

THE LEADERSHIP ROLES OF WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY WHITE SUPREMACIST ORGANIZATIONS

by

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(Under the Direction of Juanita Johnson-Bailey)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership roles of women in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan. The research questions guiding this study were: 1) What are the common leadership practices of women who participate in white supremacist organizations? 2) How do the women who participate in white supremacist organizations use their position as leaders to promote social change? 3) How does the phenomenon of white supremacy and patriarchy affect women's leadership roles?

A qualitative study was conducted, collecting data using interviews, documents, and field notes. Purposive sampling was the technique used to identify twelve women. Data analysis was completed using the constant comparative method as the specific tool used to uncover emerging commonalities and themes among the twelve research participants.

Analysis of the data revealed the following themes: 1) Women who participate in white supremacist organizations share the common practice of social homemaking, organizing and event planning, and recruiting; 2) Women who participate in white supremacist organizations use their position as leaders to promote social change through community reform and educational

reform; and 3) Women who participate in white supremacist organizations have been able to negotiate power for themselves and develop a leadership role.

Three major conclusions were drawn from the findings of this study. The first conclusion is that if it weren't for the women, contemporary white supremacist organizations would have a much different profile, since it is the women who are often responsible for recruitment and retention. The second conclusion is that women who participate in white supremacist organizations have chosen a tactic, assuming the title of and presenting themselves as leaders. While these women might have positional power, they do not have authority. The third conclusion is that if an organization, cause, or social movement is patriarchal in structure, women who work as organizers, volunteers, and activists are still doing the same thing, still performing the same functions in their gendered roles.

INDEX WORDS: Adult Education, Klanswomen, Ku Klux Klan, Social Action Movements
Women Educators, Women's Leadership, White Supremacist
Organizations

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, John P. Burch, Jr., my biggest fan.

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What a journey this has been! This doctorate represents the culmination of academic work that began in 1989 at The College of Charleston. As the time grew near for graduation, rather than feeling elated that college was over, I didn't want it to end. I had discovered something new about myself. I loved being a student and I loved learning. I will always be grateful to Dr. Von Bakanic who encouraged me to apply to graduate school, assuring me that she knew I would be successful. A special thank you to Dr. Robert Tourneur. According to Dr. Tourneur, were it not for his expertise as an editor, the required essay stating why I wanted to attend graduate school, very well may have read like a James Michener novel titled, "Menopausal Co-ed Got Bored"!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Ku Klux Klan, an icon of white supremacy which dates back to 1865, has gone through periods of decline and regeneration (Jackson, 1967). Media images are often filled with scenes of robe-clad males marching or burning crosses. Less well publicized is the role of women in white supremacist organizations. Since its formation, the Klan has used gender and sexuality as powerful symbols to motivate and promote white supremacy. This was true of the first Klan movement and remains true today. The marked difference in the current Klan and other contemporary white supremacist organizations is the increasingly visible presence of women, which is most likely because women are allowed to be members of the organization, not just an auxiliary group formed to promote the political agenda set forth by white men. Blee (2002) points out that not more than fifteen years ago estimated membership in racist organizations such as the Klan and neo-Nazi groups was less than ten thousand, but since then it is believed that memberships have had a substantial increase. Women and young girls constitute an estimated 25% of the membership, and of new recruits this figure is raised to 50%. Blee (2002) believes that this growth reflects the efforts of the Southern white male to broaden and diversify their membership beyond small enclaves of supporters. Various racist groups, such as the Klan, have made specific efforts to recruit both women and young people and as a result we are seeing women become more visible, assuming a more active role in the “kluxing” of America.

According to Blee (1995), it is a feeling of hopefulness that brings women into the realm of social activism and gives them the motivation to protect themselves and their children from a troubled society. Women, especially, who become members of white supremacist organizations governed by patriarchy, may join for reasons that have very little to do with the central agenda of the group. Blee (2002) found that at least some female members are motivated more by worries about crime, the quality of children's schools, or the dissolution of the family. They believe that through their affiliations with white supremacist organizations they are able to achieve a level of support when they encounter race, gender, and class oppression.

Background of the Study

The study of contemporary white supremacist organizations produces an image that is rapidly changing. For years history has been interpreted and written by the white men in our society. However, with the rise of feminism and feminist studies, there has been a move, or a shift of paradigm towards a new interpretation. Feminist theorists have developed alternative interpretative methodologies which offer a new or altered conceptual framework which goes beyond the existing male-defined critical approach to inquiry (Acker, 1989). Examining history through a feminist lens or feminist paradigm places race, class, and gender in a more central location in understanding social relations as a whole. A feminist inquiry enables historians to not only pose new questions about race, class, and gender, but also helps to create a more complex and correct account of society.

This study, which examined women's leadership roles in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan, was guided using a feminist perspective based on the theoretical framework of feminist theory. Feminist theory deeply challenges the ways that men are and the ways that men relate. This is a perspective that

draws attention to the power men have in their relationships with women and shows that men and women are operating in a relationship of power and subordination.

The drive for feminist theory can really be reduced to a simple question: “What about the women?” In other words, if a situation is being investigated a feminist study would question where are the women, and if they are not present, why? Conversely, if they are present and acknowledged, a feminist perspective would question what exactly are they doing and what are they contributing? What are their experiences?

Feminist research is not a method of doing research, rather it is a perspective, a way of thinking that has a direct impact on a study as the patriarchal biases that exist are explored and examined (Reinharz, 1992). I have chosen to approach my research using a feminist perspective primarily because women are the major “object” of my investigation and the starting point of my investigation was the situations and experiences of women within the phenomena of white supremacy. Because the scholarship on the role of women in modern white supremacist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan is virtually non-existent, the assumption exists that women are not a part of hate movements. By including and featuring women in an analysis of white supremacist organizations I believe that I have challenged the current literature, drawing attention to the role of women and the affect they have on the contemporary white supremacist movement.

Most feminist researchers who are committed, even at a minimum, to remedy the imbalances of masculinist scholarship, seem to select their research projects based on personal interests. It is these interests, in combination with collective feminist concerns, which ultimately determine a particular topic of research, which then appears to guide the choice of research methods that are employed. Stacey (1991) asserts that if the research method that is adopted is

macro-structural and based almost exclusively on library research what will be left out is the richness of the stories of women. In keeping with her desire to produce feminist scholarship she prefers a hands on, face-to-face research experience which she believes to be more compatible with feminist principles.

In similar fashion I chose this dissertation project, a study of the leadership roles of women in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan, primarily because it is an opportunity to try to understand the phenomena of women and white supremacy. In 1995 I worked on a research study which required me to document racist activities in the South. As the research progressed I began to learn about the Ku Klux Klan and was surprised to discover that women were a part of an organization that is traditionally perceived to be all male. At the same time I was documenting information for the study, I was also working towards a Women's Studies certificate and coming into my own feminist consciousness. What struck me was that normally women who participate in social movements do so to further the good for themselves and the society they live in, yet here were pockets of women who were volunteering, organizing, and networking. Yet, they too believed they were working for a cause that was good for themselves, their families, and society. I found myself intrigued at the vast differences in the causes many women work towards and the similarities in their activism and the way they participate, and began to realize that very little research had been done in this area.

The type of behavior said to exist in organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan is so offensive most people turn away in disgust, wanting nothing to do with it. However, the reality is that people, both women and men, who choose to be a part of white supremacist organizations do exist in our society today, and are most certainly wielding some sort of political influence.

This reality sparked an interest and I made the decision to try to discover their agenda and expose it through my research. The more I learned the more intrigued I became, and the fact that women were becoming increasingly more active in these organizations intrigued me even more. I am reminded of a story that originated with Dr. Scipio Colin, III and was retold by Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey. The title of the story is “Belling the Cat” and the central idea is that if the cat is belled then the mice can hear the cat coming and can protect themselves from it, their enemy. In other words, if you see “it”, if you know where “it” is, if you know what “it” is, then you should bell “it”. We must name “it”; we must define our enemies.

In an earlier study I found that keeping a journal was a way to work through my emotions as I began to interact with people who shocked me because of their opinions regarding those other than who they perceived as the true white race. The following are two excerpts taken from my journal. The first excerpt was written prior to my attending a weekend long Klan rally. These journal entries offer an insight into my thought process as I began a journey that would lead me to where I am today.

Thursday, AM-Charlotte, NC (August 31, 1995)

With the first leg of my journey over, I am now sitting in the Charlotte airport terminal waiting for the plane that will carry me to Kansas City. As I walked through the terminal, making my way to the next gate, I observed many people of all ethnicities. I saw a particularly gentle-looking black man in a wheel chair saying goodbye to friends and I took time to think about my own destination--a Klan conference where I will be surrounded with hatred and the righteousness of white supremacy. I am sitting

among strangers and wondering if they will be, in appearance anyway, much different from the strangers I will be sitting among tomorrow.

This second excerpt was written on the morning that I was to attend the rally which was taking place in a very small community in Arkansas, located deep in the Ozark Mountains.

Friday, AM – Arkansas (Sept. 1, 1995)

My God, the meeting site of this chapter of the Ku Klux Klan gives new meaning for me to the word field work. The location for the rally is about 15 miles outside of town, and the last 2.3 miles is a dirt road in the middle of the Ozark Mountains. There are goats, roosters, and turkeys in the road almost daring me to pass by. When I saw these animals, and after driving through several low water creeks, I turned around, drove back into town to purchase an umbrella (it is still raining) and a pack of gum at the local K-Mart. Really all I was doing was postponing my arrival at the site. My heart is pounding and I am frightened about what may be around the next turn. I am sitting in the car, gathering my strength and courage--after all, I came this far...I had to keep going. So back into the mountains I go...past the roosters and turkeys, past the goats (they slowly moved aside so I could pass by them) and on to the Klan.

There seems to be a belief among historians today that because the contemporary white supremacist movement is so fractured and disorganized they are weak. I disagree and challenge

their assumptions. White supremacist organizations today, though they are in different configurations than they were in the 1920's, are still problematic in our society, and until we began to research and expose these organizations, we can't possibly know and understand their subversive influence.

This study is ultimately designed to address the fact that with the increase in the number of women in white supremacist groups, together with a strategic move to reform the public image of hate groups, women's leadership has expanded. "From the Reconstruction-era Ku Klux Klan to contemporary neo-Nazis, the committed racist appears as male. Women racists exist in shadow, lurking behind husbands and boyfriends" (Blee, 1996, p. 680). Consequently, the assumption is that the best way to study organized white supremacist groups is to study male white supremacists. I argue that the inclusion of women into an analysis of race-oriented organizations leads to a more in-depth analysis of the various dimensions found within such groups. I believe the activities of women bear closer examination, and will seek to provide evidence that the relationship between gender and the ideologies of white supremacist organizations is not simple, but complex.

Statement of the Problem

Scholarship on the role of women in modern white supremacist organizations is virtually non-existent and the assumption still exists today that women are not a part of such movements. The inclusion of women in an analysis of white supremacist organizations highlights the multitude of political understandings. It is likely that there is not a simple relationship between gender and the ideologies of race, nation, family or morality that is typically considered as right wing or reactionary (Yohn, 1994).

The absence of attention to women involved in contemporary white supremacist activities has two consequences which restrict our being able to understand their role. First is the assumption that women are not part of organized white supremacist activities today. Second, the almost exclusive attention given to men in organized white supremacist movements warps our theoretical understanding as to why individuals become involved in racist activities in the first place (Blee, 1996).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership roles of women in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan. The research questions guiding this study were as follows: 1) What are the common leadership practices of women who participate in white supremacist organizations? 2) How do the women who participate in white supremacist organizations use their position as leaders to promote social change? 3) How does the phenomenon of white supremacy and patriarchy affect women's leadership roles?

Significance of the Study

By examining and focusing on women's leadership roles in white supremacist organizations I intend to show how these women have been able to develop a self-identity, working at the grass-roots level contributing to the cause of white supremacy. None of these women are working alone; it is through their sisterhood and through their networking that they are able to commit to and achieve goals that are compelling to them. I believe that the implications of this are that regardless of what the voluntary organization's agenda is, women use the group they align themselves with to realize that they possess a self-identifying influence committed to their particular goals, and in turn, use this influence to achieve these goals.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions will be used:

White Supremacy: The philosophical belief that the white race is the supreme race and is superior to all other races and ethnicities (Sims, 1978).

White Supremacist: Any individual who ascribes to and promotes the philosophical belief that the white race is the supreme race and is superior to all other races and ethnicities.

White Supremacist Organizations: Any group that ascribes to and promotes the ideologies of white supremacy.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership roles of women in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan. The research questions guiding this study are as follows: 1) What are the common leadership practices of women who participate in white supremacist organizations? 2) How do the women who participate in white supremacist organizations use their position as leaders to promote social change? 3) How does the phenomenon of white supremacy and patriarchy affect women's leadership roles? This chapter will review the literature that provides the conceptual framework of this study and will be divided into three major topical sections.

The first section presents the literature base that focuses on the history of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States, tracing this icon of white supremacy through its periods of decline and regeneration. Incorporated within the historical profile of the Ku Klux Klan is the development of women's participation and the emergence of modern white supremacist organizations.

The second section presents a synthesis of research and writings that examine women's leadership, including a focus on the practices of leadership, the emergence of women as leaders, and the impact of engaging women in the work of organizations. Also included in this section, as it contributes to the framework of this study, is the literature that focuses on the methods by which women use education as a tool to promote their position in society.

The third major section of this chapter will provide a review of the literature that deals with the phenomena of white supremacy and the impact of gender. Included in this section will be a focus on how women negotiate their roles within white supremacist organizations.

A Historical Profile of the Ku Klux Klan

“The” Ku Klux Klan is not a single entity; there are many different Klans, each claiming to represent the ideals of the original Klan. In order to better understand the emergence of women’s leadership roles in this white supremacist organization it is necessary to examine the development of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States, tracing its roots back as far as 1865.

The First Klan

The first Klan began in the South during the Reconstruction Period following the Civil War. This was a period in American history that saw the emancipation of slaves and Republican party rule (Trelease, 1971). It was in December of 1865 that six young men who were college educated, had been officers during the late War for Southern Independence, and who fought for the Confederacy decided to form a club. The club needed a name, and they decided on the Greek word for circle, kuklos. This small group of men met in secret places, wore disguises, and greatly amused themselves with a secret initiation which was the focal point of their activities. Though their original purpose was amusement, after quickly discovering that their nocturnal appearances were frightening people, specifically the black population, this group, this Klan, changed their agenda from playfulness to violence; they realized the power they had to frighten the newly freed blacks and their Northern friends (Chalmers, 1965).

This was a time in history when people’s expectations were divided. Boundaries existed between blacks, southern whites, and northern whites. Trelease (1971) believes that because the terror evoked by the Klan was so great, it therefore had to be central to the formation and implementation of Reconstruction policy in Washington. As the reputation of the small club originally known as “The Kuklos Club” spread and grew, so did their membership. In April of 1867, a group of representatives met in Nashville, Tennessee and drew up a type of constitution

or prescript. They also elected General Nathan Bedford Forrest as Grand Wizard, and his “empire” was divided into realms, dominions, provinces, and dens, all headed by Grand Dragons, Titans, Giants, and Cyclopes; members were referred to as Ghouls. As a self-appointed organization that began to govern their homelands, they saw themselves as enforcers, not breakers of the law. Their arrogance, combined with their oath to secrecy led these men who had empowered themselves towards horrific violence directed towards blacks, Northern schoolteachers, Yankee storekeepers and politicians, carpetbag judges, and those who did not give whites priority at all times (Chalmers, 1965).

By 1869, the Klan was both extremely successful and in serious internal trouble. “A secret, masked society, composed of autonomous units, dedicated to the use of force, operating in unsettled times, proved impossible to control” (Chalmers, 1965, p. 19). The first Klan movement was over by the mid 1870’s. The Klan did not have direction, nor were they able to achieve political status, and by 1870 the Grand Wizard had dissolved the organization.

The majority of books or journal articles that are written about the first Klan movement do not consider or even mention women at all. Gender is virtually invisible. However, with the development of feminist theory, researchers have begun to review this time in history through a different lens, creating new ways to look at things, and new ways to comprehend a whole range of problems, from how organizations function to how gender is fundamentally involved in the processes. As a relational phenomenon, gender is difficult to see when only the masculine is present.

Membership in the Klan was restricted to white males, and even though women were not participating openly, the notion of white womanhood was a reason for much of the violence that was occurring during this time. The Klan presented to the nation the idea that they needed to

protect women from being assaulted or raped by blacks, particularly widows living on deserted plantations. The idea was that without the Klan, white men would be unable to protect white women from recently freed blacks (Blee, 1991). “Most of the time the Klan rode to prevent future rather than to stop present and punish past actions” (Chalmers, 1965, p.21). Women were seen as the property of men, and men used this power over women to mark the line of difference between white and black. Chalmers (1965) points out the enormity of this belief:

The woman not only stood at the core of his sense of property and chivalry, she represented the heart of his culture. Not only was any attack on white womanhood a blow against the whole idea of the South, but any change in the status of the Negro in the South thereby also became an attack on the cultural symbol: the white woman (p.21).

The Rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan

According to Blee (1991), gender and sexuality were compelling symbols for the Klan, particularly for the various Klan organizations in the 1860's and also for the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920's. This was the second Klan, also known as the Invisible Empire of the Twenties. There are several different stories of the rebirth of the Klan. Some historians claim that the Klan came alive again as a response to the very popular movie, “The Birth of a Nation” which was fashioned and produced from a book, *The Clansman, a Historic Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, published in 1905. In the movie (and the book) blacks were portrayed as savages, and Reconstruction a huge tragedy. With the country in such turmoil the question was who was going to help deliver the South? For many Southerners the Ku Klux Klan was the answer (Chalmers, 1965).

Within one week after the movie opened, an Atlanta newspaper featured an announcement by Colonel William J. Simmons, a member of many fraternal organizations, including the Congregational and Missionary Baptist churches. The announcement read as follows: “The World’s Greatest Secret, Social, Patriotic, Fraternal, Beneficiary Order” (Chalmers, 1965, p.29). For a long time Simmons had dreamed of founding his own fraternal order of the Ku Klux Klan, and within three months he had enlisted at least ninety followers, and his dream had become a reality. Simmons’ Klan was incorporated as a “purely benevolent institution, intended to be not unlike the Elks, the Masons, and the Odd Fellows” (Chalmers, 1965, p.30). The rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan was a significant right wing challenger to many facets of American Society, preaching a program based on what Moore (1991) refers to as one hundred percent Americanism. What this meant to our country during the 1920’s was an intrinsically deep belief in prohibition, fundamentalism, anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, anti-communism, anti-evolutionism, anti-feminism, and militant patriotism (Moore, 1991). The second Klan was a well known and active organization during the early 1900’s and into the 1920’s, with a claimed membership of over three million.

Jackson (1967) traced the Klan movement between 1915 and 1930. He found that the Klan of the early 1920’s was a huge social and political movement that attracted the type of member who was a common man: a decent, hardworking, patriotic individual. He was more times than not a middle-class individual caught between capital and labor, believing that he was offering a patriotic gesture when he paid his ten dollars and officially became an active member of the Invisible Empire. For this individual, the Klan stood for better schools, improved law enforcement, and an organization that was making the effort to maintain traditional moral standards that were being challenged in the 1920’s (Jackson, 1967). Jackson (1967) asserts that

as he traced the development of the Klan within various cities across American he found certain cities that were more susceptible to the “100 percent Americanism” platform because of changing neighborhood residential patterns. He theorizes that there is a statistically significant correlation between Klan success and population growth.

Wade (1987), in his analysis of the Ku Klux Klan, examines the role that fundamentalism played. He asserts that the fundamentalist religious movement was one of the key factors that enabled the Klan to enroll millions of members during the decade of the 1920's. However, by 1928 membership had declined to several hundred thousand. By 1930 fewer than fifty thousand belonged to the Invisible Empire, which had become a fractured entity. There were disagreements between leaders, and the public exposure of the corruption and horrific actions by the Klan marred their image and public authorities began to intervene against Klan violence (Blee, 1991).

Maclean (1995) begins her analysis of the second Ku Klux Klan from the perspective that it is both gender and sexuality that have animated this movement. She argues that Klansmen could not discuss issues of race, class, or state power apart from their understanding of manhood, womanhood, and what she calls sexual decorum. What her research ultimately details is that the Klan's hostility to such things as teenage sexuality and birth control greatly contributed to the supremacist perspective, the anti-Catholicism, and the pro-Americanism for which the Klan is best known. Maclean (1995) views the Klan of the 1920's as more of a mainstream group with members who were also participating in such organizations as the Masons, the Shriners, and the Woodmen of the World.

Much of Maclean's (1967) research is focused on the Athens, GA klavern, examining why and how it formed. She found that economic development in this region of Georgia began

to close off some old options for white men. As whites stepped down from landowning to tenants, blacks stepped up from share-cropping to landowning and this created a great deal of tension. By 1920 both black and white farm owners in number were about equal, and what began to happen was a growth of the black middle class. The results were a class competition between the “new middle class” and lower-level white collar workers (Maclean, 1967).

The Revival of the Third Klan

The third major Ku Klux Klan appeared during the 1950's and grew in reaction to what was perceived once again to be a black threat upon the racial status quo. Their efforts were focused on fighting racial desegregation in the South. Women were invisible in this Klan, and like the first and second Klan, this Ku Klux Klan relied on the idea of white women and children in need of protection. They bombed schools and homes, led riots, and sparked a series of lynching, using physical violence directed towards blacks and any whites who they believed to be supporters of integration. However, with the civil rights movement, changing attitudes towards black Americans provoked a backlash, and by the 1970's the Klan was forced into decline once again (Blee, 1991).

The Fourth Klan and the Emergence of Modern White Supremacist Organizations

In the early 1980's a fourth and current Klan movement emerged from the South to spread to the North and West in alliance with other white supremacist groups. Though extremely fractured and numerically small with perhaps as few as ten thousand members, the Klan of today has formed alliances with terrorist and paramilitary groups such as self-proclaimed Nazis, right wing survivalists, and tax evaders who have their own network known as the Aryan Nations. The National Alliance, much like the Ku Klux Klan, was established to preserve the white race. Their philosophy is based on the belief that Nature's law dictates that a purified white race will

emerge and overcome all. It is their opinion that if white people are not allowed the freedom to live as a superior race then society will be deprived of true innovation and leadership. Founded and led by William Pierce, the National Alliance has become one of the most influential white supremacist groups in today's modern society (Brown, Smith, & Miller, 2002).

The white supremacist movement in the United States today is a complete paradox. While some groups are becoming more visible, they are finding that their beliefs and messages are less accepted by society than in the past. "Despite proclaiming bizarre and illogical views of race and religion, racist groups attract not only those who are ignorant, irrational, socially isolated, or marginal, but also intelligent, educated people, those with resources and social connections, those with something to lose" (Blee, 2002, p.3). Of particular interest to this study is that, while white supremacist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan and the National Alliance actively recruit women, they disavow feminism and push for a more "traditional" role for women. According to the philosophical beliefs of the National Alliance, it is unnatural for women to be placed anywhere outside a traditional sphere (Brown et al., 2002). Though women are members of this fourth racist movement, they seemingly play a supportive role, and just as the other three waves of Klan activity used images of white male supremacy and the illusion of pure white womanhood, so does the current movement (Blee, 1991). This would indicate that women, though they may become members, are expected to remain silent and are not able to actively participate in the movement. The interviews that have been conducted for this study do not reinforce this indication.

To conclude, the Ku Klux Klan of today, and other contemporary white supremacist organizations, exist as a growing presence across the United States, targeting blacks, Jews, Mexican-Americans, gay men and lesbians, Communists, and Southeast Asian immigrants.

Zellner (1995) points out that today's Klans tend to be "Kareful Klans" (p. 30). He asserts that some of the ideas that are voiced by these groups often do not carry the shock value that may have been experienced in the past. This is evident when one considers the similarity between the rhetoric of white supremacist groups and mainstream right-wing organization's beliefs about issues such as gun control. Violence is rarely mentioned openly, and the focus of white supremacist efforts in recent years has been to promote institutional discrimination through political means (Zellner, 1995).

Modern white supremacist organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan and the National Alliance, reach and recruit their members through a variety of mediums, including the internet. At a national congress I attended in 1995, and one that just took place in 2004, the tenor of the meeting was more like a political rally where attention is given to government policies rather than a traditional Klan convocation where racist epithets are literally screamed out to the public through a bullhorn by a klansman in a robe standing on the courthouse steps. In fact, the setting was reminiscent of a bible or church camp. It is typical for the 1990's Klan, reeling from past criminal convictions, to publicly disavow violence. Yet their Klan calling cards that I have seen are still intended to terrorize people the Klan dislikes. "Racism is a politic of despair. It is the recourse of those who perceive no other way to protect their children or themselves from a troubled society that they have come to understand in racialized terms" (Blee, 1995, p.13).

Women's Leadership

Gender and leadership is a rapidly changing phenomenon in our society today and when it comes to leadership there are fewer and fewer clear boundaries as to who will serve as the leader (Duhl, 1997). People often come to leadership positions for a variety of reasons which may include personal situations or crises they have experienced in their lives, with the goal of

searching for pragmatic solutions. Duhl (1997) believes that it is no coincidence that many of the emerging leaders of today, particularly in politics, are women.

