social work, religious studies (and education), women studies and mental health. The sections included here represent the select literature that influences and informs this study and is relevant, in varying degrees, to the study findings and conclusions.

Economic Inequality and Its Interpretations

Poverty is widely recognized as a disturbing and long-standing social problem and so it is not surprising that there are various ways that people have come to explain its existence. For the purpose of exploring economic inequality and its interpretations, this section begins by presenting select statistical research data that describe economic inequality in the United States. Next, the three adult education social policy models advanced by Griffin (1987) and Quigley (2000) are outlined; these models respectively share attributes with interpretations of economic inequality that appear in the literature and these are identified. This discussion is primarily conceptual for two reasons; first, the social policy models are presented with the intention of developing a foundation for introducing the social justice conceptualizations and, second, their related discourses are key components of this study's design. In this section's social policy model discussion, connections are also made to adult education philosophies; these connections are used in this chapter's next major section to appropriately locate and describe the ways that

social justice has been conceptualized. The second reason that this discussion is predominately conceptual is that there is limited empirical research to support these models; this study is intended to contribute to the limited empirical research literature base.

Poverty and Economic Inequality in the United States

Bhola (2006) contends that “poverty is simultaneously an individual experience and a social construction” and that “while poverty is ultimately located in individual lives, societies determine what relative levels of deprivation will constitute conditions of poverty” (p. 235). Although poverty in the United States is sometimes referred to as relative poverty, because of the greater economic deprivation experienced by more than two thirds of the world’s population (Brubaker, Peters, & Stivers, 2006), Belle (2006) observes that this nation’s economic inequality, between the highest earning Americans and the lowest, is the most pronounced of the world’s wealthiest nations. Belle’s contention is supported by U.S. Census Bureau data (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2008) and a recent International Monetary Fund (2010) report that indicates, in 2009, the United States had the highest GDP (Gross Domestic Product) among the world’s eight nations with the most advanced or developed economies. “In our founding documents, the United States of America celebrates the fundamental equality of all people, yet in the United States today, access to economic resources is becoming more and more unequal” (Belle, p.145). Hobgood (2006) points out that while most Americans live in relative wealth compared to the majority of the world’s population, those “who still enjoy fairly easy and abundant access to quality education, health care, high wages, and retirement benefits are about 20 percent of the U.S. population” (p. 152). The inequalities of economic resource distribution are manifested in class and race differences. In their review of economic data collected from the same set of families over the period from 1984 to 2007, Shapiro, Meschede, and Sullivan (2010), found that

“the wealth gap between white and African-American families has more than quadrupled” (p. 1). Shapiro et al. define wealth simply as “what you own minus what you owe” (p. 1), their findings show an increase during this 23-year period in the median value of financial assets (which exclude home equity) for white families of \$22,000 to \$100,000 as African American families experienced only a minimal increase in financial assets. While significant wealth increases were experienced by high income whites, low income whites and low income African-Americans experienced economic stagnation and decline; low income African-Americans were more likely to have lower wealth levels, including negative wealth (Shapiro et al.).

Berube and Katz (2005), in their Brookings Institution report entitled *Katrina's Window: Confronting Concentrated Poverty across America*, describe the extent of extreme poverty in the United States. Extreme poverty neighborhoods are defined as “census tracts in which at least 40 percent of the population lives in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold” (Berube & Katz, p. 10). In 2000, for 46 of the largest 50 cities in the United States, there existed at least one extreme poverty neighborhood (Berube & Katz). And the data further indicate that, for most of these cities, “the rate at which poor minorities (blacks and Hispanics) lived in extremely poor neighborhoods exceeded that for poor whites” (Berube & Katz, p. 4). Berube and Katz further contend that “every day in distressed pockets of urban America, a slow-moving humanitarian disaster traps families in cycles of poverty and despair” (p. 7). The characteristics of and conditions that exist in New Orleans' high-poverty areas also exist in many other major American cities, these being: “a racially segregated population, lack of married couples and two-earner families, low levels of education, and barriers to labor force participation” (Berube & Katz, p. 4). Thus, Katrina opened a window to expose the social and economic disadvantages evident to varying degrees in urban neighborhoods throughout the United States.

The United States' expanding wealth gap parallels those inequalities experienced around the world that were coincidental to the advent of globalization, meaning neoliberal globalization described by Holst (2004) as "the compendium of economic and social practices oriented toward free trade and privatization initiatives and buttressed by neoclassical economic theory" (p. 23), which occurred in the 1990's. Scholars writing from various fields (Barrera, 2007; Brubaker et al., 2006; Himes, 2008; Hobgood, 2006; Holst, 2002, 2004; Merriam, Courtenay, & Cervero, 2006; Waterhouse, 2006) acknowledge that globalization is a contested and dynamic phenomenon that has, and has had, both positive and negative effects on the world's citizens. Although globalization is not the focus of this study, two of its negative effects, economic inequality and poverty, offer background and insight into the study's societal context and are therefore addressed in this section. Barrera (2007) argues that the way statistical information is used to either oppose or support globalization "is not value-free but reflects philosophical beliefs" (p. 10). The philosophical underpinnings of these two perspectives of globalization bear an association to the models of adult education social policy as described by Griffin (1987) and more recently by Quigley (2000).

Adult Education Social Policy

Presenting a synthesis matrix, Quigley (2000) illustrates how social policy models parallel North American adult education philosophies, adult education practice, and sociological theory. Similarly, the discussion in this chapter's next section explores the parallels between adult education philosophies, social justice conceptualizations, and social justice discourse. Briefly discussed here are aspects and orientations of the three adult education social policies (Griffin, 1987; Quigley) that correlate to perspectives of globalization and interpretations of economic inequality. My purpose in discussing the social policy model is to bridge

interpretations of economic inequality to and create a foundation for adult education conceptualizations of social justice. These three adult education social policy models that are grounded in economic and political thinking are: the market model, the liberal-welfare state model, and the social redistribution model.

Market model. The market model is described by Quigley (2000) as privileging pragmatic rationality with advocates that “see society as a marketplace where incentives, negotiation, individual freedom, and self-reliance can flourish, all based on rational and utilitarian principles” (p. 217). Griffin (1987) argues that although classical political economists were outlining the market dynamics of capitalism, “their descriptions very soon took the form of normative theory” (p. 34) and so individuals’ rational behavior in market conditions was extended to include “a set of assumptions about human motivation and behaviour in general” (p. 34). Simply stated, market models of adult education social policy are informed by the principles of economic capitalism and emphasize individualist ideologies such as self-reliance and responsibility. In Quigley’s matrix, these models are aligned with vocational progressive adult education philosophies.

Liberal-welfare state model. For the liberal-welfare state model of adult education social policy, Quigley (2000) identifies the involvement of institutions as its most significant aspect. This model includes a meritocratic belief in social justice with a focus on the problems associated with “institutional access, systemic barriers, and concerns with quality of life” (Quigley, p. 218). Griffin (1987) termed this the progressive-liberal-welfare model and emphasized the societal benefits and redistributive elements to it. The liberal-welfare state model is aligned with the liberal-humanistic adult education philosophies according to Quigley’s

framework. The absence of criticality in the first two adult education social policy models outlined here is “taken very seriously in the third model of social distribution” (Quigley, p. 218).

Social redistribution model. The social redistribution model is influenced by Marxism and is grounded in the belief that capitalist democracy creates structural inequalities that, in order to redress, require a re-ordering of social systems (Quigley, 2000); Griffin (1987) labeled this model social control. Adult education policies that are supported by this model “address inequities, community-based initiatives, and alliances across organizations for social change” (Quigley, p. 218). The social redistribution model parallels liberatory/social reconstruction adult education philosophies, according to Quigley. The salient characteristics of each of these social policy models are essentially and respectively embedded in adult education philosophy (Elias & Merriam, 2005; Merriam & Brockett, 1997; Tisdell & Taylor, 1999) and the conceptualizations of social justice, conservative, liberal or progressive, and radical or emancipatory, and related social justice discourses (Choules, 2007), that are discussed in the next section.

Interpretations of Economic Inequality

Interpretations of economic inequality can be viewed through a prism informed by these adult education social justice conceptualizations which generally share assumptions with the social policy models about the individual and society: conservatism /market model; liberalism /liberal-welfare state model; and radicalism/social redistribution model. For example, Barrera’s (2007) observations regarding the broad-based philosophical viewpoints about globalization’s advantages and disadvantages demonstrate that these viewpoints represent a critique of capitalism, the market model, as a socio-economic solution to poverty; thus, the reason for using data differently becomes clear.

Globalization. Barrera observes that proponents of globalization use aggregated, relative data to focus on inequality between individuals; they use the entire world population as their unit of analysis to demonstrate that entire nations have realized improved economic and social indicators. Alternatively, opponents of globalization are focused on the differential impacts to groups within society. Opponents point to the shortcomings of neo-liberal capitalism which promotes the free market as the preferred way “to ensure economic development and political, economic, moral, and cultural liberty” (Brubaker et al., 2006, p. 5). Barrera notes that opponents use absolute, disaggregated data to reflect a “steady and worsening gap between rich and poor nations” (p. 10) and between groups within nations. Brubaker et al. argue that while poverty is considered an age old problem, in many cases globalization has contributed to, rather than alleviated it (Brubaker et al.). My review revealed that much of the recent literature about economic inequality and poverty has been written by those scholars who focus on globalization and take the position that it has done more harm than good. Thus, I present the views of some scholars who have primarily written from critical or social justice perspectives, some related to the subject of globalization, and others who have written about the United States’ economic inequality and the socio-economic divide in the localized context of the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

Class inequality in New Orleans. Indeed, the type of capitalism noted above as being responsible for globalization’s negative effects is at work in the United States. Katz (2008) observes that in “post-Katrina New Orleans (and long before it as well) it is possible to see all that is wrong with neoliberal capitalism as it works over a landscape of racialized and gendered class inequality, injustice, and enduring cronyism and corruption” (p. 16). Azcona (2006), drawing from a theoretical framework grounded in political economy and urban sociology,

describes New Orleans historical context of rampant poverty and power relations. Azcona argues that in any urban setting, local, aristocratic coalitions, that for New Orleans, he refers to as Big Easy Elites, “act as architects of public policy and proselytizers of growth ideology in order to reshape the landscape in their own interests” (p. 72). In this local example, Azcona contends that “political power and ideological discourses of the non-elected Dock Board permitted Big Easy Elites to remake the built environment of St. Bernard and the Lower Ninth Ward in the interests of the local aristocracy and at the expense of residents” (p. 72).

Interpretations of Katrina. Belle (2006) has studied Americans’ interpretations of economic inequality in Katrina’s aftermath. Belle reviewed theories and research evidence to determine possible explanations for what are contested interpretations; she argues that pre-existing understandings of poverty and economic inequality shaped Americans’ responses to Hurricane Katrina as presented by media accounts. Belle describes the factors that contributed to varying interpretations of media accounts, “While some of us saw the poverty and racial exclusions highlighted by the hurricane as the obvious result of societal forces crying out for correction, others focused on the flawed actions or characters of individuals, which led to their own marginalization” (p. 155). Belle notes that a variety of forces contributed to divergent reactions such as biases, both self-serving and group-serving, and moral and social frameworks and orientations. Belle’s review identified poverty justifications; lines can be drawn from some of these justifications to the assumptions behind the first two adult education policy model models outlined by Quigley (2000). For instance, one justification for inequality is the belief, which Belle notes is supported by social dominance theory, that economic success or failure is an individual responsibility and that “we have an open, meritocratic system that adequately rewards individual endeavor” (p. 147). This, and the belief that we live in a just world, are consistent

with assumptions respectively associated market and liberal-state welfare models. Belle's review also found that "those most likely to downplay the problems of economic and racial inequality for group-serving reasons (economically advantaged Whites), were also most likely to have political power" (p. 155); that is, those who have benefit from market-driven conditions. Alternatively, Katz (2008) offers a radical/social redistribution view when she describes the government abandonment of the poor as an appalling social fact, "made visible by Katrina as spectacle, called forth tremendous sympathy, reminding Americans, again, of the structural racisms and obdurate poverty at our nation's core, which the discourse of neoliberalism works to make invisible" (p. 17).

Summary of Economic Inequality and Its Interpretations

This section began with Bhola's (2006) observation that poverty is both an individual and social construction, his observation can be easily extended to the broader social construction of how the poor or poverty are understood by members of society at large. Masozera, Bailey, and Kerchner (2007) findings indicate that wealth is a critical factor in determining vulnerability to natural disasters because it dictates the quality of those factors that can either increase or mitigate vulnerability, factors such as housing, transportation, health care, and property insurance. Contrary to some media reports, Hurricane Katrina caused flooding in the majority of New Orleans regardless of income, elevation, or other social factors. However, lower income groups were more vulnerable during the response and recovery phases of the post-flooding period. New Orleans was brought to our collective attention in 2005 in the storm's aftermath and, for some, the city has become a living symbol of economic inequality and poverty in the United States because of a shameful, enduring legacy that pre-dated Katrina.

“Our racial/ethnic identifications, our gendered experiences in the world, and our different religious traditions shape the ways we think about wealth and poverty, about rich people and poor people, about markets and government” (Belle, 2006, p. 144). Belle calls for more research to identify the origins of attributional styles and moral stances toward poverty as well as fruitful points for developmental intervention. Bhola (2006) emphasizes the significance and importance of coupling economic analysis with social-justice analysis. Johnson-Bailey, Baumgartner, and Bowles (2010) argue that it is time for adult educators, in the consideration of class issues, to move beyond literacy to areas that might explore root causes of poverty. The next section of this chapter discusses conceptualizations of social justice within adult education literature.

Social Justice Conceptualizations and Discourse

Reminding those in the field that adult education involves more than program planning and delivery or working with adult learners and community groups, Merriam et al. (2006) make explicit that adult education “is also about becoming aware of inequities in our society and the oppression and marginalization of groups as a result of unequal distribution of power and other resources” (p. 491). Given Merriam et al.’s reminder, it follows that adult education’s broad guiding philosophies bear an association to the field’s social justice conceptualizations. Using a Western perspective, Merriam and Brockett (1997), Tisdell and Taylor (1999), and Elias and Merriam (2005), have outlined the guiding or foundational philosophies of adult education. While the number of philosophies (or variations) used in these scholars’ typologies differs, those philosophies that most clearly inform and interact with social justice as a mission are similar.

The first portion of this section is organized by the social justice conceptualizations of conservatism, liberalism, and radicalism as they are discussed in the literature (Sleeter, 1995). In

the discussion, these three conceptualizations are respectively correlated to the adult education philosophies and traditions that have been described as progressive, humanist, and critical (radical); the reader will note associations to Quigley's (2000) social policy matrix as discussed in the first section of this chapter. Following descriptions of each conceptualization is a discussion of the social justice discourse framework (Choules, 2007) that informs this study; the three discourses that Choules' has outlined are essentially articulations of the social justice conceptualizations.

Social Justice Conceptualizations

As is noted above, the way broad notions of social justice can be categorized and have been expressed in the adult education literature, as conservative, liberal, or radical (Sleeter, 1995) are, understandably, somewhat parallel to how scholars have outlined the field's philosophies or orientations. However, because elements of various adult education perspectives influence others through time (Elias & Merriam, 2005), these parallels, at least for the conservative and liberal conceptualizations, are neither neat nor clearly demarcated. Over time, adult education philosophies have evolved and become conflated; Elias and Merriam have presented the reason for this in their observation that some aspect of progressivism (and the work of Dewey and Lindeman) can be traced to all other forms of adult education as conceived from a Western perspective: learner-centeredness informs humanism, experimentalism informs behaviorism, and social change informs radicalism. Most adult education scholars have aligned with either the liberal or radical approaches to social justice. Because this study is designed and informed by a critical perspective, discussion of the radical conceptualization and adult education philosophy, the last of the three conceptualizations outlined below, is elaborated on here and in subsequent chapter discussion.

Conservative conceptualization of social justice. Conservative conceptualizations of social justice share guiding principles with the market models of adult education social policy (Griffin, 1987; Quigley, 2000); individuals have the autonomy to work within the prevailing socio-economic system and their success or failure is their responsibility, determined by their actions. In other words, justice is available for anyone; its attainment is up to the individual but “since individuals differ, inequality results naturally from differences in talent and effort” (Sleeter, 1995, p. 82). This conceptualization can be best aligned with the humanist approach in the tradition of Malcolm Knowles which has been described as basically devoid of socio-cultural context (Tisdell & Taylor, 1999). However, it can also be aligned with the progressive adult education philosophy which emphasizes the relationship between education and society while placing responsibility on the individual learner (Elias & Merriam, 2005). Humanism emphasizes rationality or individual responsibility in an effort to enhance personal growth and development; Jack Mezirow, Carl Rogers and Malcolm Knowles are among adult education’s most well known humanist proponents (Elias & Merriam). With a focus on democratic, vocational, and experience-centered education, the purpose of the progressive orientation is to provide learners with knowledge and skills, promote societal well-being, and ultimately to reform society (Elias & Merriam); indeed, Quigley parallels the market model to the vocational progressive perspective. Democracy and social change was a recurrent theme in the writing of Eduard Lindeman (1944), a leading proponent of the progressive adult education philosophy, who wrote “without a sense of responsibility towards choice-making among adults, there can be no effective democracy” (p. 102). Lindeman also wrote of the need for adult education to meet the future in terms of emerging need, to “make our intelligence commensurate with our problems” (p. 103). Conservative conceptualizations of social justice find the cause for societal equity, be it success

or failure, resting with the individual and his or her ability to make reasonable choices; “conservatives give priority to the individual and minimize the importance of group claims and attachments” (Sleeter, p. 82).

Liberal conceptualization of social justice. The liberal conceptualization of social justice is founded on the principles of John Rawls whose Theory of Justice (1971) outlined a common vision of societal justice based on individuals’ self-interest, given how they would prefer to be treated if they were on the lower levels of society. Rawls describes his theory as an abstraction of Locke, Rousseau, and Kant’s social contract; rather than using an original contract about particular society or form of government, for Rawls, the “. . . guiding idea is that principles of justice for the basic structure of society are the object of the original agreement” (p. 11).

Barrera (2007) describes Rawls’ two simple rules:

First, every person will be accorded the maximum liberties possible that are consistent with everyone else enjoying the same right. Second, inequalities will be permitted only to the extent that they benefit the least advantaged, and only if these inequalities are attached to societal roles that are open to all. (p. 6)

For Rawls, this principle of distributive justice is not meritocracy; instead those with greater abilities are seen as having a social asset that is used for common advantage. According to Sleeter (1995), the liberal conceptualization of justice shares the conservative focus on individual competition but it “rejects conservatism’s faith in private institutions and natural aristocracy and takes more seriously collective claims to past and unfair treatment (p. 82); in this view, individual pursuit of opportunity can be interrupted by stereotypical prejudice but this “can be reduced by teaching people to focus on positive rather than negative characteristics of groups” (p. 82). Rorty (2000) echoes this perspective when he suggests that the ideas of common

humanity and eliminating prejudice should be central to leftist political thought. As is the case with the conservative conceptualization, elements of both progressivism and humanism exist with this liberal stance. The progressive tradition emphasizes individual responsibility as a component of societal reform; this tradition considers the societal “whole” in a way that Rawls’ conceived distributive justice, as a means to effective societal functioning. The humanist perspective is compatible with democratic values insofar as education is “for the development of better individuals who will then promote a better life for all humanity” (Elias & Merriam, 2005, p. 144). The liberal conceptualization considers the individual’s role as contributing, in an interrelated and interdependent way, to a just, equitable, and well-functioning society.

Radical conceptualization of social justice. The radical adult education conceptualization of social justice, grounded in Marxist thought, seeks to challenge, disrupt, or change “structural and systemic injustice in which certain groups are singled out for less favorable treatment and others are privileged” (Choules, 2007, p. 463). That is, those who conceptualize social justice this way aim to ensure equality of societal participation without marginalization based on gender, race, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, or ability. Sleeter (1995) has argued that those supporting this conceptualization reject “the individual as the main unit of analysis and focus on group relations, arguing that most social behavior is structured by groups rather than individuals” (p. 82); this view considers “inequality as structured deeply into society’s institutions, having been constructed by haves in an effort to protect and extend their power and wealth” (p. 82). It aligns with the social re-distribution policy model described by Quigley (2000). Notably theorized by Paolo Freire (2004) and practiced by activists Myles Horton and Freire (Horton & Freire, 1990), Septima Clark (Baumgartner, 2006), and Dorothy Day (Thorn, Runkel, & Mountin, 2001), radical conceptualizations of social justice

are also put forth in the work of adult education scholars such as Baumgartner, Brookfield (2005), Cunningham (1996), Foley (2001); Guy & Brookfield (2009); Holst (2009, 2010), hooks (1994); Johnson-Bailey, 2006; and Merriam et al. (2006). These social justice conceptualizations neatly correspond to adult education philosophies described as radical, emancipatory/liberatory, or critical which are influenced by Marxist-Socialist and Anarchist traditions (Elias & Merriam, 2005). Endres (2002) notes that “Critical pedagogy has a more explicit concern with social justice and democratic ideals than liberal education” (p. 64). According to Holst (2009), the radical tradition includes those educators who are “explicitly dedicated to investigating, promoting, and engaging in adult education for progressive, social democratic or socialist transformation.” Emphasizing social transformation and social action, radical adult education’s purpose is to affect social action to accomplish political and economic changes in society; simply stated, social justice is its objective or, as Baumgartner (2006) states, “social justice education exists to challenge societal inequities” (p. 194).

Not only is radical adult education conceived of broadly from a theoretical standpoint in the literature, that is, having various orientations such as critical, feminist, emancipatory or liberatory (Elias & Merriam, 2005; Tisdell & Taylor, 1999) it is also considered broadly in terms of practice. Foley (2001) argues for an expansive description of radical adult education as “a fundamental departure from dominant practice or experience at one or more of the following levels: content, process, outcome, the relationship of education to other social processes” (p. 72). It follows that Foley’s (2001) definition of radical adult educators is equally expansive, he defines them as “those who work for emancipatory social change and whose work engages with the learning dimension of social life” (p. 72). Social activism is the practice of bringing about social change and justice; it has been described as existing on a wide continuum of activities or

actions that may involve inciting social change with verbal discourse through teaching organizing skills to leading a social movement (Baumgartner, 2006). This conceptualization of social justice is both radical and expansive.

Summary of adult education conceptualizations of social justice. Thus, adult education's traditionally recognized philosophical perspectives can be approximately, though not neatly, aligned with ways of conceptualizing social justice that are both historical and political, along a continuum that begins at a conservative pole of individual/citizen responsibility, continues with collective action for social change and development of human potential and agency, and ends at a radical or emancipatory pole that challenges the dominant systems of power and privilege. Each of the three frameworks discussed above can be understood as implying a particular social justice discourse that flows from and with it; these social justice discourses have been outlined by Choules (2007) and they are described in the section that follows.

Discourse in Adult Education

Before discussing social justice discourses and referring to how they correspond to adult education conceptualizations of social justice (Sleeter, 1995), the concept of "discourse" is first clarified. Wilson (2009) describes discourse as a problematic concept in the adult education literature, one "meaning many things from langue to parole to structuralism to poststructuralism to talk to meaning to text to context and so on" (p. 8). This is because discourse for educational researchers has been defined primarily in the context of the literature on critical discourse analysis (CDA) which represents different analytic and somewhat contradictory traditions such as those influenced by Michel Foucault and Norman Fairclough (Wilson, 2009), respectively representing the post-structural notion of systems of possibility for knowledge (Philp, 1985) and

a socio-linguistic approach that analyzes detailed textual components and structure (Fairclough, 2000).

Critical discourse analysis. In their literature review of critical discourse analysis in education, Rogers et al. (2005), provide a useful definition:

Within a CDA tradition, discourse has been defined as language use as social practice.

That is, discourse moves back and forth between reflecting and constructing the social world. Seen in this way, language cannot be considered neutral, because it is caught up in political, social, racial, economic, religious, and cultural formations. (p. 369)

There does seem to be consensus in the educational literature that “discourses are never neutral or value-free; they always reflect prevailing ideologies, values, beliefs, and social practices” (Pratt & Nesbitt, 2000, p. 119). According to Sandretto et al. (2007), “discourse analysis draws our attention to ways in which the language we use to make sense of complex concepts such as social justice is not neutral” and this is because “educators operate within multiple discursive fields that position teachers, students and families in particular ways” (p. 310). Thomas (2006) concurs arguing that ideologies “are not neutral concepts linking beliefs to political and social action but are intrinsically connected to issues of power and domination” (p. 59). For Thomas, ideologies are the discursive constructions that serve as fundamental referents in a spoken or textual hierarchy of discursive representation; they are used to legitimate points of view, frequently appearing as discursive fragments of common sense (p. 60) that can serve hegemony by promoting dominant ideas as normal or neutral (Pratt & Nesbitt, p. 119). Van Dijk (2006) argues similarly and adds that ideologies can also “articulate resistance in relationships of power” (p. 117). Van Dijk discusses the ideology-discourse interface and describes ideologies as

shared belief systems and ideological collectivities as additionally, communities of practice and communities of discourse.

Drawing from varying aspects of the literature on critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2000; Pratt & Nesbitt, 2000; Rogers et al., 2005; Sandretto et al., 2007; Thomas, 2006; Van Dijk, 2006; Wilson, 2009) and for the purposes of this study, social justice discourse is considered broadly, that is, how an individual understands, organizes and expresses knowledge related to the construct of social justice; expression will be considered as Foucault might, that is, by the way knowledge is shared and understood, as well how this understanding is practiced by actions. It has also been considered in terms of how it is revealed in often nuanced discursive patterns much as Wilson describes his notion of discourse analysis:

as systematically revealing the invisible, of asking the unasked, of saying the unsaid, of (under)mining the collective but often paradoxical sense of ‘common sense’ that we all routinely depend upon in order not to collapse in practical paralysis. (p. 2)

Conceptual Framework for Social Justice Discourse

Choules (2007) contends that “how we understand injustice has major implications for the way we see, or don’t see, our own role in maintaining unjust systems” (p. 462). Choules clearly gazes through a critical prism, her stated goal is to expose and examine privilege. The social justice discourses framed by Choules also conceptually inform this study; they are charity, human rights, and privilege. While Choules offers robust historical, philosophical, and evolutionary information about the dynamics of each social justice discourse under discussion, my intention here is simply to outline some major attributes and delineate the boundaries between them. This is because philosophical background has already been provided and while the reader may readily make associations to what has been discussed in this chapter thus far, I

also identify the social justice conceptualizations which correlate to each discourse and indicate those activists who, in the adult education literature, offer evidence of advocating a particular discourse frame. As indicated in this dissertation's introduction, evidence of the charity discourse is absent for adult educator activists with the human rights discourse present and the privilege discourse predominating; this is consistent with attributes of each discourse, as will be described, only the human rights and privilege discourse seek social change.

Charity discourse. The charity discourse is one of the two discourses that Choules (2007) describes as maintaining the prevailing power structure. Acts of charity do not address underlying need, this occurs because when injustice is viewed as unrelated and external to us, "it is easy to use individualistic and meritocratic justifications to remain disengaged" (p. 462). The charity giver fails to examine their own privilege and so the charitable act does not attempt to address underlying causes. While individual suffering may be alleviated in the short-term, the charitable discourse is paternalistic and patronizing because it "lends itself to an ideological approach which positions those with power in the benevolent and condescending role of protector and the Other as in need of protection" (Choules, p. 466). For example, those who fail to examine their privilege as White and middle-class may easily turn their focus to the social justice victim, the poor, as cause; Schiff (2003) describes the criminalization of homelessness through discourse. So, while willing to do good work or provide charity to those in need, those situated on the charity discourse do not recognize systemic, societal injustice as underlying causes. The charity discourse can be aligned with the conservative conceptualization of justice (Sleeter, 1995) which shares attributes with the market model of adult education social policy (Griffin, 1987; Quigley, 2000) and is supported by elements of the philosophical perspectives of humanism and vocational progressivism.

Human rights discourse. In this discourse, rights, human rights, are considered to apply to all persons by virtue of their status as human beings. While this discourse notes the need for societal change (rectifying social problems), Choules (2007) notes that the human rights discourse is typically enacted in a way that leaves unjust structures and systems unexamined because the identified social problem remains located with the marginalized. She further notes that there are two alternate positions from which to view this discourse: liberal and socialist. Using the liberal position with its emphasis on individual rights and responsibilities, the privileged do not consider their own position or their role in the prevailing social structure. However, Choules argues that when applying a socialist position of collective responsibility to the human rights discourse, the understanding is close to a privilege discourse in terms of identifying the social problem. The human rights discourse can be aligned with the liberal conceptualization of justice (Sleeter, 1995) which shares some characteristics with the adult education social policy model titled liberal-welfare state (Griffin, 1987; Quigley, 2000) and is supported by elements of the philosophical perspectives of progressivism and humanism. Adult educator activists whose practice aligns with this discourse include Jane Addams (1899) of the Settlement Movement and Hull House, Septima Clark a civil rights advocate who co-established the Citizenship School Program in South Carolina (Baumgartner, 2006) and Wangari Maathai, founder of Kenya's Green Movement, both Clark and Maathai, advancing race and gender equality respectively, can also be understood as bridging the human rights and privilege discourses.

Privilege discourse. While Choules (2007) considers the charity discourse, and in some cases the human rights discourse, as permitting and being complicit in maintaining injustice, this is not the case for the privilege discourse. For the other discourses, complicity lies in not

analyzing power relationships and structures that benefit those who are in positions of power, to the detriment of those who are not. “Privilege, as used here, implies an ability to act without consequences and as if one had the right to set the rules” (Choules, p. 472). According to the privilege social justice discourse, beneficiaries of privilege acknowledge and understand their implication in systemic injustice and are compelled to take collective responsibility for it. Ilsley (1992) argues why this is important:

the people who need to learn the most about social injustice are politicians, industrialists, and prominent leaders of bureaucracies. What they need to know is what people of color, the homeless, and immigrants, among others, in the United States already understand.
(p. 29)

Hobgood (2006) clearly illustrates this discourse when she says “because we benefit from a political economy that economically exploits, politically oppresses, and culturally marginalizes the majority of the world’s people, we are responsible for transforming the structures of power that cause that oppression” (p. 153). The privilege discourse can be aligned with the radical conceptualization of justice (Sleeter, 1995) which is directly related to the social re-distribution model of adult education social policy (Griffin, 1987; Quigley, 2000) and is supported by radical adult educators who espouse perspectives that may be alternatively characterized as critical, emancipatory, or liberatory. The list of adult educators advocating the social justice discourse of privilege is long and many of the adult educators on it have been noted in the previous section, among the best known through history are Paolo Freire and Myles Horton (Horton & Freire, 1990), Dorothy Day (Thorn, 2001), Moses Coady and Jimmy Tompkins (English & Tisdell, 2010), Michael Newman (Newman, 1994) and bell hooks (hooks, 1994).

Research Studies Examining Social Justice Discourse

My review revealed that most of the discourse research in the adult education field that is related to social justice focuses on higher, technical, or basic adult education, concerning matters of curriculum, pedagogy, adult learning, and program planning or administration. I have identified three research-based studies (Rule, 2005; Sandretto et al., 2007; Schiff, 2003) that because they focus on social justice discourse, are pertinent to this discussion and so I present them here.