Emerging contemporary local leadership often demands that one goes with the flow, be willing to work with hunches, relationships, and nonrational decision making. “Experienced in dealing with family and community issues, many women have a more complete understanding of this new approach to leadership” (Duhl, 1997, p. 75). For example, when women gather to organize a way to get rid of drug dealers on their street they do not necessarily call a meeting and come up with a plan. They often talk amongst themselves in the neighborhood, seeking to gather supporters, and pull together needed resources, realizing that resources are human as well as financial. They do not worry about the traditional hierarchy of leadership or of being elected to an office (Duhl, 1997).

In a study that examined differences between women and men leaders, Rosener (1990) initially found that though there are certainly similarities between women and men leaders, the similarities end when women describe their influence among co-workers and their performance as leaders. Male leaders often describe job performance as a series of transactions with subordinates, offering rewards for services performed and negative consequences for poor job performance. Men are found to usually use the power that is built into their position and frequently rely on formal authority. Conversely, women tend to make an effort to transform their coworker’s interest from self to the good of the group, a much broader goal, and unlike men, women view their power as coming from their interpersonal skills, hard work, or personal contacts (Rosener, 1990).

In a comparative study that examined the differences between female and male leaders, Rosener (1990) found several patterns that emerged from her data. The first difference was that

of the women she interviewed, many frequently spoke of their efforts to encourage people's participation within their organization. In other words, what the women tried to do as managers or leaders was to make people feel a part of the organization. One way to accomplish this feeling of group identity was to encourage conversations and to solicit opinions about organizational policies. This way people felt they had a vested interest in almost every aspect of their work. Rosener (1990) refers to this as participatory management.

Another pattern of women's leadership styles that emerged was that of sharing power and information. Rosener (1990) asserts that a very important part of making people feel included is their knowledge that communication flows in two directions, not just top down. These were women who were comfortable with letting power and information flow and move within the organization. What was then created was a feeling of loyalty between leaders, coworkers, and subordinates. Everyone felt they had a part in solving problems and more importantly, in seeing the justifications for decisions that were made within the organization.

The last pattern that emerged from Rosener's (1990) study was that in sharing information and encouraging participation members or coworkers in the organization felt important. These were women who, as leaders, wanted to enhance the other members feelings of self-worth, in hopes of energizing the group. Overall, there was a consensus that if people feel good about themselves and their work, they will do a much better job.

Helgesen (1995) distinguishes the leadership differences between women and men, focusing on the advantages of the unique qualities that women, who are in a leadership role, possess. Women have what she calls feminine principles that allow them to be better and more responsible leaders. Helgesen's (1995) findings reveal that organizations run by women do not take the form of the traditional hierarchal pyramid, but more closely resemble a web where

connections are made. The strategy of the web concentrates power at the center by drawing others closer and by creating communities where information sharing is essential.

When analyzing women's leadership, the conclusion must be that the traditional way leadership is defined does not fit. Leadership, for women, is not just being in charge. Leadership for women is often a process of facilitating, educating, learning, mentoring others, and collaborating and cooperating with diverse groups and individuals. The command-and-control style of leadership commonly associated with men is not the only way to be a successful leader (Rosener, 1990). Women, as leaders, often find themselves working with power not just from above but horizontally as well (Duhl, 1997). Women, as leaders, have learned to lead without formal authority (Rosener, 1990).

The Practices of Leadership

To give leadership a concrete and precise definition is an ambiguous task at best. "The very purpose of leadership is its purpose. And the purpose of leadership is to accomplish a task. That is what leadership does and what it does is more important than what it is or indeed, how it works" (Gallagher, 2002, p. 24). The concept of leadership is really ageless, however the concept of management is a way of thinking that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Gallagher, 2002). "Leadership is not management. It does not produce consistency and order, instead it produces movement" (Gallagher, 2002, p. 26). Stogdill (1974) asserts that there are as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have made the effort to define the concept.

Historically, leadership was thought of as synonymous with head of state, a military commander, a prince, a king, or a chief. Oftentimes a person was perceived as a leader if she or he was at the center of a social movement and possessed characteristics such as high energy,

enthusiasm, commitment, and the ability to effectively communicate with the masses. In addition, if a woman or man was able to influence a group to do what she or he desired, that person was considered a leader (Stogdill, 1974). Stogdill (1974) believes that leadership is equated with power, which he defines as the ability to achieve a goal with minimal resistance.

Just as there are many definitions of leadership, so too are there many theories of leadership. Stogdill (1974) explores five well-known theories. The first theory he discusses is the Great Man Leadership which is a theory based on the belief that superior leaders are those who are born with special traits and characteristics. These are the people who are essentially predestined to become leaders (Stogdill, 1974). Situational Leadership is another theory discussed by Stogdill (1974). This theory proposes that it is time and circumstances that determine who will be a leader. In other words, being at the right place at the right time. The third type, Transactional Leadership, is a theory that views leadership as being founded in promise and expectation, which translates simply into if you do something for me (perhaps a vote) I will do something for you (perhaps a job offer). Transformational Leadership is yet another leadership theory. This theory proposes that a true leader strives to attend to the needs and desires of her or his followers. Finally, Stogdill (1974) discusses the theory of Servant Leadership. This is a theory that suggests that leaders are able to accomplish more when they see themselves as serving others rather than themselves. The basis of this theory is the premise that true leaders have a sincere interest and concern for the people they lead.

There are five practices of leadership, as identified by Kouzes and Posner (1995), which they assert are the most common practices when leadership achievement is considered. Kouzes and Posner (1995) propose that when leaders are performing at their best they are challenging the process (searching for opportunities and experimenting), inspiring a shared vision (envisioning

the future and enlisting others), enabling others to act (strengthening others and fostering collaboration), modeling the way (setting an example and planning small victories), and lastly encouraging their followers (recognizing contributions and celebrating accomplishments).

When considering the practice of leadership, I think that a lot of similarities and parallel ideas can be found in Wilson and Cervero's (1996) examination of the practice of planning. Needs must be assessed and considered, objectives must be determined, and results must be evaluated. Also, just as Wilson and Cervero (1996) suggest, the interests that get to the planning table have a profound impact on whose interests are being served, and it is the leaders who often direct and even manipulate who is sitting at the planning table. The belief is that if the practice of planning is ethical, a good planner will care about who is sitting at the planning table and include all people who will be affected by the decisions that are made (Wilson & Cervero, 1996). Likewise, a good leader will also care about who is sitting at the planning table, and understand that it is good practice to consider the interests of the people that she or he is responsible for.

The Emergence of Women as Volunteers, Organizers, and Activists

This section of the literature specifically addresses how women gain access to power through their work in different societal structures with a focus on the variety of leadership practices in which women engage. According to Scott (1991), women's organizations and associations were and are everywhere:

Known or unknown, famous or obscure; young or ancient, auxiliary or freestanding; reactionary, conservative, liberal, radical, or a mix of all four; old women, young women, black women, white women, women from every ethnic group, every religious group had their societies. Before long, as the scope, magnitude,

and diversity of this phenomenon came into view, I realized that it lay at the very heart of American social and political development.

(p.2)

Since the very early days of this country women have positioned themselves as volunteers, organizers, and activists, participating in associations that have offered an opportunity to achieve goals that were important to them, and to develop and connect with the world outside the home. Field-sponsored publications in the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's portrayed women's involvement in voluntary organizations as marginal. However, public records of local women volunteers is not information that is readily available (Hugo, 1990). This is but one factor that makes it difficult to quantify their contributions. Another factor that must be considered is that many women speak of their work as a team effort, using the term "we" rather than "I". Again, this makes their work less visible and less associated with personal identity and more immersed in the organization for which they are working. For women who are volunteers in white supremacist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan their accomplishments are even more concealed.

Payne (1990) argues that men led but women were the organizers in the civil rights movement. In many cases this is true in the white supremacist movement as well. In response to Payne's (1990) argument, Barnett (1993) proposes that we need to reevaluate the traditional way we define leadership and consider the work of organizing as an important component of leadership. In agreement with this is the way in which the women in the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan work. Leadership, for many of these women, is organizing and community work.

Voluntary Associations

During the first half of the 19th century many women found their way into volunteer work through the church, broadening their range of maternal responsibilities beyond the home and into the community (McCarthy, 1990; Scott, 1991). It was McCarthy's finding that voluntary associations play a critical political role, providing one of the key mechanisms for political change, specifically constitutional reform – the very thing from which these organizations draw their legitimacy from – i.e. freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right of people to assemble, and the right to petition the government with grievances. What can be concluded from this is that voluntary associations and thus the women who serve as volunteers, organizers, or activists often play an essential political role in society, providing the momentum for change.

Scott (1991) explores how the voluntary association experience has affected the status of women. It is her assertion that the most visible outcome of association activity for women was their rapid development of self-confidence and leadership skills. The development of these skills resulted in the rise of public expectations of what women could do. This in turn led them to being asked to do more – a role they were ready to fill.

A monthly newsletter, *The White Patriot*, issued by the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan had this to say regarding women:

Women hold a very high and exalted position in the eyes of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. We believe that for too many years women have been held back and not treated fairly in the job market. While we are certainly opposed to the exploitation of women that forces them into the work force and away from their

families, the Klan never-the-less believes that women have much which they can contribute. They seek to create a societal context in which their families can survive, prosper, and ultimately triumph, and to do this they promote traditional family values. There are women in this organization who are a significant influence among the members and their roles are vital to the vision of this group. (Robb, 1996)

The Knights spend a great deal of time emphasizing, both in speeches and in newsletters, their position on women's roles in their organization. The men in this organization do not wish to separate from the women in this struggle, but choose to share their experiences.

McCarthy (1990) has put together a volume of essays that examines middle-class and elite women's activities, including voluntarism among immigrant, African-American, Mexican, Russian, and French counterparts. The essays demonstrate the diversity of women as volunteers and the ways women gain access to power through their work. For example, the services provided by women in African-American communities were particularly important because these were the communities in which needs such as welfare benefits were less likely to be met by the state and general public. For these women their activities were more service-oriented than social and were more likely to include working as well as middle-class women (Kaminer, 1984). Thus, regardless of class, whether women consider themselves volunteers, organizers, or activists, it was their community work that helped these women to become something more than domestic or sexual adjuncts to men. Their role as activists gave them a sense of usefulness and work to do in their communities.

Community Work

Community work, as defined by Gilkes (1994) consists of the creative ways individuals and groups work within their community, challenging oppressive structures in the wider society. Community work includes a widespread range of activities and tasks which are preformed by women to empower and strengthen their communities as well as involving themselves in activities that often confront oppression both within and outside the community (Gilkes, 1994). In other words, women are a vital part of initiating the process of social change. Gradually, as society became more industrialized, women became more determined to develop their own activities, and self-improvement and self-education were the by-products of the organizations that were established by women (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994).

According to Gilkes (1994):

Community work consists of the women's activities to combat racism and empower their communities to survive, grow, and advance in a hostile society. The totality of their work is an emergent, dynamic, interactive model of social action in which community workers discover and explore oppressive structures, challenge many different structures and practices that keep their communities powerless and disadvantaged, and that build, maintain, and strengthen institutions within their community. (p. 230)

For African American women who were community workers during the civil rights movement, working for their race enabled them to create a social organization that challenged and ultimately changed American society (Gilkes, 1994). Women who were volunteers,

organizers, or activists in the Civil Rights Movement worked for and with their communities, involving themselves in problems associated with jobs, labor union activities, and seeking legislation that would bring about reform.

In summary, with titled positions within certain organizations closed off, women often worked through grassroots channels. While men could hold titled positions or be a part of the inner circle within the organization, positions as “behind the scene” leaders were usually the highest positions women could attain. Group solidarity is often built around the core of women and their children; therefore it is reasonable to conclude that the organizations, the structures, the ideals that enable a group to survive are often not possible without the action of the women within the community. In these positions, women mobilize and organize the masses at the community level. However, it is the community work done by women that allows them to claim a prominent place in their community’s history because what ultimately becomes visible is the social movement leader.

Women’s Activism

What is a social movement leader? Most social movement analyses focus on those who make decisions concerning strategies and tactics (Robnett, 1991). In her examination of the civil rights movement, Robnett (1991) asserts that researchers have highlighted the role of the more visible and titled leaders. However, by discussing only the leadership role of the visible and titled leaders much of the social movement analyses obscures the role of women as leaders.

After emancipation it was church women and teachers who organized schools and churches throughout the South. However, with Jim Crow laws on the rise, women’s activism in the public eye emerged outside churches and schools and took the form of an anti-lynching movement under the leadership of Ida B. Wells Barnett. This movement was the beginning of

what would later be known as the National Association of Colored Women which was an organization that explored and exposed the ways in which racism pervaded every aspect of life for both men and women (Gilkes, 1994).

In her examination of women's leadership in the Civil Rights Movement, Robnett (1991) argues that behind the scenes leadership contributions have been largely overlooked by the Social Movement and Civil Rights Movement researchers. Blumberg (1990) analyzes women's leadership in the Civil Rights Movement, uncovering women's contributions and exposing the constraints on their leadership. She hypothesizes that the nature of a revolutionary movement such as the Civil Rights Movement creates opportunities for women as both leaders and mass participants (volunteers, organizers, and activists). However, while women were instrumental as initiators of the movement, as the movement became more organized and formal, women's leadership became less visible and their power declined (Robnett, 1991). As an example, Robnett (1991) cites the formalization of the Montgomery Improvement Association which organized the 1955 bus boycott. That organization became minister-led when it replaced the earlier Women's Political Counsel. What is often overlooked by historians is that while the Montgomery bus boycott was Rosa Park's rebellion against a racist bus system, little attention has been given to the black women who were laying the groundwork to bring about social change. Many women had been quite active long before the Rosa Park's incident, and it was women's networks that were not only the sources for political action, but sources for spiritual and mental strength as well.

Robnett (1991) concludes that women were not prevented from participating as leaders, but their options for participation were limited to areas within the organization deemed suitable for women. In general, as an organization became more formal, men moved into titled positions

while women moved to more “appropriate” spheres, performing such tasks as meal preparation and the distribution of flyers.

According to Kaminer (1984), it is upper-income white women who actually call themselves volunteers. Middle to lower income women working to change the social system tend to call themselves community organizers or activists, moving from the world of domestic activity to the world of community. Feminist historians have called this movement Social Homemaking. These were the women who created an activist existence out of their homemaking vocation (Amott & Matthaei, 1991). There is the satisfactory aspect of activism that helps women construct a larger identity for themselves and it is through their work that they ultimately construct rewards of self actualization, self confidence, and leadership skills (Daniels, 1988; Kaminer, 1984). “Far from passively accepting a fixed set of housewifely duties and confinement to the home, white homemakers extended homemaking to include both paid and unpaid professions outside of the home” (Amott & Matthaei, 1991, p.119). Daniels’ (1988) study of invisible careers has shown how women view their volunteer work, stressing its importance as part of what she does for the community, and always as a complementary interest to the family.

Women brought what could be considered a maternalistic approach to activism. Their approach grew out of the idealization of motherhood and womanhood, championing women’s values both at home and in the larger society (Rynbrandt, 1997). White women home protectors were the driving force behind the Temperance Movement, an anti-alcohol movement which was focused on protecting families from what many in society considered the evils of alcohol. Female Reform Societies organized to fight against prostitution and Consumer Leagues were created by women to protect their homes from unsafe consumer goods by publishing and

distributing lists of products which were considered to be unsafe. One such example is the Voluntary Motherhood movement which formed in the early 1900's. This was an organization in which women argued for sexual abstinence or a rhythm method of birth control because legal and effective birth control was unavailable (Amott & Matthaei, 1991).

For women who only understand society in racialized terms, organizing and becoming politically active provides a way to protect their family against what they see as a decay of American society (Klatch, 1987). Some observers believe that women in such leadership roles tend to avoid coercive power and to use a more indirect and personal style. According to Stanford, Oates, and Flores (1995) women are more likely to use power based on charisma and what is known as networking as opposed to most male leaders. Many turn to patriotic organizations to affect a change, and the past three or four decades in American politics have been imprinted with a significant amount of activism by women. Patriotic organizations have a tendency to exacerbate group conflict, and the voluntary work performed by women developed as an effective tool, opening our society to organizations that support many different points of view.

Klatch (1987) draws out a profile of a group of women in the New Right which she refers to as the social conservative. The women in the New Right are a visible presence as members and leaders throughout this conservative movement. These women, the social conservatives, seem to have many issues in common with women in certain contemporary white supremacist organizations. They harbor a deep hostility toward communism and big government – communism representing atheism and an attack on the family; big government signifying the breakdown of traditional authority. Klatch (1987) connects big government and the breakdown of traditional authority as the encroachment of big government upon the traditional authority of

the church, the family, and the neighborhood. Responsibilities traditionally designated to the family, for example, are increasingly monopolized by the state, such as the religious upbringing of children. The social conservative believes that social issues such as ERA, abortion, homosexuality, busing, and school prayer are all issues that are critical to solving America's problems. Social conservatives often see gender as a divinely ordained hierarchy in which men have a natural authority over women and women's roles are defined in terms of support for men. They characterize themselves by their roles within the family – as wives and mothers.

Several questions inevitably arise, given the social conservative's adherence to traditional gender roles. How can women explain and understand their own positions as activists? Is the move out of domestication and into the political arena justified? The answer to this seeming paradox is found within the focus of these women's ideals – the preservation of traditional morals, values, and the family. Klatch (1987) calls this the New Traditional Woman assuming the New Traditional Role.

The feminist movement has attracted a number of studies focused on the extraordinary degree of action by women, yet this has also meant the increased involvement by women opposed to the goals and values that make up the core of feminism (Klatch, 1987). In other words, what was created was a paradox. During the same time some women were mobilizing to place feminist issues on the political front and to guarantee women's place within the public sphere, groups of conservative women were joining to advocate a return to traditional ways, supporting women's role within the family.

There is an increasing number of women who are participating in organized white supremacy, a social movement that is undergoing social change. Though the white supremacist movement of today is still politically and socially marginal, it is a movement that is growing and

has features that are similar to what scholars refer to as new social movements, which includes the feminist movement, the environmental movement, and the gay/lesbian rights movement (Blee, 2002). Much like these new social movements, the contemporary white supremacist movement attracts members from diverse backgrounds, integrating them into the group and into collective action (Blee, 2002). For the women who are activists in contemporary white supremacist organizations, they are finding that their personal needs and their political beliefs are both fulfilled. This is a phenomenon that is very attractive to these women and is creating a movement that is expanding into civil society in a slow but pervasive pace.

The Practice of Engaging Women

Acker (1990) points out that most of us spend our days in organizations that are dominated by men. It is a fact that the more powerful an organization is the positions are almost entirely occupied by men, with exception to the occasional female who acts as a social man (Sorenson, 1984). Power at the national and world level is located in all-male enclaves in both large state and economic organizations with little attention paid to this until feminism came along to point out the problematic nature of the obvious (Acker, 1990). Those who research and write about organizations and organizational theory now take into consideration women and gender and the impact of engaging women in the work of the organization, or at least the impact of eliciting women's support for the work of the organization. This consideration by researchers has developed into various feminist theories of organizations, examining how the role of women is obscured as they become a part of the processes of control and participation in organizations.

What were found by Acker (1990) are four components of organizations that are created partly through the practices of the organization, all addressing issues of gender identity. First is the gender segregation of work, which includes the separation between paid and unpaid work.

Second is the existence of income and status inequality between women and men. Third is the fact that organizations are a main arena in society in which cultural images of gender are invented and reproduced, and fourth is her assertion that women tend to make organizations more democratic and thus more supportive of goals that might be considered more humane. Because the work of women within the structure of an organization is so deeply embedded it is a difficult task to determine the implications or consequences of including women in an analysis of what exactly is their role. In other words, how do they carve out for themselves a particular role or place in what is usually male-dominated organizations? How do they empower and emancipate themselves to gain recognition for their contributions? One way that women began to empower themselves in order to gain access in organizations was through education. However, what must be recognized is that even in the organization we familiarly call our educational system, women had to struggle to gain entry.

The Effect of Education on Women's Place in Society

Today the United States is a nation that provides vast educational opportunities. Yet, historically for many their opportunities were greatly restricted by reason of race, class, gender, or national origin. Certain groups in the United States were considered to be marginal and because of this prescribed status by the dominant culture of the white male, the education that they managed to obtain was often a poor match for their learning needs. Rather than accept this, members of marginalized groups devised and were able to implement alternative educational systems by creating different forms of adult education as a way to overcome oppression (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994).

Reform movements and social campaigns were forming across the country, and women's suffrage and women's liberation in general was the focus of many volunteers and social activists.

“Educational delivery systems were created around these issues, and adult education became an agency for change and for many, an arena of activity. Women, in particular, found in voluntary associations a way to have a public voice and a space of their own” (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994, p.8). However, with this said, Stubblefield and Keane (1994) go on to make the point that the central issue was really not how much or what type of education women and other minorities were receiving, but why. As always, we must ask the question whose interests are being served? In this circumstance the interests that are being served are not those of women and other minorities but the dominant class that viewed education as that which would serve to ensure their continued domination.

Slowly, in the 1830's, things began to change for women and they began to enter the profession of teaching as the number of common schools in the United States were increasing. The hypothesis is that this was allowed and accepted mainly because at this time women were perceived to be moral guardians of society and, going hand in hand with this notion, women began to infiltrate the fields of health, science, and religion as well. To accomplish this entry women had to depend mainly on training that took place on the job, only occasionally managing to engage in independent study or to attend public lectures (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994).

By mid-1800's common schools had continued to expand which in turn raised the average level of education. Museums and world fairs also became popular forms of both entertainment and education. Women in particular found world fairs that focused on progress as an outlet and a platform from which to express their opinion on issues of inequality. Overall, women, as part of society's marginalized sector, were beginning to create for themselves alternate educational opportunities to help free themselves from certain oppressive social situations (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994).

As the United States moved into the age that is known as the Industrial Revolution women became more active and more visible in a society that was working hard to keep them in the role of domesticity. As a reaction to this continued oppression, women forged forth in their search for new forms of education. The Settlement Movement that began in England found its way to America, and in 1889 Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr opened The Hull House in Chicago. The Hull House offered women daycare for their children, domestic classes and a more formal curriculum such as the teaching of the English language and vocational training. By its second year Hull House hosted about two thousand people each week, the majority of which were women, and had developed courses that were offered to adults in the evening. They had virtually become a night school for adults (Addams, 1910).

As women began to enter the workforce in increasingly greater numbers, they began to create their own organizations for education. Considered to be the most important and most influential organization for women at this time was the YMCA's Industrial Department. This organization was established in 1904 offering educational programs to women workers. Another important form of education, summer schools for women workers, was formed at this time as well. Summer schools were attended by women from the ages of eighteen to thirty-two with the criteria that they must have had an elementary school education and at least two years of experience in the industrial workforce (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994).

Women and their efforts to educate themselves were ongoing as America aged, and they persevered as a challenge to the hierarchy that was in place in our social system. Women continued to be involved in social reform organizations by participating in the civil rights movement, women's rights, and community reform. Educational support came to women by way of the Highlander Folk School's leadership training, and through the creation of the

Citizenship School Program. All of these educational establishments helped to integrate women of both African American and Caucasian descent and together they collaborated to identify problems in their communities (Horton, 1989).

During the 1920's women persisted in the creation of their own education through programs and organizations that resisted male domination. What I have attempted to map out is the progress women have collectively made to overcome social barriers and to educate themselves in a variety of methods and venues. Women promoted the belief that they had to be responsible for their own success and it was this conviction that gave rise to the innovative ways they fostered their own education, mainly outside of what was considered the normative system of education.

Literacy Clubs

From the 1870's through the 1890's women who were initially involved in this movement were social reformers who were striving to create more educational opportunities for women. Literacy clubs that were organized during this twenty year period were frequently referred to as colleges or universities even though they did not have the same standards as accredited schools. Stubblefield and Keane (1994) state, "The women's clubs counteracted the isolation of women confined to home, created a sisterhood free of male dominance, and taught women respect for their own domain" (p. 153). Through their involvement in these clubs, women learned such skills as writing, organizing, studying, and public speaking. The women's clubs evolved beyond a self-improvement curriculum to examining social issues, managing to establish scholarships so women could extend their education from an informal arena to a more formal setting. Always as the basis of their agenda were the improvement, empowerment, and advancement of women (Blair, 1980).

Because the activities in these clubs helped women to develop study skills, writing and speaking techniques, and organizing skills, they were able to slowly move from self-improvement to working on social problems. One such example is the club known as the Association for the Advancement of Women (AAW) which was established in 1873 to improve women's status by creating programs to help women improve society (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). "Through the clubs, women learned how to effect change" (Blair, 1980, p.153).

Gilkes (1994) points out it was within the safety of women's clubs, such as literacy clubs, that women were able to learn how to lead and administer. It was within women's clubs that they organized to win elections in organizations such as the NAACP and the Urban League that were dominated by men. By the early twentieth century white women activists had joined together to form a network that consisted of national organizations and involved millions of women. In fact, two million women (black and white) were led by the National Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA) to join in the fight which won the vote for women in 1920 (Amott & Matthaui, 1991).

By making the community stronger women were (and are) able to achieve a level of support when they encounter racial, gender, and class oppression. They are in effect creating a transition from a male domain into their own arena of educated-based activism within their own voluntary organizations and clubs. "Forms of adult education are, in reality, social movements through which an individual, organization, or government seeks to accomplish certain purposes" (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994, p. 309).

The Phenomenon of White Supremacy and the Impact of Gender

Just as it was true in the 1860's, the same was true in the 1920's. The growing influential force of gender and sexuality enabled the Klan to summon white men to protect what they

perceived as their threatened civilization. For these particular men this meant protecting white womanhood and white female purity. Again, in a repetitive pattern, to accomplish this, the Klan dissolved social, economic, and racial issues into powerful symbols of womanhood and sexual virtue. Bederman (1995) asserts that just as the ideals of civilization were often used by men as a way to emphasize and restructure white male supremacy, they could also take on a much different meaning when examined through the feminist lens.

Maintaining Civilization

Civilization, as defined by Bederman (1995) is a stage of human development that occurs when a society has evolved beyond savagery and barbarism. “Civilization always drew on ideologies of race and of gender, but people with very different political agendas could deploy the discourse in a variety of ways” (Bederman, 1995, p. 121). Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a prominent feminist theorist, proclaimed that the advancement of women rested on the white supremacism of the civilization dialogue. Racism, which is inherent in civilization, is an important part of Gilman’s ideology as she argued that the advancement of humans was a matter of racial differences as opposed to gender differences. In other words, while antifeminists believed that the only way women could contribute to civilization was in the role as wives and mothers, Gilman believed that it was the bond of race between men and women that led to the advancement of civilization (Bederman, 1995). In addition to her insisting on the centrality of white supremacy in civilization, she also argued that both men and women had the responsibility to advance their race toward evolutionary perfection. This meant that it was necessary for women to move out of the sphere of the home and into what she calls “God’s work outside the home” (Bederman, 1995, p.127).

God's work outside the home is exactly what a contemporary white supremacist organization, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, proclaims as their mission, involving both men and women in the work of maintaining their ideals of civilization. This organization, led by a Christian Identity pastor, contends that their fundamental beliefs are consistent with original white supremacist ideology such as what is described by Gilman. They depart from traditional Klan rhetoric, and preach love of the white race rather than hatred of other races, and they believe that it is this love that will advance the purity of the white race. For example, they present through their literature and speeches that Americans should love and be proud of what "we" are, proud of the white race. They consider themselves to be a lawful Christian association that seeks to teach white men, women, and children to be proud of their race and ancestry. They seek to create a societal context in which they can survive, prosper, and ultimately triumph, and to do this they promote traditional family values (Robb, 1995).

Yet, despite their family values, there are women in this organization who are a significant influence among the members as they do "God's work" to promote their race. For the Klan of the 1920's purity campaigns became their focus as they tried to clean up the morality of their particular communities. This was true for the Klan movement in the 1920's and remains true for the fragmented Klan organizations and various other white supremacist groups of today. For example, while the National Alliance actively recruits women, they disavow feminism and push for a more traditional role for women. According to the philosophical beliefs of the National Alliance, it is unnatural for women to be placed anywhere outside a traditional sphere (Brown et al., 2002). This would indicate that women, though they may become members, are expected to remain silent and are not able to actively participate in the movement.

One of the oath's of the Klan actually bound the members "to correct evils in my community, particularly vices tending to the destruction of the home, family, childhood and womanhood" (Maclean, 1994, p.99). Speakers at various Klan rallies began to concentrate less on the behavior of men and more on the behavior of women. In fact, what was expected of the men was to rule over the women. To use their power to control was a mandate that was concealed behind the word chivalry and honor. Maclean (1994) points out that the use of the words "honor and chivalry", historically, meant a commitment to protect the virtue of women, and thus the Klansmen's job was "to make it easier for women to be right and to do right" (p.114).

This patriarchal insistence of the Klansmen on the need to protect women gained credibility through the women themselves as they used the Klan in some very resourceful ways. A trip to the Georgia Department of Archives and History and the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Georgia revealed many letters written by women, appealing to the male members of the Athens chapter of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920's. Some women were seeking financial assistance from the Klan; others were seeking a more personal form of assistance in the way of taking care of bad marriages and bad husbands. One woman asked the Klan to help locate a husband who had deserted her (University of Georgia Libraries, #1.2). Another is a letter of thanks, describing the Klan as a "band of white robed angels sent from the Father above" (University of Georgia Libraries, #1.4). One of the most interesting letters I found was written in 1928 by a woman who lived in Elberton and who described herself as an all American woman, who had all American relatives, except her husband. She explains in her letter that she married an Italian stonecutter who was a drunkard and a gambler. She had recently discovered that he had been confined in an asylum at one time and believes him to still

be crazy. She tells of the way he curses her, hits her, and is intimate with a colored nurse who is employed by the family to help take care of their two children who were both boys. She had filed for divorce and then her husband cross-filed slandering her name. She makes this plea, “If the courts won’t render justice then perhaps the Klan will” (University of Georgia Libraries, #1.15).

These were but a few of the women who believed in using the power of their male counterparts to help empower themselves. “Subjugated women means subjugated morals” (Maclean, 1994, p. 98). This was a slogan that was heralded by the Klan of the 1920’s as its members began to recognize that if they supported women’s rights this would lead to a stronger movement devoted to white supremacy. Klan members understood that women should work with the men to achieve common political and social goals (Maclean, 1994). In other words, men began to accommodate the women in their desire for an expanded role in the organization. It was my finding that the women I interviewed in a prior study saw their role as activists as a natural extension of their fundamental rights as human beings, working collectively beside men to transform and seek legislation that would protect their race. “If their sphere was the home, women said, then who better to engage in urban reform than they” (Giddings, 1984, p.81)? This type of rationale enables these women to maintain their traditional roles, yet become more actively involved outside the home. However, even though women began to assume more tasks and their roles moved from supporter to activist, the Ku Klux Klan maintained its reputation as a male organization then and now.

Guardians of the Past: Promoting White Supremacy

In the early 1920’s the Klan’s message of Americanism and law enforcement was aimed at only white native-born Protestant males, eighteen years or older, who were recruited for

membership (MacLean, 1994). Later in the decade, Klansmen began to encourage their wives, mothers, and sisters to form auxiliaries, which provided an opportunity for many women to participate in the Klan's work as an adjunct to the men. Auxiliaries were offered as a solution to placate the women who wanted to participate in the promotion of white supremacist ideals but to whom membership was not an option. What began as an effort by the Ku Klux Klan to protect the purity of womanhood and to exclude women from a visible role became an answer to a long felt need for a unifying body for white Protestant women (Jackson, 1967). For thousands of women, perhaps half a million or more, membership in one of history's most vicious campaigns of hatred was a time of friendship and solidarity among like-minded women (Blee, 1991).

Just as there were many women who were volunteers in Ku Klux Klan auxiliaries, there were many others who chose an equally powerful campaign to promote the white race (Brundage, 2000). By expanding their role as volunteers to include matters of history, white women were able to establish an influence dedicated to what is commonly known as public history:

Their legacy included the creation of an infrastructure for the dissemination of a collective historical memory at a time when few other groups were able to do so. These women architects of whites' historical memory, by both explaining and mystifying the historical roots of white supremacy and elite power in the South, performed a conspicuous civic function at a time of heightened concern about the perpetuation of social and political hierarchies (Brundage, 2000, p. 115).

The historical activities of clubwomen who crafted heroic narratives of the history of the South had a great impact on the public. Through their promotion of the past, these white women organized and collectively contributed in a great way to justifications of white supremacy, creating institutions which worked to perpetuate a white historical memory (Brundage, 2000). They organized ceremonies, ranging from civic rituals and public monuments to creating fictional stories. These southern white women came to understand power and how it could be used not just to create historical narratives, but to silence historical narratives as well. Gradually these women began to be accepted as cultural authorities and from this they became mechanisms of power, seeing themselves as guardians of the past.

These white women ultimately became what Brundage (2000) calls architects of the whites' historical memory, performing a civic function by both offering an explanation for and mystifying the historical roots of white supremacy and the elitist power in the South. In the 1890's and into the early twentieth century there was what some consider an explosion of organizations, clubs, and commemorative activities, all inspired by the growing interests of white women. Brundage (2000) points out that around the end of the nineteenth century there was a lot that remained unresolved regarding the reconciliation of white women's agency with the patriarchal social order of the South:

Disfranchisement, legal segregation, economic discrimination, and white violence all worked to bolster the power of white men in the region. Yet, a lingering mistrust of white men and an uneasiness with dependence on them encouraged white women to enhance their own power and sense of self. Even as many white women validated white male authority, they did so without renouncing

their own claim to power – their role as partners in the millennial progress of the white race (Brundage, 2000, p. 117).

In the current Klan movement in the United States, similar leadership can be found as women fulfill what is better known as traditional leadership roles. Rachael Pendergraft, the first woman to become a member of the National Grand Council of the Ku Klux Klan, regularly represents the Knights at rallies, on television, and in news interviews. In one interview that I had with her in 1996 she stated that she believed that it is important to use her position to help other women to understand the goals of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and instill the heritage of white Christian faith in their children.

The Practice of Nonmarket Work and White Supremacy

The central meaning of work is activities that produce a good or service for one's own use or in exchange for pay or support. This definition, as presented by Reskin and Padavic (1994), includes three different types of work: paid work (also called market work), which generates an income; coerced work, in which people are forced to do something against their will with little or no pay; and unpaid work (also called nonmarket work), in which people voluntarily perform work for themselves and others. The segment of work that I am interested in examining is that which is considered nonmarket work, seeking to explore the practices in which women are engaged in the work of the organization, particularly women who perform their nonmarket work in white supremacist organizations.

Daniels (1988) examines women volunteers to determine how the paradox of people willing to work without pay can be explained. The women Daniels (1988) studied called themselves civic leaders, using their positions as members of influential families to persuade many sectors of the public to support the causes they were campaigning for: social reform and

community welfare, dominated with themes of primacy of service to the family. Whether these women were fund-raising, or participating in public relations, they are clearly seen as working within the system. In addition to her study of women as volunteers, she examines the role of their husbands. Daniels (1988) found that a husband's willingness to encourage his wife in her volunteer activities is reinforced by how her goals complement his. She uses as an example a prominent physician who is asked to host a convention. He needs and uses his wife to make the social arrangements that help the event run smoothly. Because the women that Daniels (1988) has studied are members of the leisure class, her perspective of women as civic leaders is criticized because it is felt that her view over-emphasizes the class influence behind the women's volunteer work, and while this may suggest that women of the leisure class are only assistants to the male power elite, she also shows how women's activities are important work within their community. I assert that, although she is examining women volunteers who are in the privileged, or leisure class, the dynamics are similar enough to be able to draw the same gendered parallels when considering women as nonmarket workers who are economically in the lower to middle class, particularly women who perform their nonmarket work in white supremacist organizations. The following is a quote from a newsletter, *The White Patriot*:

We had a lot of women who wanted to take a more active role. Many of the men and women wanted to meet together, so it seemed a logical step. It really worked out very well. Because a lot of women were housewives they had a lot of time. They could go to school board meetings and things like that. It was a more effective effort (Robb, 1995).

A fundamental feature of work, regardless of the type of work performed, is the assignment of different tasks to women and men. This is commonly known as the sexual division of labor. Reskin and Padavic (1994) point out that all societies delegate tasks based on sex, although which tasks go to women and which to men have varied over time. Changes in which gender performs a task occur slowly, mainly because of the social expectations of the sexual division of labor. In other words, the kinds of work or tasks that either women or men perform become labeled as appropriate for one sex or the other.

In community-based grassroots organizations program planning is an important task. Cervero and Wilson (1994) state the following:

Program planning is a social activity in which people negotiate personal and organizational interests to construct adult education programs. The programs constructed through these practices do not appear fully formed on a brochure or in a classroom. Rather they are planned by real people in complex organizations that are marked by historically-developing and structurally-organized power relations and human wants and interests (p.249).

Though Cervero and Wilson (1994) are specifically addressing program planning in adult education, I believe that the same dynamics exist in many businesses and organizations, including separatist groups. When examining the task of program planning in white supremacist groups the program planners are traditionally male and the structure is usually flat, with very few of what could be considered administrative personnel, again all male. Because of this flat structure, the program planners must consider a wide variety of interests and for the Ku Klux

Klan one very important interest to consider is their female membership and how the women are integrated into the activities of their program (Blee, 1996).

Cervero and Wilson (1994) state that the first step that takes place in program planning in an organized context is that there is a consideration of the power relations. For organizations such as the Klan they stake their bid for power quite clearly, framing their philosophy around restoring traditional values (Blee, 1995). According to Robb (1996):

Without the women, we wouldn't have a Klan. There may be a good racist woman behind every racist man, but there's also a man behind every woman, pulling strings or defending her involvement in the movement. Women have the same reasons men do for joining. They have the same problems with minorities (p.2).

Community work, a component of nonmarket work, serves as an important function for white supremacist organizations, taking on new meanings when examined through the lens of white supremacy. An examination of the role of the Klanswoman reveals how community work complements her ideals, enabling her to circulate the message of white supremacy through neighborhoods and family networks. I assert that it is often through the community that women who are involved in white supremacist organizations make known a particular set of values that create a challenge to American society as they advocate the security of white purity. For women who are members of the Ku Klux Klan working for their community means working for their race, creating a network which gives them the strength to develop family, education, and religion – all dedicated to the cause of white supremacy.

Recruiting, also a component of nonmarket work, takes on an interesting form when examining how new members are recruited into white supremacist organizations. The fact is that

the study of the practice of organized racism in the 1990's produces an image that is rapidly changing. It is no longer the exclusive domain of white men over thirty, and in the last ten years women have joined the separatist movement in record numbers. In fact, the increase in the number of women, together with a strategic move to reform the public image of hate groups, has expanded women's leadership within contemporary white supremacist organizations (Cochran & Ross, 1988). According to Robb (1996):

Since we opened the doors to women as members, other Klan organizations, rather than recognizing our vision and leadership simply copied our decision and now every Klan group in America allows women as members. The Knights, still recognizing the wisdom of bringing women into its membership made another first in 1993 when grand council member, K.A. Badynski nominated Rachael Pendergraft to be a member of the national grand council. In that capacity Rachael has regularly represented the Knights at rallies, on TV, and in news articles.

What then is the practice by which male dominated separatist organizations recruit the women who perform their nonmarket work either in leadership roles or as supporters for the cause of white supremacy? What are the factors that lead women to get involved in these organizations? An examination of the role of the Klanswoman reveals how the Klan complements their ideals, enabling them to circulate their message of white supremacy through their neighborhoods, family networks, and many times through their personal relationships. Membership into a white supremacist organization is often a choice of tactics for the

Klanswomen who express a desire for change. For these women, the Klan offers an outlet through which to channel their energies.

U.S. separatist groups, since 1980, have actively been recruiting women. Blee (2002) asserts that there are two reasons for this. One reason is that leaders see these women as unlikely to have criminal records, and the second reason is because the women will help augment membership rolls. In fact, not more than twenty years ago membership in groups such as the Klan and neo-Nazi groups was less than 10,000, but since approximately 1990 it is believed that memberships have had a substantial increase.

Summary

The role of the volunteer, organizer, or activist is a familiar female role that is steeped in contradiction. For close to two hundred years women's work as volunteers, organizers, or activists, has politicized them and moved them more and more towards working outside the home, all the while protecting the family system that put them there, under the control and care of their husbands (Kaminer, 1984).

Women in their homes, churches, social clubs, various organizations, and communities all perform in valuable roles as volunteers, organizers, or activists and, although it must be acknowledged that race, class, and gender constraints usually prohibits their gaining recognition, they perform a multiplicity of significant roles such as initiating and organizing action, formulating tactics, and providing crucial resources that are necessary to sustain their cause. "Sisters in struggle, they are empowered through their activism" (Barnett, 1993, p.177).

Throughout history women's roles in organizations have been multifaceted. They assume the position of leaders; they make speeches, or engage as organizers handling much of the paperwork. Their work frequently connects their family and their community life,

contributing to the empowerment of themselves and their organization. Overall, I believe that collectively women share many of the same experiences when one examines the different levels of commitments and attachments they have to the group or organization. What I have attempted to show is the ways in which women have become a part of the process that allows for some control in their organization.

White supremacist organizations are systems that engage in gendered processes. The practice of engaging women in the nonmarket work of white supremacist organizations occurs either because women made the decision to engage or it occurs because men made the decision to allow women entry. What is clear is that since its formation the Klan has used gender and sexuality as powerful symbols to motivate, to recruit, and to promote white supremacy. Like their male counterparts, Klanswomen hold reactionary political views on race, nationality and religion. It is through their nonmarket work as volunteers, organizers, activists, and leaders that women have been able to exert an influence dedicated to the ideology of white supremacy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership roles of women in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan. The research questions guiding this study are as follows: 1) What are the common leadership practices of women who participate in white supremacist organizations? 2) How do the women who participate in white supremacist organizations use their position as leaders to promote social change? 3) How does the phenomenon of white supremacy and patriarchy affect women's leadership roles? This chapter addresses how the study was conducted in order to learn more about women's leadership roles in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan, and includes a full discussion of the qualitative research design that was used including sample selection, data collection, data analysis, issues of validity and reliability, theoretical framework, researcher bias, and limitations of the study.

Research Design

Qualitative research is a method that helps a researcher to understand and explain social phenomena. Though there are many variations, for the most part qualitative research refers to the techniques and strategies that share common characteristics and assumptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Qualitative research designs or models often include the following: fieldwork, ethnography, community studies, case studies, life history and biographical studies, document analysis and historical studies, survey study, and observational study.

Because qualitative research has such a broad and inclusive definition, and the various categories of qualitative research designs are loosely defined, how does one know what makes a qualitative study good? In an effort to describe and capture the essence of qualitative research there is often what is called a thick descriptive account of what is being studied, which then requires an in depth analysis and interpretation of the study. Other features of a qualitative study include an intensive investigation over time, use of multiple approaches, participant corroboration, thorough descriptions and appropriate development of design selection, introspective and reflective account of the researcher's experiences, authenticity, credibility, insightfulness, clarity, and comprehensiveness, thoughtful consideration of the particular setting research subject as compared to previous research literature, judicious development and application of analytical and theoretical constructs, and finally, prudent assessments of evidence and alternative explanations for discovered patterns. I believe that when all of these features are considered, the key to a good qualitative research design is that the researcher must build and construct the design in a stepwise manner – decision by decision – letting the data be her or his guide.

It is acknowledged in the academy that just as there are many ways of knowing, there are just as many ways to conduct research. The problem is that although there is acknowledgment of different research methods, there are also frequent arguments between researchers regarding the validity of qualitative research vs. quantitative research. In fact, there is often so much disagreement that researchers who choose a qualitative method over a quantitative method find themselves in the position of having to justify the choice. A question asked by Gould (1989) addresses the disagreement. "Why do we downgrade integrative and qualitative ability while we

exalt analytical and quantitative achievement? Is one better, harder, more important than the other?" (p. 100).

The reality, in the academy, is that research that is not driven by theory, hypothesis, or producing generalizability is frequently found to be deficient, or even dismissed altogether. Such a narrow view does an injustice to the wide variety and richness of contributions that the qualitative researcher can make. What is to be learned is that, when considering theory, hypothesis, or generalization, this does not always necessitate the type of study design known as quantitative research. What the qualitative researcher recognizes is that it is the study itself that leads her or him to a decision regarding what type of research design is most appropriate. For example, a quantitative method, such as a social survey, may be most appropriate if you want to discover how people intend to vote. On the other hand, if you are interested in exploring people's life histories, then qualitative methods will most likely be the research design of choice.

Peshkin (1993) addresses what he calls the goodness of qualitative research. For those of us who are committed to qualitative research this statement brings to the surface an all too familiar emotion. "No research paradigm has a monopoly on quality. None can deliver promising outcomes with certainty. None have the grounds for saying 'this is it' about their designs, procedures, and anticipated outcomes" (p.28). It is my belief that to polarize oneself in an either-or position, a qualitative or quantitative as right or wrong position is to create a short-sightedness that can be quite misleading.

I am seeking to discover women's participation in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan, and believe that through the use of qualitative methods I have been able to uncover and understand what lies beneath women's participation in white supremacy, a phenomenon about which little is known. With this said, and

in context with my own particular research, I believe that qualitative research and methods rather than quantitative research and methods are the best fit and the better approach for this study.

As identified by Neuman (1994), within the designs or models of qualitative research are six essential characteristics of characteristics: the importance of the context, the case study method, the researcher's integrity, the grounded theory process, process and sequencing, and interpretation.

The first characteristic Neuman (1994) identified emphasizes the importance of the context. Qualitative researchers believe that the meaning of a statement or an action depends on the context, and if this is ignored then the social meaning and significance is distorted. Paying attention to the social context means that the researcher must be aware of and note what came before or what surrounds the focus of the study. Paying attention to the social context also implies the same study, including events or behaviors of the research participants, can have different meanings in different settings. It is also important that qualitative researchers locate parts of social events or behaviors into the larger dimension. In other words, "the parts in the absence of the whole have little meaning" (Neuman, 1994, pp. 321). One of the participants in this study, Nina, seemed to have a complete understanding of this:

I would be interested in seeing your questions Michele, and may even be interested in answering them. However, I have one condition. Is it one that you're willing to consider? Go read David Duke's book, *My Awakening* (yeah, I know, it's about the size of *War and Peace* – but it's a good and easy read; I call it a primer of the truth!). Then, having educated yourself in just the BASICS, come back. I will gladly discuss with you whatever you need to

know. Without reading this book, I'm wondering if you CAN ask reasoned/reasonable questions without some basis in the fundamentals of our positions. How can you formulate a thesis if you don't know what we're about? If you don't agree to read this book then I will have to assume that you're interested in writing about women in the white supremacist movement without a solid grasp of WHAT they think is important. The very basis for why these women risk their livelihoods and speak out so strongly against the political, sociological, and even legal tide is presented in Duke's book. You're going to describe what makes them tick without looking at clock theory??? The MAIN driver(s) of why (we) women work for these causes, try to lead people or educated people, or awaken people to the threats, is encapsulated beautifully in that one place. Are you, being (I'm guessing) a "typical" academic, thinking you can accurately describe people's motivations without learning about the actual think that motivates them? What use, then, your study?

The second characteristic that Neuman (1994) points out is the case study and the value of this type of study. Whereas a quantitative researcher gathers certain information on a large number of respondents or subjects, the qualitative researcher usually gathers a large amount of information on a fewer number of participants. Data analysis is also performed differently. The quantitative researcher may look for patterns in the variables on many cases; the qualitative researcher becomes immersed in her or his data and has the task of trying to find patterns in the

lives, actions, or words of the participant, while still considering the social context of the overall case.

In this study, I interviewed twelve women, all of whom are leaders in white supremacist organizations. My research and analysis of the data sought to discover patterns in their lives that would lead to an understanding of the meaning that these twelve women had constructed and assigned to their experiences and activities in contemporary white supremacist groups.

Researcher integrity, a third characteristic, is often called into question with a qualitative research study. Neuman (1994) asserts that there is an enormous amount of trust that must exist in the researcher's integrity and ability to correctly interpret data in a qualitative research study. Speaking to the issue of researcher integrity, because there are so many opportunities for the researcher to influence the data analysis, she or he often has to answer to the question of objectivity or bias. Patton (2002) suggests that the key to objectivity is that the researcher understands that to be totally objective and free of bias she or he must be able to remove her or his point of view from the study. Values should not be imposed, and the researcher should make every effort to remain neutral.

Researcher integrity is also called in to question when it comes to data analysis. One way that a qualitative researcher can make sure that her or his data analysis is as bias free as possible and reflects the data is to have a system of checks and cross-checks on the data. An example of how this is accomplished by listening to statements, and then looking for other confirming or non-confirming data. There also must be a consistent presentation of the data that is discovered. What should emerge from the data is a web of interlocking details that provide sufficient information to convince a reader that the researcher understands the phenomenon, and that there exists first-hand knowledge of events and people (Neuman, 1994).

In order to present my integrity as a researcher and to demonstrate my ability to interpret the data in this qualitative research study, I employed the role of participant-as-observer, which is an overt, peripheral role. (Neuman, 1994). I interacted with the women, but as an outsider. A series of relationships were established with the twelve women I interviewed, and as these relationships became more intimate, what began to develop were subjects who became respondents and key informants, helping me to gain further insight regarding their activities as leaders in white supremacist organizations.

A fourth characteristic of qualitative research is induction. Inductive theory develops or emerges during the data collection process. What this means is that the theory is built from the data, or rather grounded in the data itself. Comparisons are an important component of inductive theory. For example, when a researcher observes an event, she or he begins to look for similarities and differences as the original research questions are considered. What happens at this point is that data collection and theorizing can be intertwined, allowing for new questions to arise, leading to the need for more observations (Neuman, 1994).

Although there have been prior studies conducted on the activities of white supremacist organizations, most of these studies have focused on men's participation. There has been an absence of attention to women's participation which has consequently led to the assumption that women are not part of white supremacist activities today. My research has challenged this assumption and because I have focused on women's participation I have been able to present data as to why women have become involved in racist activities.

The passage of time is the fifth characteristic of qualitative research that Neuman (1994) identifies. He refers to this as process and sequence. A qualitative researcher must consider the sequence of events and pay close attention to the order in which the events take place. Because

the qualitative researcher usually examines the same case or set of cases over a period of time, she or he will discover an issue that is evolving, a conflict emerging, or a social relationship developing. Once this discovery takes place, she or he is then in a position to detect, process, and determine causal relations.

Blee (1996) asserts, “The boundaries of many racist groups today are quite fluid and respondents typically move in and out of a number of groups over time. Thus a few respondents can be definitely characterized by a single group membership, or even by a single philosophical position” (p. 686-687). In this study, as I sought to obtain demographic information from the respondents, I discovered that many of the women had a history of prior commitments with other separatist organizations.