Rule's (2005) doctoral dissertation research involved a post-structural examination of the social action discourse of Australian community activists working in inner-city Sydney neighborhood centers. Rule notes that his discourse analysis did not entail a "microanalysis of language" but rather "a contextualized analysis of the operation of discourse" (p. 151). Rule conducted semi-structured interviews designed to engage participants in their stories of practice and lived experience as activists and community workers; participants read others' transcripts and had an opportunity to comment on them. The study process also included a group meeting. Rule also provided study participants with reading material that included post-modern and post-structural language and perspective along with reflective and conversational space; theoretical frameworks were also explored. Using this deconstructive approach, Rule found, in his discourse analysis, that critical theory perspectives were evident in the social action framework these participants used in conversation. Interestingly, the activists in Rule's study "tended to define themselves as critical in their orientation and contrasted this to the type of community work linked to Church based and local-government-sponsored projects" (p. 141). Rule reports that participant stories included feminist and class-based analyses and discursive references to multiculturalism and environmentalism as well as engagement with existing power

arrangements; “discourses of inclusion, empowerment and oppositional political practices were also evident in the way community workers talked about their work, and a social action framework drawn from critical theory perspectives was evident in their conversation” (p. 141).

Sandretto et al. (2007) used a post-structural lens to identify social justice conceptualizations among two geographically differentiated groups of three teachers each in New Zealand by providing them, similar to Rule’s design, with post-modern and post-structural language and perspective along with reflective and conversational space. One group met in 11 meetings over a one and a half year time frame while the other group conversed using an electronic mail list-serve and completed their work together with a face to face meeting. Sandretto et al. note that their study participants did not have “solidified or entrenched understandings of social justice, but rather were engaged in an on-going process of understanding social justice and considering the implications of their understandings for their professional practice” (p. 308). Multiple discourses were identified in the findings and these include: “fairness, affirmative action, equality, equality of opportunity, equity, attitudes, values, self-determination, voice, ethic of care, relationships, identity, responsibility” (p. 315). Sandretto et al. developed an alternative representation of their data by creating a theater script that can be used to trouble or problematize social justice discourse among educators.

Schiff (2003) collected data primarily through 35 semi-structured interviews “with service providers, advocates, and others who generate data about homeless people” (p. 492) in San Francisco, California; intake forms and other written artifacts” were also collected. Her study’s focus was on understanding information production practices, locating the organization within the pool of those organizations dealing with homeless issues, and “teasing out”

understandings and conceptions about homelessness and people who are homeless. Schiff describes a primary finding of her research:

. . . there is an overriding dominating conception that permeates the field of homelessness, which can be referred to as the individual-responsibility conception. This conception refers to the notion that people are individually responsible for being homeless, though the degree to which they are viewed sympathetically (and thus forgiven) or harshly (and therefore condemned) varies greatly. (p. 492)

Further, Schiff found that dominating ideologies are fundamentally written into the information gathering and generation processes related to homelessness. Her findings also indicated that definitions of homelessness appear in both implicit and explicit practices. Thus, Schiff concludes that definitions of homelessness are sites of struggle; “every time a definition is encountered, especially an implicit definition, meaning is created, and understandings are being changed, reinforced, or challenged” (p. 505). Schiff also notes the importance of augmenting or enriching qualitative data with an analysis of “actual objects relevant to the research arena” (p. 506).

Summary of Studies Examining Social Justice Discourse

To summarize, few adult education research studies have been reported in the literature which examine social justice discourse among activists. Two of the three select studies that have been discussed here involved participants who self identify as activists or educators in community settings (Rule, 2005; Sandretto et al., 2007); these studies involved individuals who speak the language of social justice because of professional or academic training. The third study reviewed (Schiff, 2003) considered the discourse of service providers to the homeless.

Additional work in the area of discourse among adult education activists is needed and in particular, studies that seek clarity in the area of social justice conceptualizations.

Keeping in mind the Fenwick and English (2004) observation, noted in this dissertation's introduction that, emancipatory pedagogy and liberation theology share a historical tradition of "uniting the spiritual search with critical thinking and social action" (p. 58), the last section of this chapter turns to the association between adult education activism and spirituality. The third and last chapter section offers insight into the relationship between spirituality and sustained commitment to social justice causes and into Catholic social teaching as it relates to antipoverty activism, these are explored because they represent key dimensions of the study's situational context.

Adult Education Activists and Spirituality

The mission of social justice, the idea of a society committed to equality for all members where power and resources are equitably distributed and no member is excluded from full participation (Choules, 2007) because of factors such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation or disability has historically been associated with the field of adult education. Social justice can be and has been fulfilled through social activism which includes a spectrum of intentional behaviors that cause broad societal change; this might include provoking or inspiring social justice seed planting through verbal or written discourse, facilitating a discussion group, leading civic education classes, teaching others community organizing skills, or leading a grassroots social movement. Just as adult education and social justice share an historical association, so too, do adult education and spirituality. Throughout history, many adult educator activists, leading movements or participating in social activism, have expressed their religious and spiritual beliefs. Tolliver and Tisdell (2002) note "There have been many spiritual movements within

some of the world's religious and spiritual traditions that have been concerned about issues of social justice and transformation that focus on challenging systems of power and privilege" (p. 394). West (1999), recalling Gramsci with his references to the organic intellectual, discusses the importance of religion and spirituality as ingredients of his prophetic pragmatism notion and the need for forward social motion; West observes that the "most significant and successful organic intellectual in twentieth century America (Dr. King), maybe in American history, was a product and leader in the prophetic wing of the black church" (p. 172). Activist movements propelled by faith in addition to the civil rights movement, include abolition, women's suffrage, the Antigonish movement, and liberation theology; some well-known adult educators pursuing social justice (such as Moses Coady, Jimmy Tompkins, Septima Clark, Dorothy Day, Myles Horton, Paulo Freire, and bell hooks) have been informed by faith or an abiding spirituality.

Defining Spirituality

In spite of the consistent historical relationship between adult education and spirituality, the interest in spirituality as a research topic within the adult education field has waxed and waned over time. However, over the last decade, it has been receiving increased scholarly, and popular, attention (English, 2001; English & Tisdell, 2010; Fenwick & English, 2004; Miller, 2005; Murphy, 2003; Tisdell, 2007; Vogel, 2000). Commenting on this surge of interest, English (2001) notes that "after a long hibernation, spirituality is no longer a taboo word in adult education and training" (p. 20). In this section, I review the literature that defines spirituality and some related concepts. Several scholars, some from outside the field of adult education, (Blanch, 2007; Gall et al., 2005; Hodge, 2005; Marler & Hadaway, 2002; Pargament, 1999; Tisdell, 2002a) have noted that there is no one, single, agreed-upon definition of spirituality or, for that matter, of faith or religion. And this is nothing new to our time; William James' *The Varieties of*

Religious Experience (1985) is a collection of lectures he gave at Edinburgh University during 1901-1902. From Palmer's (1999) simple phrase the human quest for connectedness, (where he also explains that embedded in every academic discipline are spiritual questions), to a more complex theologically grounded phrase, the differences in spirituality definitions are broad in some respects, nuanced in others.

Religion and spirituality. Zinnbauer et al. (1997) recall that, historically, the words religiousness and spirituality were not distinguished from each other; their distinction coincided with the rise of secularism in the 20th century. Murphy (2003), writing from the perspective of a Jesuit priest, argues that while there is hunger for meaning and transcendence, particularly in the developed world, religions no longer provide compelling meaning, "For some, spirituality is the human face of religion, for others it is the attractive post-modern alternative to religion" (p. 148). Most of the literature, in describing either religion or spirituality, does distinguish one from the other. Marler and Hadaway, in an effort to explore the meaning of being religious and being spiritual, analyzed the results of five surveys (one was theirs') conducted between the late 1980s through 2000 and the findings from interviews with 49 marginal American Protestants that they conducted in 1993 and 1994. The majority of their respondents (63%), viewed being religious and being spiritual as different but interdependent; Marler and Hadaway concluded that the relationship between the two is not a zero-sum proposition and most Americans see themselves as both.

In an effort to bring meaning to spirituality and religion, much research has been conducted around how participants use these words; participants and researchers as well have used some of them interchangeably. A vast amount of research has been conducted and so a select survey of definitions reported over the last decade from adult education scholars and

others of related fields is presented here. Zinnbauer et al. (1997), working in the mental health field within the discipline of social and clinical psychology, concluded that whether individuals used the terms religiousness or spirituality depended on the meaning and relevance various religious groups and associations accorded each term. For their quantitative study of 346 individuals from various churches, institutions, age groups, and careers, respondents, in addition to a structured questionnaire, were asked to offer their definitions of the terms. Their findings revealed that spirituality was most often described in personal or experiential terms and included the belief in God, a higher power or a relationship with either. Religiousness included the belief in God or higher power as well as organizational or institutional beliefs (rather than experiential or relationship terms). Zinnbauer et al. determined that the two terms were not fully independent and that each incorporated the concept of the sacred. Pargament (1999), after noting that religion is moving from a broad construct to a narrow one and that spirituality is doing the opposite, argues for a return to a classic tradition in the psychology of religion. That is, Pargament sees “spirituality as a search for the sacred” (p. 12) where spirituality is a core function of religion; his is a conceptual argument. Later Hill and Pargament (2003) advanced the same idea.

Groen (2004), in providing background to her research on soulfulness in the workplace, cites Van Ness’ distinction between religious spirituality and secular spirituality. In this formulation, organized principles shared by a group characterize religious spirituality while the individual pursuit of meaning and the experience of a higher being power characterize secular spirituality.

Spiritual commitment and social justice. Tisdell (2002a), in her qualitative study examining the spiritual development of women adult educators, observes that “for some it is individualistic in its orientation, yet for others, their spiritual commitments require that they

actually work for social justice” (p. 128). Tisdell (2002a) also notes that, while the definition is not shared, many adults indicate that spirituality is an organizing principle that gives their lives meaning. Stanczak and Miller (2002), in their investigation of the association between spiritual commitment and social commitment, decided to utilize a broad definition of spirituality given that our current language is inadequate to express individual experiential meaning. Stanczak and Miller began with “a basic, open-ended working definition of spirituality as any personal or collective experience that is perceived by the individual to connect him or her with a subjectively defined ideal, entity, or higher power” (p. 16).

In her personal narrative account of the role of spirituality in social justice volunteering for an adult education program in a disadvantaged area of Dublin, Higgins (2003) simply expresses her understanding of spirituality as her relationship with God. And in accordance with Tisdell’s (2002a) conclusion, Higgins describes how spirituality was the reason to bother and keep bothering; she acted on a need for more integrity between her beliefs and how she lived her life by choosing to pursue her social justice volunteer work. Gall et al. (2005), in their study of care workers, refer to the complex nature of the spirituality construct that is integrated into and manifest by an individual’s behavior, beliefs, and experience. Hodge (2005) has defined spirituality “as an existential relationship with God (or perceived Transcendence) that fosters a sense of meaning, purpose, and mission in life” (p. 77).

Research in the field of social work is relevant to this general discussion; of the field’s six core values, one is social justice and respect for diversity (Krieglstein, 2006; Lee & Barrett, 2007). Krieglstein conceptually explores spirituality and social work and defines religion as an externally controlled, formal set of beliefs and doctrines, essentially the prescription for what qualifies as a good life. Unlike how she describes religion, spirituality is described as internally

defined. Spirituality to Krieglstein is “concerned with the distinctively spiritual aspect of human experience as it is interwoven with all other aspects” (p. 25). She also describes it as “The Gestalt of the total process of human life and development encompassing the biological, mental, social, and spiritual aspects” (p. 25). Krieglstein further identifies relational spirituality whereby relationships are most central to the helping process as the form of spirituality most appropriate to the field of social work.

In a recent article based on her previous research, Tisdell (2007) explores the role of spirituality and cultural imagination while addressing cultural or diversity issues in higher education. Religion and spirituality differ, Tisdell (2007) notes, in that “spirituality tends to focus on finding meaning in life, or meaning-making, and personal experiences. Religions are organized communities of faith that, in addition to a concern with nurturing a sense of spirituality in their members have far more aspects to them. Clearly, a wide variety of interpretations is directly related to the notion that spirituality is a construct of individual meaning-making.

Milacci (2006) has argued that adult education’s spirituality discourse has become nondescript and vague in “an apparent attempt to be all things to all people” (p. 214). In Milacci’s phenomenological study of how eight adult education practitioners understand spirituality grounded in Christianity, five practitioner participants clearly indicated dissatisfaction with vague definitions of spirituality, two others tacitly shared this dissatisfaction, and one practitioner participant did not express any dissatisfaction with current definitions. In outlining what he describes as the hazards of adult education’s current spirituality discourse, Milacci suggests that real issues cannot be confronted by research that fails to examine how belief affects practice. By interviewing those whose work in terms of organization and religious belief is informed by Catholicism, this study, in part, attempts to respond to Milacci’s call to

frame spirituality in terms of a faith tradition; this is so that the way foundational and core religious beliefs affect adult educator practice can be more directly examined.

Spirituality, Activism, and Sustained Social Commitment

While several contemporary adult education scholars (e.g., Baumgartner, 2006; Brookfield, 2005; Cervero & Wilson, 2001; Cunningham, 1998; Holst, 2009, 2010; Johnson-Bailey, 2006; Newman, 1994; Quigley, 2000) have identified societal hegemony and align with radical approaches to social change, none has pursued scholarship exploring the association between faith or spirituality and social justice. Likewise, other scholars (Dirkx, 1997; Groen, 2004; Jarvis & Walters, 1993) have studied spirituality and adult education but very few studies have been conducted that specifically focused on spirituality's association with social activism or social justice education. Tisdell (2007) notes how surprising this is given that a spiritual passion for equity and justice often propel social change. Interestingly, Clare (2006), coming from a religious education perspective, has applied Freirian concepts and Mezirow's transformative learning to better understand faith in action.

Daloz, Keen, Keen, and Parks (1996) conducted what is considered a seminal study of over 100 people engaged in community organization work and found that religion was a critical factor in the formation of their participants' commitment to the common good. In an effort to develop a conceptual model for analyzing adult education literature and spirituality, Fenwick and English (2004) conducted an extensive review of spirituality in adult education literature; this review yielded the identification of two prominent themes. One is historical and the other is contemporary. Fenwick and English note that the first is primarily North American and Christian; scholarship that focuses on subjects like the YMCA, the Antigonish movement, the Social Gospel movement, Myles Horton, Eduard Lindeman, and Paulo Freire. This group of

literature “acknowledges the strong influences upon adult education historically exercised by one religion in particular, but little follow-up analysis exists showing doctrinal foundations of different spiritual writings and advocates in contemporary adult education” (Fenwick & English, p. 51). The second group of literature associates spirituality with holistic learning and being and features authors who distance themselves from any religious tradition. Fenwick and English (2004) note that this literature accepts spirituality as a human impulse suspended from doctrinal or ideological underpinnings, beyond participant narratives. After comparing both theological and non-theological theories against the adult education literature that addresses spirituality, culling themes, and organizing the literature accordingly, Fenwick and English identified the following eight spiritual themes or dimensions: life and death; soul and self; cosmology; knowledge (the nature of truth); the way; focus; practices of spirituality and the role of others; and responses. Fenwick and English are clear that these dimensions offer but a starting point to frame the various locations of spiritual beliefs and practices. The researchers note that these themes naturally align with adult education; it appears that two of these dimensions may be especially useful in organizing or analyzing social justice activists’ work in relation to spirituality: practices of spirituality and the role of others and responses. Responses, described by the authors as action and application arising from spiritual pursuits, is service enacted that may be life-centered or transcendent. Fenwick and English use activating social justice as an example of a life-centered response and prayers or retreats as an example of a transcendent response; these responses may be broad-based or narrow and focused.

In their year-long qualitative study of 67 spiritually committed individuals leading socially committed lives, Stanczak and Miller (2002) of the University of Southern California’s Center for Religious and Civic Culture conclude that, of the diverse individuals from varying

faith traditions that they studied, there was a “common denominator, an individual spiritual commitment that propels his or her attempts to change tangible elements of their social world” (p. 6). The authors refer to this spiritual commitment as engaged spirituality. Stanczak and Miller’s research revealed engaged spirituality as a conceptual lens, it is spirituality that “must be understood as engaged in, engaged by, and engaged within individual interpersonal and social contexts” (p. 23). This study’s findings suggest that working for social change is “one of the fundamental ways that engaged spirituality is utilized, experienced, and best understood” (p. 25).

Tisdell’s (2002a) qualitative study of 16 women adult educators had among its themes that participants viewed “their spirituality and their social justice efforts as integrated into an entire way of life and as a way of thinking and being in the world” (p. 137), this was accompanied by a strong sense of mission which was “fueled by their spirituality, of challenging systems of oppression based on race, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation in their adult education practices” (p. 81). Among the findings, Tisdell (2002a) discusses a spiral process of moving beyond and “re-membering;” participants described moving from their childhood faith traditions (which only one of the 16 continued to practice) and then reframing them and giving them meaning in an adult context. Other themes identified by Tisdell (2002a) are: spirituality as a wholeness with a life force where everything is interconnected, the healing capacity of a higher power, the facilitation of authentic identity development, and a way of life sustained by inner reflection and social change action. In summary and similar to Stanczak and Miller’s (2002) findings and conclusions, this study reveals the all-encompassing nature of spirituality and its close relationship to individual cultural experience, personal development, and social change work.

Working from the social work field and exploring the notion of vocation, Faver (2003) conducted in-depth interviews of 50 Protestant laywomen to understand how women experience the “call” to social service or social activism work. Each participant worked as a social service professional or volunteer in either a secular or sectarian organizational setting. Faver reports on how the women’s narratives described the experience of being called, she says that:

. . . (it) involved a process of discernment, interpretation, and the construction of meaning. Specifically, the women heard the God’s still small voice through communications from other people and through deep inner convictions. Moreover, the respondents believed they were led or guided by God into their work through the experiences and events of everyday life. (p. 67)

Faver’s (2003) findings further revealed three specific, often overlapping ways that these participants were led to their social justice work through: some sense of inner urgency in response to a condition of need; experiences or observations of oppression and injustice (in childhood or adulthood); and finding ways to express their sense of identity through service or activism. It is interesting to note the similarities in narrative themes between these participants and Tisdell’s (2002a) especially given that in Tisdell’s study only one continued to practice their childhood faith and most were described as skeptical of organized religion.

Kovan and Dirkx (2003) investigated the role of transformative learning in those individuals participating in environmental justice activism. Semi-structured interviews (two individual, one group) were conducted with each of the nine study participants in an effort to better understand long-term commitment to their activist cause. The themes that emerged from the narratives are: “I will be working on this the rest of my life;” learning to listen to what is not known; connecting with and working from the heart; and learning to live through difficult times.

From the findings, Kovan and Dirkx conclude that the participant narratives suggest sustained commitment (all participants had been working in small non-profit organizations for at least ten years) to their work arises from a sense of work as a calling or vocation. Sustained commitment and passion are integral parts of these activist's lives; setbacks and challenges are viewed as spiritual pilgrimages. And "although such experiences may fill them with doubt, they are sustained through a kind of faith in the deep meaning of the call and the passion they associate with it" (Kovan & Dirkx, p. 113) with this deep engagement comes a deep learning, a transformative experience.

In Simmonds' (2005) qualitative study, 25 psychoanalysts and psychotherapists with a continued interest in religion or spirituality reflected on their religious upbringing. While the study focused on the adolescent phase of the life journey to authentic identity as the participants challenged their religious and spiritual upbringing, this study is worth including, though briefly, because the researcher's findings identified some themes in the participant narratives relevant to this discussion of social justice work. Rather than being forced to comply with a set pattern of religious behaviors, spiritual experimentation can result in a more intrinsically fulfilling, intrapsychically integrated spirituality and therefore, enduring spiritually. Two important parts of these participants' spiritual journeys were service to others and work with a social justice theme; Simmonds notes that, for many, this was instrumental in their career choice.

Gall et al. (2005) have built on the work of Pargament, long considered a leading scholar in the field of psychology of religion, to synthesize the diffuse findings found in the literature into a model representing the role of spirituality in mental health coping. Four care-workers from different faith traditions were consulted in the development of this model; each responded positively and assisted with some modifications. According to the Gall et al. model, spiritual

appraisal, spiritual connections, and spiritual coping behaviors are all key determinants of well-being (identified as emotional, social, physical, and spiritual). Considering the obstacles that those working for social justice causes may routinely face, this model may have applicability to and be able to inform the association between spirituality and the factors animating those working for social justice.

Tisdell (2007) explores the role of spirituality and cultural imagination in social justice education in an article that builds on the insights she gleaned from a 2003 study she conducted as well as insights from other authors. Tisdell (2007) emphasizes that religion and spirituality are not the same. She further notes

While religions do provide guidance on how to live a spiritual life, from the perspective of that tradition, religions are also organized communities of faith. . . spirituality. . . is more about how people make meaning through experience with wholeness, a perceived higher power or higher purpose. . . (p. 537)

Tisdell's (2003) study was of 31 participants that included 22 women and 9 men who were adult educators engaged in social justice teaching in either higher education or community-based settings and who indicated that their work was influenced strongly by spirituality. Tisdell's findings revealed the affective and spiritual power of the spiritual aspects of culture and religion; she refers to the spiral back process noted in her study as described in this section. Tisdell (2007) concludes that "teaching for social justice that engages the cultural imagination can also engage people's creativity and often their spirituality as well, which often unites groups and builds classroom community" (p. 556). As Tisdell (2007) points out, this is especially important for social justice education around issues of diversity and equity as these topics can cause conflict and contention in the classroom.

Lee and Barrett (2007) used a pilot study to examine the presence of an association between faith and social workers working for social justice. Data were generated from semi-structured interviews of 30 social workers, questions elicited information about the participants' political and social involvement both inside and outside their work settings; information was gathered in the study's three major domains: personal spirituality, professional practice of spirituality, and commitment to social justice. The participants' definitions of spirituality coincided with general findings from many of the studies described above and included "sense of purpose, driving force, belief framework, ethics, awareness, and compassion" (p. 10). Lee and Barrett's study implies that faith is a factor in strengthening commitment to social justice.

Summary of Adult Education Activists and Spirituality

From this review of the adult education literature on adult educators and spirituality, six major themes emerge: (a) a wholly, integrated and engaged spiritual life; (b) the emergence of a vocation or calling with an urgent passion; (c) the endurance of and from a re-framed adult spirituality; (d) the urging or pull to fill a determined need or address an injustice; (e) the presence of a transcendent being or life force; and (f) personal experience with some form of oppression. It was anticipated that some of these themes would emerge in the study, particularly the notions of engaged spirituality and calling or vocation. While there is growing momentum in the research being conducted that is concerned with adult education and spirituality, research on how spirituality informs the work of adult educators in anti-poverty activist practice would begin to fill a gap in the available and recent literature.

The final portion of this section briefly explores anti-poverty activism and its close relationship to Catholic social teaching. This has been included here because the specific context for the study is a Catholic collaborative organization that serves the homeless. Specifics about

the organization and its affiliated religious orders are of course included in the next chapter but select literature that informs the study's broader context is presented here.

Anti-Poverty Activism and Catholic Social Teaching

Bhola (2005), in discussing the roles that adult education and systems thinking have in global poverty reduction, describes the poor as those “caught in a structural spider web that is, at the same time, economic, political and cultural” (p. 406). This is because, as evidenced by economic data, “globalization and one-way free markets have brought even greater riches for the rich, leaving the poor even poorer” (p. 407). As has been established earlier in this chapter, problems associated with economic inequality faced by the poor such as “homelessness and distressed living conditions are not limited to underdeveloped and economically unstable nations; rather, being without adequate shelter is a situation that thrives in the United States and in other economically wealthy nations” (Finley & Barton, 2003, p. 483). Mohanty (2002) has urged feminist and other scholars to prepare research about the dire problems of global poverty and the colonization of men and women throughout the developing world; studies have been forthcoming (Ghose, 2007; Khawar, 2005; Lykes et al., 1999; von Kotze 2007; Walingo, 2006). But while much has been written and researched, this scholarship focuses on those in poverty and not on the activists. Bhola emphasizes the importance of adult educators reframing themselves as activists on behalf of the poor, who while discontent, may not be capable of organizing themselves to demand justice.

Liberation theology. Bhola's (2005) call to action for adult educators reflects, most likely, unintentionally, the essence of liberation theology which is a radical approach to social change informed by Catholic social teaching and, likewise, informing it. Among other tenets, liberation theology emphasizes a preferential option for the poor (Center for Social Concerns,

2004), Freire's critical pedagogy was influenced by this tradition. Proponents of liberation theology seek to achieve social justice by addressing the imbalance between the citizens of developed countries that enjoy vast economic wealth and those of developing countries that struggle economically. Social justice is sought because developed world success is viewed as being at the expense of the developing and underdeveloped world's economic deprivation. Frequently referred to as the father of liberation theology, Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian Roman Catholic theologian, wrote *A Theology of Liberation* (1973) as his "attempt at reflection, based on the Gospel and the experiences of men and women committed to the process of liberation in the oppressed and exploited land of Latin America" (p. ix). Gutierrez outlines the societal problems of Latin America and describes its exploitation in the historical context of development and dependence. "The underdevelopment of the poor countries, as an overall social fact, appears in its true light: as the historical by-product of the development of other countries" (Gutierrez, p. 84). Thirty-five years after the publication of *A Theology of Liberation*, Groody (2008) observes that there is no longer a single liberation theology but rather liberating theologies. Groody (2008) identifies these as Black theology, Hispanic theology, feminist theology and Asian theology; he asserts, "all of these theologies of liberation seek to give expression to the irruption of exploited classes, marginalized cultures, and humiliated races around the world" (p. 207).

Catholic social teaching. The publication of *On the Condition of Labor (Rerum Novarum)*, an encyclical written by Pope Leo XIII in 1891, marked the beginning of Catholic Church's social teaching in the modern period (DeBerri, Hug, Henriot, Schulteis, 2006). In it Leo XIII "spoke out against the inhuman conditions which were the normal plight of working people in industrial societies" (Deberri et al.). Scholars have indicated the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition of this and all subsequent encyclical and teaching (Whitmore, 2000). Interestingly, the

writings of Thomas Aquinas, who has been described as offering a Christianized version of Aristotle (Eterovich, 1966) considered “. . . the just thing as both a means and an equal” (p. 138), may have also influenced Rawls (1971). In his *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas states that justice directs man in his relations with other men. Now this may happen in two ways: first as regards his relation with individuals, secondly as regards his relations with others in general, in so far as a man who serves a community, serves all those who are included in that community. Accordingly justice in its proper acceptance can be directed to another in both these senses. Now it is evident that all who are included in a community, stand in relation to that community as parts to a whole; while a part, as such, belongs to a whole, so that whatever is the good of a part can be directed to the good of the whole. (Aquinas, 2008, Article 5, para. 5)

Various writings of popes have continued over time and more recent Catholic social teaching that has focused on globalization, solidarity with the poor, and the common good has been the subject of fairly recent scholarship (Gerics, 1991; Himes, 2008; Njoku, 2008; Vogt, 2007; Whitmore, 2000). Groody (2008), in exploring the interrelationship among globalization, spirituality, and justice, has argued that:

Only when we begin with the excluded can we speak in terms of a society of mutual enrichment, interconnection, and interdependence that enhances the lives of all members of the human family. Christian theology asserts that any reality that in the end divides, degrades, and diminishes a significant part of the human community rather than unites, uplifts, and enriches is contrary to the will of God. (p. 25)

Consistent with this argument and Groody's recognition of feminist theology cited above, DeBerri et al. (2006) note the Catholic Church's androcentrism and call for a Church response to the feminist critique of social teaching. DeBerri et al. describe a flawed anthropology that

defines women's "nature" and social roles in discredited, stereotypical Western cultural categories. It implicitly, perhaps unconsciously, treats the male experience as normatively human...Only by correcting this set of biases will Catholic social teaching become able to lay out a fully adequate and life-giving vision of social solidarity. (p.39)

In the last portion of this section, I briefly address Catholic women and activism, relevant even though this research study's participants did not self-identify as activists.

Catholic women and activism. Understandably, most of the scholarship associated with Catholic social thought is written by theologians and is theoretical and conceptual in nature. Historical accounts of Dorothy Day and analyses of her writing are an exception; Day, the activist journalist who co-founded the Catholic Worker Movement with Peter Maurin, was both a radical adult educator and an adherent of Catholic social teaching. But while a significant amount of scholarly literature exists about Day (Thorn, Runkel, & Mountin, 2001), very little of this scholarship has focused on those activists who served in the movement.

Fortunately, Parrish and Taylor (2007) conducted oral history interviews with twelve women, ten who had been actively involved in the Catholic Worker Movement of the 1930s and 1940s and two others who were daughters of women who had been involved. In Parrish and Taylor's investigation, which was conceptually informed by Foley's (1999) learning through social struggle, one of the primary findings was that "close interaction with poverty developed both a compassionate and critical systemic view of the world" (p. 230). An important aspect of "practicing compassionate faith was the expression of spirituality common to many Catholic

Workers” (p. 236); Parrish and Taylor draw an association to Tisdell’s work (2000) on spirituality as direct action. While social movement theory was the conceptual framework for Parrish and Taylor’s study and the women activist participants in my study are not be members of a formal, organized social movement, some principles of informal social movement learning may become useful in interpreting study findings, possibly as explanations for sharing or learning ideological discourses within their community. Foley (2001) has argued that “most learning is informal and incidental, embedded in other activities, and tacit” (p. 85); this may emerge as relevant during my analysis of participant and other study data.

Finally, Catholic feminism, which challenges androcentrism and patriarchal structures may offer some insight into the relationship between spirituality and social justice for this study’s participants. While not central to this study, Catholic feminism may be informative insofar as its scholars consider the ways women reconcile the inconsistencies among certain aspects of Catholic social thought, those aspects that support critical theory and those that are androcentric. McDougall (2008) offers insight when she describes reformist feminist theologians in contrast to revolutionary feminists who reject Christianity as irredeemably patriarchal. Reformist feminists, McDougall (2008) claims, are able to embrace Christianity because they “identify a liberating core. . . a so called ‘usable past’ more or less untainted by patriarchy” (p. 104). In comparing Catholic social thought to feminism, Heyer (2007) acknowledges dissonance but also notes areas of significant consonance arguing

Whereas many inside and outside the church cast feminism and Catholicism as incompatible ideologies, both approaches affirm equal human dignity, seek justice for the vulnerable, and liberation for the oppressed. A feminist concern for women’s experience

precisely as disadvantaged and for their equal social power both reflects and challenges Catholic social thought. (p. 2)

For her study of sixteen Catholic women and how they negotiated feminism, Ecklund (2003) conducted extended interviews with ten women, a focus group of three additional women, all members of a single church parish, and interviews with three women who had left the Catholic Church. Ecklund (2003) explored how the women in her study lived out differently their feminism in the context of a single parish. Consistent with Ecklund, Tisdell's (2003) study cited above, of 31 women and men adult educators exposed to various faith traditions during their formative years, found that nearly all the women she interviewed "discussed the role of spirituality as related to their gender, and spoke explicitly or implicitly of challenging patriarchal notions of divinity" (p. 129). Ecklund outlines three conclusions as to how her participants negotiated their identities: thinking of feminism as a spiritual matter; seeing feminism as shaping identity and interpreting their Catholicism in light of it; or identifying as a feminist and a Catholic on her own terms. This last idea of identifying as a feminist and Catholic on their own terms, which Ecklund refers to as practice spirituality, seems related to Catholic feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether's argument as to why some Christian feminists continue to re-envision the Jesus story rather than abandon it. Ruether (2011) contends that Christian feminists continue to use it as a model because:

it exemplifies the redemptive paradigm of feminist liberation: dissent against oppressive religious and political structures, taking the side of the oppressed, particularly women, living egalitarian relations across gender, race and class, and pointing toward a new time when these hierarchies will be overcome, and anticipating redeemed relations in a community of celebration here and now. (p. 23)

Ruether continues by posing the question ‘why not discard this story and tell our own?’ Her response is that these feminists are women who choose to belong to the Church, intentionally remaining a part of a faith community with historical roots. Similarly, McDougall (2008) describes third wave Christian feminist theologians as those who do not separate feminist and ecclesial traditions, seeing these two traditions as mutually informative aspects of their theological identity. For this reason these feminists “move to and fro between these two received traditions giving neither absolute priority nor uncritical acceptance as norms for their theological construction” (p. 104). The activism practiced by this study’s women, in terms of how they reconcile it with their Catholic faith, may be consistent with what McDougall, Ruether, Heyer, Ecklund, and Parrish and Taylor have described.

Summary

Some adult education scholars aligned with radical approaches to education (e.g., Brookfield, 2005; Brookfield & Guy, 2009; Cunningham, 1996; Foley, 2001; Holst, 2009, 2010; Johnson-Bailey, 2006; Johnson-Bailey et al., 2010; Merriam et al., 2006; Quigley, 2000) have wondered out loud about whether the field remains committed to its social justice mission. These scholars argue that the adult education scholarship focused on social justice and activism is waning. This seeming crisis of mission is occurring against the backdrop of a societal crisis, the dramatic and progressively widening socio-economic divide between the haves and have nots in the United States (and around the world). As Johnson-Bailey et al. have argued “with the effects of globalization come the increased necessity for social justice in adult education to rise to the top and become more prominent” (p. 346). Observing that our field is increasingly dominated by market-driven technical offerings and also noting the world’s social and economic inequality, Baptiste (1999) called on adult educators to refocus on grave human plights and

engage in efforts toward critically responsible change. Over a decade has passed since Baptiste's call to action, yet his message remains relevant to the adult education field and to the world at large.

While studies of adult educator activists have explored the meaning of their work and reasons for its sustained commitment and association with spirituality, very few have aimed to examine how they understand social justice and poverty. This is particularly the case for those who do not necessarily self-identify as either activists or adult educators which Bierema (2010) notes is one of the field's vexing issues. In addition, scant research has been conducted which identifies social justice discourse. It is also important to note that "women have been integrally involved in the education of adults through their work as reformers, journalists, and social activists" (Parrish, 2002, p. 2) and this role has often been outside of what is formally recognized as adult education and in some cases has been entirely overlooked.

To summarize, this study, in its examination of social justice discourse among anti-poverty activists, is intended to bring some clarity to the literature on social justice. As Johnson-Bailey et al. have recently pointed out, the "need to meld together diverse bodies of literature to map out the contours of social justice is evident" (p. 346). This study is a step towards doing so by identifying what social justice means to women adult educators engaged in activism. In the next chapter, details of the research design used and methods conducted are presented.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

From the smallest descriptor to the choice of naming and categorizing, our words carry power and, therefore, they can liberate, but they can, and often do, oppress.

-Tonya Huber-Warring (Huber-Warring, 2008, p. xvi)

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between Catholic women adult educators' understanding of social justice and their engagement in anti-poverty activist practice with Hurricane Katrina survivors, in the context of a religiously-affiliated organization. The central questions that guided this study were:

1. What is the social justice discourse of Catholic women with a sustained commitment to social justice?
2. How does the social justice discourse of Catholic adult educator women align with how they describe their activist practice?
3. How does spirituality influence the meaning of social justice for Catholic adult educator women engaged in work with the poor?

This chapter is organized into seven major sections. The first section describes the conceptual framework and puts forth the theoretical perspectives that inform the study. In the next section, I outline the research design, identifying the research site. The third section presents the research setting including the history and structure of the organization and sample criteria selection. The fourth section outlines my data collection and analysis methods. The fifth section describes the procedures I implemented to ensure trustworthiness. The sixth section describes

my subjectivities as a researcher. The final section describes how I upheld my ethical responsibilities. This chapter ends with a brief summary.

Conceptual Framework

This research methodology was conceptually informed by three theoretical perspectives that influenced the study's foundation and analytical framework. The first two perspectives, radical-critical theory and Catholic social teaching, identified in this section converge to formulate the study's broad foundation which reflects my philosophical understanding of adult education and social justice activism. The third perspective, social justice discourse, guided the data collection and analysis during this study.

Radical-Critical Theory

First, this study has been influenced by some of those adult education scholars (Baumgartner, 2006; Brookfield, 2005; Cervero & Wilson, 2001; Foley, 2001; Holst, 2009, 2010; Cunningham, 1998; Horton & Freire, 1990; Johnson-Bailey, 2006; Newman, 1994; Quigley, 2000) who have identified societal hegemony and align with radical approaches to social change. These scholars describe and deconstruct the systemic and structural dynamics of power and privilege, those who benefit and those who are marginalized and silenced. My understanding of social justice is grounded in the radical approach, specifically the critical-emancipatory adult education philosophy, as outlined by Tisdell and Taylor (1999), which challenges social structures through an examination of class-based power differentials. I am also influenced by Mohanty (2003) and Gouin (2009) who advance anticapitalist, antiracist feminist theory as a way to strengthen the traditional view of radicalism.

Catholic Social Teaching

In addition to radical or emancipatory theories, Catholic social teaching is the second major perspective that informs this study's foundation and my worldview, which is similar to that of reformist Christian feminists as described by McDougall (2008). A strong association between spirituality and social justice is well-established in the adult education literature, what is lacking has been a discussion of how adult educator activists expressing their spirituality understand social justice. While it has been established that Catholic social teaching both reflects and challenges radical-critical theories such as feminism, this study focused on the meaning and practice of Catholic women engaged in an area of consonance, social justice activism for those who are economically marginalized. The practice setting selected for this study reflects a notion that Heyer (2008) succinctly argues, which is that "Catholic social thought does not merely consist of what gets authored by popes or emphasized by bishops, but also by what is lived by communities of hope and faith" (p. 10). One of Catholic social teaching's primary tenets is a preferential option for the poor. This study represents an effort to move beyond this tenet and examine how Catholic adult educators working on behalf of those in poverty understand social justice, poverty, and how these understandings align with their chosen practice.

Social Justice Discourse

The third theoretical perspective that informed this study in general also informs the data collection and analysis methods in particular; it is the social justice discourse framework as outlined by Choules (2007). Choules describes how individuals express their understanding of social justice on one of three discourses, and identifies the privilege discourse as the one that clearly speaks to systemic and structural causes. I used the discourse framework Choules

outlines as a prism to situate study participants' social justice understanding on the charity, human rights, or privilege discourse and as a reference to align their practice to their verbal expression. Study participants were women, who themselves have been subjected to the multi-layered phenomena of power dynamics, engaged in adult educator activist practice for the poor. Choules framework was used to organize and examine the data I collected.

Research Design

A qualitative research study has been conducted. Merriam (2002a) and other scholars (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006) use the words qualitative research to describe a range of research strategies that are guided by several theoretical or philosophical orientations which share the assumption that individuals construct their own realities. In the realm of qualitative research, there is no single, observable reality but, rather, there are multiple realities. Merriam and Simpson (2000) note that qualitative research is influenced by phenomenological and symbolic interactionism perspectives; the qualitative researcher's interest is "in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 98). Because it is understood that these realities are constructed from interactions within each individual's social world, qualitative researchers are concerned with how individuals construct these realities and how they interpret and make meaning of their experiences. The focus is on participant perspectives, of making sense of phenomena from the individual's perspective. The purpose of qualitative research was to achieve an understanding of how individuals give meaning to their lived experience. Recognizing that all experiences occur in context, qualitative researchers aim to understand how people make meaning of their experiences in unique situations. Qualitative research methods were appropriate for this study because I sought to understand how women adult educators

engaged in anti-poverty activism, those who may not self-identify as either adult educators or activists, understand social justice and their practice.

This qualitative research study's design was a case study that blended elements of narrative and critical discourse analysis, creating a data rich method for understanding these participants' discourses and the way they enact these understandings in practice. As a case study, the unit under analysis was women's narratives; these narratives were analyzed through a critical discourse lens. While detailed descriptions of my data collection and data analysis methods are provided in the next major section, immediately below I outline how case study incorporating blended elements of narrative and critical discourse analysis was used in the research design.

Case Study

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), case study is a detailed examination of a single entity, be it a setting, subject, document depository, or specific event. Because of my interest in examining the discourses of participants in a single organizational setting, I deemed case study to be an appropriate design strategy because I endeavored "to answer focused questions by producing in-depth description over a relatively short period of time" (Hays, 2004, p. 218). The study was bounded by my research questions that focus on particular people, Catholic women who are adult educator activists, engaged in a specific practice with the poor in a particular city, New Orleans. These women's narratives were the unit of analysis under study. From August 2009 to July 2010, I made three visits to New Orleans, the first for four days to orient myself to the city and identify potential research settings, the second for five days for pre-planning meetings to confirm the setting, and the last, for three weeks, to collect data which entailed primarily in-depth interviewing and participant observation.

Critical Discourse and Narrative Analysis

Critical discourse analysis is a complex process that “questions the relationships between power relations evidenced in social formations and that of everyday statements” (Thomas, 2006, p. 70). Rather than investigating detailed discursive features such as textual superstructure, style, classification schemes, meaning relations, and temporal order or grammatical structures as outlined by Thomas (p. 95), my focus was on identifying participants’ ideological representation of social justice and poverty. Thomas (2006) describes ideologies as frameworks of thought; when group members explain, motivate, or legitimate their group-based actions, they do so in terms of ideological discourse (Van Dijk, 2006). My goal was to unpack the poverty and social justice talk of adult educator activists, individuals who likely do not identify themselves as such, in terms of power and privilege. Central to each of the three social justice discourses outlined by Choules (2007) is an ideological expression about societal power and privilege.

In order to interpret study participants’ interview text, I blended thematic narrative analysis with the macro-sensibility of critical discourse analysis. Essentially, I identified themes embedded in participants’ social justice discourse through a critical discourse lens. As I unpacked or deconstructed the narratives about their activist work and their understanding of poverty into meaningful themes, I identified implicit or explicit expressions associated with the positioning of the poor and the privileged with regard to power relations. I then situated each onto one of the three social justice discourse platforms of charity, human rights, or privilege. I sought to understand how these adult educator activists understood social justice and their practice, as well as how the two aligned.

Research Site

Because I was interested in exploring the intersection of social justice interpretations, anti-poverty activism, and spirituality, I situated my study in New Orleans, a primary location of the 2005 Katrina hurricane disaster and an area where many religiously-affiliated organizations are in operation. I regard this city as what Marshall and Rossman (2006) describe as a realistic research site, which is, among other factors, a place where there is a “high probability that a rich mix of the processes, people, programs, interactions, and structures is present” (p. 62), a mix that corresponds well to my research questions.

New Orleans. New Orleans and its immediate surroundings, where many activists have been and continue to be engaged in economic justice work, was an ideal setting to investigate sustained commitment to social justice practice. The socio-economic, demographic divide of this area was starkly and tragically highlighted in the storm’s aftermath. The extent that the city’s residents, particularly those in poverty, suffered, and continue to suffer, was and is deep. According to a 2008 Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals report, 971 Katrina-related deaths were identified in Louisiana. It should be noted that elsewhere in this dissertation, the death toll is indicated as 1,833, this is the amount estimated for the entire region affected not exclusively Louisiana. Among the major causes of death were drowning, injury and trauma, and heart conditions (Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, 2008) widely reported as attributed to wholly inadequate evacuation and rescue operations following infrastructure damage and failure. The report’s statistics highlight how those people living in low income areas were disproportionately affected by the flooding that occurred when the city’s levees failed: 51% were black, and 42% were White. Also, “in Orleans Parish, the mortality rate among blacks was 1.7 to 4 times higher than that among whites for all people 18 years old and older” (Louisiana

Department of Health and Hospitals). Walker (2010) describes the social ecology of suffering in New Orleans, reminding us that the one word moniker Katrina is now shorthand for the intersection of weather, water, and dire socio-economic circumstances. She argues that “disenfranchisement as a kind of distancing of African Americans from their home city was already a problem of enormous historical, economic, social, and environmental consequence before Katrina struck” (p. 53). Thus New Orleans is a living example of economic inequality and although the storm and flooding occurred nearly six years ago, economic inequality persists. Those individuals (adult education activists) who have continued working demonstrate a sustained commitment to social justice work. New Orleans was and is uniquely and ideally matched to my research interests and study.

The Rebuild Center. After two visits to New Orleans in August and October 2009, I identified the Rebuild Center, as a suitable and primary site; it is a multi-service recovery day center in New Orleans, Louisiana, serving homeless Katrina survivors, those chronically homeless, and immigrants seeking employment in a low income corridor of the city. The Center is a collaborative organization that, following its inception opened a new facility, bringing together agencies that had been previously serving homeless people independently. This collaborative agency is also religiously affiliated; the collaborative partners are all Catholic organizations. A description of the history and organizational structure of the Rebuild Center is included in the next section where comprehensive details regarding the research setting are presented.

The Research Setting

The Rebuild Center facility, a network of modular buildings, opened in 2007 and is located on Gravier Street which is within the Tulane/Canal street corridor, a low income

neighborhood of the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. It is at this site that I conducted five of eight participant interviews, conducted participant observations, and had informal conversations with participants and key informants, including other staff, volunteers, guests, and visitors. The Rebuild Center facility is unique insofar as it was constructed with its use in mind; many homeless shelters and centers occupy older, often formerly vacant, buildings that have been partly or fully renovated or retrofit to their new use. The facility won an architectural design award from the Bruner Foundation in 2008. Many details were considered in its design and construction, for example, the comfort of homeless people who sometimes feel confined in enclosed spaces was considered in the open air design and use of wood decking for common spaces.

History and Structure of The Rebuild Center

Today, The Rebuild Center, a collaborative, multi-service day center serving homeless Katrina survivors, chronically homeless people, and immigrants seeking employment, is open from 8a.m.-2:30p.m., Monday through Friday, closing on holidays. Services offered include: showers, laundry, local and long distance telephone calls, mail service, procurement of identification documents, unpaid wage assistance, legal services, and medical care.

Prior to the facility's opening, limited services had been provided to homeless individuals and others in need from a small trailer office located on the property owned by and adjacent to St. Joseph Catholic Church, this area was the parking lot next to the facility's construction site. There are four primary collaborating organizations that comprise the Rebuild Center; each was working independently prior to the establishment of the Rebuild Center. These primary collaborating organizations are all Catholic service ministries, three are sponsored by religious orders, and one is sponsored by the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The three collaborating

organizations sponsored by religious orders are: Lantern Light Inc., a ministry of the North American Conference of the Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and St. Joseph Catholic Church, sponsored by the Vincentian' Congregation of the Mission; and the Harry Thompson Center which is a ministry of Immaculate Conception Church and the New Orleans Jesuits. Only the Hispanic Apostolate Community Services of Catholic Charities is sponsored by the Archdiocese of New Orleans rather than by a single religious order. The Rebuild Center's published mission is "to provide a setting, resources and opportunities for collaboration among Catholic and other faith-based organizations in the City of New Orleans. The center will work with needy and displaced residents to rebuild their lives and repopulate this neighborhood" (Saint Joseph Church, 2010). The center's articulated mission is supported by the core mission for each of the collaborating service ministries, most of which explicitly express a commitment to social justice. These four sponsoring organizations work with other area agencies to provide services at a single location; these services include meals, showers, laundry, mail, language interpretation, mobile medical assistance and employment, legal, and immigration counseling (Bruner Foundation, 2009). While the Rebuild Center is exclusively a day facility, houses are also built for first-time home buyers under the auspices of Lantern Light (Bruner Foundation).

Lantern Light Inc (a service ministry of the North American Conference of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary). Lantern Light is a ministry sponsored and staffed by five women religious (nuns); it provides the executive leadership for the Rebuild Center. These women religious are members of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Presentation Sisters); they are representatives of the order's North American Conference which is a group of eight Presentation Sisters' congregations that "collaborate and communicate on issues of ministry, spirituality, and social justice" (Lantern Light, 2010). The

order was established by Nano Nagle in Ireland during 1775 when she opened its first convent; the order's mission is "to work for justice, alleviate oppression and promote human dignity, especially among the poor" (Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 2010). The North American Conference had selected New Orleans as a project site, based on the recommendation of one of the order's nuns who, during 2005, was already working in the city under the auspices of Lantern Light, Inc. (Bruner Foundation, 2009). In fact, the other four Presentation Sisters were relocating to New Orleans at the time Hurricane Katrina made landfall; they began work from a provisional facility, a trailer (Bruner Foundation).

St. Joseph's Catholic Church and the Congregation of the Mission/Vincentians. The office trailer that the Presentation Sisters initially worked from was in the parking lot of St. Joseph Catholic Church which was established in 1844 (Saint Joseph Church, 2010) and is the home parish for the Presentation Sisters located in New Orleans. The Church's former pastor facilitated discussions that brought the sponsoring organizations together in formation of the Rebuild Center with the idea that more could be accomplished in collaboration than independently (Bruner Foundation, 2009). Located in a low income area of the city, St. Joseph Catholic Church has a long tradition of providing services to the poor; in 1858 the Archdiocese of New Orleans entrusted the parish to the priests of the Congregation of the Mission (St. Joseph Church, 2010). A Catholic religious order of priests and brothers founded by Vincent DePaul, the Congregation of the Mission (commonly known as The Vincentians) seeks to evangelize the poor as the primary component of its mission (Congregation of the Mission, 2010). The Rebuild Center facility is located on St. Joseph Parish property and is situated behind the church; lay members of the parish work as center volunteers.

The Harry Thompson Center (a service ministry of Immaculate Conception Church and the New Orleans Jesuits). The Harry Thompson Center served the homeless population in central New Orleans prior to the storm offering services similar to those it offers today, as part of the Rebuild Center collaboration (Bruner Foundation, 2009). The Harry Thompson Center's original facility was flooded in 2005 during the Hurricane Katrina disaster and then closed; a leased property, the needed repairs were not made and so, having joined the collaboration, the Harry Thompson Center reopened as part of the Rebuild Center facility in 2007 (Bruner Foundation, 2009). It is a social outreach project of the Immaculate Conception Parish, a Jesuit Church (Immaculate Conception Parish Jesuit Church, 2010). Founded by Ignatius Loyola, the Jesuits (members of the Society of Jesus) have a history in New Orleans that stretches over nearly three centuries (Immaculate Conception Parish Jesuit Church). The promotion of social justice is part of the Jesuit tradition with a focus on the poor: "ours must be a dialogue, born of respect for people, especially the poor, in which we appreciate and share the values of their culture and offer our own treasures" (Jesuits of the New Orleans Province, 2010).

Hispanic Apostolate Community Services. Hispanic Apostolate Community Services of Catholic Charities is another partner in the Rebuild Center collaboration. Sponsored by the Archdiocese of New Orleans, the Hispanic Apostolate is a ministry that offers most of its community services from its office outside New Orleans in Metairie, Louisiana (Catholic Charities of New Orleans Archdiocese, 2010). Working within the broader Catholic Charities mission of assisting those in need, which includes advocating for the voiceless, and empowering the poor and vulnerable to foster a more just society (Neighborhood Partnership Network, 2010), the Hispanic Apostolate mission's ministry has been serving New Orleans since 1972 with a mission "to help immigrants become independent, productive, and integral members of our

society, respecting the dignity and potential of each human person” (Catholic Charities of New Orleans Archdiocese, 2010). While it is a key part of the Rebuild Center, with a single bi-lingual, full-time employee, this ministry has the smallest staff presence of the collaborating agencies (Bruner Foundation, 2010).

Service Recipients

The Center’s service recipients and visitors are referred to as guests. Thus, there are no clients at the Center, only guests; a word of respect that anticipates hospitality but also serves as a reminder that the invitation can be revoked should behavior be less than cordial. Center policies are posted every several feet on stainless steel plates screwed against the walls facing the built-in wooden benches where guests sit upon arrival; both safe practices and respectful behavior are demanded. Appendix A provides the Center policies. Therefore, in addition to prohibitions against weapons, illegal drugs, alcohol and smoking, profanity and physical or verbal abuse are not allowed. It is further required that all trash be placed in the garbage cans and that no one is to be in the shower or laundry areas until their name is called. Unruly guests are asked to leave the property; a staff member is required to expeditiously escort those in violation of the policies out to the street. The expectation is that guests are not just treated as guests, but indeed behave that way.

Sample Selection

Purposeful sampling is the participant selection method typically associated with case study designs and analytic induction (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Purposeful selection is used when study requirements for participants, with regard to the phenomenon to be examined, are clear (Ezzy, 2002). Because this study examined the intersection of social justice work and poverty interpretations by committed women adult educators within the context of a religiously-

affiliated organization, study participants were intentionally or purposefully selected.

Participants were individuals working in a Catholic coalition organization, The Rebuild Center, that actively serves homeless survivors of the 2005 Hurricane Katrina disaster and other individuals in need. These primary collaborating organizations are Catholic service ministries, three are sponsored by religious orders, and one is sponsored by the Archdiocese of New Orleans. These four sponsoring organizations are described above; the collaborative works with other area agencies to provide a wide range of services at a single location, including meals, personal hygiene facilities, laundry, mail, medical care, legal assistance, and immigration counseling (Bruner Foundation, 2009). Although the Center is a day facility, houses are also built for first-time home buyers as part of one of the collaborating ministries (Bruner Foundation). In addition to the women religious, lay women and men staff the Rebuild Center.

Sample criteria. The eight participants were all adult Catholic women who have been engaged in their work with the Rebuild Center (as either religious or lay and volunteers or paid staff members) for at least one year and generally engaged with the poor or other related social justice cause also for a minimum of two years; participants ranged in age from early twenties to over 65. The five participants who were over 50, had anywhere from 13 to 37 years experience in anti-poverty work. Kovan and Dirkx (2003), in their study of committed environmental activists, identified 10 years experience as an indication of sustained commitment. Of the three participants under 30 years of age, two had five years of experience working with the poor and one had two years. These three younger, less experienced participants were staff members of the Thompson Center, a key collaborative partner, representing the Jesuit tradition. The sample represents a range of ages and experience which adds depth to the study's findings. All Catholic women, three participants were members of the same religious order and five were lay women.

Only one participant identified as African American; this reflects the lack of diversity among Center staff. I was interested in examining social justice understanding outside the acknowledged adult education spaces such as higher education and community organizing and so, while none self-identified as such, participants worked as adult educator activists, both on-site and off.

The sample included all women for reasons that came together as I designed the study. The first reason is that I wanted to call attention to women whose social justice activist work is often outside that fully acknowledged as adult education whose contributions at times have been entirely overlooked (Parrish, 2002); I hoped to add to this lacking area of scholarship. Another reason is that once I decided that it was vital to include the Center's women religious in the sample, the participant sample could not also represent male clergy as none are on staff at the Center; women, both religious and lay, would provide the study's focus. A third reason is that I was interested in gaining insight into how other Catholic women might reconcile Catholic social teaching with the organized Church's social justice issues, reflecting my personal struggle as a woman who continues to practice her Catholic faith.

Sample selection. The Director of the Harry Thompson Center and the Executive Director of the Rebuild Center provided me with the names and contact information for potential study participants. Prior to my data gathering visit, I contacted these potential participants to ask if they would be willing to participate in the study, unfortunately, some had scheduled vacation for the summer weeks I was there and another was on a leave of absence from her position and out of the city. Contact was made by phone call, electronically by email, or both; a sample of the email correspondence I used for initial contact appears in Appendix B. Eight women did respond affirmatively; while making my purpose clear, I did not provide so much detail as to affect their

possible responses to my questions. Subsequent to each interview and during my time on site, I revealed additional information about my research. While I was focused on these women as individuals, engaged in activism in a particular setting, I included interview questions about contextual factors or conditions that enhanced or challenged their work.

Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative research utilizes inductive processes to analyze data (Merriam, 2002a). The inductive process builds on data as they are collected and is a continuous process of discovery. It is well suited where little is known about a phenomenon or problem. Both theory and study design are emergent. This is because the researcher typically does not know all that is significant until the study is underway. This makes the accurate and detailed collection of seemingly insignificant observations and data elements important. Refinements to research design (and later to the knowledge base and possibly theory) are made as data subsets are collected and analyzed. The researcher's findings are presented in themes, groupings, categories, concepts or possibly theory. "What is uncovered is mediated through the researcher's own perspective, resulting in an interpretation, description, or explanation of the phenomenon" (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p. 99). Because qualitative data collection and analysis is an integrated process (Ezzy, 2002), I attempted to be nimble and flexible in my approach; a description of my data collection and data analysis methods follows. These methods are informed by the case study design that blends narrative and critical discourse elements as described above.

Data Collection Methods

I proceeded as Merriam (2002a) suggests is appropriate for case studies, defining the unit of analysis and identifying the bounded system with an inductive strategy and an interest in preparing a richly descriptive product. Preparing a rich description requires that the data

collected are highly informational and complex, captured in words, gestures, documents, and images. The context, activities, and participants are all described in detail. Merriam and Simpson (2000) note that most qualitative research involves field work that is, physically going to the study site be it persons or an institution. This process is also often referred to as naturalistic and descriptive, one that cannot be easily reduced to numerical symbolism (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The researcher conveys what has been learned about the phenomenon under study by sharing participant quotes, field notes, documents, or pictures as evidence in support of the study's findings. Because the qualitative researcher is interested in context and in accurately depicting study participant perspectives, the participant's actual setting is usually the most appropriate place to conduct research; field work effectively complements the role of the researcher as primary instrument. To this end, I conducted participant interviews and participant observations.

Participant interviews. In-depth interviews are characteristic of case studies; they are consistent with and appropriate to most narrative projects (Riessman, 2008). I conducted in-depth interviews with all eight participants; these were similar to conversations and without predetermined response categories (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). These interviews had a semi-structured format because while I identified topics for discussion, I wanted to allow participants broad latitude in how they chose to frame and structure their responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), allowing for more of a conversation than a question and answer session. Broad questions were asked that facilitated and prompted response by participants on their own terms, in their own words. Follow-up questions were asked based on individual participant responses. I was able to hear the participants, through a somewhat open-ended conversation, describe their understanding of their work, the problem of poverty, social justice, and motivations and reasons

for conducting the work they do. The interview guide I developed and made use of is in Appendix C. I used an audio-recorder to fully capture participant interview sessions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) and on all but one occasion had two recorders to ensure at least one recording was viable. Following each interview, I took detailed and descriptive field notes in diary form to document my thinking, impressions, and other relevant information about the participant, day, and interview environment (Bogdan & Biklen; Hays, 2004). Interview audio-tapes were transcribed and constructed into a written record (Riessman, 2008). Because translating dynamic talk into linear written language (transcribing) is highly interpretive and not always straightforward (Riessman), participants were provided with the findings chapter to clarify interview quotations. Interview durations ranged from 45 minutes to 2 hours. This was exclusive of the follow-up conversations that occurred while I was on-site or the time I spent talking with participants during my observation and participation in some of the activities.

Participant observation. Another data collection method central to case study research is participant observation. Participant observation requires firsthand involvement in the participants' social world; "immersion in the setting permits the researcher to hear, to see, and to begin to experience reality as the participants do" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 100). Participant observations were key components of this case study insofar as they allowed me to witness (both actively and passively) participant practice. These observations also provided crucial background and experience regarding the organizational and institutional culture of the setting for three interrelated reasons. First, the study participants were working under the umbrella of a collaborative organization, a Catholic organization that articulates its mission and values and has established practices. Second, three different Catholic traditions are represented by the collaboration, the traditions of the religious orders involved all focus on service to the

poor, but each articulates this focus somewhat differently. The third reason is that Catholicism is a shared faith tradition among study participants; regardless of the degree that participants actively practiced Catholic faith; Catholic social teaching was a part of their religious formation. It was critical for me to understand how and to what extent Catholic culture informed the social justice discourse of participants. I spent 38 hours over three weeks, exclusive of a Saturday social gathering, observing participants and guests (Center clients), or engaging in Center activities myself. While observing participants, I looked at what they were doing, how they did it, and observed how they interacted with the Center's clients, other staff, and visitors. I used the guide in Appendix D as a protocol for these observations; it facilitated my note-taking. I served as a volunteer on several occasions; this included three two hour shifts administering the phone room, a couple of hours helping to prepare and serve lunch on one day, and several times assisting with helping establish and preserve order during the serving of lunch. In addition, I briefly relieved staff or volunteers who were on phone line duty and would sometimes relay messages between staff members.

Each day, I also walked or took public transportation for the three mile distance between the small cottage I stayed and the Center; I did this in both directions. It was a very hot and humid summer and aside from being determined to exercise during this three week period, I also wanted to experience the sights and sounds of the street much as the Center guests and homeless people might during the daytime hours. Either during or following this field work, sometimes immediately and at other times in the evening, I maintained a journal and notes to capture the situations I experienced and record the information I collected (Hays, 2004). This amounted to 32 densely hand written pages, some recordings were of a word or two that was intended to later trigger an entire memory. One week after returning home from data collection and while my

experience was quite recent, I began writing the narrative portions that appear in Chapter 4 using the field notes as an aid to my memory.

Key informants. The Director of the Thompson Center and Executive Director of the Rebuild Center were key informants. Historical, practical, logistical, and clarifying information regarding the collaboration was communicated to me in both formal and informal meeting settings. I had daily conversations with the Director of the Thompson Center. For these conversations and meetings, I made a written record of the points discussed or facts exchanged as appropriate, taking meeting notes or quickly jotting down a piece of information during the conversation, after, or later in the day when I returned back to the cottage where I was staying. This provided me with useful information that often complemented, augmented, or illuminated what I learned during a participant interview. During the planning phase and during my visit, I also communicated with these informants by telephone and email; notes from some of these conversations provided valuable information. Additional key informants were staff members who were not participants, guests who regularly approached me, and volunteers from visiting church groups and religious orders.

Documents. Interviews and observations were supplemented with information from extant texts. On occasion, participants would provide me with either handwritten or printed material that provided explanation or confirmation of what I heard during interview sessions. Specifically, participants provided me with written material relevant to the Rebuild Center such as the facility's 2007 dedication program and planning documents prepared as the collaborative was being established. Various websites for the Center, for each of the collaborative partners, and those of the various Catholic religious traditions also provided context and information about mission, direction, philosophy, vision, history, or accomplishments. In some cases, these

documents verified memories or helped fill in missing pieces to stories told during participant interviews. Aside from this verification function, these also confirmed aspects of the religious orders' understanding of their missions with regard to serving the poor.

Data Analysis Methods

Narrative research was central to this case study, it includes a broad range of talk and text and functions to share the meaning of experience (Cortazzi, 2001). Reissman (2008) identifies thematic narrative analysis as a form of narrative analysis concerned not with language, textual construction, or form but with narrator meaning expressed by themes. As described above, my first broad objective of the analytic process was to capture these women activists' talk about poverty, social justice, and their work. I conducted a thematic analysis and utilize methods described by Charmaz (2006) and Ryan and Bernard (2000).

First, transcripts were prepared from the audio files. I then read each transcript multiple times and analyzed participant words and my notes for patterns, trends, and recurrent themes. The audio quality of some of the interviews was poor and this required that some audio files be replayed in order to achieve additional clarity in the transcriptions. I then took one transcript and cut and paste key phrases or paragraphs into a spreadsheet, adding a numerical code for each different grouping of phrases to signal a different strand of conversation. I used the numerical codes established with that first transcript to code others. As I moved through all eight transcripts, numerical codes were added, dropped, and combined. Compiling all seemingly key phrases from participant interviews into a single spreadsheet allowed me to identify the most significant themes. A sample page from the data spreadsheet appears in Appendix E.