The sixth and last characteristic that Neuman (1994) identifies is interpretation, meaning the assignment of significance or meaning. A qualitative researcher interprets the data by giving meaning to it and making it understandable. However, and most importantly, is that the meaning that she or he assigns must begin with the viewpoint of the person or persons that is being studied. The researcher seeks to discover how the person or persons see the world, how they define their position, and what it means to them.

There are three steps to the process of qualitative interpretation. The first is to consider that the person or persons who are being studied have personal reasons or motives for their actions. The researcher’s consideration and then reconstruction of this moves the study into second-order interpretation. In this phase, meaning begins to develop from the data; however, it is critical for the researcher to recognize that the meaning is interpreted within a larger context or events to which it is related. From here that researcher may move to the third-order of

interpretation, which occurs when general significance is assigned to the data analysis (Neuman, 1994).

The respondents that I interviewed for this study most likely had a variety of reasons for participating. While many saw the interview as an opportunity to explain their racial politics to an outsider, others may have hoped that the interview would generate publicity either for the organization they are members of, or for themselves, a common motivation for granting interviews (Blee, 1996). Some of the women's reasons for participating in this study were certainly political. Yet other reasons I believe were simply based on the fact that they identified with me as a white woman, and from an instrumental point of view there are great advantages to be gained from capitalizing upon this common bond of race and gender.

The women I interviewed seemed eager to talk to me, eager that I understand their beliefs and their mission of white supremacy. They wanted to tell me their story, putting themselves at the center. Throughout the interviews these women shared with me their beliefs, their philosophies, and their world view. Through their narratives, these women became agents of knowledge, enabling me to gain an understanding of their philosophical beliefs regarding race and gender. And, when examining the multiple levels of their narratives, their life lived, their life experiences, and their life told, their need for validation became clear.

Sample Selection

Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that uses the judgment of the researcher in selecting the cases, which are chosen with a specific purpose in mind. Neuman (1994) asserts that purposive sampling is only appropriate in three situations. First, a researcher may use this type of sampling method to help her or him select unique cases that prove to be particularly informative. Second, a researcher may use purposive sampling to help her or him select

members of a difficult to contact, specialized population. Third, if a researcher wants to identify specific types of cases for in-depth investigation, purposive sampling is a good choice. The purpose is not so much to generalize to a larger population but to be able to gain a deeper understanding of the types of cases. It is a fact that in qualitative research, there are some studies that require that the researcher focus on either a small geographic area or a limited population. In other words, the researcher has a strong purpose for this type of pinpoint selection (Hessler, 1992).

Though it is generally understood that qualitative samples are usually purposive, the sample selection can evolve and change once fieldwork begins. The reason for this is that initial sample selections can lead the researcher to similar, yet different samples than was originally planned. For example, observing one person or event often invites a comparison with another, and understanding one component of the relationship that is being studied may reveal facets to be studied in others (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This type of qualitative sampling is known as conceptually-driven sequential sampling, and was the secondary research technique that I employed in this study.

Essential to this research was my desire to discover the stories of the women I selected to study. “From these woman-sharing talks, from peeling back the layers and exposing our secret pleasures and pains, our uncertainties and doubts, our angers and despair have come transformation, empowerment, community, and activism” (Gillispie, 1994, p.13). It was my expectation that by allowing the participants the freedom to tell their stories or to detail the accounts of their leadership experiences I would be able to learn about their particular leadership roles in the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist organizations. It was my intention to give these women a voice, which has traditionally been left out of research. This is a feminist

concept, giving space for women to speak, to have voice, and to make meaning of their own experiences (Reinharz, 1992).

Decisions made with regard to my sample selection involved not just which women would be observed and interviewed, but also which settings, events, and social processes would be considered. While it is true that qualitative studies require the researcher to be flexible during fieldwork, some initial selections are critical to the success of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Boundaries were set that defined the aspects of my study and connected directly to my research questions.

Because of the secrecy of membership in most Ku Klux Klan organizations and other contemporary white supremacist groups, it was impossible to obtain and list all members and sample selectively from the list. Instead I relied on subjective information (e.g., locations where Klan groups are holding rallies) and experts (e.g., the Center for Democratic Renewal who monitor white supremacist activities) to identify a sample of women in leadership roles in contemporary white supremacist organizations for inclusion in this study.

Purposive sampling was the primary sampling technique that I used, identifying twelve women who could provide the information I was seeking, and to whom access was not problematic. The selection criteria for this study required that the sample population meet the following criteria: 1) The participants must be women; 2) The participants must be members of a white supremacist organization; 3) The participants must have been in a leadership position for at least three years. I used three years as a time criteria because it is my belief that three years of leadership experience in a white supremacist organization would yield a sample of women that would be able to represent an accurate portrayal of what being a female leader in a male-

dominated white supremacist organization entails, therefore offering the opportunity for a rich analysis of such roles.

Data Collection

The data used for this study came from in-depth interviews conducted by phone and the internet. Field notes were included and treated as part of my data collection and analysis, offering a written account of what I saw and experienced as I moved forward through this study. I also gathered archival data from the University of Georgia Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, monthly publications from a white supremacist organization located in Arkansas, reports and publications from the Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR) and information obtained through forums on a website available on the internet. Also, research cited in Chapter 2 provided data regarding issues of women's leadership roles along with the phenomena of white supremacy.

Interviews

Interviewing is a technique or a way of finding out information about people. An interview, which is essentially a conversation, is more significantly an instrument of data collection, with the interviewer the tool or instrument. In qualitative research, interviewing which is probably the most common form of data collection, is usually in the format of the individual, face-to-face verbal exchange, however, interviews can also encompass phone conversations, and electronic communications via the internet. Many researchers use interviews to provide the researcher information about the participant's experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Interviews typically range from a highly structured design to semi-structured, to unstructured (Patton, 2002).

The interview is the primary method I used to collect data for this study. A Cover Letter Consent Document was given to each participant (see Appendix A) prior to conducting the interview. This document explained the intent of my research, explained confidentiality concerns, and advised the participant of their rights. In addition, the Cover Letter Consent Document explained the process for recording the interview, and the security and disposal of the interview tapes. The participants were also given a Biography Outline (see Appendix C) from which demographic information on the research participants was obtained.

According to Patton (1990), the semi-structured interview technique is designed in such a way to obtain similar information from all respondents. While the research topic is predetermined, this type of interview technique allows for some degree of flexibility, opening the way for an informative in-depth conversational style of interview. The in-depth conversational style interviews are designed to allow a more natural flow of conversation between the researcher and the respondent, thus allowing for more flexibility in both the questions asked and the responses given (Patton, 1990).

For eight of the interviews, I used a combination of in-depth conversational style interviewing combined with semi-structured and unstructured interview techniques to elicit the data for this study. Each respondent was asked a series of pre-established questions (see Appendix B), and there was not a limited set of response categories. The interviews for this study were flexible, giving both myself and the respondents the opportunity to have a meaningful and in-depth exchange. Prior arrangements were made with the participants in order to select a time for the interview. The interviews ranged in length from thirty minutes to two hours, with the majority lasting one hour. I tape-recorded each interview and transcribed each one verbatim into a word processing document.

As data collection for this study progressed, contact with four of the women I had selected to interview became problematic. Three of the women requested that the interview be conducted electronically due to their fear of being identified. One of the women requested to be interviewed electronically, expressing that they due to time constraints, responding over the internet was a better arrangement for her. When conducting interviews electronically, I used both e-mail and various forums on white supremacist web sites to collect data for this study. Once contact had occurred and the respondent had agreed to be interviewed, typically I would electronically send a copy of my interview questions (see Appendix B) to the respondent, offering them the choice of answering the questions and then forwarding their responses to me, or we would establish a time to simultaneously be on the computer at the same time and engage in an electronic conversation. Though I prefer to conduct interviews either in person or by phone, I discovered that I was still able to have a meaningful exchange of ideas with the women who I solicited for this study through an electronic interview.

“Being in the field involves placing oneself deliberately in a context of commitment different from the normal one. And as we all know, this act need not involve any traveling at all: it sometimes involves simply a shifting of attention and of sociable connection with one’s habitual milieu” (Lederman, 1990, p. 88). The development of technology and the growth of the internet have created entirely new ways in which data can be collected, and for the qualitative researcher has given new meaning to the word conversation. At its most basic, the internet, and e-mail in particular, offers a new way to gain information without the traditional face-to-face interview (Gibbs, Friese, & Mangabeira, 2002).

It was my experience that interviews that were conducted electronically had advantages for both me and the interviewee. Bampton and Cowtan (2002) point out that one of the

advantages of the e-interview is that the interviewee has time to construct well thought out responses to particular questions. They are able to reflect and then supply a considered reply. The issue of spontaneity can be called into question. However, Crystal (2001) argues that the articulated, reflective reply is not necessarily less valid. Furthermore, in some situations, an ethical case can be made for allowing respondents the opportunity to protect themselves from making imprudent comments (Crystal, 2001). Similarly, in an e-interview, the interviewer can take her or his time to respond to a developing dialogue. For me, having extra time to respond or react was particularly valuable due to the sensitive nature of my questions.

Documents

For the qualitative researcher, an important data source that is used for analysis often includes documents such as public records, personal papers, artifacts, official publications and reports, memos, and personal diaries (Patton, 2002). These types of documents can be used to collect additional information and frequently enable the researcher to gain an insight relevant to her or his study. However, their usefulness can be affected because there may be problems with the completeness and accuracy of these documents (Patton, 1990).

The documents that were used in this study include manuscripts from the University of Georgia Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, monthly publications from a white supremacist organization located in Arkansas, reports and publications from the Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR), an organization founded to counter hate crime and hate group activity through research, education, victims' assistance, and community action, and information obtained through forums on a website available on the internet.

The archival data gathered from manuscripts provided historical information on the Ku Klux Klan; the monthly publications from a white supremacist organization in Arkansas

provided valuable information regarding this group's activities and events; reports and publications from the CDR provided specific information about racist activities and a listing of known members of white supremacist organizations; forums on a website available on the internet provided descriptive information as well as material that enhanced the data that was gathered from the interviews.

Field Notes

I have included as a form of data collection and analysis my field notes. Neuman (1994) asserts that most field research data are in the form of field notes. Fetterman (1989) calls field notes the bricks and mortar of field research, and points out that field notes often include maps, diagrams, photographs, interviews, tape recordings, videotapes, memos, objects from the field, notes jotted in the field, and detailed notes written away from the field. Neuman (1994) points out that personal feelings and emotions can become a part of and influence what a researcher sees or hears in the field.

I wrote field notes before and after I conducted each interview. I typed and dated the field notes and reviewed them at various times during the data collection phase of this study. I found that journaling offered an outlet and a way to cope with stress, and that my field notes provided a source of data about my personal reactions, and as a way to evaluate direct observation notes at a later time. These observations helped me to track emerging findings as the data collection progressed.

Data Analysis

Patton (1990) asserts that there are two basic levels of analysis to consider, description and interpretation. Description, as one level of analysis, answers the fundamental questions about the phenomena being researched and studied. Interpretation, as another level of analysis,

entails explaining and showing the significance of the data, and finding and making sense of the patterns that emerge from the data. It is my intention to both describe and interpret my findings in this study, offering a reasoned and connected account of the actions and practices of women in leadership positions in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan.

The constant comparative method of data analysis was used in this study. Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasize that in qualitative research the collection and analysis of data should occur at the same time, allowing the synthesis of the data to emerge throughout the research process. It is their assertion that from the beginning of data collection, with each single case, all data should be inspected and compared within that case. Though the constant comparative method of data analysis is complex, it can be thought of as a systematic process involving reading, rereading, coding and recoding the collected data in order to see the connections which will lead to a theoretical conclusion.

There are four stages of data analysis that occur in the constant comparative method, each stage transforming into the next while keeping earlier stages in operation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The first stage is the comparison of pertinent information or incidents to various categories that will be created or that will emerge. Each incident or bit of pertinent information will be coded into categories, keeping in mind the basic and defining rule for the constant comparative method: “while coding each incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.106). At the end of this first stage of data analysis what are generated will be the beginnings of theoretical properties of the categories.

The second stage is the integrating of categories and their properties (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). At this point of analysis, though the coding continues, the constant comparative units change from the comparison of the pertinent information or incidents to comparison of the information/incidents with the properties of the category that was the result of the first comparison of the information/incidents. As a result, the differing properties begin to become integrated. “If the data are collected by theoretical sampling at the same time that they are analyzed, then integration of the theory is more likely to emerge by itself” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.109).

Moving into the third stage, as theories are developing, Glaser and Strauss (1967) stress the importance of delimiting the theory, which occurs at two levels: theory and categories. The key at this stage of data analysis is reduction, which allows the achievement of two requirements of theory: (1) parsimony of variables and (2) scope of the theory as to its applicability to situations in a wider range.

The last and fourth stage of constant comparative analysis is the actual writing of theory. At this stage saturation has occurred. The data has been analyzed and the result is a systematic substantive theory that is a reasonable, yet accurate, statement of the study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In this study there was a variety of qualitative data to be analyzed, ranging from interviews and field notes to texts and transcripts. All interviews were carefully transcribed and the information/data was analyzed and synthesized. “Qualitative analysis requires the researcher to read and reread data notes, reflect on what is read, and make comparisons based on logic and judgment” (Neuman, 1994, p. 424). Silverman (2000) asserts that when a researcher uses the constant comparative method of data analysis, she or he should always make attempts to find

other cases through which to test out what should be an evolving hypothesis. The intent of this study is to develop an understanding of the leadership roles of women in contemporary racist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan. The constant comparative method of data analysis has enabled me to develop an in-depth understanding of not only the leadership practices of these women, but how they negotiate their particular roles within patriarchal white supremacist organizations.

Validity

Employed in a technical sense, the concerns surrounding validity are most often whether a researcher has successfully measured what the research or study claims to measure (Wolcott, 1995). Though both validity and reliability are terms normally associated with quantitative research, the fact is that qualitative researchers have principles regarding both constructs.

For the qualitative researcher, validity has taken on a wider meaning, associated more with the value of truth as opposed to a more quantitative definition that is limited primarily to measurement (Wolcott, 1995). Validity, in qualitative research, is a two-fold construct: internal and external validity. Internal validity is defined as the extent to which observations and descriptions are authentic representations of some reality. How closely the research findings match reality can be determined through a number of research methods that will be utilized in this study: (1) data triangulation which includes interview data, observation data, and archival data, and (2) respondent validation in which the researcher returns to the participants in the study with tentative results seeking to refine the interpreted data, peer review and examination, and clarification of researcher subjectivity (Silverman, 2000).

External validity is defined as the degree to which some representations can be legitimately compared across groups. In other words, how generalizable are the results?

There are several ways to insure and to increase the external validity of a study. One way is through maximum variation sampling which provides a variety of experiences from which to interpret the data, increased length of time in the field, and triangulation of data through multiple sources (Silverman, 2000).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which a particular measurement process produces the same results whenever and wherever it is conducted (Wolcott, 1995). Reliability, another critical component of research, can be problematic for the researcher, particularly the qualitative researcher, mainly because fieldwork does not really lend itself to what reliability is all about. In fact, the rigidity associated with it diverts attention from the research results and to the research processes. “Similarity of responses is taken to be the same as accuracy of responses” (Wolcott, 1995, p.167). Just as validity is a two-fold construct, reliability has an internal and external component.

External reliability considers whether or not researchers would discover the same phenomena or generate similar constructs in similar settings. Internal reliability considers and questions if given a set of previously generated constructs would other researchers match data in the same way as the original researcher? Are the results consistent with the data collected?

Just as there are several ways to ensure validity in a study, there are also several ways to ensure reliability. One way is through an audit trail, which will outline how the data was collected and how decisions were made throughout the study. The purpose of the audit trail is to enable others to understand and if desired to reconstruct the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Peer review, peer examination, and member checks are also useful to ensure reliability (Silverman, 2000).

Researcher Orientation and Bias

In a qualitative research study, the most important tool or instrument is the researcher. Because of this, the argument of objectivity vs. subjectivity is one that is found in every research methods course and is an argument that leads to extensive debates. Generally, most researchers concede that to be objective is to remove the observer's point of view so that the results will be free of bias. There exists the assumption among both qualitative and quantitative methodologists that the researcher should be a neutral observer and that one's values should not be imposed upon the subject.

Peshkin (1988) has this to say regarding researcher subjectivity, "It is no more useful for researchers to acknowledge simply that subjectivity is an invariable component of their research than it is for them to assert that their ideal is to achieve objectivity" (p. 17). This quote points out what qualitative researchers innately know as true, that subjectivity is invariably present in their research; it just simply has to be. Peshkin (1988) asserts that subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed, it is present in all aspects of our life. In fact, he argues that researchers should systematically identify their subjectivity throughout the course of their study. His reasoning is based on his belief that if the researcher is aware of her or his subjectivity, and discloses this throughout the study, they will be able to write unencumbered from personal beliefs that may or may not intervene and interfere in the research process.

Wolcott (1995) refers to subjectivity as a bias and uses the words interchangeably. He believes that good bias not only helps the researcher get the work done, by lending focus, but is essential. Of course, there can be an excess of bias, which is never good, and in the case of qualitative studies, subjectivity can become excessive if the researcher allows it to exert an undue influence on the study. The way to guard against this is to acknowledge one's

subjectivity, to recognize it, and to control it. “Bias should stimulate inquiry without interfering in the investigation” (Wolcott, 1995, p. 165). In agreement with Peshkin (1988), Wolcott (1995) states that the researcher must understand that her or his subjectivity or bias is not the problem. The researcher’s purposes and assumptions should be made explicit and used carefully to enhance the meaning and focus of the study. This is the dance; this is the art of keeping in balance.

Standard ethnographic conventions demand the use of a distant voice. The underpinnings of keeping the voice distant are to ensure objectivity. Acker, Barry, and Esseveld (1983) assert, “The impossibility of eliminating all objectification exists in all social research, and the problem cannot be solved by creating the illusion that no relationship exists between the researcher and her research object” (p.434). A prime example of the departure from ethnographic conventions that encourage objectivity can be found in the writings of Zora Neal Hurston. She challenges the social science paradigm that insists that a distant voice is imperative. Hurston, as a way of debunking the proposed objective truth, ladens her research with her own subjective interpretations, readily admitting that she is a part of the cultural scene that she writes about (Hernandez, 1995). This presented a problem for her in the world of academia and, according to Hernandez (1995), there were numerous doubts expressed about Hurston’s commitment to scholarship.

“We cannot rid ourselves of this subjectivity, nor should we wish to; but we ought, perhaps, to pay it very much attention” (Cheater, 1987, p.172). I find this quote extremely meaningful and did just what Cheater (1987) suggests during the course of this study: I paid my subjectivity very much attention. Because of the nature of this study and my previous research experiences, the issue of subjectivity is necessarily huge. What has become clear to me is that

the subjective voice only serves to enhance what many in the academy refer to as the objective truth. I believe that there is great value in including the voice of the researcher, yet the inclusion of voice is something that must be done with great care so as not to silence the person or the group that is being studied. There is a delicate balance that must be considered and achieved.

Ethics is an issue in research studies and researcher orientation and biases that helps one decide which research roles are appropriate and which ones are not. Just as there are many fields of study in academia, there are as many conflicting views of what is or is not appropriate research roles and behavior. Aside from the professional guidelines and code of ethics that are in place that members of professions are bound to follow, the more interesting discussion is how a researcher's ethics and values may conflict those whom she or he is studying, and how this conflict is resolved.

As the German sociologist Max Weber (1946) pointed out, all research, to some degree, is contaminated by the values of the researcher, and that it is only through these values do particular problems get identified and studied. In addition, when people's behavior is studied and questions are being asked, not only the values of the researcher have to be faced, but the researcher's responsibilities to those she or he is studying have to be faced as well.

Mason (1996) discusses two ways in which these types of ethical issues can encroach upon the qualitative researcher:

- (1) The rich and detailed character of much qualitative research can mean intimate engagement with the public and private lives of individuals.
- (2) The changing directions of interest and access during a qualitative study mean that new and unexpected ethical

dilemmas are likely to arise during the course of your research (p. 166-167).

Mason (1996) suggests that there are three ways to confront these problems:

(1) Decide what is the purpose(s) of your research, e.g. self-advancement, political advocacy, etc. (2) Examine which individuals or groups might be interested or affected by your research topic. (3) Consider what are the implications for these parties of framing your research topic in the way you have done (p. 29-30).

The fact is that during the course of a research project the researcher is going to face many ethical dilemmas and must decide how she or he should act. Ethics begin and end with the researcher. I have reflected on my own ethical dilemmas that I faced in the course of a previous study, and the dilemmas that I had to deal with in this study. I find that I am comfortable with my own code of ethics and was always up front with my subjects with regard to the purpose of the study. Yet, with this said, it almost seems too simple considering the subject I am studying, women and white supremacy. My intention is not to oversimplify the ethical issues that are raised by my research, but to establish my role as researcher with outsider status. However, this can call into question the fact that establishing my role as researcher with outsider status is really only pure when considering my interest in studying the group as a whole. As my exploration deepened and I began to interview women, I had to come to terms with the fact that my own position, not just as a woman, but a white woman, could create a combination of methodological, personal, political and moral issues.

Finch (1984) raises the issues of the ethics and politics of interviewing women. She asserts that what must be considered is the ease with which a woman researcher can elicit material from other women, and in my study gender is not the only factor, race must be considered as well. She conducted a study of clergymen's wives in which she was the sole researcher, doing all the interviews herself. She used qualitative techniques, including in-depth interviews, talking to the women about aspects of their lives which centrally defined their identities as women. Her approach was informal, recognizing what she calls the special character of a research situation in which a woman talks to another woman. Finch (1984) recognizes and prefers a less-structured research strategy, avoiding a hierarchical relationship between her and the women she was interviewing. It has been her experience that women are usually enthusiastic about talking to a female researcher, even if they may have some initial anxieties about the purpose of the research. "The friendly interviewer, with time to listen and guarantees of confidentiality, not surprisingly finds it easy to get women to talk" (Finch, 1984, p.169).

The fact that I am a white woman most certainly offered great advantages, some of which included capitalizing on the common bond of race and gender. These advantages are a great concern to Borland (1991) as she examines what she calls interpretive conflict. Borland (1991) points out that as researchers interpret narratives from interviews they are also looking inward at their own experience during the time of the interview. This reflective practice necessarily has an impact as the connections are being made between the narrative and what she calls larger cultural formations, many times differing from the original narrator's intentions. This is where issues of researcher responsibility and ethics come into question, and the researcher must be cognizant of the dynamics that exist between the researcher and the person interviewed and for women,

particular attention must be given to situations that are often a contradiction. Borland (1991) offers this perspective for thought as she asks who controls the text.

We seek to empower the women we work with by revaluing their perspectives, their lives, and their art in a world that has systematically ignored or trivialized women's culture. On the other hand, we hold an explicitly political vision of the structural conditions that lead to particular social behaviors, a vision that our field collaborators, many of whom do not consider themselves feminists, may not recognize as valid. Our presentation of these stories -in particular publications under particular titles – will influence the way in which prospective readers will interpret the text (p. 64).

In conclusion, there are great benefits for the researcher who trades on her or his race and gender, but research ethics demand that these benefits must be recognized and acknowledged. When we conduct interviews and then interpret the narratives, we necessarily bring our own knowledge, experience, and concerns to our research (Johnson-Bailey, 1999, 2003). This should help us toward a richer, and more textured understanding of the study (Borland, 1991).

Another concern surrounding researcher orientation and bias is that of researcher deception and researcher betrayal. Wolcott (1995) has very strong feelings regarding the issues of researcher deception and researcher betrayal. He declares that there is nothing more disturbing than the suggestion or accusation that those whom have been studied feel betrayed or deceived by what was said or written. The possibility will always exist, and the truth is that there is no way to do field research without uncovering additional data that may be more complex than

was anticipated, no way to conduct a qualitative study in order to find things out without finding things out, and finally no way a researcher can report what she or he understands without the risk of being misunderstood. After all, the purpose of the study is revelation, therefore there is always the possibility that what is being revealed may be in contradiction to the party or parties involved and lead to their feeling betrayed because of the differences in perception (Wolcott, 1995). What then is the role of the researcher when she or he is in the field? How does the researcher gain access to a person or persons? How are relationships established? How do researchers protect themselves against accusations of researcher deceptions and betrayal?

The first step that must be understood is that in order to gather valid data about research subjects, regardless of which role the researcher chooses, the fieldworker must gain the confidence of the individual or group that is being studied. Chicago School researchers believe that this should not be a problem, considering that people are generally straightforward, honest, and cooperative (Adler & Adler, 1987). Peshkin (1993) sums up this point, as he expressed his initial reactions and beliefs when he first entered the field, "If researchers appear good, honest, and decent, then they are rewarded with trust. If trusted, they have the open sesame to meetings, documents, interviews, etc." (p. 24). My experience was nothing like this, and I strongly suspect that any researcher who is exploring women in fringe groups would not have such an open and inviting experience as described by the Chicago School researchers and Peshkin (1993).

In a past study, access to the women in fringe groups was inconsistent at best, and the reality is that most of the time it was very difficult and required great tact on my part. As I stated earlier I am comfortable with my own code of ethics and was always up front with my subjects with regard to the purpose of the study. There is no deception at this point. However, Neuman

(1994) points out that deception is something that arises in several different ways in field research. For example, the researcher may assume a false role or identity, the research may be covert, or the researcher may mislead the individual or group the she or he is studying. This type of deception really addresses the role of the researcher. With my own study assuming a false role or identity or conducting covert research was never considered as an option.