As I reviewed the codes, I determined those that made the most analytical and categorical sense by re-sifting through all of the data. Data sifting to identify significant emergent themes is

an iterative process. I also subscribe to Ryan and Bernard's insights into finding themes. As these scholars indicate, I have used both the narrative text and to a lesser extent, literature reviews as a way to express the articulated themes. Ryan and Bernard make it clear that theme finding occurs before, during, and after data collection, and this was the case. Analysis continued through the theme write-ups where further collapsing and dividing of themes. I also matched participants' poverty talk and its emergent themes and situated it in one of Choules' (2007) social justice discourses. Thus, I analyzed the poverty talk and themes with the objective of identifying implicit and explicit references to societal power relations.

In the reviews of my analytical notes and memos conducted during data gathering and later during reviews coinciding with theme spreadsheet preparation, I recognized that a high level theme, one that subsumed all the others, was emerging. Onwuegbuzie (2003) recommends meta-theme analysis during what he considers confirmatory thematic analyses. While I did not employ the statistical binary technique he supports, which would seem especially useful when multiple meta-themes are suspected within a very large data set, my analysis did reveal a broad unifying meta-theme. This meta-theme is presented as a finding along with the other themes that my analysis revealed. A pilot interview that I conducted to test an early draft of the interview guide and a conversation with an acquaintance provided me with some examples of how I might identify understanding and ideology associated with social justice. From there, I considered whether there existed alignment between each participant's discourse and how they described their specific adult educator activist practice and how I observed them in their practice. I also considered how spirituality influenced participants' understandings of social justice. Table 1 below served as a preliminary aide for the critical discourse analysis portion of the analytic process.

Table 1

Sample Data Analysis Guide: Social Justice Discourse Platform

Thematic Expression Related to:	Charity	Human Rights	Privilege
Client	<p>Client as social problem (cause) , as “other”, lazy, not self-reliant; unintelligent:</p> <p><i>‘Well, who doesn’t know to get out of the way of a storm? I know, everyone knows. . . honestly, how could they not have listened to the news [of Katrina’s approach] and not have known what to do?’</i></p>	<p>Client as victim of rights violations:</p> <p><i>‘Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.’</i></p> <p><i>‘We are all worthy of decent treatment.’</i></p> <p><i>‘We are all sisters and brothers.’</i></p>	<p>Client as victim of structural injustice:</p> <p><i>‘How does anyone overcome the problems of no transportation, limited language skills, and no reliable childcare?’</i></p> <p><i>‘Others [the privileged] do not understand because their tunnel is bright, they do not see all the blockades the poor face.’</i></p>
Society (implicit or explicit)	<p>Society as fair; provides opportunity for all; individuals should take responsibility</p>	<p>Shared humanity and rights should be extended to all persons</p>	<p>Poverty as injustice and inequality; tied to societal structure</p> <p>Recognizes obstacles to transportation, citizenship, employment</p>
Underlying Power Structure	<p>Not problematic, status quo remains</p>	<p>Has potential to challenge structural injustice but often goes unfulfilled</p>	<p>Challenges/questions prevailing power structure</p>
Practice (Alignment)	<p>Serving food, arranging temporary shelter, hygiene kits</p>	<p>Legal assistance, wage claims assistance, medical assistance, mail services, emergency groceries</p>	<p>Mortgage readiness, Financial literacy, home ownership assistance</p>

Trustworthiness

An important characteristic of qualitative research is that the researcher serves as primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2002a). Given that the overarching purpose of qualitative research is to achieve an understanding of human meaning and the process of meaning-making, it follows that the researcher fulfills a critical role. Thus, in an effort to conduct a highly credible qualitative research study, measures to ensure trustworthiness should be adopted. The abilities of responsiveness and adaptation are key requirements of successful qualitative research and the human instrument is well equipped to serve as data collector and analyzer under these circumstances.

Narrative inquiry, the primary technique I have utilized in this case study which is blended with a form of critical discourse analysis, is especially vulnerable to researcher subjectivity and participants' perceptions, both fraught with the potential for misinterpretation. With narrative inquiry, mutual trust and accurate interpretations are essential to the ability to collect and analyze rich, descriptive data. Faithfulness to participant narrative data and the plausibility of data findings are important also. For these reasons, I have endeavored to ensure trustworthiness by considering four measures as outlined by Morrow (2005). Although Morrow (2005) writes in the context of qualitative research for counseling psychology, she notes her field's "evolving constructivist and social justice foci" and considers the standards she outlines as "somewhat universal across disciplines and paradigms" (p. 250); these standards may be deemed appropriate for this adult education study. One of the standards that Morrow considers is social validity, reflecting back to Wolf (1978) who argued for subjective measurement in those cases where applied behavioral research was of social significance. Not only does this study center on social justice and its meaning, but articulating a research study's social significance, as

I have done in Chapter 1, is a common practice in the field of adult education. I therefore outline how this study addresses the remaining three standards; these are subjectivity and reflexivity, adequacy of data, and adequacy of interpretation (Morrow).

Regarding data interpretation, Denzin (2010) considers the fifty year history of qualitative researchers' calls for triangulation and mixed methods and concludes that "there are no ironclad criteria regulating the production of knowledge or the validation of inquiry findings" (p. 424). Denzin (2010) furthers this notion with his argument that "inquiry has always been and will always be a moral, political, value-laden enterprise" (pp. 424-425). He admits to having 'climbed on the band wagon' of "racing to design research that was valid, objective, and sensitive to threats to internal and external validity and reliability" (p. 419). And while today Denzin looks to a "moral and methodological community that honors and celebrates paradigm and methodological diversity" (p. 425) without adherence to rigid rules regarding solid research inquiry, in the Adequacy of Interpretation subsection below, I do address triangulation in the manner he formerly delineated it. This is because in accepting the notion of researcher as bricoleur or quilt-maker, I believe a well created quilt's artistry is revealed through a unifying, though sometimes subtle, coherence of technique, material, and color composition; likewise, data triangulation can ensure the researcher a significant measure of such coherence.

Subjectivity and Reflexivity

Merriam (2002a) highlights the importance of the researcher identifying and monitoring her/his biases or subjectivities that may impact the study that is being conducted. Rather than striving for objective study outcomes, it is useful and important to understand researcher subjectivity in terms of how a particular researcher shapes a given study and its findings; unique research contributions are created as a result. While I have worked to well represent

participants' realities by inquiring into meaning during this study's data collection process, it is critically important that my subjectivity be acknowledged. In order to thoroughly present my subjectivity, I have devoted the next major section of this chapter to it.

Adequacy of Data

In describing adequacy of data, Morrow (2005), cautions against focusing primarily on amounts of data. As suggested, this study used a purposeful sample that was criterion-based, the specific details are outlined in the sample criteria and selection section earlier in this chapter. I have collected data from multiple sources. My primary source of data collection has been eight participant interviews and having achieved redundancy and saturation such that the themes and findings presented in Chapter 5 easily resulted from my analysis of the data, I am confident that adequate data were collected. I additionally conducted 38 hours of participant observation over a three week period and made two planning visits to New Orleans for a total of nine days prior to my data collection visit. Information provided by key informants and other written documents were used to verify, to the extent possible, participant descriptions of their practice. As Merriam (2002b) suggests, I maintained a research journal and supplemental notes where I recorded insights, observations, key words or sights to jog my memory, and impressions that I experienced on a daily basis for the duration of the data collection and analysis processes. Information about participants, the setting, the process, and reflections of me as a researcher were included, speaking to the adequacy of the data and serving as "a detailed account of how the study was conducted and how the data were analyzed" (Merriam, 2002b, p. 28).

I provided an opportunity for study participants to review their profiles and the verbatim quotations used in the interpretive findings for accuracy; they were also able to restate or redact words that do not convey their intended response. Merriam (2002b) notes that the peer review

strategy is built into the dissertation process by the involvement of committee members (particularly the methodologist and committee chairperson). I have also described my perspective in the researcher subjectivity statement (that follows this major section) and in an earlier section in this chapter the study's conceptual framework is outlined; I have articulated my assumptions, worldview and theoretical orientation to the study's research topic and questions so that the relational aspects of the study that affect its findings are clarified and I may increase awareness to my biases and their effects on data interpretation (Merriam, 2002b).

I have provided rich, thick descriptions of data (Merriam, 2002b). While the reader will not be able to broadly generalize from the study's findings beyond this purposeful study sample, every effort has been made to ensure that the findings accurately reflect the data collected from this particular sample in this particular research setting. As Bodgan and Biklen (2007) note, one way that qualitative researchers approach generalizability is to provide a well-documented study that other researchers may then use to decide how to best apply (presumably to situations that they have familiarity with or have studied). This is how the study will realize its interpretive value or generalizability, in the potential to offer in-depth analyses and interpretations to other researchers working in various contexts, contexts that share similar elements or characteristics.

Adequacy of Interpretation

Adequacy of data and adequacy of interpretation are closely related and interdependent to a great extent. In qualitative research, reality is understood through "the researcher's interpretation of participants' interpretations or understandings of the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 2002b, p. 25). The researcher's aim is to develop an in-depth understanding of participants' realities and so small non-random samples are purposefully selected, findings therefore cannot be generalized (Merriam, 2002b). However, Merriam (2002b) points out that

the knowledge derived from an in-depth analysis may be transferred to other situations. Given that there can be multiple interpretations of the same data, it is likely that qualitative study replication will not yield similar results; however, the more appropriate concern for qualitative researchers is whether consistency exists between data collected and the results (Merriam, 2002b).

Analysis, interpretation, and writing. Morrow (2005) outlines three key aspects in the research process regarding adequate data interpretation; these are (a) the continuous, interactive process of data analysis, interpretation, and writing; (b) the articulation of an analytic framework at the study's outset; and (c) a findings presentation that balances participant quotations with researcher interpretations. To begin with, I articulated both a conceptual and analytic framework for this study; these are articulated in earlier sections of this chapter. Furthermore, I adhered to this framework as I conducted the study. Regarding the interactive process of data analysis, I would add that this began during data collection and proceeded throughout the study up to the findings write-up. Multiple readings of transcripts, playbacks of audio recordings, and the written articulation of my interpretations occurred throughout this process. Details of the data analysis techniques employed are also described elsewhere in this chapter. I believe the findings presentation, which is replete with verbatim participant quotes, is organized by and balanced with my interpretations as researcher.

Data triangulation. Morrow's key aspects are further supported by data triangulation as articulated by Denzin (1970); he outlines four basic types: data, researcher, theory and methodological. As I moved through data analysis and interpretation a dynamic, interdependent verification process unfolded that helped ensure my faithfulness to the narrative data and indicated that my findings were, indeed, plausible. For the analysis that occurred both during

data collection and afterwards, participant narrative data supported the other participants' data. Participant narrative was additionally supported by the participant observations and review of available printed and electronic documents. From the vantage of researcher, my interpretations were confirmed by participants who reviewed the reported findings. Next, the available literature in terms of previously conducted research studies supported participant narrative as well as my interpretations of it. Finally, the relevant theory described in the literature supported all aspects of data interpretation.

As I have indicated above, an important limitation to consider for the conduct of this study is that the data themes identified, discourse locations on Choules' (2007) framework, and findings represented, have been viewed and then presented through my researcher subjectivity lens and so run the risk of being distortions of participant data and intended meaning. I have worked, consistent with Merriam's and others' suggestions, to minimize such distortions. In the section that follows, I present my subjectivity.

Researcher Subjectivity

As noted in the Trustworthiness section above, it is worthwhile for me to consider myself as primary research instrument and reflect upon my simultaneous insider/outsider status. Insider/outsider status has frequently been described in the qualitative research literature as a binary concept. That is, the researcher is perceived as either an insider or outsider to the study participants in terms of the various societal groups with which the participants may themselves identify or affiliate. Insider/outsider perceptions are important to acknowledge because they signal power imbalances and bias that can affect the researcher's data collection and data analysis. With the assumption that not all study participants fully shared my race, class, religious affiliation, and political perspective, I was likely perceived as an insider to some, outsider to

others, and both to still others. For this study, I simultaneously held insider and outsider status. There exists nuance to the social construct of insider/outsider. I recognize that, in those instances where I deemed myself an insider, I might have been more or less in from a given participant's perspective. Similarly, this can be the case with outsider status.

Johnson-Bailey (2004) describes the extended notion of insider/outsider as a binary pairing with fixed categories to the idea that there are dynamic perceived degrees of difference around the political and cultural position of researchers vis a vis participants. Commenting on feminist research, Johnson-Bailey (2004) also refers to the inconsistency of the insider's terrain, reflective of perceived degrees of difference. And in their research study of evangelicalism in Northern Ireland, Ganiel and Mitchell (2006) describe religious identity as a continuum and challenge researchers to "resist the temptation to reduce religious identity to social categories and boundary maintenance" (p. 15). Thus, it is important that I, as researcher, represent my role as data collector and data interpreter in terms of my subjectivity (Merriam, 2002a), the lens through which I will be conducting this study.

I am a white, fifty-five year-old, middle class woman. I am also a practicing Catholic who was educated at a Jesuit university during the 1970's, a time when liberation theology was flourishing. Catholicism, in general, and Catholic social teaching, in particular, inform key components of my worldview. While I was an outsider to the organization, for some participants, all of whom were women (religious and lay) working in a Catholic organization, simply being a Catholic woman may have deemed me an insider regardless of their other positionality attributes. I will have been perceived as an insider to some (those who are white, middle-age, middle class, and lay), outsider to others, and both to still others. Thus, some of this study's eight participants might have experienced me, as researcher, in the way Johnson-Bailey

(2004) has described, with a perceived degree of difference in spite of similar characteristics. For example, shared positionality in all but academic degrees attained could cause me to be perceived as an outsider. Because a single view of the United States socio-economic landscape is not shared by all citizens, I was careful to not indiscriminately express views that could render me an outsider to study participants who because we share race, class, gender, and religious affiliation would otherwise consider me an insider.

One source of demographic information (MuniNetGuide, 2008) indicates that New Orleans is over 67% Black. For the one Black participant that I interviewed, I might have been perceived as an outsider because we do not share racial background. I am not nor am I a member of Cajun culture, nor am I from Louisiana, therefore my outsider status with regards to race as well as class could be magnified in the eyes of some participants. Because of the city's demographics, a disproportionate number of those affected by the storm and its aftermath are Black. As a White person, my research involving economic justice for Katrina survivors may or may not be looked upon favorably; this perspective will likely differ by individual.

Demographic statistics (MuniNetGuide) also indicate that New Orleans' median household income is \$33,625. One view is that I would be an insider for those study participants who are middle class and an outsider for those who are not. The idea of an insider/outsider continuum works well here. While I have benefited from both White and socio-economic privilege, my young parents of modest backgrounds worked multiple jobs so that my brother and I would be the first generation to continue our formal education directly from high school. I appreciate my privilege, but I am a fourth generation American with parents of European ancestry. I heard family narratives of economic struggle: poverty, meager means, and discrimination by more advantaged Whites. I determined it was not necessary for me to disclose some of this

information to study participants. However, it may also be possible that I will have had a variation of Johnson-Bailey's (2004) experience during her study of re-entry women where economically disadvantaged women who also lacked educational credentials were reluctant to speak to an academician even though they had gender, race, and class upbringing in common; again, this did not seem to be the case as all participants had at least undergraduate degrees and several also had masters.

According to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA, 2008), New Orleans is 46% Catholic. With regards to this dimension, I will often be considered an insider to participants, all who will have had an upbringing or an experience in the Catholic faith tradition, regardless of their current practice. Some were women religious (professed members of religious orders) and others, lay people. However, a shared religious tradition may not have insulated me from an outsider slant or misguided data interpretation. While conducting religious ethnographic research in Northern Ireland, Ganiel and Mitchell (2006) describe how their study participants responded to each of their self-described religious identities, one a liberal evangelical and another a religious backslider. Interesting dynamics resulted as the researchers' religious identities influenced their engagement level in various participant activities and dialogue. I am moderate in my Catholic stance and this coupled with the fact that I am more politically liberal than not, may cause me to be perceived as an outside insider by those who are conservative adherents to Catholicism. Fortunately, no participant revealed herself as a highly rigid and strict adherent to the Catholic faith. In reflecting on insider-outsider issues in her research, Tisdell (2002b) describes a researcher's potential interpretation pitfall of being blinded by insider status insofar as incorrectly attributing participant actions through the prism of a shared positionality attribute. I believe, however, that my Catholicism helped participants to

better relate to me as researcher and contributed to free-flowing discussion, allowing me to engage participants in a conversational rather than purely question and answer session.

Ethics

I proceeded with this study following approval from The University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board. Study participants are adults, who voluntarily participated in this study. They are not members of groups considered vulnerable human subjects. I upheld the highest ethical standards while conducting this research, in the ways described below as well as in the kind, sensitive, and respectful treatment of participants, potential participant recruits, and site staff members. Subsequent to an oral description of what they were consenting to and prior to the beginning of any interview, participants were asked to read and sign a consent form. Answering or choosing to not answer any question was at the participant's discretion as well as was sustained participation in the interview. In an introductory statement immediately preceding the interview, I described the interview process. I further explained, at each interview's conclusion, that participants had an opportunity to refine or withdraw any of their responses. Further, the identities of all participants will remain confidential. Pseudonyms have been used and other identifying elements will be removed from all study reports and publications using transcript excerpts. Pseudonyms have been used to label all transcripts, audio tapes, digital, and other electronic files. Password protection for electronic files and locked cabinets for paper and electronic media file copies will be used to ensure the physical security of stored records. I commit to having honestly reported and prepared the findings for my final report. Finally, permission from each participant will be required for the indefinite retention of their records (paper, tape, and electronic media) for future research and teaching purposes.

CHAPTER 4

STUDY PARTICIPANTS IN PRACTICE

We reach out in faith to the homeless and those made poor. We are bearers of hope, as we nurture its various manifestations, by encouraging, supporting, comforting, assisting and being a compassionate, listening presence to those we encounter. We have been entrusted with the responsibility and the privilege to enable people to help themselves, to realize their self worth and their potential as persons.

Our continuing prayer, as we collaborate with others, is that together we will bring forth a sustainable society where universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace is the norm.

-Presentation Sisters Collaborative Ministry,
Program for Dedication of St. Joseph Rebuild Center,
August 26, 2007

In this chapter, I present the participant information compiled during the data collection phase of this study. Because this research is a case study that blended elements of narrative and critical discourse analysis, it is important I present the case in a robust contextual frame by describing the participants and their practice, in the context of the research setting that is described in Chapter 3. Further, because this is a qualitative study, the lens through which the researcher peers, in other words, my perspective is also presented. In this chapter's Introduction, I describe the organization and structure for this chapter's body and the reasoning behind the chosen format.

Introduction

Storytelling through narrative is a way for the reader to peer through the qualitative researcher's lens so I use the narrative form to provide you with a sense of people and place; my intention is to describe details and circumstances that were present during my field work to

create background and foreground to the study's findings. For this reason, I have chosen to embed participant profiles into narrative descriptions. I have constructed these narratives primarily in one of the ways described by Reissman (2008), that is, from memories of my participant observations prompted by field notes and journal entries. I have used edited interview transcripts to a lesser extent here and more extensively in Chapter 5. In this chapter, I have coupled participant profiles with the rhythm of a typical day at The Rebuild Center. In so doing, I present an important component of the case by situating participants in their practice, which is where they revealed to me their understandings of social justice, an idea central to this study's research questions. Not only do I convey my researcher's perspective in narrative descriptions of others, I also share my own experiences that occurred during planning visits and data collection in New Orleans. Throughout this chapter you will read three voices: those of the study participants, the Center guests who were present as I observed the participants, and mine in two versions, as me, a storyteller or narrator and me, still Sherri, but as a researcher, the primary instrument of data collection and analysis looking through the prism of critical theory. Critical theory focuses on power relations and the effects of power and privilege on the societal level. Critical discourse analysis examines how discourse (words and their meaning) are used to maintain or challenge prevailing power structures. Because this study is a form of critical discourse analysis, words are a critical element.

The body of this chapter includes a major section for the researcher and another for the participants; each section includes one or multiple narratives. From here forward, I use the word guest just as the organization refers to a client or individual receiving services. I have used different phrases to signal changes in voice; my author voice as participant observer is labeled with the phrase "The Story." Once introduced, participants' actual words are attributed by

pseudonym. I follow each participant story with a subsection titled with the pseudonym and the words “as Participant;” this is to make a distinction between a narrative description of practice and my researcher voice. I use the phrase “A Reflection” when I provide my first person accounts.

The text is occasionally interrupted with text boxes labeled “Center Fact” or “Living Homeless” that highlight facts about the Center or homelessness as a way to broaden and deepen the discussion beyond the specific details of a given narrative and to provide further context related to the work these women adult educators do. In some cases, these facts might serve to trouble readers’ notions of homelessness and the organizations that serve homeless people. I have also included phrases uttered by guests that are in boxes and labeled “Guest Words” in an effort to recall those handwritten signs, often scratched on weathered cardboard, that homeless people sometimes carry to announce their availability for work and need for food or spare change. While the Catholic women workers are the focus of my study, my intention is that these phrases give voice to the guests, the marginalized persons that the study participants interact with in a variety of ways. In most cases guest quotes are paraphrased from my field notes except when they were spoken by a participant during an interview. Further, I intentionally make references in narrative to my American middle class lifestyle to serve as a reminder of privilege, and to help make the circumstances of society’s invisible people, those marginalized in the way homeless people often are, visible through comparison to the circumstances of those who are privileged. The Researcher is the first of the two major sections; it begins immediately below.

The Researcher

In Chapter 3, I describe my research methods and present a subjectivity statement where I outline in detail my positionality and its relationship to this study from my dual perspective of

researcher insider and outsider. Here, in three subsections, I share my experiences as a way to introduce myself, Sherri, as author, adult educator and researcher, someone who has become aware of her privilege over the years but occasionally needs to be reminded of what this privilege means to her and what it might mean to others. My intention is to offer you a sense of the researcher lens that I peered through during the data collection and analysis phases of this study. Using narrative as described above, two of the three subsections are presented to share my reflections on and general impressions of New Orleans and the practice setting; in the third subsection, I share one of my experiences. Each subsection is organized in two parts, The Story and A Reflection that is intended to further illuminate the story it accompanies.

Reflections and Impressions of New Orleans

In Chapter 1, I describe the social and economic landscape of New Orleans and the devastation wrought by the Katrina storm and aftermath. Here, I share a view through my researcher lens by offering a brief description of my general impression of the city, which was in the throes of an environmental assault during my data gathering visit.

The story. Outrage and resolve, brokenness and hope, disappointment and promise infuse the city's air, like the braided odors of mildew and freshly cut wood wafting from homes and buildings in various stages of deterioration, renovation, or new construction. Having identified my research site and made tentative arrangements during two prior visits in 2009, I arrived in New Orleans, Louisiana for what became three weeks of data gathering in late June 2010; it was approaching five years since the Katrina disaster, about eight weeks after the BP Deepwater Horizon explosion had occurred and before the oil spilling into the Gulf of Mexico was contained. During the duration of my stay the Times-Picayune newspaper daily featured articles and graphics that tracked the size and location of the spill, documenting its effects on

wildlife, the fishing industry, availability of seafood, and the livelihood of residents. And five years after the storm disaster, there were few news or human interest articles I read that did not locate the reportable situation temporally, in pre- or post-Katrina terms. Upon returning home, I was asked the state of New Orleans residents' sentiments and emotions, whether they were palpable, in the air. My response was that they were the air, naturally inhaled and exhaled. The point is not that this was or is a city of contrasts, though in many ways it is, but that these dualistic emotional states were simultaneously held collectively and by individual beings like a mother's deep love and optimism for a young adult child who has repeatedly disappointed and hurt her or like the music of a New Orleans funeral, daunting and pleasing because it is simultaneously mournful and celebratory.

A reflection. Walker (2010), in describing the social ecology of suffering, how those lacking socio-economic means suffer most and differently, also references the "belatedness" of traumatic events. This is the idea that trauma is not simply bound or limited temporally but persists across time. I think belatedness is what I sensed in the air during my days in New Orleans.

Reflections and Impressions of the Practice Setting

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the research setting. In this subsection, I share my sensory impressions of the research setting's environment which is the collaboration's facility and the actual or former practice site for six of the eight participants. It is also where I conducted participant observations.

The story. Squealing brakes as cars and buses negotiate long neglected potholes, the relentless sound of an overpass' rushing traffic, an elevated walk-way bridging two buildings, hard-hatted construction workers adding to the high-rise skyline, people mulling on the uneven

sidewalk, a bus-stop shelter, a wide, open entranceway. . . arrival at The Rebuild Center is a three-step journey. Visitors step from the concrete urbanity of Gravier Street to a courtyard refuge of wood and the luscious greens of bamboo, jasmine, and tropical flora, a journey, from the hard edges of street life to a healing serenity traveled in just three paces. The Center's architectural design recalls an ark. Its infrastructure, from environmental aesthetics to organizational rules and culture, visibly transforms a cranky, agitated homeless man who had a taxing weekend not only because the New Orleans' heat index continues to exceed 100 degrees but because someone took his belonging-filled backpack, laid down as he sipped from a park water fountain near the bench where he was sitting. As he steps into the garden courtyard, he is visibly transformed into a calmer person with a seemingly renewed perspective, able to share his troubles with members of the Center community who respond empathetically and materially. This man leaves the Center hours later showered and shaved, clothing laundered, cooled by ceiling fans, having eaten a lunch complete with fruit and a slice of red velvet cake, toting an overnight bag with shop tags dangling. The most meaningful, perhaps therapeutic, aspect to his visit is that for five hours he experienced physical safety and diminished vulnerability; because the persistent assault on his senses was temporarily abated, he could relax his guard and have some sense of self and humankind restored. And tomorrow, Tuesday, he is welcome to return to this place, this community, his community.

A reflection. On my initial planning visit to the Rebuild Center in October 2009, I see the Louisiana Superdome, the professional sports arena used as a Katrina evacuation shelter so poorly managed and ill-supplied that lives were lost inside of it, looming a short distance from the facility's entranceway. Later, on my first day of observation at the Center, I stand in the back parking lot, look up, and slowly turn about to also see Delgado Community College, Louisiana

State University Health Sciences Center, an Interstate-10 flyover, and work crews constructing new structures. The irony of this panoramic view is woefully obvious to me; in one way the city is being re-made as buildings are erected and commerce is revived while education, medical care, and transportation seem to be in easy reach. But the daily existence for the city's homeless population and working poor, that experienced by the Rebuild Center's guests, is like the Center's low lying structure, it remains in the Superdome's broad, dark shadow where obstacles to education, medical care, and transportation persist.

Reflections and Impressions of a Researcher's Experience

In this last subsection about the researcher, I recount an experience that places me directly in the study. My intention is to provide a specific, situational context to explore and complement the description of my subjectivity which is outlined in Chapter 3.

The story. Walking at a brisk pace, a tall, middle-aged white woman crosses Elysian Fields Avenue, then Esplanade, arriving in the French Quarter. She continues along Royal Street and steps onto a curb when her sandaled right foot slides on one of the city utility's worn brass manhole covers, she falls. It is a spectacular spill, her left knee and hand touch the sidewalk first, then her left shoulder propels forward, scraping across a few inches of concrete, her body comes to rest with the crashing of her left cheek bone to the hard surface. She lies there for a full minute and then reaches for a metal Times-Picayune newspaper box that she uses to pull herself to a partially seated position. Two joggers who are across the street slow to a walk, observe her on the ground, and move quickly when they realize that she is bleeding profusely from her cheekbone, mouth, shoulder, knee, and hand. When they reach her they are at first silent looking at her oddly and then tentatively ask if she is okay. She says she thinks so and begins to prattle on about whether she broke any of her dental veneers and that the white pearls from her small

Chinese bracelet, a gift, are strewn about and have lodged in the concrete sidewalk's crevices. She expresses further distress when she realizes her blood is staining the ecru-colored outfit she wears, a purchase made the evening before. The babbling continues as she says, "there would be even more blood, if my flight was tomorrow instead of Thursday, I always take an aspirin before getting on a plane." The joggers help the woman come to a standing position, look at each other and back at the woman. The male jogger, with slight hesitation, then hands the woman a small terrycloth exercise towel. The woman declines further assistance when the joggers ask if she would like them to walk her back to her place.

<p>Guest words. Oh no, were you jacked?</p>
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A reflection. It is at this moment that I first contemplate the gift of insight that I have received, a gift that endures as I move my sidewalk assaulted body back to the cottage where I am staying. The look I received from the joggers, and every person who passed near me on the slow, mile-long amble back, disconcertingly conveyed a certainty that I had caused my predicament and was deserving of this injury's pain. Having been in New Orleans over two weeks, I easily imagined the thoughts running through the minds of passerby, "Yep, another one falling down after a long Bourbon Street bender" or "She probably was sleeping outside the gates of Jackson Square last night and fell off a bench" or "What a shame they cannot get their lives together." It is the look untreated substance abusers, the mentally ill and homeless people experience regularly from those not in similar circumstances, those who consider themselves upstanding and normal. Ashamed, I realize I had given the look in the past. As I use the now crimson-dyed exercise cloth to dab my face, I further think, here I am, a decent person on my way to Sunday Mass at St. Louis Cathedral, reduced to babbling about middle class trappings, as I was othered. I recognize that not only was I expressing the importance of the material artifacts

of my privilege, but I was attempting to provide evidence to these joggers that I was not the homeless alcoholic that they seemed reluctant to aid.

My gift of insight was unwrapped when I arrived at The Rebuild Center the following day and several of the guests looked at me with attentive eyes of concern, asking if I “had been jacked” and seeing me as a victim of a circumstance and not its cause. The significance of this gift endured in the days that followed while running errands throughout the city as many people I encountered expressed the look but only when the bruised and scabby left side of my face was in full view.

The Participants: Profiles and a Typical Day at The Rebuild Center

In the main body of this section, each of the eight participants is introduced and profiled in the context of an aspect of her practice at, or in association with, the Center. Before the subsections that profile each participant, I first provide prologue to how the participants collectively practice the mission. Following the prologue, I describe how the purposeful participant sample members were recruited, some general information about the participants, and then information about how the participants’ profiles are presented and organized.

Prologue: Practicing the Center Mission

While a detailed description of the Center mission and collaborating partners is provided in the Research Setting section of Chapter 3, I wanted to offer a sense of the organizational culture through my eyes and their unattributed words, prior to identifying participants. Thus participant names are not used here.

The researcher’s observations. A painted mural with biblical quotes depicts the Red Sea’s parting and a two-foot tall crucifix hangs on the wall facing the courtyard; while these are the only physical symbols of Catholicism or Christianity in the Center’s common areas, they fill

the straight-ahead view of anyone coming off the street who has passed through the entranceway. Before each meal one of the four women religious offers a brief ecumenical prayer. These women, members of a Catholic religious order, dress in casual clothing and move through their work days with the same purposeful care as the lay staff; the particular guest need being addressed is what distinguishes religious from lay. The subtle evidence of Catholicism and a Catholic affiliation complement the mission as a place of respite and not one of evangelization or discomfort.

The participants' words. One participant described an exchange she witnessed on the day the Center was dedicated when a homeless visitor, knowing from experience that most such facilities are housed in formerly abandoned storefronts or offices, asked for whom the facility was built, and the person being asked was able to answer "For you, this Center was built for you." The notions of community and community-building were raised frequently by the eight participants I interviewed, all Catholic women who worked either at or in association with The Rebuild Center. One participant expressed community by describing social interactions saying, "they are so good to each other and think about each other and want to get the best for each other" and another said "we become their families, we become their support base." Still another spoke of those guests who return after they no longer need the Center's service; she pointed out that these individuals offer something unique: "one thing that's wonderful about people that have been here and come back is that they can provide that missing piece that we definitely cannot." The missing piece to which she refers is an understanding of the condition of homelessness with a living and intimate example of successfully facing and overcoming adversity. I observed two of the guests carefully performing daily custodial duties and periodically assisting staff with heavy lifting. I asked a manager about this and whether these individuals were actually

employees, the explanation was yet another demonstration of community and caring. Each of these guests began work as a condition of court-ordered community service however their service requirements had long ago been fulfilled and their helpfulness continued uninterrupted; their only compensation was the appreciation of staff, the satisfaction of making a contribution, and the leftover food that staff members would store in refrigerators until all the wooden decking had been cleaned and the waste barrels emptied into the trash dumpsters in the parking lot. Community is important to all involved, extending beyond guests and staff, as the Center is a collaborative agency; community involvement of local agencies is integral to the collaboration's effectiveness and success.

When asked how she understood the Center's mission, one participant expressed that it was "to give a person a calm, caring environment to come where they can sit and be respected." Another said "the mission is very simple and it's to provide a place where people can get clean, get out of the elements, and have a sense of community." Other participants spoke about the Center as a place of security, safety, calm, and rest; a safe haven, a place to treat people with respect and kindness. People can just come here and just sit and relax and not have to be hassled."

<p>Living Homeless: Despite the fact that the city of New Orleans has only about 80 percent of its pre- Katrina population, 9,165 people, excluding those now living in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), now meet the HUD definition of homelessness on any given day in Orleans and Jefferson parishes, compared to 5,360 in 2005 before Hurricane Katrina.</p>
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The Participants

I recruited members of this purposeful participant sample through the efforts of two of the Rebuild Center's administrators. Lists of and contact information for potential participants were provided by the director of the Harry Thompson Center and the director of the Lantern Light ministry who is also the executive director of the collaboration. I used email and phone calls to

make contact. For those participants working on-site, I finalized appointments in person, allowing an initial introduction of me and the study as well as an orientation to the upcoming interview. With the exception of the first interview, I engaged frequently with the other participants before our formal talk, each also had an opportunity to witness me observing and participating in Center activities; this contributed to an ease and informality during our scheduled sessions.

Pseudonyms are used for all participants to protect confidentiality; all but one participant self-selected their pseudonym, the other I selected. To further protect confidentiality and because this organization has a small staff, I have not provided detailed descriptions of the individual participants; for future reference, this chapter ends with a participant summary table highlighting the descriptive information that is shared in this section. Three participants were between 22 and 29 years old, two are in their fifties, and three are over 65. While all participants identify as Catholic having been brought up in this faith tradition, one now attends Methodist church services. Seven of the eight described their race as white or Caucasian, one described her race as African-American. All participants have at least a bachelor's degree and each of the three women religious had prior careers in K-12 education, one of the women religious is trained as a nurse, as is one of the lay participants. I have organized profiles of the five on-site participants (Rose, Wanda, Eliza, Nanette and Noel) so that they are coupled with narrative that illustrates some of the Center's activities; I use some of the activities of a regular weekday, representative of what I observed and in some cases, participated in for four of the profiles and a Saturday when a social gathering occurred for one of the profiles. I have developed this form of organization to provide you with a window into participant practice and to give you a feel for the rhythms and order of a day at the Center. Dragonfly, Avalon, and Marie, the three participants

who work off-site were not observed because of the nature of their practice; Dragonfly provides support to the mentally ill and Avalon and Marie perform administrative work for the Jesuits of the New Orleans Province.

The story: Rose and morning showers. It is 8.50 a.m. and there are people seated on wooden benches, mirror reflections of faces with white shaving cream contours, terry cloth towels, and aerosol mists propelled by a large free-standing vertical fan. Someone uses a comb to carefully untangle his companion's clean, wet hair. The air is filled with the smells of soap, deodorant, toothpaste, body powder, and soiled clothing, the kind unintentionally neglected for too long in a laundry room hamper. But this soiled clothing smell is urine-tinged, with hints of stale beer, perspiration, and traces of dried blood, it takes a few moments to identify its aromatic complexity as one might a glass of Chilean red wine. This odor is unmistakable; it is the odor of homelessness. Sounds are of doors opening and shutting, the staccato of a single pair of flip-flops abruptly stopping and starting, words spoken with serious, engaged, and playful affect, and names clearly shouted, "Mark. . . you're next! Michelle. . . James, James Milton. . ." loud enough

<p>Guest Words. Just because I'm homeless, it doesn't mean I have to be dirty or sloppy.</p>

to overcome a calm, conversational din. There is joyful banter interspersed with laughter, like that between old friends. It is Rose smiling as she purposefully moves among the homeless people who have arrived this hot summer morning; Rose is coordinating the use of The Rebuild Center's shower rooms.

<p>Center Fact: 93 people took showers one Thursday morning in July 2010, an amenity, in addition to clothes laundering, that is offered each week day.</p>
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Rose as participant. And so began 38 hours of participant observation at my research site in June and July 2010, time exclusive of that accorded the eight participant interviews I conducted that extended over three consecutive weeks and included one off-hours observation of a Saturday afternoon celebration attended by staff and Center guests. I witness Rose on this day and in subsequent observations in the moment, just as she described her engagement with guests during our first lengthy conversation, an interview conducted on June 30, 2010 in a small spare office, on the Thompson Center side of the facility where we speak for 45 minutes. We engage in a series of nearly daily conversations including one before the formal session. Whenever I observe this full-time, Jesuit volunteer staffer, one of the three study participants in their twenties, addressing a guest, it is with both eyes looking attentively into theirs. I notice, too, in our many conversations, that whenever Rose refers to a guest it is with a deep sensitivity and respect. Accepted into the Jesuit Volunteer Corps after completing her undergraduate degree, Rose has worked as a volunteer staffer for one year, compensated with lodging, food, and an eighty dollar monthly stipend, and was a month away from the end of her internship at the time we met. While my intention was to interview only those women who had worked with The Rebuild Center for at least two years, Jesuit ideals ground the Harry Thompson Center, a key, on-site collaborator of the Rebuild Center, and some former Jesuit volunteers continue to work at or with the Center. Rose's relative youth combined with the intensity of her Jesuit Volunteer Corps experience, provided me with useful insights into the organizational context, insights I would not have benefit from if I strictly adhered to my initial, intended participant criteria. Rose had five years of experience working with the homeless population, having volunteered during her college years. Rose's work includes maintaining guest order and keeping toiletries available in the shower/shaving area; she also launders towels and guest clothing. When I asked Rose how

she thinks about her work she says “I’m just there to be; I think my presence is really my work.” In my time on site, I will observe Rose holding a woman severely affected by neuromuscular disease so she can bathe and dress, helping a man put on socks whose feet are still sticky damp after a shower, and bandaging another’s skin wound. I repeatedly observe acts such as these, expressions of gentle, loving care; I repeatedly observe Rose present.

The story: Wanda and the phone room. A daughter living in Florida who might have a spare bedroom or some extra cash, possible work with a BP clean-up crew, reinstating cell phone service with Sprint, a late Social Security check, Greyhound bus destination and schedule information—all reasons to make calls, calls that often result in interminable “holds” or non-responsive answering machines. Wait times are endured without the benefit of a personal computer to fiddle with or a leftover snack warming in a kitchen microwave. It is mid-morning and Rodney is seated, legs outstretched, on the wood decking in the last couple of feet of morning shade, waiting for his second 10 minute turn at one of the four desks in the phone room. He asks where he is on the list and Wanda, surveying the clipboard, provides an estimate to Rodney, whose name is fifth as to when his turn will be; when he hears his name spoken, he exchanges a knowing nod with Wanda. The estimate given earlier is within a minute of when Rodney is actually at a phone desk, eagerly dialing the number scribbled on a worn scrap of paper. A few minutes later a volunteer arrives and relieves Wanda of phone duty. Guests approach Wanda with questions or call out as she passes by; she has the capacity to retain an amazing amount of information in her short-term memory, like a server at an upscale Atlanta restaurant expertly taking a party of five’s order without a notepad. How to find vehicles at impound yards of unknown locations, accessing train schedules, arranging a few nights’ stay at the Salvation Army, whatever the request, Wanda’s countenance is at once kind, anticipatory,

serious, and hopeful; she embodies compassion. Wanda moves purposefully about the Center, up and down the walkways and in and out of offices, on mini-missions seeking and gathering information; she then locates the guests who had requests in the previous fifteen minutes and responds to each, serving up resolutions, recommendations, and referrals, solving or taking a significant step toward solving those obstacles any guest may face on a given day.

Guest Words. It's frustrating . . . my daughter's line is either busy or she's not at home when I call. . . I just can't seem to catch her.

Wanda as participant. Wanda is another participant who has had experience as a Jesuit volunteer; in her late twenties, she works full-time for the Harry Thompson Center arm of the collaboration. Our scheduled interview occurred on July 8, 2010 and lasted approximately one hour; it was conducted in the same spare office where I interviewed Rose. Additionally, I spoke informally with Wanda every time I was there observing, with the exception of one weekday when she was out of the city; after our formal meeting, she approached me on a few different days with elaborations or refinements to our conversation. These conversations were facilitated

Living Homeless. 649,917 people were counted as homeless across the U.S. on one night in January 2010. 38 percent or 246, 968 of these people were unsheltered: sleeping on the streets, in their cars, in abandoned buildings, or in another location not meant for human habitation. (HUD, 2010)

by my presence staffing the phone room for two 2-hour periods and filling-in as others took brief breaks on a few other occasions> Casual conversations were also facilitated by the places I would sit while conducting observations because they were high traffic areas and in close proximity to Wanda and Roses' t primary work areas. Wanda has worked with the poor for five years and has been associated with the Rebuild Center for four of those years. Phone room duty is a small part of her daily work, she also makes referrals, answers guest inquiries, many that

require phone calls or research, and offers advice. When I ask Wanda what her job entails, she pauses and thoughtfully responds, “what I am doing is forming relationships with people on a daily basis.” Just as is the case with Rose, I repeatedly observe Wanda enacting her words as she interacts with guests, other staff, volunteers, and visitors.

Living Homeless: In a single calendar quarter during 2010, \$22,000 was recovered for those guests who earned wages but were not paid by contractors and employers; the Center works through Catholic Charities and in conjunction with lawyers who offer pro bono services to recover unpaid wages and provide other legal advice and representation.

The story: Eliza and mail services, identification cards, and other referrals. A woman traverses the facility pausing every several feet, moving with the graceful purpose of a bumble bee at work, exchanging words, in hushed tones, warm embraces, and sometimes notes with staff and guests alike. She first emerges from the office wing at the far right end of the facility, then alights at the Center entranceway, again near the kitchen door, outside the office wing at the far left side, and after disappearing into the left side offices for about 15 minutes, reappears, and resumes gliding, reversing her path and returning to the opposite end of the facility. Kindness and a gentle spirit imbue her movements, mannerisms, and face.

Guest words. Now that I finally have this ID card, I can try for that job my friend told me about.

Eliza as participant. I observe this woman for a couple of days before I know that she is Eliza, one of the Presentation Sisters working through the Lantern Light ministry and who, like the others, is over 65 years of age. We speak informally yet deeply on several occasions before our interview on July 13, 2010; this scheduled talk in the spare Thompson Center office lasts for approximately one hour. Eliza has worked with the poor for 15 years and has been at The Rebuild Center since its inception. While the religious women might fulfill any guest need on a

given day, I learn that the provision of mail services, filing of identification cards, and scheduling appointments for on-site legal assistance are all within her primary area of responsibility. Eliza is gentle and soft-spoken but not passive; she describes her work broadly as “being present to people” who likewise, are present to her. Many of her words are framed in the language of her Catholic faith; she observes a connective-ness among people insofar as “we’re all in need.” I once again note a participant’s self-awareness; the way Eliza describes her work corresponds to what I observed prior to us settling into the lengthy conversation of our interview.

<p>Center Fact: Some 150 to 250 lunches, which are hot or cold depending on the groceries and ingredients that are available, are prepared and served each week day at the Center.</p>

The story: Nanette and meal time. It is about ten minutes before 1 p.m., the hour that those desiring lunch must be assembled in the courtyard; several guests are just arriving, adding to the over 170 people who are awaiting a meal. Most, but not all, who assemble availed themselves of the Center’s services throughout this morning, some left and have returned while others stayed continuously from the morning to this early afternoon hour. Today’s lunch is one of two hot lunches that will be served this week. It is completely prepared and boxed in the Center’s kitchen, a process that takes a few hours. The Sisters plan, prepare, and cook the meals sometimes with assistance; volunteers are often available to help with boxing and distribution. To maintain orderliness, tickets in a variety of colors are distributed to those assembling in the courtyard. At one o’clock, Nanette speaks through a megaphone inviting those with red tickets to the front of the lunch queue, the reds assemble along a rail as happily as the zone one passengers do when they are called to board their flight’s aircraft first, then yellow, black, green, and blue; the color order is random and will be different tomorrow. Nanette jokes as she announces the colors while also carefully and firmly ensuring the structure and integrity of the line is maintained. The queue winds its way to the back of the building and across the Center’s

decks. Nanette continues to use the megaphone offering a brief non-denominational prayer once the line is fully formed. The first red ticket holder leads the line and by 1:17p.m., lunch, in clam shell take-away styrofoam containers accompanied by lemonade and a dessert will have been distributed through a serving window to 178 hungry people. Guests either settle in a common area to engage in conversation over their lunch or exit the property to eat elsewhere. The structure and rhythm of the lunchtime process is adhered to each week day, it is familiar to many guests and a discipline to be learned by those visiting for the first time. While a responsibility of the Sisters, every available Center staff member voluntarily enlists in the lunch effort. Tomorrow, it will be another Sister who takes the lead and though her leadership style differs from Nanette's, she will use the megaphone to similar effect.

<p>Guest Words. Oh I'm so full ... I ate too much for lunch!</p>

Nanette as participant. Like Eliza, Nanette is another of the five Presentation Sisters who work at the Center through the Lantern Light ministry. She has been at The Rebuild Center since its inception and has been working with the poor for thirteen years; Nanette describes these as "the happiest years in my life." While we conducted this interview in her office on July 8, 2010, we also met during my October 2009 planning trip; exclusive of several brief informal exchanges, we spoke for a total of two hours. I also participated in lunch preparation and serving one day, joining Nanette, a couple of the other Sisters, two visiting women religious of a different order, and a group of regular volunteers, all lay women, each of whom works at Louisiana State University's Health Sciences Center. On three different occasions I also assisted with crowd flow and control during the lunch hour. In the kitchen, just as in the courtyard, Nanette, who plans the daily menu based on the week's donated food and groceries, using some pantry items and a few necessary purchases, proceeds with her work in an orderly fashion with

specific instructions for the day's assembled volunteer kitchen staff; instructions that result in a smooth and efficient operation.

During our talk, Nanette speaks of what's important in life and at the Center, "it's really the relationships we have, the support we offer one another. . . that is what's important." Nanette holds an administrative position and so has multiple organizational responsibilities, she spoke of the truly collaborative spirit of the Center, where everyone does what it takes to serve the guests, often without regard to the established division of tasks between the various ministries. One of the Lantern Light services that she oversees is a homeownership program; Nanette describes the joy of seeing new homeowners on the day of their real estate closing as "just unbelievable." She seems to value structure and order not for their own sake but because they make dreams achievable. Nanette's interest in the orderly serving of lunch and a 100% success rate in homeowner mortgage approvals are firmly grounded in the scope and sweep of Lantern Light's offerings from meals through mortgage literacy classes.

Living Homeless: The daily high temperature in July 2010 ranged from 86-97 degrees with an average low temperature of 74 degrees. Over 6.5 inches of rain fell during the month.

The story: Noel and a Saturday gathering. A loud din of chatter and laughter fills the Center courtyard on this hot, humid Saturday afternoon; the high-spirited mood is threatened by a darkening sky. Blue lips and tongues, cheeks dabbed with ketchup, and grease-stained paper napkins are evidence of the burgers, hot dogs, and flavored shaved ice that are being enjoyed by everyone in sight. A dramatic light flash introduces atonal, repetitive pinging, July rain is hitting the tin roof. The conversational din becomes denser as those intent on remaining dry huddle onto the sheltered decking. This all adult crowd of guests, visitors, and staff have gathered for a farewell social to honor a Sister who will soon be leaving the Center. With most attendees seemingly emboldened rather than deterred in the face of inclement weather, this weekend event

is a gift as much an opportunity to honor a beloved person as one to stay dry and safe for the afternoon; the rainstorm amplifies the uplifting mood. After a few words from the departing Sister, papers, pencils, and cards are distributed and a series of bingo games begins. Gift bags, too many to count, surround the caller's microphone. As game cards are replenished, Noel responds to the players who ask for a touch from her "lucky" hand which she advertises as such on her walks across the benches and floor where players have assembled. The winner of each round thoughtfully selects either a men's or women's gift bag and slowly pulls out the brightly colored tissue paper to reveal the contents; each bag includes three to five items, thoughtfully useful, that are tiny treasures valuable to someone homeless such as small note pads, combs, retractable ink pens, travel-size toiletries, tissues, rolled hard candy packs, small change purses, and pocket-size books filled with inspirational messages. The many winners are gleeful and generous, sometimes selecting a bag more appropriate for the companion they are with or sharing their bounty with others who failed to have a winning card. The rain has stopped by the time the social ends as guests return to New Orleans' oppressive seasonal elements until Monday morning when the Center re-opens.

<p>Guest Words. I hope I have a lucky bingo card this time!</p>
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Noel as participant. Like the two other women religious I interviewed, Noel has been at the Center since its inception; she has been working with the poor for 15 years. All three of these women religious had previous careers, while members of their religious order, in different parts of North America. We spoke in Noel's small office on July 14, 2010 for about 45 minutes. Noel is forthright, assertive, and practical in her approach and in our discussion she is also quick to laugh. Like Nanette, Noel speaks about the importance of structure and discipline, particularly in the Center environment, to ensure a just distribution of services among the guest

population. In anticipation of Saturday's gathering, a couple of the lay staff members mentioned that I would likely observe a contrast between the rigidity and discipline of Lantern Light's regular activities, expressed by lay staff as somewhat overdone, and the relaxed flexibility of an off-day special event. While this was the case, I was surprised that not only did Nanette and Noel refer to structure unprompted when describing their work but they also identified it as simply a method for achieving operational goals and fulfilling the Center mission. Noel spends a good deal of time performing health care duties, I was fortunate to be able to interview Noel in between appointments. When I ask about the meaning her work holds, she says that "you can't go out and talk about the poor if you've never smelled them or touched them." She continues "I feed them; I wrap their leg up, whatever." Noel, believes so many gifts have been revealed to her through others, in terms of what she is capable of doing for guests and what the guests do for her. She provides some tough love as she deems necessary but her candor is often presented with a light hearted moment or two.

The story: Dragonfly and off-site support services. Everyone is here. Of the twenty-five people sitting along one of the long benches on this high-humidity summer morning, 17 are people of color, 8 are white, all but 3 are male. They appear to be in their twenties, thirties, forties, fifties. . . even 70's. A few along this bench have visible physical disabilities, two may be intoxicated, and one seems agitated. A small number wear distress on their faces, although most look peaceful and calm.

A reflection. During my observation time at the Center I had many more interesting informal conversations than I imagined I would have with people, not unlike those in my neighborhood, who were musicians, a screenwriter, a carpenter, a teacher, and a hair dresser. Jobs lost, promised opportunities that never materialize, fascinating careers paused or up-ended

by unforeseen circumstances, illness, Katrina, alcoholism, BP Oil explosion, guests approach me wherever I am, no matter what I am doing; they answer unsolicited questions, sharing their stories and opinions on a variety of issues. While many of the people I encounter are lucid and clear speaking, I discover on my third day of observation that there is more mental illness present

Living Homeless: About 30% of people who are chronically homeless have mental health conditions. SAMSHA, 2010

among the guests, from untreated to under professional care to in recovery, than is readily apparent to me. While legal and medical services are performed on-site at the Center, mental health services are available to guests by off-site care-givers.

Dragonfly as participant. Dragonfly manages intensive day treatment for chronically mentally ill people; we met at her workplace on July 7, 2010 where we talked in a conference room for about 90 minutes. Dragonfly is in her fifties and has worked for social justice for 37 years. In conversation, Dragonfly was quick, willing, responsive, and engaging; we developed a seemingly instant rapport. In the past and in addition to running her business, which is staffed with social workers and a psychiatrist, she volunteered doing nursing around the state at different facilities; she spent some time at the Rebuild Center, becoming familiar with the facility and its mission. Dragonfly realized that the services she was offering would be helpful to the Center's clientele and so forged a working agreement whereby for the last two years she has been providing treatment with the goal of re-integrating those referred Center guests who have been identified with chronic mental illness. Dragonfly spoke about the importance of the Center's fundamental service and mission because if "basic needs are not met, I don't care how much therapy we are doing. . . nothing's going to happen." Because her original nursing education as in a very different specialty and a series of events led her to this particular work, Dragonfly

describes her practice as a calling. Consistent with her nursing oath, Dragonfly says she is an ‘advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves.’

Center Fact: Hurricane Katrina and the ensuing floods crippled many of the works and affiliated ministries of the Jesuits of the New Orleans Province, and destroyed the provincial office. Immaculate Conception Parish rectory and church basement flooded, as did their primary mission to the homeless, the Harry Thompson Center, located just next to the church. Without a congregation to support it, a staff to work in it and a building to house it, it initially appeared that the Harry Thompson Center would not re-open. But a conversation between the Jesuits, UNITY for the Homeless and the Presentation Sisters around a kitchen table in the back of St. Joseph’s church sparked a dream for a new collaborative ministry through which the services provided to the homeless people by each individual organization could be saved and strengthened.

From the program for the Dedication of St. Joseph Rebuild Center, August 26, 2007

Avalon, Marie, and Jesuits of the New Orleans Province. The words above are a reminder that Katrina challenged not only individuals but the non-profit organizations and ministries serving the poor; for a period of time those gravely in need of services had few places to turn. These program words also capture the special relationship between the Jesuits of the New Orleans Province and the Rebuild Center, not only did the Jesuit Province have a role in facilitating the collaboration, it raised and contributed a significant amount of financial capital for the Center’s construction, and was a partner in developing its strategic and operational plans. While not working on-site, both Avalon and Marie, in separate interviews, were able to provide some additional perspective since each had direct experience with the Thompson Center. Marie’s was when it formerly operated from Immaculate Conception Church and Avalon’s was after it became part of the Rebuild Center.

Avalon as participant. Avalon, a soft-spoken and thoughtful woman in her mid-twenties, was only available after business hours so we agreed to meet at a coffee house on the evening of July 1, 2010; we spoke for about 90 minutes. Like Rose and Wanda, Avalon had experience as a Jesuit volunteer and had been working for social justice for two years at the time

we met. She considers herself fortunate, blessed, and privileged and had always wanted to do a year of service and felt, after an academic project where she researched Katrina, an event she had not previously accorded much attention to, that she would like to have firsthand experience with homeless people to “walk in their shoes and see the world from their life.” So Avalon applied and was accepted into the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, she was with the Thompson Center arm of the Rebuild Center for a year. Her work primary assignment, like Rose, was with the showers, shaving, and laundry but she also enjoyed the opportunity to conduct visitor tours, help the Sisters with lunch on occasion, and assist guests in completing forms or developing resumes. Avalon now jumps at any chance to help out at the Center, she likes her current administrative staff position but found it was a difficult transition leaving the daily hands-on aspect of her work at the Center.

Marie as participant. I met Marie in her office on July 7, 2010 where we spoke for about 70 minutes. In her fifties, Marie has spent 35 years, her entire adult life, working for social justice with the poor. Marie is energetic, joyful, thoughtful in her responses, and contributes to the easy conversational flow of the interview. In addition to her administrative position with the Jesuit Province, Marie has a seat on the Rebuild Center’s governing board. She provides an historical and organizational perspective that complements and enriches what I learned from the directors and printed documents. Bringing the new Center to fruition occurred at a time of need, a time that was fraught with the realities of flooding, an oil leak, infrastructure damage, key decision-makers having evacuated out of the city and in one case the state, and individuals filling posts on an interim basis. In reflecting on the Center, Marie spoke about how advocacy groups so often give homeless people their second best, such as a re-missioned and not fully adequate building but to Marie, the Center has succeeded by ‘trying to give them the best which is where

God is calling us.’ When she sees a Center guest she considers that we should all be in community and thinks, “You’re not second class; you’re not second place.” Marie spoke about the transition of four independent agencies into a single collaborative organization. Even though some issues remain, Rebuild Center does provide ‘a common place where these different organizations collaborate to provide a full spectrum of services to homeless people and have it be faith-based.’

Summary

In this chapter which is organized into two major sections, I have introduced the study’s eight participants and me, the researcher. I used my field notes and interview transcripts to construct the narrative portions of each section; this was done with the goal of establishing meaningful social and organizational context for this study’s findings that are presented in Chapter 5. I have presented these practitioners, whose discourse is presented and analyzed in subsequent chapters, to provide you with the background necessary to consider the findings. Finally, for use as a guide to references made to participants in the upcoming chapter, Table 2 below provides a tabular summary of the eight participant profiles.

Table 2

Participant Profiles

Pseudonym	Age Range	Years working with poor	Lay or Religious	Collaborating Partner Represented
Avalon	22 - 29	2	Lay	Jesuit Province of New Orleans
Dragonfly	50 - 59	37	Lay	Independent Provider
Eliza	> 65	15	Religious	Lantern Light
Marie	50 - 59	35	Lay	Jesuit Province of New Orleans
Noel	>65	15	Religious	Lantern Light
Nanette	> 65	13	Religious	Lantern Light
Rose	22 - 29	5	Lay	Harry Thompson Center
Wanda	22 - 29	5	Lay	Harry Thompson Center

CHAPTER 5

STUDY FINDINGS

Katrina really let me see the poverty. -Eliza

We need to learn how to find our center in the margins. -Rose

We often complain about the price of gas. Nobody complains about the price of a gallon of milk.
-Nanette

You can't be in these services and not be involved in social justice. We're speaking up for the folks who can't speak for themselves. -Dragonfly

In this chapter, this research study's findings are presented. While the data analysis initially produced many themes, this chapter's focus is limited to the study's stated purpose and design. The research questions that guided this study are: (a) What is the social justice discourse of Catholic women with a sustained commitment to social justice?, (b) How does the social justice discourse of Catholic adult educator women align with how they describe their activist practice?, and (c) How does spirituality influence the meaning of social justice for Catholic adult educator women engaged in work with the poor? The presentation of findings is organized by research question.

I have identified one meta-theme and seven themes with associated dimensions from my critical analysis of the narrative data. These are the meta-theme, (a) predominance of the privilege discourse and seven themes: (b) eyes opened, (c) acknowledging privilege, (d) struggling together, (e) getting clean, (f) finding teachable moments, (g) called to walk against the grain, and (h) tempered activism. As a meta-theme, Predominance of the Privilege Discourse is the single, broad theme that subsumes the other seven themes. The first research question of

What is the social justice discourse of Catholic women with a sustained commitment to social justice? is addressed by the Predominance of the Privilege Discourse meta-theme and the themes of Eyes Opened, Acknowledging Privilege, and Struggling Together and their associated dimensions. Next, the second research question of How does the social justice discourse of Catholic adult educator women align with how they describe their activist practice? is addressed by the themes Getting Clean and Finding Teachable Moments. The third and final research question of: How does spirituality influence the meaning of social justice for Catholic adult educator women engaged in work with the poor? is addressed by the themes of Called to Walk Against the Grain with its associated dimensions and Tempered Activism.

I have intentionally structured the theme titles differently; I use the past tense for the first and sixth themes listed because these are described, for the most part, by participant recollections of their initial experiences with homeless individuals and with Katrina as well as having responded to a call to serve. The meta-theme is appropriately expressed in noun form, as is the last theme. The other four themes were revealed most frequently in present tense discussion and so are reflected as such. I use verbatim participant quotes extensively for the explanations presented in the subsequent sections. Some themes have multiple layers of understanding and, in those instances I identify dimensions within the theme description. Table 3 below represents the meta-theme, themes and their associated dimensions that are presented in this chapter.

Within each of the three main sections, I respond to the section's research study question and then present the relevant findings; each section ends with a summary. The main sections are organized in the order that the research questions are listed above. These section titles are: (a) Social Justice Discourse Identified, (b) Aligning Social Justice Discourse with Activist Practice, Table 3

Meta-Theme, Themes, and Associated Dimensions

Meta-Theme	Themes	Associated Dimensions
Predominance of the Privilege Discourse	Eyes Opened	People Overlooked Injustice Exposed
	Acknowledging Privilege	Unblamed Made and Kept Poor
	Struggling Together	n/a
	Getting Clean	n/a
	Finding Teachable Moments	n/a
	Called to Walk Against the Grain	Touched Emotionally and Physically Sharing Stories
	Tempered Activism	n/a

and (c) Spirituality's Influence on the Meaning of Social Justice. The section that begins below addresses the first research question.

Social Justice Discourse Identified

The social justice privilege discourse outlined in earlier chapters of this dissertation is the identifiable discourse of this study's participants. As noted above, Predominance of the Privilege Discourse is a unifying theme, one that includes all other themes and dimensions. Consistent with the study's purpose and context, participants, and therefore my analysis, focused on economic inequality even though there is evidence that participants understanding of social justice included issues pertaining to race and gender, as well as class.

The privilege discourse's key attributes are salient aspects of the themes and dimensions described here. The privilege discourse, in this context, considers socio-economic disparities in terms of the power relationships and the societal structures benefitting those in power. Those who argue for a privilege discourse understand the close and direct relationship between great wealth and abject poverty. In accordance with this discourse, beneficiaries acknowledge their privilege and are compelled to take collective responsibility for systemic injustice, meaning beneficiaries of privilege understand that addressing societal injustice effectively requires a shared commitment.

Eyes Opened with its two dimensions of People Overlooked and Injustice Exposed, represents participants' understanding of socio-economic inequality. Acknowledging Privilege is a theme that represents recognition by these participants of their social status as well-educated women from middle class backgrounds. Acknowledging Privilege's two dimensions offer further evidence of the privilege discourse; Made and Kept Poor expresses economic injustice as systemic, serving the interests of the powerful, and Unblamed considers the recipients of

injustice as victims, not causes. The last narrative theme discussed in this section, *Struggling Together*, speaks to the collective responsibility aspect of the privilege discourse.

Predominance of the Privilege Discourse

My analysis revealed the key finding that Predominance of the Privilege Discourse is an over-arching theme or meta-theme that subsumes all the other themes and associated dimensions. Through reviews of my analytical notes and memos and theme spreadsheet this high level theme has emerged. I have indicated that the themes of *Eyes Opened*, *Acknowledging Privilege*, and *Struggling Together* are those that most directly address the first research study question. I use the words most directly because social justice discourse, an idea central to the study and core to the first research question, is not contained in these three themes exclusively but is embedded and signaled across all themes. Because I have conducted a form of critical discourse analysis, I considered how participants' social justice discourse was conveyed specifically, through these themes, as well as more generally, through the broader perspectives, examples, or even words that occurred in their conversations and sometimes in evidence for other themes. Thus, social justice discourse is not exclusively relegated to specific themes and dimensions, but is indicated in the way participants generally express themselves. For example, in the two major sections that follow, the privilege discourse continues to be in evidence as participants explain their work at or with the Rebuild Center, revealing internal struggles between belief and practice as well as referencing societal barriers, marginalization, and the needs for advocacy and legislative change.