Limitations of the Study

This study had two limitations. First and foremost was access to the subjects I wished to study. “From the Reconstruction-era Ku Klux Klan to contemporary neo-Nazis, the committed racist appears as male. Women racists exist in shadow, lurking behind husbands and boyfriends” (Blee, 1996, p. 680). An encounter I had while attending a Klan rally held in Forsyth County, Georgia in 1995 provides an excellent example of this. Present at this rally were men, women, and children. After speaking with several of the men I met a woman who was a member of the Rebel Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. As I was asking her if she would be willing to be interviewed, her husband came up and quickly told me, “She don’t have nothing to say to you”. Nothing in this exchange allowed me to understand her place, if any, in this organization. She appeared manipulated and voiceless. Because organized white supremacy is a male province, it seems to naturally follow that the women who join are the ideological appendages of men. This type of logic is circular and leads to the assumption that the best way to study the practices of organized separatism is to study male white supremacists (Blee, 1996). This depiction is typical in reports of women in racist groups; however I believe that I have challenged this depiction as I explored the leadership roles of women in the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist organizations.

A second limitation with this study presented itself again in the form of access. The sample of women that I had access to have a variety of reasons for participating in the study and this must be taken into consideration as the data is collected. While some respondents may see the interview as an opportunity to explain their racial politics to an outsider, others may hope that the interview will generate publicity either for the group or for themselves – a common motivation for granting interviews (Blee, 1996). Their motivation for participation had to be considered as I completed my data analysis and drew conclusions.

Summary

This chapter outlined and described the methodology for this qualitative study that has examined the leadership roles of women who participate in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan. This chapter has also outlined and described issues related to the research design, the sample selection, data collection, data analysis, validity, reliability, and researcher orientation and bias.

The primary methods of data collection were interviews and document analysis. The constant comparative method was utilized as the data analysis technique in order to discover the commonalities and themes among the research participants.

CHAPTER 4

PRE-STUDY DATA

This chapter reveals a significant and relevant finding that emerged from my study. Though this data is independent of my research purpose and questions, I believe that, given the nature of the topic and given the effect that resistance, reception, and rationale for participation had in shaping this study, it is important that this phenomenon be explored and presented. I detail the resistance and the reception that I encountered as I made contacts and conducted interviews. I have also included in this chapter a variety of reasons that may help to explain why the respondents agreed to participate in this study.

While I had anticipated that access to research subjects might prove to be problematic and limited, I believe that the instances of resistance to my request for an interview, the ways in which my request was received, and the reasons that some of the women had for participating in this study are very important findings to my research.

From a previous study, I had some experience going out into the field, attending rallies, and meeting and interviewing women face to face. I also had a good bit of experience talking to women on the phone, conducting interviews. What I did not have was the experience of going on the internet and signing up on various white supremacist web sites in order to meet women whom I could interview. After investigating several web sites I realized that to get anywhere I was going to have to begin to post my request for an interview on their sites, which I did.

The following is my initial request for an interview which was posted on June 1, 2004 on a white supremacist web site:

Hello, my name is Michele C. Burch and I am a graduate student at the University of Georgia, in Athens, Ga. (a “mature” student at 50 years old!) I also teach at a local high school. I am working on my Ph.D. and my dissertation topic is on women’s leadership roles in white supremacist organizations. My master’s thesis was on a similar topic but was a much smaller research project. I did a case study on a Ku Klux Klan group located in Arkansas, focusing on the role of women within this particular organization. I am now trying to expand my research to a broader study, still with a focus on women and the contributions they make. For example, how women work; is what women “do” different from men? How do women teach their philosophies of whiteness? I offer no judgement. I am just merely interested in the role that women have. Gender and race have been an interest of mine for a long time and I have found that very little academic work has been done in this area. Most of the articles that I have come across are very negative and make the women and men involved in white supremacist organizations seem uneducated. My experience has been just the opposite. I would really appreciate the opportunity to speak with you and set up an interview – either via the internet, phone, or in person. I have the summer off and can travel if necessary. I would be glad to supply you with my credentials – copy of the interview questions, approval from the UGA research

board – whatever would make you comfortable. I am open to questions regarding my work, etc. Please respond either to my e-mail account or you may call me at my home phone number and leave a message. I will call you back so it won't cost you long distance charges. Thank you and I look forward to hearing from some of you.

Resistance

I posted my request for an interview on a white supremacist web site on June 1, 2004. I registered using my name, and was quite candid about my purpose for posting on the site. I briefly explained my study, and though in many instances I was quite successful with regard to establishing contacts and scheduling interviews, I was totally unprepared for the rudeness and oftentimes vicious personal attacks that I experienced from both women and men. Though they were nothing more than words on a computer screen there was no mistake; I got the message. The first negative reply came almost immediately from Forum Member #1, a male, location is unknown (June 2, 2004):

Dear Ms. Burch, I would suggest that you contact whites in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe or South Africa. Most whites have been ethnically cleansed from Zimbabwe since whites lost sovereignty there, but there are still some left. And whites in South Africa have been experiencing an extremely high murder and rape rate since the end of white sovereignty there, so they might have other things on their minds than speaking to you. You might also talk to white women who are of the WWII and WWI era. All whites used

to be what we call racist or white supremacists: they believed our race exists and that we have a right to live in traditional white societies where we govern ourselves. White gentile cultists like yourself would have seemed an oddity back then.

From Forum Member #2, a male from Maryland (June 4, 2004):

White nationalism is a big story and getting bigger. Media and academics are very anxious to get access to it. Until white media has grown, I think we should not deal with system media or academia. They will only twist our words and divert attention away from white media. We have a monopoly on a popular subject – let's keep it. When people want to find out about white nationalists, let them come to our sources. What do you think about that, Michele Burch? Would you mind if I read your thesis?

Is there a place I can easily obtain a copy?

Another posting, this from Forum Member #3, gender and location are unknown (June 4, 2004): “Who is this person? Maybe she is a troll? I get the impression she is a typical pc white feminist. Does anyone know if she is even white”? The response to this question was unnerving as I realized that I had quickly been checked out. Of course, this in itself is not unusual, but it was uncomfortable to read about it on an internet site and from someone I had never even spoken with.

From Forum Member #4, a male from England (June 4, 2004):

She is genuine (as far as being who she purports to be). Her e-mail addresses checked out, she is a mature student at the University of

Georgia in Athens and teaches at CCHS – special studies of something similar, if I recall correctly. She’s got a BSC in sociology, I believe, but I can’t recall the university she got it from. Having said all that I don’t know if that makes her trustworthy or not.

The negative banter continued, as did their investigation of me: “So far, I’d say your credentials are a joke”. “Women’s studies, imagine how impressed we are. Write anything for The Womanist”? “She is probably someone who takes bell hooks seriously”. A post from Forum Member #5, a male, location unknown (June 5, 2004) has turned out to be one of my favorites:

If you check out Michele’s credentials you will find that they read like an indictment for the House of Un-American Affairs Committee. I don’t think that you’ll find much to recommend her as an independent thinker. She’s a true believer with a certificate in women’s studies to prove it. I can picture her turning her classroom into a shrine to the new Father of her Country, the Beloved Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., every February; leading a class sing-along of The Internationale every May 1st; religiously observing every Gay Pride event in the world; asking her students when they realized they were heterosexual; torturing the younger ones with the blue eyes-brown eyes routine; referring to the Founding Fathers as slave-owning sexist racist homophobic dead white males who oppressed women; fainting at the sight of

the Confederate flag; banning Christmas decorations; and so on and so forth. In other words, typical teacher.

From Forum Member #6, gender unknown, located in California (June 5, 2004):

Oh, she has a degree in Sociology. That's just swell. I attended my friend's sociology department graduation ceremony here at UC Berkeley. Most of the speakers who happened to be also professors and the chair of the department were socialists, borderline communists. It was enough to make me puke, especially seeing the people all enthusiastic to hear the communist braying. Quoting Jew Marx in their speeches... Disgusting. It would be interesting to pick their speeches apart and hand over their asses.

From Forum Member #7, a male located in California (June 6, 2004):

I am a National Alliance member, and I could be the guy next door mowing his lawn. My Bachelors degree is in Computer Science and if I am a redneck I am a decently educated one. The issue here is whether or not the piece Ms. Burch is doing is intended to put our mug shots and statements on the front page of the hate directory, or southern poverty law center web site. I am interested in the spin that will be applied to this work to protect potential interviewees. You can see that we don't trust you Ms. Burch. Tell us your life story; tell us what you are doing to preserve your race.

From Forum Member #8, gender unknown, located in Virginia (June 7, 2004):

Look, with all due respect, no one here owes you a damn thing. Remember this, you are coming into our house, you are a guest. We have given you reasons as to why we are suspicious. If you don't like it here no one is forcing you to stay. We are trying to build our own nation here; all you are trying to do is write a paper. If nothing else you know a good thing when you see it. I think that you are here to glean personal experiences of our members for your own personal use.

From Forum Member #9, gender unknown, located in Pennsylvania (June 7, 2004):

Anyone involved with the university system in the last 20+ years knows the slant that will inevitably be taken. Her dismay at our reaction is typical. How could anyone suggest that she would lower her standards, to twist the bits of other people's lives and experiences into a nice anti-piece? And, to boot, she gets a degree out of slamming our lives and ideologies, err, that is, understanding us better. Bladdy-blah about university standards – you're not fooling anyone here. Take your women's studies and cram them up your have a nice day!

This next response to my request for an interview came on June 7, 2004 from a forum member who later responded to me privately expressing that she was possibly interested in an interview. I did interview her at a later time, electronically. She has been given the pseudonym

of Nina. Nina is a forty year old woman who describes herself as a very active member of a Proto-Unit of the National Alliance. This was her initial reply:

Michele, can you understand that many of us, myself among them, are extremely cautious and self-protective? Because we are open in our discussions of the destruction of our race, our society, our nation, our culture, we MUST protect ourselves. It is a FACT that the Jews WILL hound and destroy us (our livelihoods, our ability to get and keep work) if we are ousted (to say nothing of the Jew-media who twists and uses anything we say or do to further their agenda and damage ours!) I cannot tell you the depth of my respect and support for those people who ARE willing to destroy their lives in order to work out in the open (David Duke, Ernst Zundel, Don Black, et al.) But I dare not slip up and expose myself; my husband and I rely on his small business to support us. If our “disaffection” were to become known we’d absolutely risk losing that livelihood. Are you even AWARE that a company that asks or RESPONDS TO a question about whether or not a product is made in Israel can be FEDERALLY charged? We DARE not be open! And you come here, full of the propaganda and (sorry) foolishness you’ve been filled with all your life, and expect us to welcome you as if we had no experience of other people (well-meaning or more usually, NOT well-meaning) coming in trying to “understand”.

More from Forum Member #9, gender unknown, located in Pennsylvania (June 9, 2004):

For this stranger we are nothing but lab rats to be slightly studied and used for her own purposes. I think it is naïve to believe otherwise. She was a voyeur with Klan women and now she proposes to do the same with us. I can only imagine the accolades such an infiltration garners her within the elitist university circles which comprise her social group. Do you actually believe that the university point of view is any different than the Jew-controlled media/journalist outlook is? Wake up, these are one and the same – hand in hand they are leading us to slow destruction by promoting white self-hatred to our young in public schools, by crushing the questioning spirit and by focusing on the false and/or lesser accomplishments of other races while attacking in every direction White achievement/values. AND YOU TRUST HER??? Let this person find her own way to racial awareness. There are plenty of resources here and clearly she is good at research. However, this woman is not special. Either she is open to the truth or she just wants some quotes to fill her blessed dissertation. Here's the truth: she is encompassed, embraced, and welcomed by the university system and that's her own reality. Anyway, since we have not heard from her for awhile, maybe she is long gone now – no surprise really. She is over in the teacher's lounge sitting with the department head and some of her feminist friends mulling over

those racists...blady blady blady. Oh those antis feel so superior when discussing “hateful racists” and/or anyone else who see them knocked off their pedestals as we do.

From Forum Member #10, gender unknown, located in Arizona (June 9, 2004):

Really Michele, what’s the big mystery here? What is it that you seek to know? Are you wondering why people would become White Nationalists and become part of the pro-white cause? Haven’t you figured it out yet? You’re ten years older than I am, and I’m presuming you’ve lived in America during that time. Have you been asleep during your life? Do you not know what is going on? There’s really no need to do an interview of us. We’re open and honest about our views; there’s no mystery or ambiguity to what we say and why we believe what we do. People like you are the real mystery here. You’re the ones who should be put on the spot and interviewed, because in my view, people of your ilk are a bunch of phonies and supercilious, self-righteous robots who blindly conform to media/government propaganda because they can’t think of anything better to do.

More from Forum Member #5, a male, location unknown (June 9, 2004):

I think that it would be a much more profitable use your time, Michele, to study your own environment. Take a look around you. How did America’s colleges turn into Ivy covered North Koreas? What was the influence of women in the corruption of higher

education? How could such a twit as Margaret Mead get away with her blatant fraud? For that matter, how did Freud? Boas? Marcuse? Gould? Why is the faculty of every humanities department in the country crawling with clueless bubbleheads, frothing Marxists, and dyke screech-owls? I could go on and on. There's so much ore to mine right on your campus that you need never leave it!

From this one request came a flood of responses, many of them negative; many of them personal attacks. I was called everything from a white gentile cultist to a troll. My positionality was questioned and I was basically told to stay within the deluded world of academia and to mind my own business. As I considered the resistance that my request evoked, there can be no question that one reason was the topic of the study and my being an outsider, or a "voyeur" as Forum Member #9 stated. The issue of trust is critical and is not something that is easily, if ever, attained.

I also believe that gender factored into the resistance I encountered due to the fact that ten out of the twelve negative responses were from males. According to Wolf (1996), race usually dominates the kinds of social interactions that occur in the field, however gender or class have an impact as well, though it is often not as obvious. The fact that white supremacist organizations are patriarchal in nature and that it was the men who disproportionately responded negatively to my request should not be ignored but very much considered as a key factor to the resistance that was encountered in this study.

Reception

As unprepared as I was for the hostile resistance I faced, I was equally unprepared for what I can only describe as an eagerness that at times seemed to border on desperation, from some of the women to talk to me, to tell me their story. Again, I believe that this information is pertinent to this study due to the fact that while some of the comments are nothing more than a polite response to my request, many of them are written in direct opposition to a nasty remark that had been made by another member of their organization. I begin this section with the postings from a woman who agreed to be interviewed, but under most unusual conditions. She was ready to give birth, and in fact did give birth in between interviews with me. That she would take the time in the middle of childbirth to talk to me, to tell me her story, is incredible.

After reading my post (June 1, 2004), which was my initial request for an interview, a woman who has been give the pseudonym of Susan replied on June 4, 2004. Susan is a thirty-eight year old woman who is the leader of a Proto-Unit of the National Alliance, located in a western state. Susan replied with to my interview request with questions of her own. “How much information do you need? I might be interested in talking to you. I want the masses to realize we are real people with a really important purpose in our struggle”. Then, she posted again on June 5, 2004, before I had replied to her first post:

Chairman Griffin of the National Alliance has given me the go ahead to do the interview with you. I am the leader of a Proto unit of the NA in a state out West and the only female that the NA has in this position at the moment. There is also a woman that we have as our spokesperson who you may be able to speak to. I will try to contact her for you.

I wrote to her that day, thanking her and making arrangements for the interview, etc. She wrote back immediately (June 5, 2004):

I am quite anxious to do the interview with you. Please e-mail the questions to me so I can be thinking about them. I have been a bit busy these last few days though. I have a doctor's appointment today as tomorrow is my due date and so I am going to hopefully find out that this baby is coming soon!!! I will work on the questions and maybe get a chance to talk to you on the phone unless this baby decides differently.

Four days later she wrote to me again (June 9, 2004):

I had my daughter on Monday at 12:23 AM by C section. She was 7.1 lbs and 19 inches long and has lots of ash blond hair. We just got home. Her first name is in remembrance of the Germans that were killed when that city was bombed by the allies during WWII. Her middle name is after my friend who is one of the leaders of the World Church of the Creator who was falsely convicted and now faces up to 50 years in prison.

From Forum Member #11, gender unknown, located in New Jersey (June 6, 2004):

My instinct also says that she may very well be genuine and a good person as well. Still, a postgraduate research paper is only as good as the advisor (and committee) who are currently unknown here. Evelyn's "trust but verify" stance seems like the most sensible approach. I want to say that once you really get burned by these

people, who sit at your table sharing a pot of tea with you and pretending to be fair, you get a bit gun-shy. And think about Michael Moore – what he did in Fahrenheit 9/11. Let's not forget what can be done in the editing room when someone wants to make their subject look like a complete and utter moron. With that said, I do want to state for the record that I do think it's a good idea to get someone who will report their findings here objectively, and help educate the public as to what white supremacy is truly about. The social stigmas attached to this movement have gone unchallenged for too long, in my opinion, and I think it's high time that someone tried to show that the labels placed on us have no validity or merit.

From Forum Member #12, a male, location is unknown (June 6, 2004):

Gents, Ladies, I know you bear ancient scars, but shouldn't we address the possibility that Michele might be honest and well-meaning??? Ms. Burch, don't let some peoples attitudes put you off. Most people here are good, honest, and friendly people. Unfortunately previous openness has been abused and a lot of "once bitten twice shy" happens now when people come asking questions.

More from Nina (June 10, 2004):

Though I do not trust her, I am however willing to handle her as one does a possible venomous snake; with care and consideration

for her possible fangs! However, I'm not fundamentally against snakes, and I think some of them make very good pets! Not EVERY college student is a hopeless Jew-tool! Yes, Michele may have studied in the stupidest and most propagandistic fields – but that does NOT mean she is therefore unrecoverable! I was a massively indoctrinated feminist, raised on Long Island, NY: so I was Jewish in all but race and religion!! And, yes, I'm a college grad – degreed in psychology, even! But, I have become completely awake!

From Forum Member #13, a female, located in Georgia (June 12, 2004):

I understand her frustration. Come on people, there were a lot of nasty things that were directed at her. I understand her (probably unintentional) supercilious attitude toward us – most 50 year old women can't IMAGINE why people wouldn't LIKE her and want to help her. I feel that way myself (albeit, I'm not QUITE yet 50!) and am surprised when people don't want to listen to me and take me seriously when I point out how the Jews are ruining the country!

Yet another posting from Nina (June 12, 2004):

I have been keeping up with the remarks on this forum about Michele's request for an interview, and I'm not sure that I understand your objection to Michele's request. Do you think she's using us as guinea pigs by interviewing those of us who are

willing to talk to her, and thus you object? Or is it just that you have no interest in helping her – and then where does the journalist view/media come in? She is doing this for her dissertation. I admit to a curiosity of my own about the other women in the movement – how did they come to be here, what moved them to awaken, how they have awakened others, and so on.

It was encouraging after so many negative comments to find not just women, but several men who were at least open to the idea of this study. Again the issue of trust surfaced, however the comments that these women made regarding my request for an interview let me know that while they may have variety of reasons for considering participating in this study, some of which were certainly political, others I believe were simply based on the fact that they identified with me as a white woman. I recognized that there are great advantages in having this common bond of race and gender, and this later became even more important as the women who I interviewed tried to help me understand their beliefs and their mission of white supremacy.

Rationale

The respondents that I interviewed for this study most likely had a variety of reasons for participating. I found that many of the respondents wanted me to know the course of action that they were taking to help further their cause of white supremacy, and it seemed important that the outside world be given what they portrayed as accurate information which would hopefully challenge media reports that depict racial activities as ignorant or violent. I also found that there were some respondents who saw the interview as a potential opportunity to recruit new members. A remark from Forum Member #14, a male, location unknown reflects this (June 2, 2004):

Regarding this student type, in my experience PhD's rarely go into hardback, so while it's unlikely to corrupt it is likely that she might just be able to influence a great number of people. She may even manage to win people over to our side! The worst that you could do is correct a few misconceptions, so why not give the old trout a sit down? It may just work out.

From Forum Member #15, a male, located in Pennsylvania (June 3, 2004):

There's probably no harm in talking to this woman. At the worst, she'll write something negative and it will be filed away with the thousands of other unpublished dissertations and theses that liberal arts programs churn out each year. At best, you may be able to convince her of the rightness of our thinking, or at least defy the stereotypes that often define us. Remember that professor in Vermont who wrote a book about Dr. Pierce – he ended up sympathetic to our cause and become involved in the National Alliance.

Again, from Nina (June 14, 2004):

I view Michele as a potential recruit – if she is REALLY and ACTUALLY interested in understanding why we are white supremacists and if she actually DOES read David Duke's book (as I recommended to her) – how can she NOT change who she is? She sounds like she has partly awakened already: anyone with contacts with blacks starts awakening. And she's in Georgia, not

far from the “black capital of America” – so she will have her own experiences to try to balance with her inculcated “beliefs” – that was one of the main things that started ME awakening was exposure to blacks! We here talk a LOT about trying to awaken the sheep- how is Michele not one of those? At least SHE, more than most, is willing to actually brush up against some of us – the vast majority would flinch in horror at the mere THOUGHT of talking to a group of Klanfolk! She may not have understood a lot, or learned a lot – but she sure as hell learned a LOT more than most of the folks living on your block who run screaming from mere BROCHURES from the National Alliance, eh?

From Forum Member #16, gender unknown, located in Virginia (June 16, 2004):

Michele, I have a few questions for you. If you don't want to answer them, that is fine. I would appreciate a reply though. First, are you white? If you are not, then could you please tell us about your heritage? If you are white, why is it that you are not a member of our movement? Do you care about the future of white people? Do you have children? Grandchildren? If you do, what have you done to make sure that they have a future? Have you raised them to be proud of their heritage and proud of their race? Would you ever consider joining a White Nationalist group or the Ku Klux Klan? If not, why not? Do you believe in integration or

separation? These are just a few questions, I am sure that I will think of some more. Thank you for your time.

The following is an excerpt from my journal. This was written at the end of the Labor Day weekend spent at a Klan congress in Arkansas. I had met lots of members in this chapter of the KKK, both women and men, and over the course of the weekend managed to conduct six interviews. I left the site loaded down with a legal pad full of notes, tape recorded interviews, numerous phone numbers, and one Klan Barbie doll.

Sunday, AM – Arkansas (Sept. 3, 1995)

It is after midnight and I had just returned to my room. I was packing, more than ready to return to Athens and away from this surreal environment that I had been in for three days. The phone rang and it was Peter, the Regional Coordinator of the KKK in Florida. He asked me if I would like to come downstairs and have a drink with a group who were in the lounge. I agreed, grabbed my notebook, and went to the lounge thinking that I would perhaps be able to conduct a few more interviews. I could not have been more wrong. When I got there the first thing that I noticed was that out of the twelve people seated at a large table, there was not a woman among them. I sat down, ordered a drink and began to feel very uncomfortable – a different kind of uncomfortable than I had felt all weekend. I quickly learned why I had been asked to join this group. A few of the men who were sitting closest to me began to ask me a lot of questions and it was almost what I imagine a

debriefing session would be like. They wanted to know things such as what I thought about the events of the weekend, and what I thought about their organization. I wasn't ready for this, but I think I answered them as honestly as I could, while still protecting my research and future access to this organization. I told them it was one of the most fascinating weekends I had ever spent and that the experience had been amazing. I said that it had been a great opportunity to meet so many interesting people and I really appreciated all the hospitality I had been shown. The next thing I knew I was asked if I would ever be interested in joining! Tactfully I declined and (probably after closing my mouth which I am sure was hanging open) said that I was glad I had met so many people that were willing to talk to me. I finished my drink (quickly) and said goodnight.

In spite of the fact, or perhaps because of the fact, that I identified myself as a student who had studied Sociology and Women's Studies, and as a teacher in the public school system, two ready signs of a confirmed liberal from a white supremacist's point of view, I was seen as a potential recruit. At the very least it seemed that some of the respondents to my request thought that an interview could generate publicity either for the organization they are members of, or for themselves as they attempted to educate me about the activities of white supremacist organizations.

Summary

As a qualitative researcher it is understood that this is the type of research that is about the lives of specific people, including their stories and behavior. By bringing forward my encounters of resistance, reception, and rationale for participation in this study, I believe that I have offered information that will lead to a more in-depth analysis and interpretation of the women who participate in white supremacist organizations.

CHAPTER 5

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Twelve women were purposefully selected to be interviewed for this study. The interviews were in-depth and were conducted in person, by phone, and electronically using the internet. At the onset of each interview, each participant was given a Biography Outline (see Appendix C). However, due to the topic and nature of this study, much of the demographic information that was requested was not revealed by the participants, therefore the participant profiles are not balanced in terms of the details that are provided. To maintain anonymity, each participant was assigned a pseudonym.

Participants Affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan

Of the twelve women who were interviewed for this study, nine were affiliated with various chapters or units of the Ku Klux Klan.

Patricia

Patricia is a thirty-five year old National Membership Coordinator and spokeswoman for her chapter of the Klan which is located in Arkansas. She oversees daily operations at the national office, is the assistant editor of her organization's monthly newspaper, co-host of a weekly internet news program, and senior coordinator for their web site. She is married to a Klansman whom she recruited, has three children whom she and her husband home school. She is employed as a Para-legal.