My analysis further shows that Predominance of the Privilege Discourse embodies both ideological and sensory components. These components are not necessarily evidenced by discrete expressions but are often present simultaneously in a single theme. For example, *Eyes Opened* with its dimensions of *People Overlooked* and *Injustice Exposed*, represents the visual

expression of the cognitive idea of economic inequality. Acknowledging Privilege, and Struggling Together represent cognitive expressions of ideology, where the salient characteristics of the privilege discourse are most clearly apparent in participant narrative. While Getting Clean and Called to Walk Against the Grain with its associated dimensions of Touched Emotionally and Physically and Sharing Stories, represent the sensory component which emphasizes tactile, emotional, and auditory expressions of the ideological aspects of the social justice privilege discourse. Finally, Finding Teachable Moments and Tempered Activism best represent a balanced integration between the two elements that is the thoughtful or intentional aspect, the ideological, of these activists' discourse which is imbued with their primarily hands-on practice, the sensory. The Predominance of the Privilege Discourse finding is further supported here and in subsequent sections with details from participant narratives. This section continues with the presentation of Eyes Opened, the first of the three themes noted at the outset.

Eyes Opened

The theme of Eyes Opened is named to evoke the visual expressions and words such as seeing, blindness, darkness, and exposure, a type of revelatory awareness, that some participants used when describing the images and impressions they recalled as witnesses to Katrina's immediate aftermath. For other participants, similar words were used for the recollections of their first experiences with poverty in New Orleans or elsewhere in the world. Understandably, vivid recollections were shared by those participants who were immediate eye witnesses to Katrina's destruction. However, they were not solicited directly by me, the recollections came as these participants described how they came to do their current work. While it was typically later in an interview conversation that I asked why they selected this particular work explicitly, meaning work with Katrina survivors, it was obvious from their opening and early narrative

descriptions that, for witnesses, Katrina's images still loomed large five years after the storm. The profound emotional impact the storm had on its witnesses, with its juxtaposed images of dire need and prosperity, serves as a continuous reminder of persistent poverty and economic inequality. Dimensions of this theme shared by others include the closely related aspects of seeing or understanding New Orleans' socio-economic conditions and more general observations concerning participants' initial awakenings to the pervasiveness of poverty and injustice.

Nanette who had been in New Orleans for seven years prior to the storm spoke about the time period, from shortly after Katrina's landfall in late August 2005 to March 2006, without electricity. Nanette was so struck by the absence of light she repeated the word dark for emphasis, saying, "Our city was so dark I guess again I never realized that it could be so dark. Everyplace was dark." Eliza recounts her observations upon coming into the city after most of the flooding had abated, "The streets were just devastated. People's livelihoods had all just been parked on the side of the street. I found it so touching and so moving and so devastating and so sad." As Eliza shares further reflections she says, "Katrina really let me see the poverty. . . because people were reduced to absolutely nothing materially." Marie, long familiar with the city's poor population spoke of contemplating, with colleagues, a replacement for the flooded and damaged Immaculate Conception Church's homeless shelter, a discussion that helped to spark collaboration and the Rebuild Center's facility. Marie wondered with others what would become of the city, what they would see, whether:

homeless people were going to return; it was still very early and we even thought we didn't want to build anything permanent cause we didn't know what the post Katrina landscape was going to look like. And whether homeless people were going to come back.

According to Avalon, some eyes needed to be opened; she was a participant who did not experience Katrina first hand but felt a pressing need to respond to what she would come to see from afar. Two years after the storm hit and months before she would relocate to New Orleans as a volunteer, Avalon, a media studies major, was carefully reviewing Katrina video news footage for her senior year college thesis and during our interview she spoke about what she saw. She was “researching and reading on so many different people's responses to the storm.” Avalon, who was younger and “off doing college things” and not according close attention to the storm at the time it was occurring, now expressed disappointment, frustration, and tempered outrage:

to see the media coverage and hearing something on CNN or a local news outlet in Alabama or Texas, which were so much closer, but it wasn't as accurate as it could be. I really did feel like people here were sometimes, mostly portrayed in or not seen in a great light. . . . And it always gets to me when somebody seen carrying a loaf of bread walking in four feet of water is looting and another picture of a White person doing the same thing and it was called, they were surviving. I really did feel that more people really needed to bring some awareness to this.

Two dimensions that contribute to this broad theme of Eyes Opened resulted from my analysis of the data; each extends the notion of what participants *saw* regarding homeless people and poverty. People Overlooked and Injustice Exposed differ from each other, though in a nuanced way, and are described more fully below.

People overlooked. Through the People Overlooked dimension, participants conveyed that poor and homeless people are marginalized, basically missing from view, unseen, on a societal level. This dimension provides a reason why Eyes Opened, according to participants, is important. Continuing to reflect on her arrival in New Orleans, Eliza mentioned that “I realize

more and more that the South was kind of a forgotten part of the U.S.” And Nanette shared an image of those forgotten in New Orleans:

When we came back we heard stories of people who said I was six days out on top of the roof and they showed you their burnt arms. . . just sitting all day in the sun. And then maybe saying, I eventually came down and was able to wade through the water.

Dragonfly talks about how unaware the city’s small middle class is of these forgotten people, something she brings up with friends and colleagues:

And I tell people all the time if you guys knew what’s happening in this city you all would wake up and make known the underbelly, the hidden stuff that is going on. You all would be on the steps of the capital. You would be there every day. You would forget all of this other stuff that’s happening and again, you would see how we are treating our children, our mentally ill, our ill-educated, how we are keeping all of that the same or worse and you would say, ‘my God, what are we doing?’

My conversation with Rose seemed to offer a partial explanation for this lack of awareness about those people who are forgotten, she says , “I think the most successful people aren’t doing this kind of work or don’t think they are able to be right in the middle and still work their way out.”

Eliza elaborated further on this notion:

people who are in high places, they want to stay in these [their] positions, and they don’t want to rock the boat. They don’t want to lose their jobs. And so they close their eyes to a lot of the real situations that exist. You know the injustices done to the disadvantaged and socially deprived people. . . just seem to go unnoticed by people in authority. The poor and homeless don’t count, they are treated as non-entities.

Wanda, who moved away from the city before Katrina and later returned, reflected on the socio-economic dynamics involved, saying “New Orleans is a big who you know type place.” She added that “These people are overlooked. . . and I say that as being one of those people for the longest time, I didn’t even know it existed. I was just blind to it.” The ‘it’ Wanda refers to is homelessness and poverty in general.

Injustice exposed. Injustice Exposed builds on the People Overlooked dimension, it represents the need to identify, name, and make others aware of systemic injustice, all implicit to the privilege discourse. Noel spoke about the importance of staying informed, she reads whatever she can, about social justice issues. She also spoke about being intentional regarding the situations one puts oneself in; Noel says, “I think some of that stuff is letting yourself be exposed.” Dragonfly described the dire situation of the poor as escalating after the storm. In pre-Katrina times Dragonfly noted it was “pretty bad, you know, but it was super calm at dawn.” The metaphorical calm at dawn that Dragonfly references is introduced to highlight how the severity of the situation deepened as time moved forward. She was aware that New Orleans has always had “a really large poor population” and she had “dealings that were you know really, really below standards.” This reference is to those mental health care providers who receive public funding but offer low quality and substandard care. The inference is two-fold: the funding received may have been inadequate and what was received was not always used appropriately or for its intended purpose. She recounted conversations with other providers who claimed to have programs in place that were similar to hers’ when, in her view, very little similar was in place. Dragonfly continues, “I saw a lot of injustice.” But post-Katrina, when services were stretched and what had been occurring revealed, Dragonfly saw things she had “never witnessed” before and she was “in shock of how we are treating the mentally ill.” A centralized government

delivery system became de-centralized and rather than ensuring services would reach those who need them, it became a confusing maze. She wondered aloud what the point to change was:

Did the services improve? No. Were clients taken care of? No. What happened is. . . the system failed even more because now there was all these different agencies doing all these different things.

Dragonfly's stories are punctuated often by the phrase "There's so much injustice." While analyzing transcripts I realized that this phrase, though worded variously, was a conversational refrain shared among these adult educator activists that began, ended, or bookended their narratives frequently. For example, Wanda begins to tell a story with "There is just so much systemic injustice." She then proceeds to share a situation, something she has seen played out more than once during her time in New Orleans, in which homeless people may find themselves. Here, Wanda explains one of the difficulties homeless people may have even when they are able to find regular work:

So let's say you got this job and you're working on it but you know the police have already turned you in as being a homeless person. When you're coming home from your job, you're walking through and they pick you up. So then they take you to jail. You can plead not guilty and sit in jail for 21 days so then that job you just got, you just lost or plead guilty and they give you \$250 fine, so you can get out and go to your job. You know it's just like that, it's absurd. You know they make it a crime for being [homeless] in public.

Nanette speaks about the often heard complaint in the United States by and among those who own vehicles:

There are some many things out there that are expensive, basic food, bread, butter, milk. That is more expensive than a gallon of gas! We often complain about the price of gas. Nobody complains about the price of a gallon of milk. We expect you to grow up with strong bones and have enough calcium.

As she finishes describing this frustration, Nanette adds: “I pray that the whole justice system, I pray to God to assist.” After having mentioned the South as forgotten, Eliza again uses a visual metaphor in a way that summarizes the Eyes Opened theme and its dimensions, “So maybe Katrina really opened the eyes of not only North America, but the world to think that, even now five years later, there’s still an awful lot to be done.”

Acknowledging Privilege

My critical analysis of the narrative data revealed many instances where participants spoke of being fortunate, blessed, or privileged. In conversation, these words connoted self-awareness of the participant’s class privilege. Homeless persons were portrayed as society’s marginalized victims rather than as causes of their situations. And while systemic injustice is verbalized in the Eyes Opened theme, it was to signal its existence and expose it; Acknowledging Privilege, this study’s second narrative theme, shifts to the perpetuation of unjust systems and goes a step further by capturing how these activists understand the causes or dimensions of homelessness and poverty through the dimensions of Unblamed and Made and Kept Poor. Specific instances of Acknowledging Privilege are presented first, followed by the two dimensions.

I asked no one about the circumstances of her upbringing or social status however each participant offered an example of their privilege. In most cases this was to illustrate a contrast with the life circumstances of Center guests. As they described how they came to do their

current work, each shared the college degrees they had attained. Participants referenced their privilege in various ways, including the context of family, upbringing, and safe and stable home environment. Wanda said simply, “I was fortunate enough to grow up knowing I was loved.”

Eliza spoke about the blessings in her life that were unlike some of the people in poverty:

I mean, by the grace of God, I could be in the same situation. But no, I just happened to have been lucky enough or be blessed enough to have, a good upbringing, good parents, and all the rest of it. And to have been born in a very peaceful neighborhood, in a peaceful country, and that’s a privilege. I had nothing to do with it really. You know?

Avalon, begins “I’ve been very privileged” and references the values her parents instilled in her like the importance of education and the cultural and recreational opportunities she had to become well-rounded; Avalon ends this description with “So I would consider myself lucky and blessed.”

Alternatively, Noel thinks about her professional privilege, saying “I have a degree in education. . . is that not a blessing?” Dragonfly speaks of her comfortable life and before Katrina, “going to the dock to get the boat on the weekend” without a second thought. Dragonfly recounts why she spent time in a Houston evacuation shelter, “couldn’t get to my money, couldn’t get to my funds, couldn’t stay at a motel any longer so I stayed at the shelter.” The experience profoundly affected her, causing her to reflect on her middle class privilege, “And in a day, in a week can be humbled how often it is that you’re not in control of things?” Rose’s awareness of her privilege emerges as she talks about those in poverty, “But I will say that I think people have just been given hard breaks and some people have a better support system than others. Like if I were to lose my job, I can go home to my family.” Nanette’s understanding of her privilege is revealed in her explanation of persistent poverty:

But we make so many decisions kind of automatically. And not realizing why I made that decision or is that the best decision. We are so programmed because we have resources to make decisions. They cannot make any decisions or very few decisions about themselves. They don't have resources. Yes, they make decisions but they don't have resources to back up those decisions. Sometimes those decisions take them maybe farther down a long path and a more difficult path and turning back is too difficult.

And Marie considers what her personal and professional life have afforded her: "You know my family has been so blessed. . . being part of the community of people who care about the poor and care about justice."

Understanding privilege implies recognizing its' absence and the barriers to achieving it. The two dimensions of Unblamed and Made and Kept Poor speak, respectively, to the lack of opportunity through happenstance and systemic obstacles.

Unblamed. Unblamed captures the narrative expressions related to the situations a homeless person may find themselves in. This dimension extends from a premise that seems shared, though it was infrequently voiced, that Eliza advances, which is "We don't have the ability or authority to condemn anybody or to judge." Wanda says something quite similar, "I feel like I am in no place to judge. So all I can do is just be here and just love." Unblamed represents the idea that rather than accusing homeless people of laziness and in a few cases, outrightly rejecting the notion of laziness, participants commonly recognized the difficult challenges, in the absence of true opportunity, that those people who are homeless face. Rose describes her evolving understanding, "generally how I'm coming to understand it is not generally blaming them for laziness or that kind of thing. I just think that they got hard breaks,

they made some mistakes, and they're paying for them now." From conversations and time with guests, Eliza understands the situation much like Rose does:

But talking to some people they just got off on the wrong foot they didn't get the break that a lot of other people got and they didn't have the opportunities. And sometimes they get an opportunity and they have to go through so many hoops and obstacles to overcome that to try to continue or make a success of what they are trying to do, they lose courage.

Likewise, Avalon does not see a person's fault but instead:

the endless cycle of it, of being born into it and not having a lot. And not having the financial resources to move forward, to make something better of yourself, than just being stuck in that lifestyle because that's all you know.

But, even in spite of limited opportunities and dire circumstances, Wanda has recognized a "willingness on their end" to face challenges. Here again, the notion of victim as cause is rejected.

Made and kept poor. This dimension's focus is on the reason for persistent poverty in general and New Orleans, in particular, as described by participants. While emphasis varied among the activists, my analysis revealed a shared understanding, consistent with the privilege discourse, that structural societal barriers marginalized some citizens, making and keeping them poor, while alternatively advancing the economic and social interests of a powerful few.

Expressing the reason for this, two other participants shared Eliza's contention that "We keep people poor because of the greed in the world." In this passage, Dragonfly begins her understanding of New Orleans' unjust system; here, in this tourist driven city, poverty is an integral part of the social and economic fabric:

If I educate you, are you going to want to clean my toilets and make my beds in a hotel? Are you willing to clean up the restaurants? Are you going to be a busboy? Are you going to want, you know, to put out the trash in the restaurants? Work as a cocktail waitress or a bartender? Probably not.

After noting that limited and poor educational opportunities apparently serve the economic interests of French Quarter business owners and other powerful New Orleanians engaged in tourism-related commerce, Dragonfly continues:

And that's why having somebody ask me the other day, 'why do you think they opened up that project right at the heart of downtown?' 'Well we've got to put the maids and the busboys somewhere!' We've got to house them somewhere. The system of poverty is a whole economic. . . but it really is bad here. And I don't know how that will be fixed.

That's why there is hardly any middle class here.

Nanette talks about the real difficulty, made so because of established and accepted employment and payroll practices, of pulling oneself out of dire poverty, even after finding a job. Her focus is on the period between the first day of work and the first paycheck:

Especially the homeless, what they do that first month they are working? No place to wash, no place to shower. No place to get food, seek shelter, seek food. We should almost pay people ahead rather than at the other end. So I think we drive people into poverty.

Noel's insight that "Charity never offends anyone; justice offends everybody at some time in their life" seems brought to life by Marie's thoughts on persistent poverty's causes and ways they might be addressed and the likely challenges. At the outset of this passage, Marie identified greed as a problem:

I don't think we can solve persistent poverty through a charity. I think it has to be structural change that has to happen. And that has to happen through programs: housing and mental health programs, education. In order to do that, we have to spend government money and in order to get government money, we have to be taxed. And I think people don't really want to be taxed, you know. And they really don't want to let go of any of their money. I mean they'll give to charities but that's throwing pennies at nonprofits, not the way to solve that. And handing people money on the streets is not the way to solve that. So I think we have to have structural change in order to help lift people out of poverty but that takes a real concerted effort.

Struggling Together

The third theme that my analysis revealed, *Struggling Together*, represents the words and notions of struggle and struggling that were commonly used in narratives by participants primarily in descriptions of their avowed commitments to and responsibility for homeless people and the poor. And as its title might indicate, the sense that we are all; that is, the whole human family, in this together is a key dimension of this theme. Because of its consideration of injustice, *Struggling Together* bears an association to *Eyes Opened*, however it moves beyond experience and awareness to a collective responsibility for action and an acknowledgment of shared vulnerability.

Rose makes a clear connection between shared humanity, part of a dimension discussed in a later section, and this third theme with her comment: "Everyone's a human you know. Life's hard everywhere. And we're all just in it together. So I think it's just aiding in the struggle." Wanda, while not using the word struggle, expresses a deep connection to poor people, their plight, and a communal approach: "I keep coming back because it is a community here, a

community I am very close to.” Wanda also explains that through her relationships and the power of community, she can help to guide and aid those who may have lost their way:

They are not going to make a change if you don’t feel like you’re worth anything. But now if we can start with that I can just try to make people feel like okay, you know people do care about me. You know I am worth something. We start with that. And that’s when maybe a change can be made. Does it happen often? Not too much but, it does happen. I’ve seen it and when it does happen, it’s an amazing thing.

Nanette, in considering the notion of struggle, views Katrina as instructive:

. . . we are all in this struggle together. We are living from day to day. Yes, we may feel we have a lot of security. I think Katrina taught us we could be all wiped out in a moment. That is what has happened to our guests. For most of them it was wiped out in one moment. And I think it has caused me to reflect on what is most important, why is it important. And it’s really the relationships we have, the connections we have, the support we offer one another, that’s what’s important.

Nanette spoke also about how she was struck following Katrina by “the perseverance of people: coming back, the struggle they got through.” Eliza describes the context she is working in by providing her interpretation of the Presentation Sisters’ statement of direction. To review the statement wording in its official form, see Appendix F.

The theme of our congregation right now is to eradicate poverty. And I think the big thing is. . . it’s the emphasis on the greed and going beyond our own needs and becoming global minded. You know just going beyond our own comfort zone, satisfaction, and just thinking bigger and getting out to people. Because if the poor are suffering we all suffer. You may not think it but, if the earth is suffering which it is now it causes us to suffer.

And especially it causes the poor to suffer more because they are closer to it, I think, than most of us.

Rose has been trying to live in accordance with something one of her professors, a priest, said a couple of years earlier, “I remembered one of the priests. . . said that we need to learn how to find our center in the margins.” Rose believes her work at the Rebuild Center, with marginalized homeless people, allows her to do that; it’s how she understands aiding in the struggle. Eliza, too, believes “We need to go to the margins.” Nanette sees that all struggles are linked: “no matter where we go, I think it’s a struggle.” The Struggling Together theme offers foreground and background to the remaining three themes discussed in this chapter.

Summary

In this section, I have responded to the first research question of What is the social justice discourse of Catholic women with a sustained commitment to social justice? by presenting the themes that support my finding that the privilege discourse is the social justice discourse used by the study’s Catholic women participants. First, I described the study’s meta-theme of Privilege Discourse with its ideological and sensory components. Next, I presented the three major themes of Eyes Opened and its dimensions of People Overlooked and Injustice Exposed, Acknowledging Privilege and its dimensions of Unblamed and Made and Kept Poor, and Struggling Together. In these themes and their associated dimensions, the fundamental attributes of the privilege discourse are expressed. I have illustrated participants’ common understandings of socio-economic injustice, privilege, unjust systems, and collective responsibility. The next section addresses the second research question and is a shift in gaze towards the alignment between the activists’ social justice privilege discourse and descriptions of their practice.

Aligning Social Justice Discourse with Activist Practice

Study participants described their activist practice through the two themes of Getting Clean and Finding Teachable Moments. Seven of the participants did not self-identify as either adult educators or activists; only one, a Sister, clearly identified herself as an educator in her current practice, although all three of the women religious had K-12 teaching careers prior to their association with the Rebuild Center. However, after reflecting on whether they saw themselves as an educator, be it a formal educator or an informal one, each was clear about the informal educator aspect of their practice. Words like advocate and advocacy were repeated by participants as was the notion of a life coach.

Participants also saw an important role in educating the privileged about homeless people. This occurred with those who took Center tours and in conversation with day volunteers, family members, and friends. Likewise, the Lantern Light home ownership program served to educate guests as well as those working for banking and mortgage institutions to the systemic challenges and obstacles that poor and homeless people face. While helping individuals, through mortgage and financial literacy training, to successfully negotiate the structural maze of processes related to home ownership, Lantern Light also spearheads the Center's daily lunch program. These practitioners actually understand their work and respond to the social justice issues they confront in multiple, layered ways. While elements of the privilege discourse predominant and serve as a sort of touchstone when describing their practice, the privilege discourse does not align neatly with these practitioners' daily work. The privilege discourse focuses on power and systems but for these women their activism in daily practice is focused primarily on simple, less complex activities. Catholics are among those Christians who subscribe to the notion of works of mercy as a form of grace; works of mercy attend to the

material and spiritual needs of others and include clothing and feeding the poor. The themes Getting Clean and Finding Teachable Moments demonstrate the complexities and internal struggles I observed among participants as they described their practice.

Getting Clean

The Getting Clean theme represents how participants understand the simplicity at the core of the Rebuild Center's mission and how it is fulfilled on a daily basis. Its title refers, in part, to guests taking showers, having their clothing laundered, and attending to fundamental hygienic and physiological needs. Also integral to this theme is the notion that this is a small but first and necessary step in addressing systemic injustice or as Dragonfly contends, "If you're hungry or you don't have an ID to get in the shelter, the basic needs aren't met. Nothing else happens!" Avalon understands the service the Center offers in the context of her privilege:

It's to care for the daily needs 'cause things that are done are things that I would take for granted: a hot meal every day or laundry or getting prescriptions or an ID or having your mail sent somewhere.

Marie conveyed that social justice advocacy is a component of her practice with the New Orleans Jesuit Province. Describing one example she says "We have action alerts about different issues and we pick what issues in a year that we work on. And one of those is poverty." After mentioning health and low income housing, and accompanying needs for legislation and programs, Marie mentions:

We also do work then with corporations. And so we do shareholder advocacy. And you know we actually purchase stock in companies that we want to try to impact and we sit around the table with them and try to, you know, negotiate with them on issues.

Here Marie is contrasting the broader initiatives of the Jesuit Province with the Center's purpose and says:

Our [Rebuild Center's] mission is really simple and some people say, 'well, gosh, that's a waste of time.' You know, 'why aren't you spending your time you know figuring out how to build houses or get more money into mental health services or alcohol substance abuse treatment for homeless people you know whatever?' But the mission is very simple and it's to provide a place where people can get clean you know, get out of the elements have some sense of community, go to the bathroom. It's so simple and fundamental.

Marie acknowledges that by recognizing the mission's simplicity, it does not mean she has not struggled with the idea of the Center accomplishing simple charitable works in the face of systemic injustice:

I mean I think that's you know we have to be okay with that because that and that's against a lot of what I normally believe. If we're going to spend the money you know how about spending it you know try to figure out how we're going to solve this problem rather than just taking care of people that day that hour and make them feel a little bit better about themselves? So that's a little bit of a struggle but when you're there you realize how important it is that for one you know for half a day you can walk around with clean clothes. And you're shaven and you look good and you brushed your teeth. And you know so what little part does that play in restoring your sense of self-worth and dignity enough that maybe you can for now pull yourself out of this.

Avalon, who in an earlier section is quoted speaking about the inaccurate manner the media portrayed Katrina survivors, reflects on her past practice at the Center saying she:

took great pride in organizing the pantry. You know just realizing that no task was too small that it's all a part of running a smooth day at the center and that's essentially what you want at the end of the day. Is for things to go right smoothly. And to help as many people as you can. Not alienate anybody or get a rise out of people. So whatever I could do is what I would try to do.

Wanda, who earlier also expressed deep concern about the societal and legal barriers that exist for homeless individuals, relayed a social justice parable or dilemma that she had heard and thinks about at times:

Babies coming down the river. . . are you going to get the babies out of the water or are you going to go up and find out where the babies are coming from? Obviously I'm going to get the babies out of the water but I know there needs to be someone to go check that out. You know I definitely think there's a need for both of that. I'm not too great at going and checking out what's going on up there at the top of the river.

Conversations with those well versed in theology and Internet searches confirmed that this is not the re-telling of a biblical story but is one told in social justice circles; it's authorship is either unattributed or variously attributed. A complete version of this story published on the Internet appears as Appendix G. Marie's comment that "I don't know that they [Tompson Center staff] can see beyond the next shower, you know, sometimes. I mean it would be great if we could", is an assessment of what is realistically possible in terms of the services currently delivered.

Finding Teachable Moments

My analysis revealed the idea of informal teaching or education as a prominent aspect of participants' description of their practice. The older, more experienced participants seemed most readily able to illustrate this, most likely because they had reflected on their practice at different

times. For example, while Lantern Light offers a formal, structured home buyers program, the women religious, similar to the lay women, emphasized the informal facet to the education they provide. Noel says that, as an educator, she is often looking for teachable moments. Nanette concurs and observes that “there are always opportunities to speak for educating whether it’s more the informal.” She talks about assisting with guest’s decision-making when she sometimes poses questions such as “Did you ever consider a what if?” And while Nanette recognizes the role formal education might play saying “sometimes I would love maybe to get an opportunity to have some formal education for some,” Nanette continues with what it is the Center’s staff and volunteers can accomplish:

And sometimes it’s just helping them to read something. Helping them to fill out a form. When we look at the forms that could apply for anything. Some of them are so many pages of sometimes you say useless information. And if I can’t read and write how do I complete those forms? So I think there’s an opportunity for education.

Dragonfly, after explaining also that most of the education she does is informal, observes; “So our first role is to educate our clients and then to educate caregivers and our final goal is to educate the community.” In referencing her clients, many of whom are Center guests, Dragonfly asks, “Who’s going to advocate for them who’s going to talk. . . about budget cuts? Marie reflects on her current practice:

In general, I think with my job now, I do education about issues and what our faith says we should be doing with those and how to take action on issues. I do that through trying to make connections between what kind of services we are providing who it is we’re seeing and the broader, ‘what’s causing people to be homeless.’

Nanette spoke of possibilities for more formal education into the future. Marie also added a longer view perspective. Here she speaks of a need to perhaps work with guests in a more formal, developmental way. Marie indicates designing such a program component would begin with asking some questions:

You know what is the reality? What is the reality about? And then how can we really help people to move out of that? So that needs to be spelled out. What works, what doesn't work. And how are we going to get there.

In contrast to those respondents over fifty years of age, the younger participants responded as Rose did saying, "I feel like we all have stuff to share. . . so I guess I could be like an informal educator. I never thought of it like that. But yea, sure, I guess." Wanda responded to my suggestion that as part of her practice, she performed a teaching role with "I think you're right [but I] would never consider myself an educator." When working with the new Center volunteers, who are usually recent college graduates, Wanda explains "I like to think that I don't educate them but help them along with forming their ideas and everything else in a way, just people's idea of homelessness."

And while not formerly having considered an educational aspect to their practice, the examples of informal learning provided by the younger participants included completing applications or resumes, descriptions similar to the older participants. As Avalon describes:

You know I would sit down and teach them to do a resume or fill out forms. . . . Not that I was trying to teach them to read but I was just trying to help them in a way so. And you know we would educate them about other services in the city.

The concept of coaching, by modeling, is revealed in Wanda's description:

Everything we do here is pretty straightforward. But just hopefully leading by example how to address people, how to deal with situations. And then also by my learning- like when I screw up, I own it. . . and I think that's good for guests to see as well.

The prominence of informal education and teachable moments discussion does not mean formal education or training was undervalued. The women religious, through Lantern Light, sponsor a home ownership educational program, the actual training is done by, as Nanette says, "somebody who is gifted and knowing the whole [system] and that's her whole ministry." With community partners, homes are built and home buyers trained. Nanette also described the significance of the mortgage literacy component to the training program, "And it is from the simple thing of how do they get their credit to how do they build credit scores? How do they apply for mortgage?" According to Nanette, Lantern Light and the trainer have worked with city institutions to ensure the education is relevant so potential buyers:

will not be sent to the mortgage company until we are 99.9% sure that we can [succeed.] So it might be a long journey. We know that they go through that struggle they will be able to keep their home. And be sure that their mortgage is the best possible mortgage they can get. We want to make sure any funding other funding is available we help them apply for that.

Nannette also spoke about the recently established homeowners association that Lantern Light set-up and what its power will be into the future saying "Yes, they have rights." She was essentially describing citizen empowerment and engagement of first-time home owners by being educated to property rights, rights as a neighborhood citizen, and rights regarding what the City government can or cannot do. So, Nanette, who devotes a considerable portion of her days

planning, preparing, and serving the Center lunch, also spends time that translates to assisting future and new home buyers exercise their agency as full citizens.

Summary

In this section, I have responded to the study's second research question of How does the social justice discourse of Catholic adult educator women align with how they describe their activist practice? by presenting the themes of Getting Clean and Finding Teachable Moments. Getting Clean represents simplicity of practice and mission and Finding Teachable Moments illustrates that participant practice is predominated by informal education. Through these two themes, the multiple and layered ways that these participants understand their social justice practice has been revealed. While the privilege discourse predominates in discussions about social justice, the realities of how these activists describe and understand their practice does not neatly align with the social justice privilege discourse. Instead, there is fluidity to their understanding of practice which defies any singular, streamlined categorization. The third and final major section of this chapter begins below; in it, the way spirituality has influenced these participants' understanding of social justice is explored.

Spirituality's Influence on the Meaning of Social Justice

Not surprisingly, these Catholic participants indicated comfort with their spirituality, noting as Eliza did that "Spiritual experiences are in the simple things" and sharing Wanda's observation that, at the Center "[You have] spiritual experiences every day." Sometimes spirituality manifests itself in a pause taken on an especially chaotic day; Rose describes standing back and simply looking at people and noticing how beautiful they are and knowing that "you can love people like that." For these reasons, spiritual moments described by the participants are reported incidentally throughout this chapter.

In this section, however, the focus is on the way spirituality has influenced the meaning of social justice for these women activists and so participant responses to my specific inquiry about spiritual experiences are reported here for those specific instances where the narrative illuminated the meaning of social justice. Spirituality's influence on the meaning of social justice is evidenced in the way participants walk against the grain in terms not only of working with those marginalized by society at large but by how they choose to practice. This influence is represented by the two themes presented in this section, Called to Walk Against the Grain, with its dimensions of Touched Emotionally and Physically and Sharing Stories, and Tempered Activism which represents quiet acts of resistance. Called to Walk Against the Grain is like a braid, intertwined, signifying an almost iterative process whereby participants responded to a spiritual call to serve the poor which led to experiences that now inform or shape how they understand their faith, which, in turn, perpetuates or renews their calling and sustains their commitment to and understanding of social justice. Tempered Activism is how respondents have embraced, enacted, and reconciled the meaning, their understanding, of social justice with their Catholicism.

Called to Walk Against the Grain

When asked why they pursued their practice, each participant indicated they responded to a call to walk against the grain by engaging in practice with poor people. This call was expressed in various ways such as acting on Catholic social teaching's tenet to serve those who are poor, fulfilling God's will, or being drawn into a ministry that was difficult to understand or articulate. For example, Nanette responded to my question by saying, "I guess it is a real call as a Presentation Sister, to minister among the poor and to try to change some of the systems." As a lay person, Marie is similarly clear, her response was:

I think there's a few things; one is the absolute conviction that this is what my faith is calling me to do. I just have never doubted God. And this is how faith makes sense to me. It doesn't to everybody else but this is how it makes sense to me. And how I can understand some of the bigger, you know, God's bigger plan.