She has been with the Klan for over twenty years, speaking out in defense of White Christian America. At the age of twelve, she began calling members of Congress, urging them to vote against the Equal Rights Amendment, believing that the ERA promoted lesbianism, no-

fault divorce, and what she believed to be most dangerous of all, military draft for women. As a young girl she was “knighted” by David Duke, who was then the National Director of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. She worked for an Arkansas chapter of the Ku Klux Klan on a volunteer basis, attending rallies, marches, meetings, and demonstrations across the country. At twenty-four, after serving as operating manager of the national office, she was nominated for a position on the governing board (grand council). After the election in 1993, she became the highest ranking Klanswoman in America and fifth highest ranking Klan officer. Today, Patricia is the second ranking Klan officer in the nation.

In an interview with Patricia she had this to say about the general leadership styles and practices in her organization:

We are the only white rights organization in America that follows what I call the leadership principle. For example, if you want to become a Klan leader, and that is your number one goal then you can do it very quickly by joining another Klan group, but not ours. People that don't like us laugh at how easy it is to get a title or an official position within the white racist movement. One Klansman resigned recently because he wants to use traditional Klan titles instead of modern Klan titles. I have been thinking about this and found myself asking if this was a good reason to resign? Personally, I think the answer to this was found out when his web site appeared on the internet the very next day and all of a sudden he had the title of Grand Dragon. Now I thought, hey, did his qualifications for a position of leadership suddenly get better or

improve overnight? No, but this new group sure was quick to gave away what I thought of was an undeserved title! You know, I think that titles should be earned not given away. A title that has not been earned is worth nothing – except it can be displayed on a letterhead or business card. In my organization, we believe that someone who has gone through our ranking system is better qualified to be a state director or regional director than any other Klan group in America! However, we are looking for people who are in this for the long haul – for the long term. When I think of what makes a good leader I think of loyalty. I mean, if you can't even stay with an organization for at least over five years and keep up with your dues, then how the heck can you to be some kind of high ranking leader?

I was curious about the different leadership positions in her organization and how they were ranked. I asked Patricia about this and she spent a great deal of time outlining for me the different levels that members could attain. She refers to this as the Party Structure:

The highest ranking leader is the National Director. There is a board of directors who govern the chapter, and the National Director serves as both chief executive director and President of the board. A Page is the first rank that a Klansman or Klanswoman can earn; a Squire is the second rank, and a Knight is the highest. She used the term earn repeatedly and when I asked her about this she said that earning the position of Page or Squire

came about through study and participation in various group activities. However, earning the position of Knight, which is the next step above Squire, required not only study and group participation, but also taking a written test. Once a Klansperson has earned the title of Knight, then he or she can apply to be a Unit Recruiter. A high school diploma or G.E.D. is required.

I asked Patricia to define what she meant by Unit and she explained that for her chapter of the Klan, the Unit usually consists of four to fifteen members, all of whom must hold the rank of Page. The officers of the Unit include the Unit Coordinator, who must hold the position of Knight. The Unit Coordinator is the same person as the Unit Recruiter, and this is the person who selects the individuals for the following offices: Assistant Unit Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer, the Ombudsman (provides counsel to members of the unit) and the Expediter (the keeper of the flags and banners; insures their correct display at meetings). I was amazed at the intricacy of the structure of this organization. Titles were clearly a very important part of membership- dictating and distinguishing each person's rank, duties, and ultimately her or his power.

Communications and interviews with Patricia took place in person, by phone, and electronically using the internet. Patricia was always very willing to talk to me and was candid in sharing her beliefs and experiences.

Caroline

Caroline is twenty-two years old and has been involved in various white supremacist organizations since she was fifteen, coming from a family who had many active members in various chapters of the Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina, including her father and two of her

grandparents. The first racist group she was affiliated with, though she didn't officially have a title, she was second in charge (her boyfriend was first in charge). At eighteen she joined the National Alliance and was a member for three years until she and her boyfriend decided to break off and form a more localized chapter in North Carolina which she referred to as a Proto-Unit. This Proto-Unit had a membership of eight to ten members, and she was Co-Chairperson (her boyfriend held the position of Chairperson). Caroline told me that during her time as Co-Chairperson of this particular Proto-Unit there was a change of leadership in what she referred to as the Main Organization, and basically everything fell apart.

Caroline is a White Revolution member, and the most recent group she was affiliated with is a chapter of the Ku Klux Klan, located in North Carolina. She stated that she would prefer not to name the organization, but did report that there were three main positions Grand Dragon (head leader), her position, Grand Klokard (assistant to the head leader, secretary, treasurer, and spokesperson), and Klokards (general members). She told me that she is currently working as a corrections officer at a state prison.

Communications and interviews with Caroline took place by phone and electronically using the internet. She was initially very hesitant about participating in this study, but the more we talked the more comfortable she became and her discussions with me became less guarded.

Isabelle

Isabelle is forty-three years old. She and her husband have been members of a chapter of the Ku Klux Klan, located in Georgia, for about 8 years. I initially met her at a rally that was held in Cumming Georgia in 1995. The city had roped off an area in front of the courthouse for the gathering, and the speeches were held at the Forsyth County Courthouse. Flyers that were distributed announcing the rally proclaimed that the rally was being held to stop the illegal alien

invasion. In bold print was the following statement, “Now is the time for real White people to show that they are against the colored and the alien invasion of White America by attending this important rally”. The rally lasted for about two hours before there was a huge disturbance created by a Mariachi band that paraded by along with a group who were passing out red roses. This had all been orchestrated by the producer, Michael Moore for his television show, TV Nation. The police immediately stopped the Mariachi band (they did not have a permit to march) and the speeches came to a halt. I was able to get beyond the roped off section at this point and met several people who gave me their phone numbers for future contact. Isabelle was the only Klanswoman that I was able to speak with in this organization, and though other women were present, they were silent and sitting on the sidelines.

Communications and interviews with Isabelle took place in person and by phone. Throughout our discussion she remained guarded, telling me that she was speaking to me against her husband’s wishes.

Harriet

Harriet is a thirty-five year old member of a Klan unit that is located in Pennsylvania. She was not willing to share any personal demographic information with me. Though she does not hold a titled position in her unit, she believes that, as a woman, her participation is critical to the contemporary white supremacist movement’s efforts to bring their truth to the political forefront. She told me that she believes that women are leaders from the start - women birth the children and it is women who are ultimately responsible for procreating the white race.

Communications and interviews with Harriet took place electronically via the internet.

Polly

Polly is a fifty-six year old woman who is the Regional Coordinator of one of the Klan organizations in Tennessee. When I called Polly several months ago she seemed quite pleased that I remembered her and that I had kept her phone number for so long. As we started our conversation, catching up on different people that I had met that weekend, she told me that nothing much had changed for many of the folks, although her brother had passed away about three years ago. In fact, she was still employed at the same grocery store as a checker.

Polly, along with her brother Paul, had a small business that they operated on the side to help promote their message of white supremacy. When they attended rallies they would set up a table filled with Klan paraphernalia. They sold badges, pens, books, banners, leather key chains, leather belts, t-shirts, and hats, all with various Klan insignias on them. They even sold Klan Barbie dolls. She told me that she still sets up tables at rallies, but that Paul was really the artist behind all the leather goods, and with him gone now she mainly sells assorted literature on the Klan, and the Klan Barbie dolls.

I asked her to tell me how she originally became involved in the Klan and how she became the Regional Coordinator? Polly became quite animated as she began to tell me about her first encounter with the Klan. She told me that she had attended a rally in Pulaski, Tennessee just out of curiosity, but “it was Patricia that impressed me the most”. She continued:

As I stood there listening to Patricia speak I was overwhelmed with surprise. This was not an organization that preached hate, they preached about love of the white race- which is something that I hold dear to my heart. For far too long this country has had to bend over backwards to accommodate the blacks, and quite

frankly I am sick of it. I mean, for example, you should see what I see every day at the grocery store. All the blacks that come into the store that are on food stamps...and what they buy is unbelievable. I don't think our country owes blacks who refuse to work this kind of governmental support. I remember hearing Patricia make all these speeches about how it is our government that needs to change or else we whites are going to become a minority with less rights than blacks...and I guess I agree with her on this. After that rally I decided to speak to Mr. Thomas and see if there was a branch of their organization in my area so I could participate and go to meetings. Well, I did talk to Mr. Thomas and he told me that there was not a unit in my area. He suggested that I might want to think about starting a unit myself. Now, I can't really go into details about how I became naturalized into the Klan, but at that time I was also named Unit Coordinator for the group I was going to form in Mississippi.

Communications and interviews with Polly took place in person and by phone. She was candid in sharing her experiences with me and contacting her was never problematic.

Brenda

Brenda is a forty-seven year old woman who is a member of a chapter of the Ku Klux Klan in Texas. While she does not hold a titled position in her chapter, she describes herself as one of the more active members. She is responsible for recruiting new members and has organized marches. She is a housewife and has three children. Both her great-grandparent and

her grand parents were members of the Klan. However, she told me that her own personal motivations for joining the Klan were not because she had Klan members in her family, but because of her children and the concern for her family. Communications and interviews with Brenda took place in person and by phone.

Cathy

Cathy is a fifty-two year old woman who belongs to a Ku Klux Klan organization in Florida. She, along with her husband, used to produce a syndicated television show in Florida that aired once a week. She seemed to welcome the opportunity to be interviewed but stated that she would prefer not to discuss any personal information about herself or her family. She told me:

My husband and I joined the Klan because of the efforts we saw them making towards changing some of our government's policies. For instance, consider the tax system in our country. It is bad. Something else – we are always getting blamed for slavery. Well of course it was wrong. My unit of the Klan believes this. We are equal but we all have different abilities. Now why would we want to wipe out an entire race because of this? It is just a matter of realizing that there are differences between all races. People need to know what our founding fathers wanted for this country, what they considered the American way. We need a standard for our children; they are our future.

Communications and interviews with Cathy took place on the phone and electronically via the internet.

Rebecca

Rebecca is a twenty-nine year old woman who is a member of a chapter of the Ku Klux Klan located in Arkansas. She is the secretary and treasurer of her organization and spends much of her time organizing and planning various Klan events. She was very proud to tell me that she was a college graduate and she currently works as a real estate agent. Communications and interviews with Rebecca took place in person and by phone.

Renee

Renee is a sixty-two year old woman who holds the position of Assistant Unit Coordinator in her Klan organization, located in Arkansas. She told me that she feels that she has been involved in the Klan all of her life. She is very active in her church, serving on the Board of Directors, and as editor of the church's monthly publication. She stays busy petitioning the government over educational policies, and stated that she has no problem going to court if necessary in order to implement changes. Communications and interviews with Renee took place in person and by phone.

Participants Affiliated with the National Alliance

Of the twelve women who were interviewed for this study, three were affiliated with various Proto-Units of the National Alliance.

Nina

Nina describes herself as a very active member of a Proto-Unit of the National Alliance. She is forty years old, and lives with her husband in Georgia. Nina and her husband own and operate a small business in their community. She has a college degree, majoring in Psychology. She was extremely protective of her identity, stating:

I'm not ready to come out from behind that curtain, but I am interested in helping you (Please don't feel snubbed by that refusal: it is VERY dangerous to trust unknown people). It is a common attack from some Jews to ingratiate themselves and then expose and destroy the trusting. As I told you, we are supported solely by my husband's small business. We cannot afford to have the Jews harassing our customers and suppliers. And, if you think, astonished, "Oh, they don't do that", then you are naïve and you need to read David Duke's book!!! However, please fill me in a bit more about what all you are intending to investigate and what kinds of information you are looking for and I might consider...but only through e-mail – and I don't accept attachments.

Communications and interviews with Nina took place electronically via the internet.

Susan

Susan is a thirty-eight year old woman who holds a titled position in her unit of the National Alliance. She is the leader of a Proto-Unit of the NA in a state out West and the only female that the NA has in this position at the moment, however she does not see herself as active as other women in the movement. Before Susan could agree to participate in this study she told me that she had to first get from the Chairman of the National Alliance.

Susan lives in a housing project and is surrounded by many different ethnicities. However, she told me that she only talks to white people, and never allows her twelve year old twins to play with blacks. She has just given birth to a daughter. Communications and interviews with Susan took place electronically via the internet.

Mary

Mary is a thirty-four year old woman who is a member of a Proto-Unit of the National Alliance that is located in Michigan. Initially Mary was not willing to be interviewed at all, telling me, “I’m probably not the sort of woman you want to talk to, but I will really go over your message when I get a chance later. I think I’ll go milk some chickens and feed the goats for a spell”. I continued to e-mail her and she continued to respond, offering more details about her activities in the National Alliance. She finally agreed to the interview. However, she was not willing to offer any demographic information. Communications and interviews with Mary took place electronically via the internet.

Table 1

Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Marital Status	Organization	Location
Patricia	35	Married	Ku Klux Klan	Arkansas
Caroline	22	Single	Ku Klux Klan	N.C.
Isabelle	43	Married	Ku Klux Klan	Georgia
Harriet	35	Married	Ku Klux Klan	Pa.
Polly	56	Divorced	Ku Klux Klan	Tennessee
Brenda	47	Married	Ku Klux Klan	Texas
Cathy	52	Married	Ku Klux Klan	Florida
Rebecca	29	Married	Ku Klux Klan	Arkansas
Renee	62	Married	Ku Klux Klan	Arkansas
Nina	40	Married	National Alliance	Georgia
Susan	38	Married	National Alliance	The West
Mary	34	Married	National Alliance	Michigan

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

Gender and sexuality have been used by the Ku Klux Klan since its formation as influential symbols to promote white supremacy. This is still true today, however the key difference in the current white supremacist movement is that women are allowed to join and become members of these organizations. Because they are no longer merely an auxiliary group their visibility has increased as they actively work to promote white supremacy.

This study is primarily designed to address the fact that as more and more women become members of white supremacist organizations, they have also moved into leadership positions. The purpose of this study is to examine the leadership roles of women in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan.

The research questions guiding this study are as follows: 1) What are the common leadership practices of women who participate in white supremacist organizations? 2) How do the women who participate in white supremacist organizations use their position as leaders to promote social change? 3) How does the phenomenon of white supremacy and patriarchy affect women's leadership roles?

This chapter is comprised of the findings that emerged from this study. The findings are organized and presented in three sections and are organized around my specific research questions. I begin by discussing the common leadership practices of women who participate in contemporary white supremacist organizations. The emergent categories, Social Homemakers, Organizers and Event Planners, and Recruiting, are discussed and presented in this section.

Next, I introduce the data that explains how women who participate in white supremacist organizations use their position as leaders to promote social reform. The two categories, Community Reform and Educational Reform, that emerged from the data are presented and discussed. In the last section I present the data that emerged detailing how the phenomenon of white supremacy and male patriarchy affect women's leadership roles. As stated in the methodology section, Chapter Three, my field notes are included and treated as part of my data collection and analysis, offering a written account of what I saw and experienced as I moved forward through this study. I believe that these journal entries offer an insight that is useful and applicable to the analysis of the findings that emerged from this study.

Table 2

Data Display

Categories	Subcategories/Properties
I. Leadership Practices	a. Social Homemakers b. Organizers and Event Planners c. Recruiting
II. Promoting Social Change	a. Community Reform b. Educational Reform
III. The Affect of Patriarchy	

Leadership Practices

My first research question, “What are the common leadership practices of women who participate in white supremacist organizations?” is an attempt to try to begin to understand the phenomenon of women who not only join contemporary hate groups, but who take on leadership positions in an effort to solidify the white supremacist movement in our country today. By examining and focusing on women’s leadership roles in white supremacist organizations I have discovered how these women have been able to develop a self-identity, working at the grass-roots level, contributing to the cause of white supremacy. None of these women are working alone; it is through their sisterhood and through their networking that they are able to commit to and achieve goals that are compelling to them.

The three practices of leadership that emerged from the data, Social Homemakers, Organizers and Event Planners, and Recruiting, clearly detail the ways in which these women who participate in white supremacist organizations hope to be able to protect their family against what they see as a decay of American society.

Women as Social Homemakers

Women who are defined as social homemakers are women who involve themselves in a series of clubs, organizations, and activist groups while maintaining their traditional domestic values. Many of these organizations and clubs are made up of members who are related both by blood and by marriage (Amott & Matthaei, 1991). In fact, what has become clear to me through this study is that family is the basis not only for membership, but the impetus of a white supremacy devoted to securing traditional family values.

There is a Ku Klux Klan organization whose headquarters are located in Arkansas. They claim to be one of the first (if not the first) Klan organization that opened its doors to women for

general membership. They took the lead in this area because they claim to have realized that women are an important part of their racial struggle. As do some white supremacist groups, this Klan does not wish to separate themselves from women. They want instead to share their experiences, visions, thoughts, wisdom, and energy (Burch, 1997). In a former study, my findings were that what they say in writing they apply in practice, but the ways in which women are integrated into the organization are still confined to traditional female role expectations.

Three of the women that I interviewed from this particular Klan organization, Rebecca, Renee, and Patricia, had the opportunity for leadership. They could make speeches if they wished, but they were also responsible for routine housekeeping chores as well. When I asked Patricia about her views on women as social homemakers and home protectors she stated:

Some women may resent being reminded about their abilities as far as being a mother is concerned. The feminist movement really has made women feel ashamed of being a mother. We can't escape the course that nature has set out for us – motherhood. I am not saying that this is our only talent though. Some women either don't have or can't have children – but most women do, and this maternal instinct is strong. There is a need for women to protect their families and to work hard for our children's future. I don't think that we should listen to all those feminist myths. The media has portrayed the majority of women as being pro-abortion, pro-homosexuality, pro-euthanasia, pro-globalism, and pro-immigration. I am telling you that this is not true – not for the women in my organization. We are pro-family. Our mothers,

great grandmothers, and their mothers before them helped to build this country we live in. The founding fathers, under their mothers watch, were raised to be obedient to God, to fight for liberty. Women have a strength that should be recognized and used. Something else you should think about. It is the family that is the cornerstone of American life. So, it only makes sense to secure the support of the mothers in these families.

Cathy, who belongs to a Ku Klux Klan organization in Florida, described for me how she thinks women view the Klan as an organization that helps to reinforce their traditional family values:

The role of women in the white supremacist movement may be difficult to present in a paper, simply because the role itself cannot be defined specifically. It is as diverse as white supremacist women themselves. I think that most of these women focus on the support of their families. The unnumbered masses of white supremacist women consider their role to be raising and educating white children. I think that women join for the same reasons men do – out of love for their racial family. They believe that the leaders of our country have betrayed us, and the Klan offers a political alternative to the problems America faces today. What I am saying is that the Klan offers women a sense of community and child rearing support – this is what we are looking for.

All of the twelve women interviewed depicted their activities as a logical result of their desire to improve the lives of their families and neighbors. Out of the twelve participants in this study, excerpts from interviews with Polly, Brenda, Harriet, and Mary offer the most poignant description of their activities as social homemakers. In an interview with Polly she told me that after she joined the Klan, she found that the most efficient way to promote her ideal of white power was through eliciting the help of her family. She stated:

Well, I was divorced before I became involved in the Klan. As far as my family goes, two of my sons belong to my unit. The oldest is a full-pledged Knight, and my son who is sixteen is a youth leader. This is a family organization – not just for the men. The kids that have been brought up in the Klan will have the benefit of learning about what we stand for at an early age.

In an interview with Brenda, when I asked her to clarify what she saw as the ties between family and the Klan, she discussed the values and societal roles that she believes are endorsed by the Klan:

Family is the most important value that is promoted by my chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. In fact, it was mainly because of our son that my husband and I made the decision to join this particular organization. We wanted to be able to try to assure a future for him that would not be such a struggle against what I see as discriminatory policies – all policies that are geared to promote other ethnicities and to bring down white people.

Harriet, a woman who is member of the Klan in Pennsylvania, had this to say about women as home protectors, and her personal reasons as a mother for embracing the white supremacist philosophies:

Women are leaders from the start. What I am saying is that it is the women who birth the children. If the women are strong, and we are, in the organization, people will see this. They show their strength in their leadership skills, and they show their strength in how they run their home. We are trying to move to the political forefront and it is the women who are going to help us achieve this. Now, don't get me wrong, it is a team effort, but it is the women, the mothers, who are going to make sure that our children, our homes, and our families are protected.

Mary, who is a member of a unit of the National Alliance, stated:

I never wanted to be a stay at home mom because I was raised to think it was beneath me. Turns out that was a bunch of bull. There is nothing more exciting and fulfilling than teaching your children about the wonders of the world. Once your child's mind begins to blossom and the questions start coming you can share what you know with them and they ask you so many questions you can't help learning more yourself. I see it as my mission in life, my mission as a mother, to teach my children at an early age the importance of valuing themselves as white people. I don't teach hatred of other races, but a true respect and love of the white race.

My mom gave me a little plate for the wall when my first boy was born over thirteen years ago. It said, “The hand that rocks the cradle, rocks the world”. If we don’t dump our children into daycare for others to raise you truly can change the world, one child at a time. I am proud to be raising children who understand the importance of the white supremacist movement. You can also influence friends of your children. I love being a mom.

Polly, who always included her children when she attended Klan events, stated that she thinks of the Klan meetings and rallies that she attends as similar to a family gathering. She told me that her mother, Penelope, who is a seamstress by trade, and has put her talents to work sewing the flags, and the hoods and robes, “made out of the best bridal material that money can buy”. Polly told me that she really thinks that her mother only attends the rallies for the fellowship because she has told her many times how glad she is to be able to do something to help her children and their friends.

Women as Organizers and Event Planners

Throughout the interviews that were conducted for this study what became very clear was that each of the twelve women felt that one of the most important functions that they could do to contribute to the cause of white supremacy was to offer their skills as organizers and event planners.

During an earlier study, in 1995, I attended the National Congress of a chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. This is an annual event that is held over every Labor Day weekend. The meeting site is owned and operated by a local church. Klanswomen and Klansmen from around the nation gather each year in the Ozark Mountains in Arkansas for three days of workshops,

speeches, entertainment, and fellowship. Though it has been nine years since I attended, from all recent accounts the line up remains the same. The following is an excerpt from my field notes:

Labor Day Weekend, 1995

On Friday the gates opened at twelve noon, offering those in attendance plenty of room to camp. Some took advantage of this, while others chose to stay at motels in the nearest town which is about fifteen miles away. Friday evening is a time for reuniting and the camp kitchen is in full swing with women who are very busy cooking meals for travelers who are arriving by the dozens. Saturday morning began with breakfast and then there was the opening ceremony where the American flag was raised, this year in tribute to Klansmen who are away on military duty. The day is filled with training sessions, an auction, and speeches. Saturday evening began with an old fashioned Ozark BBQ and ended with new members who were naturalized. Sunday morning at the Labor Day rally was much the same as the day before, as was the afternoon. The tenor of the weekend long meeting seemed more like a political rally where attention is given to government policies rather than a traditional Klan convocation filled with hatred, and the setting was reminiscent of a bible or church camp.

The year I attended, 1995, there was a tour that was going on, showing off the Klan's new national headquarters. The following is another excerpt from my field notes:

Labor Day Weekend, 1995

Before I went on the tour I wandered over to a tent where the speeches were just beginning. The “big top” was packed and I found myself hovering at one end that was completely open. Here I could see and hear who was speaking without getting into the thick of the crowd. After a little while I decided to sit down on the grass. A few minutes later I heard someone whispering and calling to me. I glanced around to find a man motioning me to come over to him. I was frightened but feeling as if I had no choice I walked over to him. When I got to him he whispered in my ear that he hoped that I had sprayed myself down with something to protect me from the chiggers because if I hadn’t my “ass was going to be hurtin later on”! I am sure that my mouth flew wide open, and then with a big laugh he introduced himself to me. His name was Paul, a member of the Klan in Mississippi. This crazy encounter proved to be invaluable, and he was most helpful in introducing me around to who he fondly referred to as the “boys in the hood” and several of the women who were members of the Klan.

Some of the contacts that were made over Labor Day weekend in 1995 are women who are still active members of the KKK and are women who were willing to be interviewed for this study almost ten years later.

Renee, Patricia, and Rebecca are three of the women I met in Arkansas and are still the main women who are responsible for hosting the Labor Day gatherings. Though these women

hold offices of title in the KKK, rather than give speeches, they prepare the food, and are responsible for insuring that all details for the Saturday night banquet are in place. They have to make sure that tables and chairs are in place and that the red, white, and blue balloons are blown up and ready for release (the weekend I attended this happened after the ribbon cutting celebrating the opening of their new national headquarters). Renee stated that she thought they (Renee, Rebecca, and Patricia) had the most important job of all, which was to keep the men on task, making sure that the three crosses are properly wrapped in preparation for the lighting ceremony that takes place later in the evening. In addition to all of this, Rebecca hosts a tour through their headquarters while the men handle the business of naturalizing new members.

I asked Rebecca if she would explain what she meant by “naturalizing new members” and she told me she couldn’t really give me any details other than just generally explaining what naturalizing meant. She stated, “Naturalizing is a secret ritual, and a form of initiation that a new member must go through in order to join the Klan”. I got a much more detailed and horrific explanation of the naturalization process from Isabelle, a member of the Ku Klux Klan in Georgia:

I knew of a girl that took four years before she got up the nerve and the courage to go through the ceremony. Now, I call it, Naturalization, a ceremony because that is what it is. It is a big deal, really the biggest that can happen to you. I mean, it is like being baptized, or being born again. Yes, that girl was frightened, she was scared to death! Think about it, wouldn’t you be frightened if you had been blindfolded and taken for a long ride out into the country? Then when you got where they were taking you,

you walked into a room full of men with a branding iron waiting for you? Something else too, once you join the Klan the only way out is by death.

In an interview with Caroline, as she discussed her role as a leader in her organization, she told me that she thought the most important thing she did was to organize Klan meetings and to arrange for speakers at the meetings:

I try to make arrangements for my group to meet at least once a month. I think this is really important so we all know what is going on and we can share ideas and information. When we have new members join I am usually the one who is in charge of the meeting. I am always the one who gives the talks or speeches I guess you could call them. I have an extensive knowledge of Klan Kraft and I try to pass some of this on to new members.

I had never heard of the term Klan Kraft before so I asked her what it was. She defined Klan Kraft as her knowledge of Ku Klux Klan traditions, including the process of naturalizing new members. Caroline also told me she thought because she had such extensive knowledge about Klan Kraft there was a great deal of jealousy directed towards her, from both women and men. As we talked I asked her why, if there was such resentment directed towards her, she continued to belong to this chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. This is what she had to say:

You have to remember that I was really the one who started this chapter...well, me and my boyfriend. I know that people don't like me too much but I don't really care. I don't let this stop me from doing what I want to. I think that because of me we are more

community and family based, and I try to work with young people as often as I can. I like to work with women too, even though there aren't very many in our chapter. I know that I could do stuff like belong to some of the groups that you see on the internet, but they have lots of problems too. You might think that women are appreciated in these groups, that women are really doing something, that they are active in the movement...but think about it...it is too damn easy for people to use the internet and think they are big leaders in the movement. I think you have to get out there and be seen.

In the Ku Klux Klan unit that is located in Arkansas there are many tasks that are divided between the women and the men. Rebecca told me that the tasks that are delegated to the women are what most people would call traditional women's work; however, she stated that she did not feel that she was being excluded from the main business of her organization. In fact, Rebecca, Renee, and Patricia told me that by carrying out what they thought of as traditional female responsibilities, such as hosting a gathering, they claimed they felt fulfilled and were quite satisfied with the contributions they were making. The following is an excerpt from my journal that I wrote after attending the Saturday night banquet. The day had been filled with numerous conversations and interviews with women who were members of this Klan organization, many of which took place in the camp kitchen and the women prepared meals.

Saturday, PM – Arkansas (Sept. 2, 1995)

The afternoon was growing late and I decided to return to town to rest a little and to prepare for the evening's festivities. At this

point I was getting more than a little apprehensive at just the thought of actually being there when the crosses were lit. When I arrived back at the site, the banquet was just about ready to begin. The tables were set, and on each table was a plastic flower arrangement done in red, white, and blue. As a matter of fact everything that could be decorated was done in red, white, and blue. It all looked very patriotic. After the banquet, after the ribbon was cut, and after the helium filled balloons were released, the tour of the new headquarters began (this was a building that seemed to be nothing more than a large storage shed). Rebecca led the tour detailing what the function of each room was for (we were even shown the bathroom). While the tour was going on, some of the male leaders took new members away to be naturalized. There was quite a wait for this process to be completed, and by this time it was about 10:00 p.m. The Klan had changed their clothes (which resembled that of EMS workers) into traditional Klan hoods and robes – everyone was getting ready for the cross lighting ceremony.

The triple cross lighting took place in a large field and it was very dark. Everyone was gathered and it was quiet. A large circle was formed by the Klan. Robert, the National Director, came down the hill and walked into the center of the circle. He had a large torch that was lit. He gave a speech that very much sounded like a

sermon, speaking of how the members should work together to preserve America for the white people. He spoke of love of the white race and there need not be any hatred for any others. He said that violence was not the way but that the truth of white supremacy would be found by the illumination of the crosses. He preached that one person alone could only offer but a small light, but that two, and then three, and then many could show the way to truth for America, and for the families that lived in America. After he was finished speaking, he slowly walked to one of the members and lit their torch, and then slowly all the torches were lit, completing the circle. The crosses were lit next, the two shorter ones representing the past and the present, and the tallest one representing the future. About ten minutes of silence followed. As I stood there in the cold darkness of the Ozark Mountains, staring at three burning crosses illuminating the sky, I could only feel a sickness and a deep sorrow for what these crosses represented. This group says love, but I cannot feel or see any love anywhere around me. After a while, after the crosses had burned out, I got in my car, drove back into town, and returned to my room totally overwhelmed at what I had just witnessed.

Caroline talked quite a bit about her own particular leadership practice. She also enjoys organizing and planning social events. She frequently has barbeques and picnics at state parks, and attends rallies in Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. She keeps very busy

updating the applications for membership and creating new flyers. She said that her favorite pastime was throwing these flyers in driveways or putting them up on college campuses in the middle of the night. Isabelle told me that in her particular organization, her job was to help create and print the various flyers that were distributed by wrapping them up with a rock in a plastic bag and throwing them in yards after dark.

In an interview with Renee she stated:

The men need all the support we can give them, especially with the little details, like office work and answering letters. And really, if it wasn't for all of the work that we do, I don't think that our annual rally would even happen. Between Patricia, and Renee, and myself we are really the main ones, well actually the only ones, who make sure that notices are out, that supplies are ordered, that the sound system and tents are in place, and then we keep track of everyone who is coming so we know how many to expect by the time the weekend rolls around.

Renee went on to explain that in the early 1990's she and her husband bought about 40 acres of land near Harrison, Arkansas. Their goal was to build a national office, and to create a Bible-camp type resort for members of their organization. She described to me how their goal has been accomplished:

Our goal at the time, and one that has become a reality was to create a wholesome environment where white men, women, and children can gather to promote the solidarity of the white race. We now have a video-production center where we produce videos that

I believe help to revitalize the ideals of the Klan. I do not think this could have been accomplished without the support of both husbands and wives in our organization. I mean, when you think about it, group solidarity is built around the core of women and their children, so, I think that it can only be concluded that the Klan organizations, our organization, and the ideals that enable white supremacists to survive would not be possible with the action of the women within the community.

In summary, it was my finding that the women I interviewed saw their role as social homemakers as a logical result of their desire to improve the lives of their family and neighbors. These women bring what could be considered a maternalistic approach to activism, an approach that grew out of their idealization of motherhood and womanhood. The women who participated in this study are home protectors who seem to only understand society in racialized terms. Their activities as social homemakers range from organizing events and meetings, to forming chapters of the Ku Klux Klan in their hometowns, all in the name of protecting their family against what they see as a decay of American society.

Women as Recruiters

Three of the women I interviewed, Rebecca, Brenda, and Patricia, felt that one of the most important things they could do to make sure that their families were protected was to help recruit new members. In most white supremacist organizations, the actual work of recruiting members takes on much gendered differences. For example, while men stand on street corners handing out leaflets in an effort to spread the word of white supremacy, women usually choose a different approach, a different tactic. An interview with Rebecca reveals some of the differences:

When I think of how I recruit, I see it totally different from how my husband recruits members. He likes going out and talking to people, and passing out literature. Well, he can get them there to the meeting, but I am the one who can make sure they stay. I spend my time talking to other women at the meetings, to show the family side of our organization. I mean, by the time they come as a couple to the meeting they already know who we are and what we stand for...they know our political views. I talk to them as people. I comfort them and help with any intimidation they may feel. I answer their questions. And another thing, the men seem to be much more short-tempered and ready to chuck the whole discussion and write off a possible recruit. I am much more patient than most men.

In an interview with Brenda, as we were discussing how members were recruited into her organization, she had this to say:

This is the way membership is usually established in our organization. Of course it is more complicated than this, and the process can be quite lengthy, but anyway, this is usually how it goes at first. The husband comes to the first couple of meetings, and then he brings his wife. If she is not agreeable then the men will back out. I've seen this time and time again, and have never seen this reversed. To me, this is how members are recruited...it is totally up to the women.

According to Patricia:

I think that recruiting is a very important thing that women do in our organization. It is a misconception among so many people that women somehow follow their men into the movement. To think this way indicates that women are left out of the decision to join. In fact, I think it is just the opposite, at least from my experience. My husband is very supportive of my position in our organization. I recruited him and think that he is a wonderful husband, father, and Klan member. He respects me and my leadership abilities. I believe that women understand what the issues are and my organization empowers women to seek out and recruit not just women, but men too. We are working together to win the battle.

As we continued the interview I asked Patricia if she thought that women were recruited more often than men. She responded that she didn't think that women were targeted any more than men when it comes to recruiting. However, she did say that her organization was always trying to make sure that women were represented at their meetings and rallies. "We always want to make women feel welcome to join; we are careful to never alienate women".

Recruiting takes on an interesting form when examining how new members are recruited into white supremacist organizations by women. It is a fact that women, in the last ten years, have joined white supremacist organizations in record numbers. This increase in the number of female members has led to women assuming a more active role, which at times includes the job of recruiting new members. For these particular Klanswomen, Rebecca, Brenda, and Patricia,

increasing the membership of white supremacist organizations is all done in the name of protecting their family and what they perceive as the marginalization of the white race.

Summary

Because public records of women who participate in white supremacist organizations is information that is not easily accessible, this makes it difficult to quantify their contributions and accomplishments. In addition to this, because many women who are active in the white supremacist movement speak of their work as team work, often using the pronoun we rather than I, their efforts are even more concealed.

I was able to gain access to twelve women who agreed to be interviewed for this study. It was through an examination and an in-depth analysis of their gendered roles within the white supremacist organizations they belong to that I have been able to show how these women, through their social homemaking and their own personalized style of recruiting, have been able to position themselves in such a way as to accomplish tasks and achieve goals that are important to them and to the white supremacist movement. Their stories portray how they have been able to circulate their desire for change and their message of white supremacy by affiliating themselves with a group that complements their ideals.

Using Leadership to Promote Social Change

The women who were interviewed for this study assert that they use their position as leaders to teach and to educate their families, their neighbors, and the people in their communities about the need to protect the white population. They strive to become the representative and driving force behind the white community and have hopes of affecting government policies in such a way as to ensure that whites do not become a marginalized people. What emerged from the interviews were two important areas that the participants believed they

had the power as leaders to exert an influence to reform society in order to promote the white race: Community Reform and Educational Reform. The women I interviewed believe that it is their job to challenge the political hierarchy that is in place within these two social systems.

Community Reform

Throughout the interviews, women described various problems in their communities, and stated this is what sparked their voluntary activism in the Ku Klux Klan or other white supremacist organizations. I have selected passages from eight of the women who participated in this study. These are women who were most clearly able to articulate the significance and the impact of their activism in the community.

Patricia, who regularly represents her organization at rallies, on television in news interviews, and on internet forums, stated that she believes it is important to use her position as a leader to teach other women in her community an understanding of the goals of the white supremacist movement:

My efforts are directed towards enlightening the people of America with the knowledge that the Ku Klux Klan is not an organization of hatred and violence, but an organization built on the principle to preserve and protect white Christian Americanism. Women have always played a part in the building of nations. They have been instrumental as mothers who are giving birth to and rearing future leaders. God made women with a built in intuitiveness and a sensitivity to the needs of others and has always worked through them. From what I have seen, white Christian women today face a unique problem. They are slammed with

feminist organizations that promote abortion, race mixing, and sometimes even homosexuality. These organizations are often led by women who often have no experience in raising families. Also, some women who have the nerve to speak out sometimes face hostility from men who refuse to acknowledge their right to protect their families from what I call the tyranny of the federal government. My chapter of the KKK believe that that there are an equal number of women who are worried about the white race and the oppression that we are facing. It has been my experience that many women put the men to shame in the amount of work they do and the sacrifices they make, all for the benefit of the white race. We need more strong, intelligent white women who refuse to ignore the corruption that exists today in our government. We need white women to stand up to the government and be the heroines that I believe God intended them to be.

Polly believes that it is her duty as a white supremacist woman to bring her ideals to the public forum. She told me that she attends as many rallies as she can and that she often gives speeches:

My organization has a pride in the white race and our ancestry. We are pro-white, pro-Christianity, and pro-family. I want to stand up against race mixing. I usually talk about illegal immigration, and NAFTA. I also spend a lot of time speaking out about the ills of school busing and affirmative action. I want

political power and my unit of the Klan understands that this is achieved through the ballot box. We understand how quickly things can change in politics. Like, for instance, the Soviet block fell in one night, the wall in Germany fell in one night. Windows of opportunity are there and those of us who are ready to take the lead will have the chance. As a woman who is a leader, I am working to build an organization that will lead our nation. But, we have to have people who trust us- they have to trust our ideas and solutions. Our National Director believes that as the conditions in our country get worse, white people will get tired of what he calls the same shade of gray. He believes that people will begin to look for the extreme and I agree.

Rebecca who gives many speeches at Klan rallies informed me that she usually focuses on trying to teach people about reverse discrimination and affirmative action programs. "People walk in to get a job and immediately are denied because they are white. There is a quota to hire blacks and we are getting the short end of the stick. This has got to stop and the one way I can help is to try to inform as many people as I can". Cathy had this to say when I asked her about community reform, "What I am trying to do is let people know that there are answers for the problems we have in this country and in our communities today. The television program my husband and I produced was a great outlet to get the word out".

We talked more about her involvement in her unit of the Klan and how she thought she was actively promoting change:

I have helped to organize large public rallies, and like I told you, for years I was involved in a television show and though I personally don't have anything to do with the bookkeeping/secretarial end – there are lots of women who do. These are the women who are responsible for writing up and distributing literature; literature that helps to re-educate law enforcement agencies and the educational establishment. These two groups must be given another side of the story, not just getting information from organizations like the ADL, the NAACP and Klanwatch. I believe that my unit, under the direction of Mr. Thomas, has grown to be the largest and most professional white rights organization in America. There are of course those who are in other Klan organizations and are less than honorable. Other Klan groups are very small, and some have poorly educated leaders, and really are an embarrassment to the memory of the original Klan. Through my affiliation with my group, I think that I have been able to get out there and be heard. If I was not with this group I don't think that anyone would pay any attention to me. I think that this group has given me some political power and this has allowed me to try to change policies that are in place that are not so good for the future of the white race. The people in this country, that is the white Christian people, have to understand that they have been betrayed by our nation's political leaders, our

economic leaders, our educational leaders, and our religious leaders. I believe that the Klan represents the last hope for America.

Renee spends much of her time working on petition drives to grant ballot access to Klanswomen or Klansmen who run for local, state, or federal offices such as school board members, congress, or state representatives. She told me that she works hard organizing and trying to get people to the polls. "I try to get people who will vote in our favor or at least can have the opportunity to do so. I also try to recruit new associates and volunteers for our organization who will work towards the election of Klansmen and women to public office". As the interview continued she began to talk about a recent court case that she was involved in regarding an Adopt a Highway sign. She said:

We have had this sign up for a long time, and there have always been problems like protests and such, but we managed to overcome those. Then in May of 2001 when we re-applied to participate in the Adopt a Highway program we were denied on the basis of a new regulation. This is when I got involved and started checking into this new regulation. Basically it states that eligible adopters are those who do not deny membership on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Well, that is us. We do not allow non-whites to become members. I hired an attorney for us and after a lot of legal motions that were filed, a ruling came about. It was decided that the forced inclusion of an unwanted person in a group infringes on the group's freedom of expression if this unwanted

person affects in a significant way the group's ability to advocate public and even private viewpoints. It took awhile for this to all happen, but in September of 2003 we won the right to participate in the program and our sign is back up. I am so proud of this. It was a long battle and it will probably never really be over, but it is for now and I think I played a big part in making this victory happen. This victory shows that your voice can be heard.

Nina believes that as an active member of her unit of the National Alliance it is her main mission to educate anyone she can get to talk to her about the white movement, and to help them understand the need to instill the heritage of white Christian faith in their children. I asked her how she went about doing this and she replied:

Mainly by asking people to consider what they think and why. And providing facts and figures, and asking the person to try to balance what she or he knows with what the facts show; with what the common sense shows. I am trying desperately to save my race and my nation. I start out tickling my friends with the most egregious information – stuff you cannot HELP but find horrifying or infuriating, or just questionable. As I prime the pump, I sometimes get some interest. I try to pitch my information to the person's specific interests. For example, a guy who is a media/control of the air wave's specialist I feed info about the Jewish control of the media and what is presented to the populace. The mother of a young man in the military, I try to get to face the

fact that the military is not serving our country, but Israel. Obviously, first I get her to recognize that the uses the military is being put to does NOT serve America. Once she gets that, I go on to get her to try to figure out who DOES benefit.

I asked Nina to tell me what she felt were some of the important issues her organization is trying to address, trying to change, and how did she see herself involved in helping these changes to come about? She responded:

Most important to me is the Jewish control of this country! Next is the destruction of the country and our race by importation of non-white foreigners. Finally, is the destruction of our country and race by codling and lying about blacks. I think that the only possible chance we have is to awaken enough people to stop the destruction. Do I think that it can be done? No. I think it's LONG past hope or help. The logical question then is, why try? Why continue and risk discovery? WHITE people know about honor and duty. It's innate (and yes, I mean that in a genetic, biological sense!). Sadly, MOST white people have been brainwashed, misled, and mis-educated from childhood into ignoring and squashing their innate preferences for honorable behavior. Please understand that I know how uncomfortable the plain talk about Jews and the destruction of our race and nation is – I was raised in New York, so I was essentially Jewish in all but race and religion. I remember sitting at the dining table with tears streaming down

my face as my husband asked me to consider what I knew and what was the historical/actual truth. He didn't teach me by catechism – he asked me questions and made me research and work out the answers myself. Talk about MASSIVE cognitive dissonance! EVERYTHING I knew about my country, my WORLD was upside down!

Susan saw her influence as a leader as more localized within her neighborhood and then reaching out into the community. She had this to say:

I believe that the real power that women have, whether they are in a leadership position or not is the fact that it is the women who bear the children. They hold the real power. I don't want to teach my children to hate; I just don't want them to think that mixing with other races is ok. As far as being an activist in my community I just don't feel that I can openly share my beliefs. I am afraid of the repercussions. However, when I think about trying to make a difference in my community I think I have to start in my neighborhood. I want to see an end to affirmative action. My whole family has always been very involved in the Klan – I guess you could say that I grew up in the Klan. I do attend Klan rallies, but not ones that are close to home...and when I attend I try to be visible...I mean that I help out, doing whatever anyone asks, but I am too shy to be up there giving speeches but I admire the women that do speak. I listen to everything they say like I am reading a

really good book and then I try to hold onto the feeling and take the message home with me. I talk to my neighbors. I try to tell them that God created every race because he likes variety and diversity. If we race mix then his creation will be destroyed. When I talk to the people in my neighborhood I try to teach them the value of the white culture. I try to teach them the value of motherhood – it is the mothers who can teach their children wisdom and virtue. Mothers are able to shape generation after generation. Today's feminists have portrayed motherhood in a horrible light. The shaping of our children in our community into adults who will protect the white race is not viewed as noteworthy. Most women will at some point in their lives become a mother and I believe that their greatest contribution to the white supremacist movement is the influence they have with the children. Mother by mother, ideas can be taught – from the neighborhood, into the community, and then to the nation.

Brenda discussed her contribution to a march that the Klan held in Vidor, Texas. This was a march that she organized to protest government housing in her neighborhood:

It was the Klan's position that the government was removing white people's names and putting blacks at the top of the housing lists. My husband and I decided to organize a protest against what we saw was an intentional misuse of power resulting in reverse discrimination. I took care of the necessary paperwork. What I

mean is that I obtained the permit we needed to march. I also was responsible for getting flyers printed up, and I contacted other members who live in our area to let them know what we were planning. Well, the march seemed like it was going great and then things got violent. Now, keep in mind that we were legally protesting; we had the permit to be where we were and to be doing what we were doing. Then, all of a sudden, like I said, things got violent. A black man was shot – not by a Klan member, but by a white man who is not a member of our unit. Our march was stopped immediately, and all of our future permits are suspended. The police want the list of all of the members of our unit – which we are just not going to give them. The real trouble here is not us, but another group of white's – they are called the Camilles. They ask for trouble...like not so long ago they drug a black dummy through town by a noose that was around its neck. They are idiots! Well, anyway, we are going to court soon and I feel sure that everything will be cleared up. I am getting a group of women together to help me with all of the paperwork that we will need in court. This is what most of the women in our organization do. I honestly think that things wouldn't run nearly as smoothly as they do if the women weren't involved.

In summary, it was my finding that the women I interviewed see themselves as activists in their organizations, working towards community reform. They shared with me how they were trying to affectively change government policies as they campaigned against political issues such as illegal immigration, school busing, affirmative action, and reverse discrimination, all in the name of protecting the white race. What emerged from the data and became clear is that their activism is based on their being able to maintain traditional gendered roles both within and outside of the home as they call for the protection of traditional family values. Giddings (1984) asked, “If their sphere was the home women said, then who better to engage in urban reform than they” (p. 81)?

The women in this study have organized and worked to strengthen and solidify the political base of the white supremacist movement. These are women who are involved in community reform and from an analysis of the data I believe that their activism is a reflection of their fear of social, cultural, racial and religious changes that threaten white dominance.

Educational Reform

What quickly developed as a pattern with six of the women who participated in this study was their complete and total aversion to the public school system in the United States. During the interviews these women vehemently opposed public schools and expressed strong beliefs in the importance of home schooling; they absolutely did not want to rely on public schools to educate their children, believing that as adults they should use their positions as leaders to right what they believe is wrong in the system of education.

Brenda, who sees herself as an advocate against public schools, had quite a lot to say about what she believes is wrong with the system and what she was doing to try to change it:

I have a great contempt for so-called educators. Teachers in public schools represent a profession with a moral framework that can only be described as criminal and perverse. In my way of thinking, teachers for the most part are so bizarre and internally contradicted that they don't have recognizable criteria for distinguishing right from wrong. They encourage homosexual behavior among children. They have deliberately dumbed-down the curriculum of the public schools in an effort to equalize results for blacks, swindling an entire generation of white children out of a decent education. Far from seeing anything wrong with such behavior, they consider themselves noble crusaders for social justice. In my chapter of the Klan, trying to get others to understand the corruption is my mission. I give speeches and a lot of my time is spent writing letters to the government trying to change policies. I can't even tell you how many petitions I have sent in showing how many people in my community want to see changes in our schools.

Mary, who told me that her mission in life was to teach her children the importance of valuing themselves as member of the white race, stated that she has great concerns about the system of education in this country. She stated:

I believe that we, as white supremacists, have our work cut out for us to try to change the system of education in this country. People sometimes ask me why am I so down on teachers. Well, for one they don't teach, they indoctrinate. Most of my education came

despite teachers. Philosophy, history, politics, and race? These things I had to research on my own. If we're going to create a perfect system, we've have to change the role of teachers dramatically. They need to take on the role of exposing politically correct lies for what they are...like we're all the same blah, blah, bladdidah blah...the lies used to infect history and paleo-anthropology. Now they have infected the entire curriculum, and students are now barely able to read and write! What sort of adults will we have in our society if they can't read or write? I work hard in my organization teaching other members about the evils in our school system and trying to incite them to stand up and do something about this tragedy!

Harriet believes that because it is the woman who gives birth to the children, it is her responsibility to her family to insure that children are protected against what she calls the evils of public education:

If you are a teacher and they find out that you have instilled pride in young people's European heritage they'll boot you right out the door. They'll even make it a hate crime under the current regime. And it won't get any better if we get a democrat in the White House. I guess what I feel is not pure contempt, more like resignation with the current system. Luckily the internet is here, and if other white supremacists will use their heads they will learn a lot by checking out our web sites. I write a lot on the internet

and sign up on as many forums as possible. It is my way of reaching out. I am trying to inform people in America that we really have to protest more against the system of education that is brainwashing our children today. I'll give you a great example of what happened in a classroom recently – actually this is sort of funny – but it just shows you how critical it is that we move quickly to fix the mess that our schools are in! There is this brain-dead fifth grade teacher in my daughter's school who was explaining to her class about what a liberal Democrat is – and then told them that she was one. Then she had the nerve to ask the kids in class if they were liberal Democrats then they should raise their hands. All of the student's obliged the teacher – probably just to please her – except for one – and that would be my daughter. This idiot teacher asked my girl why she had not put her hand up. She told the teacher, "Because I am not a liberal Democrat". The teacher replied with a sarcastic, "Oh reeealy, then what are you"? My daughter proudly boasted that she was a proud white patriotic Christian and added that her Dad and Mom were too. The teacher became very angry and asked my daughter "What if your Dad and Mom were morons. What would you be then?" My little girl just smiled very sweetly and said. "Then I'd be a liberal Democrat"! See what I am saying? Most teachers these days are knee-jerk femdemlibs of mediocre intellect, possessing noddling-donkey

degrees. Their qualifications are pathetic. I'll bet you couldn't find one Ph.D. in a hundred in any humanities department in the Ivy League capable of basic trigonometry.

When questioned, Susan responded with a slightly less hostile point of view:

Well, while I do believe that the educational system in this country has been dumbed down, and I disagree with this trend of course, however I do not believe that everyone who is involved in the public school system is a leftie. I have thought a lot about what our children are and are not exposed to in the public schools and really think that home schooling is the way to go. Can you think of a better way to help instill pride in young people's European heritage than to introduce them to the works of Homer and Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dickens and Shelly? Or the works of White Americans like Twain, Poe, and Hemmingway? In our organization we spend a lot of time developing our own form of education, and I think that this in a sense is home schooling - but it is for adults. Yes, home schooling is the best for the young people and adults today. If I can take a child and show him or her that the poems of Sidney or Elliot are a much better alternative to gangster rap then I will feel I've accomplished something. There are plenty of boneheaded teachers out there, that's for sure. Kids should learn how to think but lately the schools seem to be teaching them what to think. No thanks, I will teach my own at home and I will

teach at our meetings. Actually I think that I teach all the time. I live my life dedicated to the cause of white supremacy and I try to influence everyone around me at all times – not just at Klan meetings but in my church and in my neighborhood.