The plan Marie refers to entails bringing "about a place where justice and peace prevail." Marie further explains her practice, explicitly referencing Catholic social teaching:

We're called to include those who have the least who are the least powerful who are the poor. You know we are called to act on that option for the poor. Then I can't imagine, I mean, there's nobody poorer than people who don't have a home who have. . . nothing or at least in this country, I think there's nobody poorer than people who have nothing. So that's just been a real interest and passion of mine.

It seems the younger, less experienced participants had some difficulty in fully articulating or separating out the idea of a calling. For Rose, one of the participants in her twenties, discerning the elements of the Called to Walk Against the Grain braid, essentially unraveling it, was unnecessary or unimportant, "After I'm done with this program I still want to get into some kind of work with the homeless. I can't really explain why. I just know there is where I think I should be." Rose, who earlier expressed awareness and concern about systemic injustice while discussing her work of coordinating guest showers and doing laundry says, "service doesn't seem like much but I mean it is. . . it's like more of a ministry or presence than anything else." Rose continues, "I think that's really what I just felt called to do. So I think that personal meaning, why I did it, just kind of all runs together. Cause if I didn't want to be here, I wouldn't be." Avalon provides another example of mission and calling as one when she recalled a day when the first guest she came to know, a quiet and shy man, offered his bicycle to her on a

day she was walking to the Center. Avalon says, “And I just really felt that my mission here and my call to be here was just, was really [clear] at that moment.” Alternatively, Dragonfly, a middle-aged participant whose intended and earlier career was as a nurse specializing in oncology, sees the ideas as discrete saying, “I call it a ministry and a calling. I had no plan ever in life to deal with chronically mentally ill clients much less homeless.”

Some participants invoked Jesus when describing their practice; just as Eliza, who said, “I can see why Jesus loved the poor. He was always with the poor and downtrodden.” Wanda commented, “I always go back to Jesus. . . . I go to mass just to hear the word.” Marie too, invokes Jesus saying “I guess that for me to make Jesus real I have to be involved with making their lives better. . . . That’s where my spirituality is.” Modeling Jesus as a way to respond to this call is resultantly expressed as a closeness with poor and homeless people, those at society’s margins, that is both physical and emotional.

Touched emotionally and physically. As indicated by the examples above, participants described spiritual experiences related to their work as those times, often moments, when while engaged with a Center guest or other homeless person, they clearly recognized and felt the presence of God or, as Noel observed, “how the gospel came to life.” Participants described these profound human encounters as moments of clarity and calm that often occurred when stepping out of the bounds of typical societal or professional behavior. These women consistently expressed the compelling emotional effects that experiences with homeless people have had on them whereby homeless people’s humanity and the participants’ compassion are both revealed. Avalon spoke about what “made me love it even more is that the people that work there have a true passion. . . , calling to be there” and they are a “mix of religious and lay people.” Dragonfly, focusing on her mental health work that initially came about through a mis-

filed application, “And I tell people all the time this is not a choice” but today she is “endeared to the clientele.” Like the Eyes Opened theme discussed earlier in this chapter, this dimension of Called to Walk Against the Grain has a sensory element, but rather than the visual, participants spoke frequently about being touched emotionally and, to a lesser extent, being touched and touching physically. This touching followed simple listening, listening to stories. Storytelling, often meaning the sharing of guest biographies, is another prominent dimension of this theme because, according to participants, stories enable a soulful recognition of humanity; they also have the power to inspire or fuel compassion.

A fitting example of this dimension is offered by Eliza as she describes her first encounter with a hungry, homeless person who knocked on the door of the Sisters’ office trailer that was parked at the future Rebuild Center site. A short time after the storm, the Sisters were simply serving coffee and small treats, often from a car; the trailer was not stocked with substantial food or groceries. Eliza, who was alone in the trailer, let the man in and gave him some cans of food with pull tops and also some packaged cheese and crackers, like those from a snack machine; “he just took them and pulled the wrappers off so fast, he was so hungry.” They then talked a little bit and:

when he got to the door he turned around and looked at me he said, could I have a hug?

So I mean I almost lost it, you know? I said, indeed you can have a hug! That was such a tremendously moving, touching, humbling moment, that I haven’t forgotten it.

Noel also described her first private encounter with a homeless person but, unlike Eliza’s, her experience occurred some years prior to her arrival in New Orleans. Interestingly, there’s a tactile element to this description as Noel talks about her feet feeling as though they “were stuck on the floor:”

I was at a bus terminal and I met this woman and it took me about a half an hour to get off the seat and get over to her. I felt like my feet were stuck on the floor because she was definitely homeless. She was mentally ill. When I go there I asked her to have tea with me and she came and we sat. But that was like almost, I don't want to say a conversion because I always had the poor in mind, that's what we were founded for. But it was like I lost that. . . maybe that, I don't know, maybe fear.

Like Eliza's guest who wanted a hug, Dragonfly spoke about a mental health patient who kissed her on the cheek, this was someone who had been making some progress but had been away for a short time. A psychiatrist who was nearby observed the kiss and was aghast that Dragonfly would permit such close contact and such a breach of professionalism. When telling me the story, Dragonfly argues that "People have the right to have people touching them. Isn't that part of being a human?" At this point her conversation takes a comically honest but thoughtful turn:

He missed me. That's what people do when you miss them. So for me, no I don't want his slobber on me, but it would have caused a lot more trauma for him for me to do that [push him away] than me just go wash my face.

Dragonfly shared another instance of walking against the grain as she told a story that occurred in a residential facility where a highly agitated mentally ill client was "ranting and raving" one evening and had blocked the phone rendering a call for assistance to the psychiatric crisis unit difficult, nearly impossible. In the confusion, Dragonfly was compelled to pick-up a bible that another client had left and she opened it to a random passage and began reading aloud.

Dragonfly recounted that

she [the client] cursed me, yelled at me... she pulled my hair, but I never stopped. I don't know why. This went on for an hour and a half and I didn't move. And I just kept looking

at her, and she kept looking at me. And somewhere in the course of that night I felt I was confronted with evil. I don't know why. I never felt that before. I was not frightened. I was not afraid. And I kept it up and finally, she started crying.

After enumerating the abuses she had been subjected to during her life, this client that Dragonfly sat with through the night became subdued. Dragonfly had prefaced the story of her unorthodox technique with the variety of medication regimens that may be used with those suffering from schizophrenia and the fact that five psychiatrists might have five different diagnoses for a single patient. Her ability to go against the grain of professionalism, later sustained by feeling a special spiritual presence, enabled Dragonfly to be with and calm this 'broken soul' in a kind, compassionate and effective way.

Rose also shared a spiritual experience that had a calming effect on another where the sensory dimension was prominent. Rose and her roommate were exiting a streetcar and enjoying an evening out with daiquiris in hand. As they stepped onto the street, Rose noticed a commotion and realized that a Center guest, inebriated and sleeping on the ground, was being ridiculed by sidewalk pedestrians. Rose, a short-statured small person, attired in a "little sundress" threw down her drink, pushed those who had gathered out of the way, and proceeded to pull the guest up, waking him in the process. As he is about to take a swing at the person tugging on him, the Center guest opens his eyes and flashes a smile signaling recognition and peace. Rose senses the calm washing over him as he looks at her as if to say, "ahh, it's just you." Rose thought nothing of this as the episode unfolded, she simply acted, propelled by what she saw needed to be done. Later she mused at what those who witnessed her behavior may have seen, perhaps surmising that this was a random occurrence between strangers. In another instance, Rose described escorting a frail 75-year old guest to the bus stop as he was on his way

to a Salvation Army night shelter. As Rose tells it, others witnessed a curious bi-racial couple, walking slowly to their destination with arms locked tight. But for her, it was the opportunity to “really help just one person” in a meaningful way and to identify that “look in someone’s eye like you can just see it;” she characterized this as ‘one of those moments that makes you feel really good.’

Speaking about the powerful compassion stirred within her, Wanda’s comment offers another way that this dimension’s tactile underpinning manifested itself in participants’ narratives: “To be honest, I’m sure I would have come back Katrina or no Katrina. The city had a grip on me that year before.” When Eliza shares her succinct reflection that “I think what sustains me is the connective-ness of the humanness of people,” she is speaking about the connections made through interactions with guests that include sharing stories.

Spirituality was also revealed as a sustaining factor in participants’ commitment to their practice. It was, however, expressed variously. One way was in the expression of what participants learned through their practice. Eliza, with 15 years of practice working with poor people, spoke of “working in the margins and working with people who [have little]. . . have given a lot more meaning to my life” she further explains, “They teach me” because “They have faith in spite of poverty.” Wanda, having had five years of practice, is similarly affected, “I’m learning constantly as a person and there is so much to learn from people from their faith to their patience.” Dragonfly’s learning from practice reflects the idea of Called to Walk Against the Grain as intertwined, like a braid:

Part of my oath as a nurse is to be an advocate. . . to be an advocate for those that really can’t speak for themselves. So it really became a calling and a lesson. Because I don’t

complain about anything more in life. When I catch myself complaining about. . . aspects of my life, I get a reality check.

Although having a different insight, Noel too, expresses that her 15 years of practice cause her to reflect “I’ve come to realize in myself more gifts that I had. Suddenly I saw gifts when I was a teacher. It’s almost like an enrichment of who I am.” Marie’s work with those in poverty has spanned 35 years and she describes her lengthy commitment to activist work simply, saying, “So that sustains me, just really feeling the presence of God.”

Dragonfly has been involved in some aspect of anti-poverty practice for 37 years; her current practice involves running her own business that involves managing the cases of mentally ill homeless people. In this passage, she relays her prayer to God at a point when she was concerned whether her business was viable:

What I thought was, ‘okay this is how this is going to work.’ I will take care of Your people as well as I’ve taken care of my cancer patients with all the same passion, with the all the same intensity, with all the same nurturing. I will treat them just as well, with respect and kindness. . . if You are that sure [of] all of that. . . [I am] able to sustain myself, be a place where I can employ other people, and, you know, be something good in the community. I will take care of the least of Yours like they are kings and queens, if You do that other part.

Her spirituality has allayed Dragonfly of her financial concerns and she points to this as a key factor that sustains her commitment to practice:

What sustains me is the fact that I do not worry about none of that stuff anymore. I don’t worry about how the doors will stay open. I don’t worry about the ceiling where it’s leaking right there. [She points to the water stain on the ceiling tile in her conference

where we met.] I don't worry about anything, I figure if the Lord really wants me to do this, He will figure out a way because I can't do all that stuff.

Sharing stories. The power of shared stories to reveal a person's humanity, to affirm personhood, is present prominently in the participant's narratives and is a powerful dimension of *Called to Walk Against the Grain*. Participants frequently made mention of the story and its impact on them. Of her work at the Thompson Center, Avalon said "it just brightened my heart" and "these people touched me in so many ways. . . just with their stories and their strength." Rose spoke about how she likes to go about her work:

You can never really understand a person until you know their stories. Once you know their stories you can kind of like understand where they're coming from for the most part. So I think that's generally why I've really taken then, time like, to sit down and talk to people.

From her vantage of mental health professional, Dragonfly, referring to the mentally ill in poverty, describes a source of inspiration: "They've been traumatized all their life and sometimes when I start listening to the stories, I realize why we are doing this." Noel, too, speaks about how she is touched, "You know their stories and you see them struggle and you see them turn and then you see them look at their new house. I mean there is such life that you know, it touches into your very being."

Eliza reflected on the appreciation that the Center's guests expressed for her having engaged them in conversation: "And sometimes you feel what did I do? I didn't do anything. I just listened. Just listened to a story." Eliza also reflected on how being with the poor has affected her she mentions how she initially considered these people, "Oh they can do better and

they can this and that. But my attitude has changed. You know, and people are people.” When I ask Wanda what she sees when she looks around the Center, she responds:

I see beautiful individuals who like I said before all have their own story. And some of them just want to be, want to be recognized. Want to be treated with dignity and respect like everyone deserves. Maybe not having the best day. But nonetheless, they are human beings.

In this next passage, Marie is responding to my probe after she mentioned the concerted effort it takes to make structural change; she ties personhood to advocacy:

One is I think people have to have a personal experience with people who are poor. You know I don't think you can just say: oh give to the poor. It's hard to get changed without having or entering into a relationship with those people who are poor. That's how my heart gets changed. That's one of the reasons I don't like to call the group of people the homeless. I always try to really refer to them as homeless people because I think that you have to think of them as people. And you know they are people who have dreams and hopes and you know stories just like you. They have families and children and they have a mom and they have a dad. And you know and something went wrong. And they couldn't pull themselves back up again.

As was the case with my interactions with the other seven participants, I found conversation with Marie compelling. But this particular exchange had a profoundly subtle effect on me.

Immediately after and since, I have not used the words the homeless without people or persons or individuals directly behind it; it is no longer recognized as a noun in my vocabulary, it now functions only as an adjective. Rose also explained the relevance of storytelling:

Because everyone's homeless for a different reason. You know and I think that's what a lot of people don't realize that aren't in this work. I feel like they have the tendency to kind of clump them all in one group which I don't think is fair. You know I don't think that's right. So I think for me it was just kind of learning more about that and then sharing with other people on it. Cause I think that's kind of justice like doing them justice is like sharing their stories with people that don't necessarily know much about homelessness.

Participants also spoke about the guest stories they, in turn, shared or could share with others. Nanette thought aloud about one way to begin affecting societal or even community change: "It might be sharing those stories with others." Wanda spoke about how easy it is to affirm personhood: "And so whether it be here, or outside of here, to friends or family, anyone can help people to recognize that they're just people. They have a name and a story." Like *Touched Emotionally and Physically*, *Sharing Stories* is a salient dimension of the theme of *Called to Walk Against the Grain*.

Tempered Activism

The theme of *Tempered Activism* is so named because each of these participants is not so unlike the individual said to be engaged in tempered activism, working from within to make change while choosing to remain inside the organization by balancing her individual perspective of what needs to be changed with the prevailing organizational culture. In this case, however, prevailing culture relates, not to a single organization but, to society and the Catholic Church's seemingly rigid strictures with its endemic social justice issues. For these women activists, adherence to the faith they profess is not blind acceptance to the Church as institution but love for Church as people sustained by a deep spirituality, informed by Catholic social teaching. This

is, in part, achieved by committing subtle acts of resistance. For example, one of the women religious women chose to have her only 50th celebration as a Presentation Sister at The Rebuild Center and not in a church because she viewed her practice environment with guests and staff, the people, as her spiritual sustenance and church. A similar example was mirrored by lay women who reported that they had found spiritual reflection, how and when they prayed, or working through their faith struggles as much more important than mindlessly attending mass with its seemingly rote recitations and standardized prayer.

Most participants expressed the importance of the fundamentals of their faith. This was clearly addressed by the notion of Jesus as rebel. For example, Dragonfly says:

Well, you know, I like to tell people that if Jesus was here today, he'd be with the people.

He would relate to one of our party. He'd be hanging out with all the folks we talked about. . . because that's what he was. He was a rebel.

Dragonfly experienced a period of time where she questioned her Catholicism and her faith altogether but came back full circle, determining "I'm a Christian so, okay, as a Christian what does that mean? And He [Jesus Christ] was a rebel." This revelation informs Dragonfly's understanding of social justice which she describes in terms of action:

I'm not going to be with folks who can manage their way, figure it out and, you know, will prosper. I'm going to hang out with the folks who are being downtrodden just by design of their being. Either poor or, you know, color that isn't the color that you should be; not the gender, you should be. You know that has to be part and parcel of what we do. And by the sign of our work here we are doing social justice. We're speaking up for the folks that can't speak up for themselves. So I see it as inclusive in everything we do. You can't be in these services and not be involved in social justice.

In explaining how they reconcile the Church's social justice issues with their commitment to social justice, participants described their internal struggles. Eliza, too, brings up Jesus and says she often asks herself:

How would Jesus act or react to all of this? And I think that, you know, he would be doing what he did, when he lived on earth. He ignored a lot of the laws and tried to abolish them. So I mean, I feel I do the same thing.

Marie explains, "I really have struggled with that. Most of my friends have left the church." The only study participant of color contemplates this issue regularly:

That's difficult. And it is a constant reconciliation. Because as an African American Catholic you have to understand growing up in the South. I have to reconcile on a regular basis. Catholics didn't always have Blacks in churches. And when they did allow them, it was the back of the church. Even as a child and an adolescent I'd think, 'God wouldn't do this.' I have struggled with it often.

Noel says she "would hope and pray that someday the Church" would broaden its commitment to social justice, beyond a concern for those who are poor. "And I do believe we are a Church that is social justice minded but it is very definitive and very singular." In terms of reconciling spirituality with the Church's social justice issues, Nanette believes the abiding question, one that applies to all vexing social justice issues, is "how do I let my spirituality transform me?" and this is "so that I can overcome, maybe, some of the difficulties." The appreciation and willingness to participate in shared struggle, described in a theme that is evidence of their social justice privilege discourse, may be partly informed by the struggles they have recognized and endured on their own behalf.

Where Nanette speaks of allowing her spirituality to transform her, Avalon, who is maturing out of young adulthood, describes how she understands her faith:

And I think for me, that just kind of being in this institution of the Catholic life has been, I've just seen a different light of it being older now. And not in that structure of being a good Catholic school girl kind of way. And I kind of get, I don't really necessarily let it affect me as much because, for me now, I'm totally kind of reevaluating my spiritual life and its more of a reflection and everything. So part of my spirituality is to continue to get back to. . . [fundamentals].

Rose is evaluating similarly to Avalon, she says, "I am Catholic and I do consider myself Catholic but, as far as those kind of issues go, I think I am informed enough to make my own choices on what I want it to be." Both these participants pointed back to their Catholic education as a way to reconcile the Church's social justice issues; Rose considers that her "ideals were kind of always in my head. Because you know they [the Jesuits] put a big emphasis on them, like spirituality, social justice, simplicity." Avalon reflects on what's important to her, saying its "Catholic faith and values" which include the "corporal works of mercy that I learned. You know, you visit the imprisoned, you give food to the hungry. So I think it's more focusing on that part rather than the Church. Rose conveys also that her practice is what chiefly occupies her, "I think that just like right now I'm concerned with what I'm doing right here. Or what I'm seeing. And what I've seen rather than what I really perceive I have no control over."

As a participant who is in middle age, Marie seems to express a lay variation of the reconciliation that Nanette describes, speaking of "just the reality of it" and that she has no doubt about the social justice part to her Catholic faith, she has worked through it, "I just let go of that anger. Realizing that it's not going to change but there are some things. . . that I'm involved in

and that I'm most in touch to, that I can totally believe in." And Noel remains steadfast in her faith but thoughtfully observes, "I can't expect to have it in my lifetime. . . you know, where women will be on equal footing." In spite of the Church's social justice issues and possibly because of them, these women are sustained in their activist work with the poorest among us, going about it in a tempered manner. For these women, their sustained Tempered Activism, exercised by subtle acts of resistance, is directly linked to their spirituality.

Summary

In this, the last major section of this chapter, the third and final research question, how does spirituality influence the meaning of social justice for Catholic adult educator women engaged in work with the poor? is addressed. The theme Called to Walk Against the Grain with its dimensions of Touched Emotionally and Physically and Sharing Stories and the theme Tempered Activism have been presented as support for this interpretation. Marie's reflection on the occasion of the Rebuild Center's 2007 dedication ceremony and opening seems to well communicate the spiritual significance of being Called to Walk Against the Grain and Tempered Activism that was revealed through my analysis of participant narratives:

And it was just such a joyous occasion and it was rich and poor, and the archbishop and homeless people and everybody celebrating together. I thought this is what the kingdom is supposed to look like. Nobody was turned away. And everybody shared and celebrated that together. This is what God meant for us, to be in community this way.

Together, these two themes and their associated dimensions paint a picture of a complex relationship between a spirituality within a Catholic frame, that calls these women to practice, and the influence that the experiences of practice have had on their spirituality. My analysis of

the narrative data has revealed that spirituality has a direct influence on how these women understand social justice and it is also firmly grounded in their practice.

Chapter Summary

In this section, I make associations between the narrative themes that resulted from my analysis of the data and this study's three research questions. As noted in the body of this chapter, the meta-theme of Predominance of the Privilege Discourse and the three themes of Eyes Opened, Acknowledging Privilege, and Struggling Together and their associated dimensions of People Overlooked, Injustice Exposed, Unblamed, and Made and Kept Poor, all relate to the first research question which is: What is the social justice discourse of Catholic women with a sustained commitment to social justice? It has been noted that the very nature of discourse means that most themes provide some evidence or trace evidence to support its characterization although these three themes most clearly and directly support the study findings. Given that predominance of the privilege discourse is identified in response to the first question, Getting Clean and Finding Teachable Moments are the two themes that most directly address the second question which is: How does the social justice discourse of Catholic adult educator women align with how they describe their activist practice? Finally, the theme of Called to Walk Against the Grain with its dimensions of Touched Emotionally and Physically and Sharing Stories and the theme of Tempered Activism most directly address this study's third research question which is: How does spirituality influence the meaning of social justice for Catholic adult educator women engaged in work with the poor?

To summarize, I have presented in this chapter of findings, one meta-theme and seven major themes that have been revealed through my analysis of the study's narrative data. Additionally, I have provided explanations in support of my interpretations and correlated the

themes and their associated dimensions to the study's three research questions. The next and final chapter presents discussion and conclusions in light of the findings described here.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Narrative of the Poor takes shape most often around those who are the victim's of society's greed, exploitation, and manipulation, that is, those who suffer the consequences of empire.

(Groody, p. 37)

In this final chapter, I present my research study conclusions and discussion, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research; while interrelated, each is presented in a separate section. Before these three major sections begin, I summarize briefly the information captured in this dissertation's preceding five chapters.

Study in Brief

The significance of anti-poverty activism cannot be denied in relation to the United States' current socio-economic landscape. This nation's economic inequalities are considered to be the most disparate among the wealthiest nations of the developed world. Brought to attention globally as the 2005 Hurricane Katrina disaster and its aftermath unfolded through extensive media coverage, the city of New Orleans, Louisiana has come to symbolize the ethnic geography of catastrophe (Campanella, 2007) and suffering, both acute and chronic, for those in society who have been socially and economically marginalized due to systemic injustice. Social justice, the righting of societal injustices and inequities, has been historically considered one of the adult education field's core missions. However, scholars in the field have articulated differing, and sometimes conflicting, conceptualizations of social justice's meaning. Practically, many prominent adult educators have participated variously in social activism and some of these adult educator activists have expressed deeply held religious and spiritual beliefs. While a broad-

ranging and significant amount of adult education literature exploring spirituality exists and an increasing amount explores spirituality and commitment among adult educators working for social justice, very few studies have examined the meaning of social justice for adult educator activists who strongly express religious or spiritual beliefs.

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between Catholic women adult educators' understanding of social justice and their engagement in anti-poverty activist practice with Hurricane Katrina survivors, in the context of a religiously-affiliated organization. Three research questions guided this study: (a) What is the social justice discourse of Catholic women with a sustained commitment to social justice?, (b) How does the social justice discourse of Catholic adult educator women align with how they describe their activist practice?, and (c) How does spirituality influence the meaning of social justice for Catholic adult educator women engaged in work with the poor?

I have used a qualitative research design which was a case study that blended elements of narrative analysis and a type of critical discourse analysis, creating a data rich method for understanding these participants' discourse and the way they enact these understandings in practice. The unit under analysis was women's narratives; I, a fifty-five year old white, middle-class, Catholic woman, have analyzed the narrative data through a researcher's critical discourse lens. The methodology I chose is conceptually informed by three theoretical perspectives that influence the study's foundation and analytical framework. Radical-critical theory and Catholic social teaching are the first two perspectives and these converge to formulate the study's broad foundation which reflects my philosophical understanding of adult education and social justice activism. In addition, social justice discourse as outlined by Choules (2007) guided this study's data collection and analysis. I used purposeful sampling to recruit and select this study's eight

participants. The criteria for this sampling included gender, identification with a particular religious faith tradition, commitment to anti-poverty work, and practice at or in association with the selected research site. Semi-structured interviewing was the primary data collection method; I also conducted participant observations during a three-week stay in the city. The data analysis was constant comparative which I have used in an on-going way, from my first conversation with a key informant and initial participant interview through the writing of this final chapter.

The key findings were the answers to the three research questions inquiring into Catholic women adult educators' understanding of social justice and their engagement in anti-poverty activist practice with Hurricane Katrina survivors. The answers to these questions were indicated by one meta-theme and seven specific themes with six associated dimensions that were revealed through my critical analysis of the data. The meta-theme and the seven other themes are (a) predominance of the privilege discourse, (b) eyes opened with the two dimensions of people overlooked and injustice exposed, (c) acknowledging privilege with the two dimensions of unblamed and made and kept poor, (d) struggling together, (e) getting clean, (f) finding teachable moments, (g) called t against the grain with the two dimensions of touched emotionally and physically and sharing stories, and (h) tempered activism. The first research question aimed to identify the social justice discourse used by Catholic women with sustained commitment to social justice; I have identified that the privilege discourse was predominately used by these activists. The second question was an inquiry into how social justice discourse aligned with the ways these activists described and understood their practice; my analysis revealed that their predominant discourse did not align neatly with their practice because they understood social justice in multiple and layered ways. The third and final research question sought to determine how these activists' spirituality influenced the meaning of social justice in terms of their work

with poor and homeless individuals; I have found that Catholicism, in general, and Catholic social teaching, in particular, have had a direct influence on participants' understanding of social justice.

Conclusions and Discussion

Based on these research findings, I put forth three interrelated conclusions that address this study's purpose which was to explore the relationship between Catholic women adult educators' understanding of social justice and their engagement in anti-poverty activist practice. First, I conclude that Catholic women adult educator activists' enacted practice has a complexity that does not conform neatly to adult education conceptualizations of social justice. Second, I conclude that Catholic women adult educators stress that their engagement in anti-poverty activist practice results in their own significant informal learning. Third, an iterative relationship exists between Catholic adult educator activists' spirituality and their practice that informs what social justice means to them that, in turn, has shaped their spirituality. These conclusions are interrelated not only because they address the study's single purpose, but also because parsing the discrete strands of Catholicism, gender, and activism from these practitioners' shared positionality as Catholic women adult educator activists is difficult. Nevertheless, these conclusions are discussed separately in the next three sub-sections.

Conclusion One: Catholic Women Adult Educator Activists' Enacted Practice has a Complexity that Does Not Conform Neatly to Adult Education Conceptualizations of Social Justice

From this study, I conclude that Catholic adult educator activists' enacted practice has a complexity that does not conform or correspond neatly to adult education conceptualizations as discussed in the literature. The idea of social justice has been a compelling vision in adult

education; but there have been competing, even contrasting, views of what social justice means in practice. In Chapter 2, I argue that the adult education literature has conceptualized social justice in three ways. It seems, however, that Catholic women adult education activists understand and enact social justice practice in multiple, layered ways. In other words, the reality of practice or the actual doing, has a complexity that is not defined by the adult education field's traditional social justice conceptualizations.

While these activists' social justice discourse is clearly predominated by a privilege discourse, descriptions of their practice were peppered with the language of charity and human rights discourses (Choules 2007). They have a critical analysis of their practice but one that does not draw on formal theoretical sources; they frequently reference the notion of power and privilege without explicitly naming it. Descriptions of their practice are characterized by a fluidity that does not correspond to traditional adult education conceptualizations of social justice. This may be due to the nature of their adult educator activist practice. As Foley (2001) has argued and has been noted elsewhere in this dissertation, "most learning is informal and incidental, embedded in other activities, and tacit" (p. 85). Although some of the education at this day recovery center is formal, by far most occurs less formally or on the fly. And so it may follow that the doing, in this context, reflects an immediacy, urgency, and responsiveness that cannot adequately be explained by the way those in the adult education field have traditionally theorized social justice. At the same time, it is likely that through the doing, an informal process, that these adult educator activists have come to understand and learn social justice in a practice context.

To more fully expound on this conclusion, I use a simple metaphor to illustrate the role of the traditional or formal social justice ideals as conceptualized in the adult education literature

and their relationship to actual practice as evidenced by this study. Van Dijk (2006) discusses the ideology-discourse interface and describes ideologies as shared belief systems and ideological collectivities as additionally, communities of practice and communities of discourse. Reflective of Van Dijk's point, I juxtapose the conceptualizations and social policy categorizations to social justice discourse as described by Choules (2007) to create a three dimensional social justice matrix which appears as Figure 1.

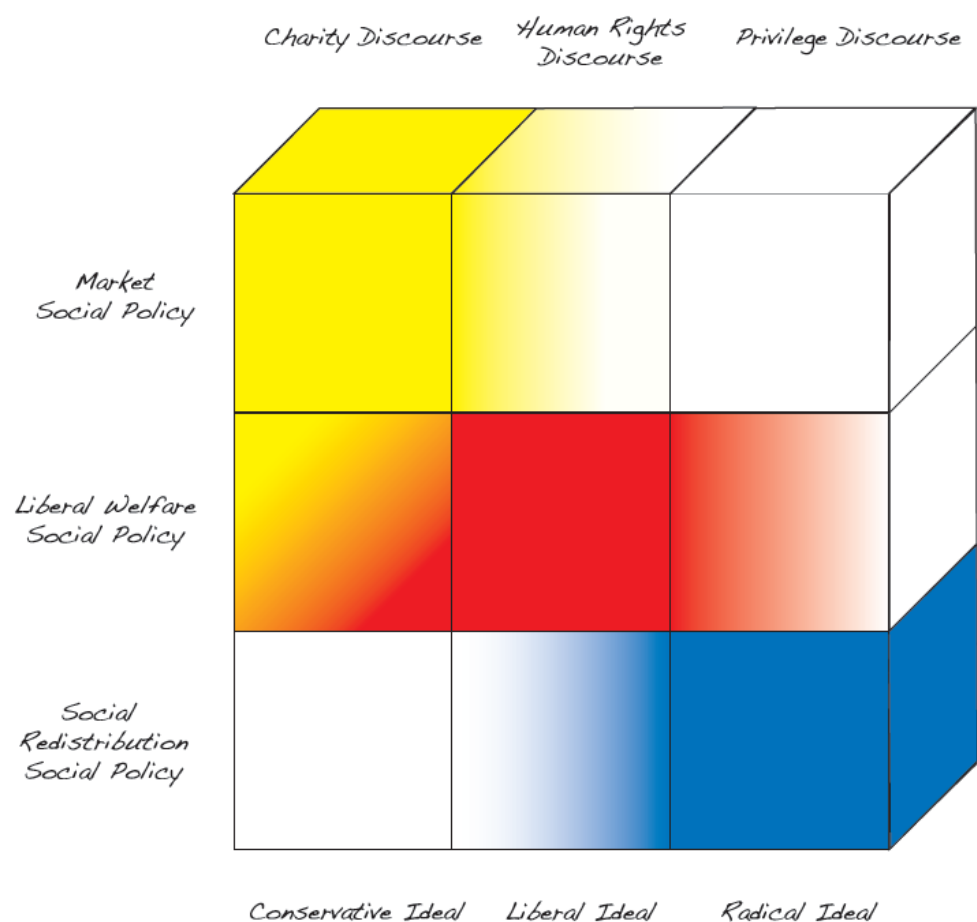


Figure 1. The social justice house: Adult educator activists enacting a fourth way.

Proceeding with the metaphor, I envision this three dimensional social justice matrix, as it is represented by Figure 1, as a house with nine rooms each having a length, width, and depth (height). Each room's three dimensions are approximations for adult education social justice

ideals, social policies, and discourses. Each of the three colors represents a three dimensional location on the matrix: yellow is for conservative-market-charity; red is for liberal-liberal welfare-human rights; and blue is for radical-social redistribution-privilege. The colors bleed into abutting cubes to denote the shared elements of rooms. Figure 2 represents a sample room.

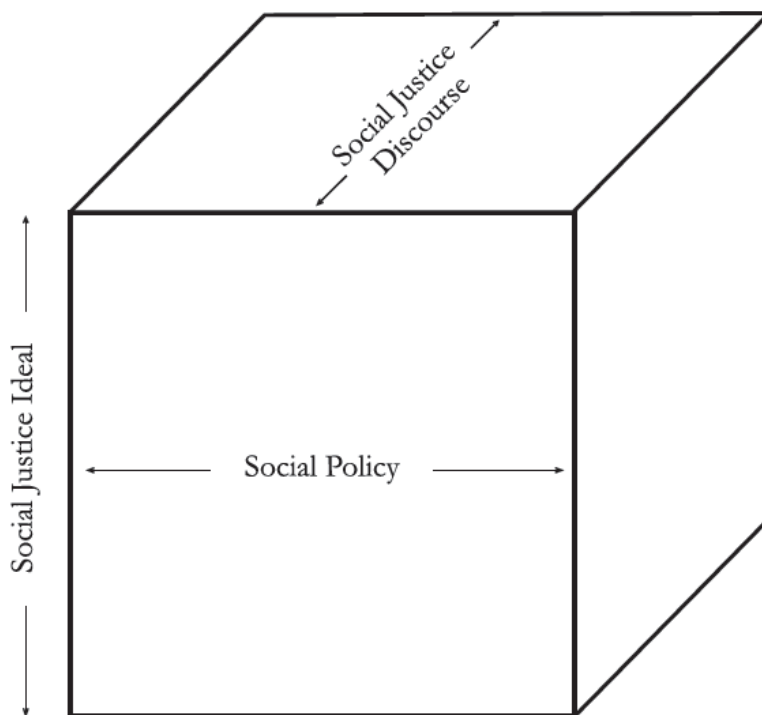


Figure 2. Sample room in the adult education social justice house.

Now, return to Figure 1 and imagine these activist practitioners walking freely through this metaphorical social justice house. Like our actual residences, we each have a favorite room yet we find ourselves in any room at any time for various reasons. We go to the kitchen for nourishment, to the laundry room for utilitarian purposes, to our den or living room to engage in leisure activities, and to our bedroom to rest. Sometimes we wander about the house and alight in the place that suits our mood or emotional state while at other times, we do not have a true

choice as to room destination, for instance, when we are satisfying a physiological need.

Likewise, these practitioners are aware of societal barriers and systemic injustice, understand a need for re-structuring, and for acknowledging human dignity but they also understand that a charitable act may be required in any moment or for most of a day or week or year. The social justice house these practitioners reside in as they engage in their activist work is one with identifiable spatial locations but without visible walls.

Further, it is important to state, as has been noted elsewhere in this dissertation, that these activists did not self-identify as such; in fact, they did not identify initially as adult educators either. It may be the case that these Catholic women workers have learned through their practice and are unburdened by scholars' academic discourse resulting in an understanding of social justice in action that does not match the field's conceptualizations. If this is the case, a question is then provoked which is: does context drive the contours of practice for these and other activists and if so, in what ways? In other words, is there something about the nature of this anti-poverty work, or that for any other social justice cause, that shapes how a practitioner engages in or understands their practice? The need for additional research to explore this and to build upon existing theoretical conceptualizations is clear.

Conclusion Two: Catholic Women Adult Educators Stress that Their Engagement in Anti-poverty Activist Practice Results in Their Own Significant Informal Learning

My second conclusion is that Catholic women adult educators stress that their engagement in anti-poverty activist practice results in their own significant informal learning. I found that these adult educator activists expressed having developed a world view that was more compassionate and, as evidenced by their privilege social justice discourse, critically systemic. This is consistent with Parrish and Taylor's (2007) findings, however, their study examined

women who had been part of the Catholic Worker social movement and their interest was in historical and other contextual issues, such as gender, race, age and religion that might influence the learning that occurs among members of social movements. My study reveals that the practice context, or nature of their work, may have been a key factor in informal practitioner learning relative to the adoption of a critical perspective. So, while participation in a social movement was an important contributor to Parrish and Taylor's study findings, I argue that this conclusion exists outside the boundaries of social movement learning as well.

Parrish and Taylor, in contrasting the Catholic Worker and the Protestant Social Gospel movements, observe that the Catholic Worker movement, rather than using political channels to address social injustice, sought to embrace voluntary poverty and separate from the powerful. Similarly in my study, the three women religious and the three lay women who were Jesuit volunteers have all experienced simple, non-material existences, in close proximity to the marginalized. As has been noted, social activism includes, among a broad range of activities, participating in life's daily social struggles (Foley, 2001; Gouin, 2009). Parrish and Taylor (2007) chronicle the inception of the Catholic Worker movement's hospitality houses:

In addition to writing and acts of public protest, Catholic workers responded to the immediate needs of readers. Editors and writers began to offer simple food. . . The women and men of the Catholic Worker provided direct aid to the most destitute.
(p. 226)

Likewise, the adult educator activists of my study have participated intimately in, or been witnesses to, the daily struggles unique to those individuals who are homeless or poor and uncommon to those individuals of privilege. Their practice involves engagement in activities related to physical struggles such as bandaging badly swollen feet covered with infected blisters

from walking in worn, ill-fitting shoes or cutting then, shaving an unkempt beard because a mirror, clean razor, and shaving cream are neither a priority nor readily accessible when you've spent three months' worth of nights sleeping under a bridge. They are also engaged in activities related to bureaucratic or legal struggles such as advising a tearful guest who is unsuccessful in contacting a bank about an unusable debit card and knows her time to make a phone call the following day will meet with similar results as it had the day before; distributing a piece of mail to a person who lacks a home address; filing for an identification card for a guest who lost his the weekend before when the backpack with all his worldly possessions was taken after he put it down while taking a drink from a nearby water fountain; or convincing a mortgage lender that a low income, first time home buyer is well prepared to assume the financial responsibility of a new, modest home.

Having been engaged in or witnessed these and other like struggles, participants spoke frequently of learning patience, persistence, and appreciation from guests as well as gaining a deepened faith and compassion. Citing their initial and ongoing experiences with those in poverty that had opened their eyes to systemic injustice, they also spoke at times in words that rejected the social justice charity discourse as described by Choules (2007), saying those in poverty were victims not causes, further affirming their embrace of the privilege discourse.

The predominant social justice discourse I have identified is also supported by Rule's (2005) study of community activists in inner-city Sydney, despite a somewhat different situational context but with an essential similarity. He, too, concluded that critical theory perspectives were evident in the activists' social action discourse. Of the three social justice discourse studies I identified in the literature, Rule's is the only one that examined activist practitioner understanding. The two others had differing findings; these studies, by Sandretto et

al. (2007) and Schiff (2003), examined respectively the social justice discourses of teachers and service providers, advocates, and others who collect data about homelessness. Sandretto et al. identified multiple discourses and an ongoing, dynamic process for understanding social justice relative to their teacher participants' practice while Schiff identified the individual-responsibility conception, consistent with the charity discourse, as the dominant discourse among her study's information producer participants. These contrasting findings actually offer support for this conclusion insofar as I am arguing that it is the engagement in active practice and experience with homeless and poor individuals which is a key factor in informal learning; this then results in developing both compassion and a critical-systemic perspective of social justice.

This study's meta-theme, predominance of the privilege discourse, has both an ideological and a sensory or hands-on component. It would seem these Catholic women activists may have learned with each day's challenges and small victories in hegemonic struggle, as described by Foley (2001), who argues

The story of this struggle is one of gains and losses, of progress and retreat, and of a growing recognition of the continually contested, complex, ambiguous and contradictory nature of the struggle between domination and liberation. This struggle also has a learning dimension when we examine concrete situations. (p. 77)

Meanwhile, Gouin (2009) identifies the shortcoming in Foley's framework which, while acknowledging informal learning, privileges capitalism and "falls short of affirming social justice struggles as spaces that foster complex and contradictory learning (p. 163)." Gouin (2009) calls for locating antiracist, anti-capitalist feminist theory within the Marxist tradition so as not to privilege capitalism but to identify oppression beyond capitalism and recognize the interdependent, interlocking nature of power dynamics. There is some evidence indicated by my

study findings that practitioner learning related to race and gender marginalization may have also occurred. This study centered on issues of social justice as they relate to class inequality and so the data that is related to race and gender, collected incidentally, were not fully analyzed.

However this emerges as an area worthy of further research; this idea is among those explored in the recommendation section presented later in this chapter.

Another critical factor embedded in this conclusion is that, just as in Parrish and Taylor's study, these are Catholic women activists, and so their faith and spirituality are part of the context in which they understand social justice. The third and final conclusion addresses this.

Conclusion Three: An Iterative Relationship exists between Catholic Adult Educator Activists' Spirituality and Their Practice that Informs What Social Justice Means to Them that, in turn, Shapes Their Spirituality

My third and final conclusion, based on this study's findings, is that an iterative relationship exists between Catholic adult educator activists' spirituality and their practice that informs what social justice means to them that, in turn, shapes their spirituality. This conclusion is evidenced by the findings which might be aligned in a process such that: they are called to serve within a Catholic frame; are then touched emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually; adopt a critical perspective; integrate this into how they choose to enact their faith; and are sustained in their commitment by the way their practice touches them.

The general idea of religion, faith, or spirituality, as a critical factor in sustained commitment to social action for the common good, referred to as engaged spirituality by Stanczak and Miller (2002), spans various faith and spiritual traditions, some absent an organized religion context. Engaged spirituality has been well documented in the adult education and related literature (Daloz et al., 1996; Faver, 2003; Fenwick & English, 2004; Kovan & Dirks,

2003; Lee & Barrett, 2007; Simmonds, 2005; Tisdell, 2002a, 2003, 2007). The engaged spirituality of this study's participants, as evidenced by the findings, can be characterized as walking against the grain and committing acts of resistance. That is, participants described their spiritual experiences in practice as deeply profound human encounters as moments of clarity and calm that typically occurred when stepping out of the bounds of typical societal or professional behavior. In practice, these Catholic women activists balance their understanding of social justice with the Church's teaching. In my review of this literature, I identified six major themes that characterize the broad notion of engaged spirituality. These are: (a) a wholly, integrated and engaged spiritual life; (b) the emergence of a vocation or calling with an urgent passion; (c) the endurance of, and from, a re-framed adult spirituality; (d) the urging or pull to fill a determined need or address an injustice; (e) the presence of a transcendent being or life force; and (f) personal experience with some form of oppression. Five of these six themes are represented or signaled by this study's findings. The last theme, in particular, in regard to experience with gender and race related oppression, has been identified as a topic for future research as some of the study data collected suggest its likely presence however, it was not directly examined in this study.

The finding Called to Walk Against the Grain, with the two dimensions of Touched Emotionally and Physically and Sharing Stories best embodies the first, second, fourth, and fifth themes. To a lesser extent, dimensions of Eyes Opened, Struggling Together, and Getting Clean are also represented. The third theme in the engaged spirituality literature, the idea of a reframed spirituality, has been well developed by Tisdell (2003). My findings are consistent with her notion of spiraling and finding a more relevant adult spirituality. However, most participants in Tisdell's study moved away from the faith traditions of their upbringing. The adult educator

activists in this study, not surprisingly, have all remained within the faith tradition of their childhood. Faver (2003), who studied 50 Protestant laywomen, concludes similarly to Tisdell and supports my findings. In her study of Protestant women social workers who felt called to social service or activist practice, Faver noted “a process of discernment, interpretation, and the construction of meaning” (p. 67) while remaining within their faith tradition. My study’s Tempered Activism finding represents the way activist participants have reconciled callings to serve with their Catholicism and the Church’s social justice issues by committing quiet acts of resistance.

By studying Catholic women, I have responded to Milacci’s (2006) call for research to frame spirituality in terms of a specific faith tradition so that the influence of core religious beliefs on adult education practice can be more directly examined. So, while the studies on sustained commitment and spirituality that are reported in the literature strongly confirm part of this third conclusion, I look again to Parrish and Taylor’s study for its Catholic context. Further, to more fully interpret the dynamics of the iterative relationship between spirituality and social justice, Tisdell’s (2003) work on spiritual development and midlife integration will also be further addressed.

One of Parrish and Taylor’s reported findings is that the women in the Catholic Worker movement, which critiqued American society’s structural systems, actively sought an “authentic expression of faith (bringing belief and practice together, or praxis)” (p. 231). Freire (2004), influenced in part by Catholic theologian Gutierrez’ liberation theology, described praxis as critical to transformative change and constituted with two dimensions: action and reflection. He noted that the absence of one dimension sacrificed the other; so that without action there is idle verbalism and absent reflection there is empty activity which he phrased as activism. Groody

(2007) in describing the operative theology of Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, articulates the notion of praxis by claiming “she connected political commitment with traditional, conservative theology, and tried to match her words with actions” (p. 169). As Groody explains, the conservative theology that nurtured Day’s faith and activism was that of Church teachings, writings by Church fathers, papal social encyclicals, “and above all the Christian Scriptures” (p. 168). This meant that Catholic Workers practiced outside the confines of a Church parish that afforded less opportunity to articulate and enact fundamental Church teaching, with its hierarchal structure within a diocese. Similarly, the Rebuild Center operates essentially outside the purview of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, though two parishes are among its partners.

Parrish and Taylor observe “it seemed probable that to be an authentic Catholic, as taught by the Church, a person would come into conflict with that same Church” (p. 234). The participants in my study shared their internal and spiritual struggles and expressed a range of various emotions, from resolve to disappointment to anger, regarding the Church’s social justice issues associated chiefly with an entrenched patriarchy. At the same time, they intentionally embraced both their Catholic faith tradition and their calling as social justice anti-poverty activists. These women continue to practice their faith in accordance with the tenets of Catholic social teaching and, or, by modeling the works of Jesus. This is because they are intentional in their view of the Church as that of the people who are served and not the Church of those who use their power and influence to perpetuate patriarchal oppression. Similarly, Parrish and Taylor’s oral history participants asserted “that an authentic Christian life is one that demonstrates Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, where carrying out the works of mercy for others is really serving Christ” (p. 233).

Tisdell (2003) has noted a move toward “integration and wholeness” in her study of adult educators’ spiritual development. Her study was large and primarily of people in mid-life. My study of eight participants included three in their twenties, two in their mid-fifties, and three over 65 years of age. Interestingly, Tisdell’s findings related to mid-life integration seem to be in evidence with these Catholic activist participants. While only two were in mid-life, for the younger participants, this may be more the case of an earlier stage of spiritual development rather than full integration, meaning how they understand their faith or whether they remain active Catholics may change fifteen to thirty years into the future. For example, as recounted in the findings chapter, Rose spoke of being “old enough to make her own choices as to what I want it to be” in terms of how she enacts her faith. Avalon spoke of currently “re-evaluating her spiritual life...and not in that structure of being a good Catholic school girl kind of way.” It may also be relevant that all three of the younger participants had been Jesuit volunteers and exposed to Ignatian spirituality, so named for Ignatius Loyola who founded the Jesuits, with its emphasis on practical spirituality, social justice, simplicity and encouragement of contemplation and reflection. My analysis did not reveal a difference, in this regard, between participants in their fifties or those older. Some reflected on Jesus as rebel others, like Nanette, brought up prayer and spirituality when she said “how do I let my spirituality transform me?. . . so that I can overcome, maybe, some of the difficulties.”

For these participants and especially but not exclusively, those in their fifties and older, the themes of Struggling Together and Getting Clean also provide evidence of “the ability to deal with paradox and the integration of the tension of opposites” (p. 137) as documented by Tisdell (2003). Two examples from this study’s findings include: (a) recognizing the depth of systemic injustice and being compelled to address it while reconciling oneself to the simple task at hand,

offering a shower for a homeless person and (b) dedicating one's life to living out Catholic social teaching as member of a religious order in a Church that seems to be lacking in its social justice commitment by failing to address issues concerning the status of women. As Tisdell has emphasized, a robust analysis of identity, one that considers gender, culture, and history as well as religion is required to fully understand spiritual development and an individual's wholeness. For this reason, further research that explores the feminist identity of Catholic women activists is recommended.

This was not a study of Catholic feminism; however, apparently consistent with what Ruether (1997, 2011), Ecklund (2003), Heyer (2007), and McDougall (2008) have described, there is some study evidence that suggests these activists may have negotiated their identities as women and Catholics in a way that allows them to acknowledge the Church's social justice issues while continuing to re-envision and embrace their Catholic faith tradition and identity. This is to say that some participants may have enacted a solution to counter the notion of a patriarchal church that uses Jesus Christ's "maleness to insist that women cannot represent" (p. 23). Consistent with Ruether's claims and supported by participant references to Jesus as rebel and getting in touch with scripture, these Catholic activists may have deconstructed the assumption of male patriarchy by understanding Jesus as a model not for

his maleness, but his human-ness as one who loves others and opts for the most vulnerable and oppressed, especially women. One imitates Christ by living in a like manner, not by displaying male genitalia. (p. 23)

Ruether deems such a solution as problematic and ultimately unsatisfactory for feminist theologians however, for these Catholic anti-poverty activists, the embrace of this particular understanding appears consistent with my interpretation of the data.

Thus, the iterative relationship between Catholic adult educator activists' spirituality in practice and the meaning they ascribe to social justice that I conclude exists is supported by the adult education literature but will require additional research to fully deconstruct and understand.

Implications for Practice

Some implications for adult education practice that flow from the study's conclusions expressed as questions for practitioner-scholars are presented here. To begin with, do our theoretical formulations of social justice practice fully grasp the interrelated and fluid nature of those engaged in social justice practice outside the academy? Put more simply, the essential question becomes does adult education's social justice theory square with what it means to those participating in its actual practice? As Baptiste (1999) observes, 'most critical pedagogy classrooms focus largely on the behavior of, and consequences to, students, teachers, and staff within that classroom or institution' (p.100). Likewise and as this study has illustrated, acting on radicalism in a way that challenges societal barriers is difficult when, in the moment, you are faced with someone who is in immediate need of food, shelter, or legal advice.

Exploring that quiet or tempered space that some activists occupy could lead to a more complex and nuanced understanding of how social justice is practiced. This will likely entail building on the traditional adult education conceptualizations as reported in the literature. Seeing a fourth way to conceptualize social justice, one that goes beyond the three conceptualizations, becomes possible when our understanding of adult educators activists is broadened beyond the acknowledged spaces of higher education classrooms and organized community activism.

Next, is the implication that engagement in social activist anti-poverty work, the doing, is integrated with informal learning, such that practitioner compassion and world view are influenced. This means that active engagement in activism does not necessarily involve full

participation in a social movement or semesters of graduate study. Changing hearts and minds to better understand and work to address society's systemic issues may simply require exposure and experience to the people who have been marginalized. Learning can and does occur informally in contexts that make clear to the privileged the circumstances and obstacles that those marginalized face. The work may entail acts of charity but the learning is about struggle within unjust systems.

Another implication for adult education practice, the third, is closely related to the second and is embedded in a question posed by Gouin (2009) which is "How do activists learn about the inequities among women and men around the world?" (p.163). By extension, I ask, does activist practice directed to one form of injustice, inform practitioners' understanding of others or get them in touch with other forms of oppression or their own? This study centered on issues of social justice as they relate to class inequality and so the data that is related to race and gender, collected incidentally, were not fully analyzed. The appreciation and willingness to participate in shared struggle, described in a theme that is evidence of their predominant social justice privilege discourse, may be partly informed by the struggles they have recognized and endured on their own behalf as women.

A fourth implication for adult education practice is the recognition of the significant role spirituality plays in social activists' understanding of social justice. As Tisdell (2003) argues, recognizing and attending to spirituality is vital to adult education practice especially in relation to emancipatory and transformative approaches because it "is about the engagement of passion, which involves the knowledge construction process of the whole person" (p. 188). Because as humans we are wholly integrated beings, matters of the heart and soul are as relevant as matters of the mind and adult educators working for social justice must be ever mindful that all aspects

of our humanness are relevant and must be acknowledged in all efforts towards meaningful societal change.

Here I have suggested implications for adult education practice in the four areas of: (a) theory and its relationship to social justice activist practice outside the academy, (b) the integration of practitioner engagement with informal learning, (c) the ways specific social justice practice informs practitioner understanding of other forms of oppression, and (d) the recognition of spirituality's place in social justice conversations. The next section extends the study conclusion and implications discussion to recommendations for future adult education research.

Recommendations for Future Research

My recommendations for future adult education research have been implied and in some cases stated in the chapter sections above. This section, then, briefly outlines what has already been addressed.

In an effort to more fully develop a suggested theory, future qualitative research is needed to confirm the possibility of and more fully develop a fourthway to conceptualize social justice, one that mirrors the understanding of those adult educators, in this case several outside the academy, who engage in activism. To accomplish this, I recommend that scholars pursue research studies that: (a) explore Catholic women activists working for social justice in different non-academic situational contexts, those who both self-identify as activists and those who do not, and (b) examine social justice understanding among women and men activists with other and varying faith traditions. The purpose would be for those in the field of adult education to better understand and deconstruct the theory-practice association. Also, insights into the association between social justice and spirituality in various faith tradition contexts could be revealed.

Another worthwhile addition to the literature would be to further examine simple social justice activist experience in highly localized practice settings to better understand how service engagement is integrated with informal learning. Conducting research with a focus on the doing might help sort out or separate social movement learning from the informal learning experienced by practitioners outside the academy.

A final area I recommend for further exploration involves the gendered understanding of Catholic social teaching and spiritual development. Aside from an inquiry into how participants reconcile their spirituality with the Catholic Church's social justice issues, I asked no questions regarding feminism such as whether these participants identified as such and what that might mean for their practice and in the case of the women religious, their vocation. I have referenced the work of Catholic feminist theologians; additional research is recommended to explore the relationship between feminist understanding of systemic injustice and that of anti-poverty activists who may not identify as feminists.

Chapter Summary

I introduced this final chapter with a summary that outlined briefly the previous four chapters. Next, I presented the study's three conclusions, implications for adult educator practice and some recommendations for future research. This completed dissertation signals the culmination of seven years of study and research, including a year immersed in the data collection and analysis process.

My goal was to contribute to a conversation which is sometimes cast aside even though it is at the very heart of the adult education field, the conversation about social justice. Deeply moved and haunted by Katrina, I wanted to research those engaged in anti-poverty activism. This was in an effort to bring some clarity to the field's traditional conceptualizations of social

justice, attempting to square them with actual on-the-ground practice. As a Catholic woman, I was drawn to the Rebuild Center with its faith-based tradition of meeting the needs of homeless people. At this research study's outset, I realized that, as a qualitative researcher, I would be its primary instrument. However, I did not anticipate that the instrument would be honed and I would be so profoundly affected by this work. It has been an immensely gratifying academic and spiritual journey for me.

Finally, in recognizing my responsibility for maintaining the highest integrity and respect for the participants, the data and its interpretation, and adult education scholarship, I have been continuously conscious of my positionality. I have proceeded with ever vigilant ears and eyes in an effort to produce a trustworthy and meaningful study. It is my hope that you find that I have indeed done just that.

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APPENDIX A
POLICIES FOR GUESTS

Policies for Guests

1. No smoking
2. Weapons of any kind are not allowed on the property
3. Sleeping: guests must be upright
4. No seats are reserved
5. Loitering/panhandling are not allowed on the property
6. Profanity is not allowed
7. Physical/verbal abuse is not allowed on the property
8. No feeding of the birds
9. We are not responsible for unattended bags
10. Bikes and carts need to be locked. Nothing can be left at the front entrance
11. Animals are not permitted on the property, except for service dogs.
12. Littering: please put all trash in the garbage cans
13. Guests must be inside the gate before 1.00 p.m. for lunch
14. No sitting on the steps
15. No one is allowed in the Shower and Laundry Areas before their name is called
16. No alcohol or illegal drugs allowed on the property

Children must be accompanied by parents or guardians at all times.

APPENDIX B**SAMPLE EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE TEXT**

Sample Email Correspondence Text

Dear _____,

I am a student at the University of Georgia, working under the supervision of Dr. Talmadge Guy, who is conducting a research project about the women who work at the Rebuild Center. Your name was provided by _____ as someone who has worked at the Rebuild Center for _____ years and who might be willing to participate in my project. Your possible participation would be entirely voluntary and, if you were to agree, I would be interested in conducting a confidential interview with you that would last no more than 90 minutes with a possible follow-up conversation for a shorter time. The interview questions will pertain to how you understand your work at The Rebuild Center as well as how your spirituality informs it and your commitment to this work. I will also have consent forms explaining the level of confidentiality for each person who participates to sign.

If you agree, we also would likely exchange several emails or phone calls so I can make sure that I understand your answers to my questions. Please contact me by email (lawless@uga.edu) or by phone (843.290.3340), should you be interested in further pursuing this. At that time, I will provide more details and answer any questions that you have.

Sincerely,

Sherri K. Lawless

Ph.D. Student, Adult Education Program
College of Education
The University of Georgia

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide

Introductory Remarks: Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research and for talking with me today. As you know, I am a student at The University of Georgia and also a member of St. Francis by the Sea Parish on Hilton Head Island in South Carolina. I will be staying in New Orleans about three weeks and am interviewing about 10 of the women who work here in various capacities. My interview questions will pertain to your work here at The Rebuild Center. I will be asking you questions such as what you do, why you do it, and the meaning it holds for you. I will be taping this interview so that I can transcribe it and have printed information to use in my research work. You will have the opportunity to read the transcript and make any changes to your words that you would like. I may also contact you to follow-up on any parts of our conversation that are unclear to me or for any other questions that I may have. Today, we will have to stop speaking at least one time for me to change tapes. If any of the questions make you uncomfortable or if you would like to stop the interview at any point, please let me know. As I mentioned this should take about 90 minutes. If we have some time at the end of the interview, I will talk to you more specifically about my research interests and the study I hope to conduct.

1. Please tell me about the work you have been doing here at (or in association with) The Rebuild Center.
2. How did you come to do this work?
3. Please tell me about the reasons why you are engaged in this work.
4. What is the personal meaning it holds for you?
5. In what ways is your role here one of an educator, either formally or informally?
6. There are many opportunities for performing good works for Katrina survivors and the homeless, why this and not something else?
7. Why is working for and with homeless people important to you?
8. You have been involved in this effort for quite some time, what keeps you involved in this?
9. Please describe your spirituality.
10. Please describe three spiritual experiences you have had that connect to your work here.
11. How do you negotiate the tension in the Church regarding its own social justice issues and your spirituality?

12. What do you see as the mission of the Rebuild Center and how do you carry it out in actual practice?
13. Are there other factors that affect your work?
14. What else would you say to help me better understand you and your work here?
15. Is there any question that you might like to return to and answer further or differently?

APPENDIX D
PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Participant Observation Protocol
General Guide for Note Taking During Observations

Date

Weather

Who is being observed?

What can be seen?

- physical view of participants, and physical building
- including postings/wall decorations (i.e. Guest Policies)
- what process is in progress?
- how does the participant move?
- in what ways is she engaged with guests?
- how does she address guests?
- what is her primary work area?
- who are the people around?
- how many people are there?
- what is the mood or atmosphere?

What can be heard?

- what's the noise level?

What can be smelled?

Anything seemingly unusual?

Other general impressions:

Questions to ask later:

APPENDIX E**ANALYSIS SPREADSHEET-SAMPLE PAGE**

Theme	Part.	Phrase	Discourse
32	E	They are not just lazy. Got off on the wrong foot.	reject C
32	E	I see it (sj) as treating people with dignity and putting the importance of people above money.	P/HR
32	*	It is constant reconciliation. Because as African American catholic you have to understand growing up in the south.	
33	NO	I can't expect to have it in my lifetime. . . you know, where women will be on equal footing.	
33	E	They have faith in spite of poverty.	
33	W	That's because there are issues there and until those issues are resolved you know they're going to continue that lifestyle and it's not that they desire it by any means. But it's until they make change. And it's not a change that you can make or force anyone to make. And when you're ready to make that change I will do everything within my power to get you there and get you the help.	
33		Now you say he has a job why would he come back here? I think they find some sense of peace. . . decision peace. And nobody's going to say move on you can't sleep here today. Can't sit down here all day. It's a place for them to be.	
41	E	They didn't get the break that a lot of other people got.	P
41	E	They didn't have the opportunities.	P
41	W	I was fortunate enough to grow up knowing I was loved.	
41	R	I think it's very complicated and I can't really say that I understand it myself. But I will say that I think people have just been given hard breaks and some people have been better support systems than others. Like if I were to lose my job I can go home to my family. And life it some people can't do that especially with like Katrina and. . . that affected a lot of people when their houses were destroyed in Katrina. And so it's like what do you do? I think there's some was outside of their control. . . make sure of things being outside of their own and they're own personal problems just kind of did it. You know? And like everyone deserves a chance a second chance but that's generally how I'm coming to understand it not generally blaming them for laziness or that kind of thing. I just think that they got heartbreak they made some mistakes and they're paying for them now. I don't think its. I just think of how it is you know. There's consequences.	P
41	NO	I have a degree in education. . . is that not a blessing?	P

APPENDIX F**INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATION ASSOCIATION: STATEMENT OF DIRECTION**

International Presentation Association

Statement of Direction

Conscious of our identity as Presentation women, we listen deeply to the cry of Earth heard most loudly in the cry of those made poor and we are moved to attend with urgency to the woundedness of our global community.

In these critical times it is imperative that we find ways to ensure that human dignity is everywhere upheld and honoured and that we name, challenge and seek to change the systems and lifestyles in which we are complicit and which contribute to the present extremes of wealth and poverty and the degradation of Earth.

Therefore we will address the root causes of poverty, especially by confronting personal and corporate greed which exploit Earth, her peoples and the whole community of life.

2007 Assembly

Retrieved August 1, 2011, from

<http://internationalpresentationassociation.org/?s=mission+direction&x=0&y=0>

APPENDIX G
THE “PARABLE OF THE RIVER”

The "Parable of the River"

Once upon a time there was a small village on the edge of a river. The people there were good and life in the village was good. One day a villager noticed a baby floating down the river. The villager quickly swam out to save the baby from drowning. The next day this same villager noticed two babies in the river. He called for help, and both babies were rescued from the swift waters. And the following day four babies were seen caught in the turbulent current. And then eight, then more, and still more!

The villagers organized themselves quickly, setting up watchtowers and training teams of swimmers who could resist the swift waters and rescue babies. Rescue squads were soon working 24 hours a day. And each day the number of helpless babies floating down the river increased. The villagers organized themselves efficiently. The rescue squads were now snatching many children each day. While not all the babies, now very numerous, could be saved, the villagers felt they were doing well to save as many as they could each day. Indeed, the village priest blessed them in their good work. And life in the village continued on that basis. One day, however, someone raised the question, "But where are all these babies coming from? Let's organize a team to head upstream to find-out who's throwing all of these babies into the river in the first place!"

The seeming logic of the community elders countered: "And if we go upstream who will operate the rescue operations? We need every concerned person here!"

"But don't you see," cried the one lone voice, "if we find out who is throwing them in, we can stop the problem and no babies will drown! By going upstream we can eliminate the cause of the problem!" "It is too risky," said the village elders. And so the numbers of babies found floating in the river increase daily. Those saved increase, but those who drown increase even more.

Clearly, we need to do our part in rescuing those babies found floating down the river. But we also need to take the risk of raising our voices and asking why they're being thrown into the river and what we can do about it!