Isabelle talked about the steps she has taken to educate members of her organization regarding the politics of education reform. She had this to say:

One of the recent things that I have done in my organization is that I have been talking a lot at meetings, I guess you could say giving speeches, but women aren't really allowed to do this in my chapter and besides, things are so relaxed at our meetings that to say I gave a speech seems wrong. Anyway, I have been telling everyone about the Home-Schooling Protection Bill that was introduced by Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave. This is a bill that would give home school students equal treatment under the law as those students who are in the public school system. Now, I have to tell you that a lot of kids whose parents are in our chapter have been home schooled...and maybe to say they are kids is wrong too. They are grown up, they are young adults. Most of them dropped out years ago because their parents hated public schools and didn't want their kids to be brainwashed. So, the kids just didn't go to school at all. And now a bunch of them are grown up and need an education. Well, this bill I think would help us feel that we were legitimate. I think this bill has a chance to pass and I do know that

it has the support of the House Education and Workforce Committee's chairman, John Boehner. I try to promote this in my community too by passing out literature about the bill.

In the interview with Patricia she was very interested in making sure that I understood that the issue of educational reform was a key political focus of her organization and that helping this come about was one of the most important aspects of her duties as a leader:

We are one of the most active Klan organizations in America. By the time one of our members goes through everything they have to in order to achieve certain ranks and positions they are equipped with the knowledge they will need to back up their beliefs. Lots of other Klan organizations just don't take the time to teach and to instruct their members about their philosophy. We don't fool our members into thinking that we will achieve victory overnight. It is going to be a long hard struggle. Our members understand that we are not a club, we are not a fraternity, but a white Christian political party working for serious goals and one of the most serious things we have to work on is to change the system of education that is in place in our country today. To help to teach our members about what is going on in the public school systems is my one of my most important jobs.

What these six women have captured in their statements is something I discovered that is echoed by many white supremacist organizations across this country. They declare that education is their foundation, and reform of the public system of education is a cause to which

they are committed. I found that the leadership of women in most contemporary white supremacist groups calls for their members, both women and men, to advocate for change in the system of public education, recognizing that this is a struggle that won't result in an overnight victory, but one that is well worth their efforts. The white supremacist organizations that I have studied see themselves not as a club or a fraternity, but a white political party working for very serious and very real goals and they vow to stay active in the pursuit of those goals.

Summary

Because of the popular assumption that women are not part of white supremacist organizations it is often difficult to understand the impact they have. The women in this study are not always just in the background. They have had the opportunity to hold titled positions, and out of the twelve participants, six have titles, and the other six consider themselves to be a very important part of their organization. For white supremacist organizations, group solidarity is often built around the core of women, frequently working in tandem with men for the security of their families. Because of this I believe that it is reasonable to conclude that these organizations, and their ideals and philosophies on promoting the white race would often not be possible without the action of the women, particularly within their communities.

I have shown how women such as Patricia, Polly, Rebecca, and Cathy have used their position to try to help the people in their community understand the goals of the white supremacist movement. They are a visible presence at rallies, often giving speeches and granting television interviews, and are actively writing and participating on internet forums. Renee works on petitions to put Klanswomen and Klansmen on voting ballots in the hopes that the contemporary white supremacist movement will attain political seat of power in this country. Susan and Nina work for the cause of white supremacy closer to home, trying to teach the people

in their neighborhood about the marginalization of the white race. White supremacist women such as Brenda, Mary, Harriet, Susan, Isabelle, and Patricia are strong advocates against the public school system and see themselves as activists in a white political party calling for the reformation of the public system of education in this country.

In this study I have found women who have been able to mobilize and organize the masses at the community level. These are women who have been able to access power through their work and efforts focused on initiating social change as they advocate for both community and educational reform. These women have engaged in a widespread range of activities and tasks in order to improve and strengthen their communities as well as seeking to change the normative system of education.

White Supremacy, Patriarchy, and Women's Leadership

In this last section, I will present the data that shows how women who are in leadership roles in the contemporary white supremacist movement manage to negotiate power for themselves in organizations that are founded and based on patriarchy. What emerged from the data is that these women, who were able to develop and position themselves in a leadership role, did so in an ideological setting that challenges this development.

When it comes to men accepting women in leadership positions in contemporary white supremacist organizations, there is a chapter of the Ku Klux Klan in Arkansas that claims to be unique in many respects, particularly in how the women are treated. Three women, Renee, Rebecca, and Patricia who are members of this particular group claim to have had very different experiences than most other women who are active in white supremacist organizations. They see themselves as a much more visible presence in their organization as compared to many Klan groups, both as members and as leaders.

It was my finding that what they claim to be true is. This is an organization that spends a lot of time actively recruiting new members, and they specifically focus on recruiting women by offering them titled positions. They continually emphasize the importance of women in their struggle. Their monthly newsletters often features articles about women, asserting that women are held in the highest regard, even going so far as to call women's position "exalted" (Robb, 1996). For this particular white supremacist organization there is the general belief that women's roles are crucial to their vision as they seek to change our society.

Patricia had this to say:

I think that the issue of women as leaders in white supremacist organizations really is an issue of the type of people our organization looks for as members. I mean, it is crazy to think that we will ever make any advances politically without women. Women are just as interested in things that affect their family as men are, and the women in my organization are willing to try to recruit others who share their views. Most of the women in our organization are willing to volunteer to help plan events, all pulling together to work for political power. You have to understand that in our group, we really don't see any differences between men and women when it comes to filling the positions. Technology has made a huge difference for women and the ways they can help to lead the cause of white supremacy. Women are able to reach more people through the use of technology, such as web sites and communicating through the internet. They can still have a career

and also have time to help with our cause. When you think about it, it makes sense. Women can influence a lot of people through the internet and they can do it very quickly. Also, I think that we are seeing that more and more women have their own businesses and this gives them more time to work for our goals. A lot of the women in my chapter who volunteer stay at home full time, taking care of their children and home schooling them. This really gives them time to help us out.

With Patricia's next statement it became clear to me that her organization see themselves as a politically active social movement on the extreme right, not an exclusively white supremacist organization:

When I think about politics I know that we are not as successful as the Democrats or the Republicans, and I guess in terms of third parties we are small. But, our group can still say that we are the largest racist organization in America, and we are still growing. I think that what makes us so successful is that we have the ability to win the support of women. You know, what most people don't recognize is that women have always held influential positions in society. What is so sad is that so many people think that influence is the same thing as some sort of public position. Think about this, the very first person to see Jesus Christ, after he was resurrected, was Mary Magdalene. Jesus trusted Mary Magdalene and told her to spread the word. Christianity has really grown in influence

because of the help of women. And another thing to think about, the men who founded this country were brought up by virtuous Christian mothers.

In an interview with Nina, she had this to say about her leadership activities in a white supremacist organization that is dominated by men:

I am a leader only in that I am very articulate and have as a personal mission or preference to awaken other whites, especially women! The men, as I see it tend to be more active. They are the ones who attend the meetings in my group. They are also more likely to be looking for leaders and leadership positions – it's a guy thing! I am looking for companions of like knowledge, people with whom I can openly express my horror, my angers, my desires, and my hopes.

I went on to ask Nina what she thought that she had contributed to her organization that was different from the men. She replied:

I see myself as more a leader by example than an actual leader. I make my opinions known; I argue and discuss points, ideas, concepts, and plans. I am often, but not always, willing to go round and round with someone who is intending to prove we're wrong. I guess because I always have a hope of awakening even that person. I am willing to keep working and working on someone, because I believe most people can be awakened, and that we all have a duty to them to keep trying. I am not willing to cut

people off early on – many men are not willing to invest the time and energy in someone if they don't see a short-term gain. Discussion, education, clarification, suggestion...those are the things I focus on. I like to discuss these things with people who are not yet or are just beginning to be awakened, because many of them have all the same problems unawakened people have plus the difficulties brought on by holding unacceptable positions. My focus is dating and mating. Because of their unacceptable positions, White Nationalists and other reactionaries have a real hard time finding women who are willing to consider them as friends or mates. My goal is to help white men recover their women; I want to make sure whites, especially women who are so easily brainwashed by the media, don't date or mate cross-race. I am committed to uncovering the destruction wrought by feminism, which you will find out is a Jewish program that is destroying and in many instances has already destroyed the white family structure. I believe that it is my job to try to gently and surreptitiously insert racial, but mostly anti-feminist, information into the zeitgeist.

Unfamiliar with the term, zeitgeist, I asked her if she could define this word for me. She replied: "Zeitgeist is a German word. Zeit meaning time and Geist meaning ghost. Zeitgeist means the spirit of the age or times. Sort of the general intellectual and moral state or temper characteristic of any period of time, an age, or generation".

In an interview with Caroline, she discussed the problems that she had encountered from most of the members in her organization, female and male, regarding her being a female activist. She informed me that she recently had encountered “some really big problems” and had gotten a lot of negative feedback from the chapter. She was not allowed to ride in the van with all the men when her chapter was attending a rally and if she wanted to go she had to drive herself, which she did. She told me that she was resented by the women and men in her group because she repeatedly told many of the members that she was a feminist, and that this, along with the fact that she was so active and visible, not just at the meetings, but in public as well, had created many problems for her. She stated:

I could do it all really, everything but hold the title of Grand Dragon. People don't want to join a group if they think that there is a woman in charge. What they don't understand is that I do a lot more than my boyfriend, who is the Grand Dragon. He doesn't like to talk to a lot of people and deal with keeping in touch with them about stuff – I like this so I do it. I am one of the only people in my group that can say “I am a feminist”. You better believe that just by saying this I kicked up all kinds of shit. Well, being a feminist along with my knowledge of Klan Kraft was enough to get my charter pulled. I was accused of being an informant and I was even questioned by the police. This is how far these sons of bitches went to get rid of me. They even had photos of me at different events with other groups – now these events were supposed to be for members only – and there I was, looking like a

traitor. I was put on trial and never given a chance to defend myself. I mean, I couldn't talk for myself. My boyfriend talked for me. Hell, I wasn't even allowed to attend the trial. So now, I don't know, I am just hanging on my own and I don't know what I will do about getting in another group.

I questioned Caroline about her being accused of being an informant; I asked her if she could be more specific. Here is her answer:

Well, I will tell you what they are so afraid of – what they thought I was really up to at these other gatherings. Now, I am not saying that this is why I was there, but this is what they accused me of. A lot of people think that our Grand Dragon, my boyfriend, sells illegal weapons and deals drugs. I am not saying that he does, I am saying that this is what a lot of people think. Anyway, the police have been questioning him about all of this – although nothing has come of it yet – they can't prove anything. But, once the word got out that I was attending other Klan meetings, people in my group started thinking that maybe this is why the police had gotten involved. Like, I had gone to other groups and told them this stuff. And, they wanted to get rid of me anyway so the threats started and then I had moved out of my boyfriend's house and in with my parents. Anyway, one night this guy who was with the Aryan Brotherhood, broke into my parent's house, and he shot and raped me...this was just in April...now I got to tell you this 'cause it's

why I really think they went after me the way they did. They know that I had been raped in college – they knew this – and I think they figured this would be the worst thing they could do to me. Getting shot was just an accident...it was in my shoulder...not too bad...oh yea, and they also know that I used to do a lot of rape and domestic violence counseling. So, I quit – I had to. Oh, and the guy that did this – they caught him I guess you could say – caught him dead in his apartment. He had overdosed on drugs. So like I told you before I am just hanging right now. But I will say this...if I was a guy this would have never happened. I know it. Oh yea, and something else that you might find pretty interesting – I got more well wishes from anti-racist folk than from racists.

Renee stated:

Because of unfair media coverage about the KKK, you might think of the men as sitting at the table drinking mugs of beer and cussing about minorities, while the women, with little babies pulling on the hem of their dress are serving dinner. Who in the world would ever want to be a part of such a scene? I am very proud to tell you that since I have belonged to the Klan, I have never met more respectful and helpful men. As for women's role in the movement, I believe that they are neither above or below their male companions. They're truly our equals in all respects. Ask them!

Cathy told me:

Sometimes what I do is no different than what men do. My associates can attest to that. My role in the movement is anything I am capable of – and that means anything. Listen, I like learning about women's things myself, but this oppressed abused, woman-as-slave thing just isn't true. If you're looking for some validation of that, if you're looking for rampant misogyny you won't find it here. Believe it or not, men in this movement treat us better and more as equals than other kinds of men.

Mary seems to agree with Cathy:

I have never experienced anything like oppression. And, I think that the men in our organization recognize and respect this about women. The men that I have come into contact treat me like a lady. You need to understand that our women are not simpletons being led by their men. They are truly the most independent minded of the female species. We have the capacity to realize that we, not our men, control the future. We realize that we are the life and death of a race. Just the fact that we know supporting our cause means isolation from popular culture speaks volumes for our courage.

In an interview with Polly, I asked her if she could specifically tell me how she thought her position as a woman who has a leadership role differed from the men. She stated to me that she really didn't see much difference. She makes as many speeches as the men in her

organization, if not more. She is just as visible at rallies, but the one difference that she did point out was that she felt like she was more responsible for organizing events than the men, but wasn't sure if this was because she was the Unit Coordinator for her area and this was a responsibility that she just assumed as the leader. I asked her if the men that held similar positions of authority had the same responsibilities as the women and she said she wasn't sure because all of the men that she knew of were married and that their wives always helped with such tasks.

Isabelle told me that even though women were allowed to join their group, they were not allowed to hold any type of official title and were not allowed to give speeches. She stated that she really did not see women in her organization as having any sort of leadership positions at all. In direct opposition of Isabelle's experience, Patricia stated:

You have to understand that in my organization, women's roles are extremely important. Women are not in some sort of separate auxiliary – they have the same opportunity to hold titled positions as the men do. And, really, in my organization, all the members, and I mean all of the men and women, recognize that women are in the front lines of the defense of the family and Christianity. Also, and I think this is an important point, a lot of people think that women follow men into the white supremacist movement – which really indicates that women are somehow left out of the decision to join. It has been my experience that more often than not it is women who make the decision for the couple to join. I think that the men in our group respect the women and respect them even

more for their leadership abilities. Women understand the important issues that we are fighting for, and the racist movement, and our group in particular, is empowering them.

Brenda told me that she thought that what made her organization different was that women were encouraged by the men to be leaders. She explained:

The women who want to be leaders in my group are supported by the men, and women's ideas and suggestions are given equal attention. I for one believe in the traditional roles for women. I love being a woman, and I don't want to compete with men. I don't see the contemporary white supremacist movement as just a man's movement. More and more women each day are waking up to the truth, and they are joining us in our fight to secure a future for our race. We women are fighting for our kin and hearth. We know that we are important in the battle.

When I asked Susan if she thought that the men in her organization had much of an influence on her leadership she stated:

There have been those who equate racism and sexism as being one and the same. Just as white women are often lumped in with minorities as being equal victims of what many see as an evil white male dominated society. I don't think there's anything about the National Alliance which specifically defines gender roles. Some have their own ideas about such things, but as far as I can tell it is the duty of any white citizen, man or woman, to be loyal to their

nation and people. Nobody gets a free pass in that regard. Don't try and speak for this white woman!!! I am proud of all white men and their achievements. It is good for all of us. The white men treat the white women better than any non white country. I do not resent my white brothers one bit. I don't feel that there is anything wrong with my holding traditional values and wanting to marry and have a nice home and be a good helpmate to my husband. It is important for a man to be able to come home from work to a nice home where he can relax and forget about the world outside and recharge his batteries. The men and women in this movement work together to achieve their goals. Let me assure you, that women like me are very happy being real women.

Summary

While it can be concluded that there may be a white supremacist man behind every white supremacist woman who participated in this study, it can also be said that there is a woman behind every man defending her involvement in the movement. Today's white supremacist women see themselves as working with their male counterparts to help save their families and their communities from the destruction of their race. As I have shown, women's roles in white supremacist organizations vary from group to group, and woman to woman. However, what is not varying and is a constant is the fact that women are becoming more visible, and much like the feminists many of them claim to detest, they are recognizing the conflict between their own sphere of activism and the traditional expectations of women's roles in society today.

There is no question that gender is an important issue for contemporary white supremacist organizations. Certainly there exists the stereotypical pictures of modern day Klansmen in militarized uniforms projecting a sense of hypermasculinity, offering an exaggeration of masculine ideals. Modern day Klanswomen often are seen as starkly contrasting figures, leaving one to wonder how these seemingly passive women can have any impact at all on the organization's racial politics.

From the decline of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan (WKKK) in the 1920's to the 1980's perception that white supremacy is a masculine enterprise, the unity among white supremacist males was based on the exclusion of women. Women were rarely recruited to join the Klan groups, and much of the propaganda that was publicized portrayed women whose only function was to support their men and to raise the children (Blee, 2002).

The data that was analyzed for this study presents a much different picture. With the exception of one woman, Isabelle, all of the women discussed the importance of women being recruited into their organizations. They spoke of groups that want to recruit women as individual members rather than mere appendages of husbands or boyfriends, recognizing the contributions that female members make to move the cause of white supremacy forward. I believe that because women are visibly involved and welcomed in the activities that take place, this is in itself an attractor for women and appeals to their sense of fighting for a collective goal.

While it is a fact that many white supremacist groups, though they share in their philosophy on race, sometimes vary in their treatment of women members, which often is due to their different histories, the ideals of their leader, and the ratio of female and male members (Blee, 2002). Recognizing the fact that women's level of participation varies across groups, I found no differences in the emphasis of women's familial and social roles. There is no doubt that

white supremacist organizations are systems that engage in gendered processes; therefore I have concluded that the women who participated in this study engaged in the activities of their organization because of two inseparable occurrences. One, because they made the decision to join and become active members, and two, because men made the decision to allow the women entry. The women in this study hold reactionary political views on race and nationality and it is through their activism in the white supremacist organization that they are affiliated with that they have been able to exert an influence dedicated to the ideology of white supremacy.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership roles of women in contemporary white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan. The research questions guiding this study were: 1) What are the common leadership practices of women who participate in white supremacist organizations? 2) How do the women who participate in white supremacist organizations use their position as leaders to promote social change? 3) How does the phenomenon of white supremacy and patriarchy affect women's leadership roles? This chapter presents a summary of the study, the major conclusions, a discussion of these conclusions, and the implications for theory, practice, and research.

Summary of the Study

To provide a background for this study, and in an effort to frame it within relevant historical, theoretical and social contexts, I reviewed the pertinent literature from three major areas. First, I examined the literature base that focuses on the history of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States, tracing this icon of white supremacy through its periods of decline and regeneration. Incorporated within the historical profile of the Ku Klux Klan is the development of women's participation and the emergence of modern white supremacist organizations. Next, I examined the literature base that focuses on the current theoretical perspectives of women's leadership, including a focus on the practices of leadership, the emergence of women as leaders, and the impact of engaging women in the work of organizations. Incorporated within the theoretical context of women's leadership, as it contributed to the study, was a focus on the methods by which women used education as a tool to promote their position in society. In the

last section of the literature review I focused on the social phenomena of white supremacy and the impact of gender. Included in this section was an examination of how women negotiate their roles within white supremacist organizations.

I used a qualitative research design for this study, collecting data using interviews, documents, and field notes. Purposive sampling (Neuman, 1994) was the primary sampling technique that I used, identifying twelve women who could provide the information about membership in white supremacist organizations. I employed the role of participant-as-observer (Neuman, 1994), and analyzed the data using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). My research and analysis of the data allowed me to discover patterns in the participant's lives which led me to an understanding of the meaning that these twelve women had constructed and assigned to their experiences and activities in contemporary white supremacist groups.

Analysis of the data that was collected from the women who participated in this study revealed the following themes related to the first research question: what are the common leadership practices of women who participate in white supremacist organizations. The first theme that emerged as I examined the common leadership practices of women who participate in white supremacist organizations is the practice of the *social homemaker*. These are women who have involved themselves in various clubs, organizations, and activist groups while maintaining their traditional domestic values. The second theme that emerged is the leadership practice of women who are *organizers and event planners*. These are women who felt that one of the most important functions that they could do to contribute to the cause of white supremacy was to offer their skills as organizers and event planners. The third theme that emerged as I analyzed the common leadership practices of women who participate in white supremacist organizations is the

practice of *recruiting*. These are women who are committed to increasing the membership of white supremacist organizations, all in the name of protecting their family against what they see as a decay of the white race.

Relating to the second research question that guided this study, how do women who participate in white supremacist organizations use their position as leaders to promote social change, the following themes emerged from an analysis of the data. The first way that women who participate in white supremacist organizations use their position as leaders to promote social change is through *community reform*. These are women who use their position to teach and to educate their families, their neighbors, and the people in their communities about the need to protect the white race. They strive to affect government policies to ensure that white people do not become a marginalized people. The second way that these women use their position as leaders to promote social change is through their challenges to the public system of education, calling for major *educational reform*. Again, these women are trying to confront and question the political hierarchy that is in place in the educational system, believing that the white race is in jeopardy.

Data analysis relating to the third research question of this study, how does the phenomenon of white supremacy and patriarchy affect women's leadership roles, revealed the following theme: the women in this study have been able to negotiate power for themselves and develop a leadership role in white supremacist organizations, even though these are organizations that are founded and based on patriarchy.

Conclusions and Discussion

My efforts have been to give a reasoned and connected account of how the underlying organization of actions and practices of women affect the white supremacist movement that is

currently active in the United States. Women, as members of white supremacist groups, are volunteers, organizers, and social activists who share many of the same experiences when one examines the different levels of commitments and attachments. Traditionally, women have been seen as useful only because they can bear children and ensure the survival of the white race. While this belief is still fundamental, it is also true that women are moving outside of these strict confines to feature more prominently in the contemporary white supremacist movement.

Three major conclusions were drawn from the findings of this study. The first conclusion is that if it weren't for the women contemporary white supremacist organizations would have a much different profile since it is the women who are often responsible for recruitment and retention of members. For example, women who purposively involve the entire family do so as a means of insuring more comprehensive support of the white supremacist philosophy within the home. In addition, family involvement assures that time donated to the cause is not resented because there is something for each member to do. The incorporation and involvement of women further cements the idea of family values and promotes the idea of the movement as non violent and nurturing of children, women, and the white race in general.

It is clear through this study that women are vital to the process of social change for white supremacists. These women have worked hard to change political policies that affect illegal immigration, affirmative action, and government housing. They engage in the distribution of literature, and lead protests against the system of public education that is in place in the United States. If it weren't for the enterprising women who have made efforts to shape social change through their work in their chapters and units, the promotion of the cause of white supremacy would take on a much different form.

The second conclusion is that women who participate in white supremacist organizations have chosen a tactic, assuming the title of and presenting themselves as leaders. Yet analysis reveals that their positions as leaders are encased in gendered roles. This was demonstrated again and again in this study when women were confined to the role of being hostess, cooks, and babysitters. These traditionally female roles, while important to the day to day functioning of society are indeed gendered in that they are primarily assigned to women. While these women might have positional power, they do not have authority. Though they might hold a titled position in their chapters or units, they are so busy keeping the home fires burning that their authority within the structure of the organization is diminished.

Throughout the interviews as the women spoke of their leadership roles, they always mentioned domestic work such as planning and hostessing events they perform for their organizations as well. They depicted their leadership activities as a logical result of their concerns for their families and neighbors; they spoke of women's importance in birthing the children who would be the next generation of the white race. They pointed out that just as strong as their leadership skills were, so were their skills in making sure their homes were run well; they maintained that even though they had leadership responsibilities they were still able to focus on traditional family values.

The third and final conclusion, and the one that I believe to be the primary conclusion is that if an organization, cause, or social movement is patriarchal in structure, women who work as organizers, volunteers, and activists are still doing the same thing, still performing the same functions in their gendered roles. It is my assertion that the work the women are doing in their chapters and units is essentially the backbone of white supremacist organizations. They align themselves with a group and develop a realization that they possess a self-identifying influence

committed to their goals, and in turn use this influence to accomplish these goals. These are women who are committed to promoting the philosophy of white supremacy. They call for the protection of the white race, and often rather than blaming ethnic minorities, they blame the government for the problems the white race faces today.

To exemplify the conclusion, that if an organization, cause, or movement is patriarchal in structure, women who work as organizers, volunteers, and activists will still do the same thing, still perform the same functions I am using a comparison between the women who participated in this study, who are activists in the white supremacist movement and the women who were activists in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. Though their philosophies are opposite, the roles played by both groups of women parallel each other in their efforts to legitimate their ideologies and incite action, all designed to lead to changes in the social structure and political policies.

If it Weren't for the Women

For years women have positioned themselves as volunteers, organizers, and activists, working toward goals that were important to them through associations or organizations that offered them the opportunity. Through their work as volunteers, organizers, and activists these women were able to connect with the world outside of their homes. I found that all of the women I interviewed described their activities in white supremacist organizations as a logical result of their desire to improve the lives of their families and neighbors. Also, what became very clear through the interviews is that each of the women felt that by offering their skills as organizers, event planners, and recruiters they were truly leading as they promoted the cause of white supremacy.

The common assumption that all leaders in white supremacist organizations are men is erroneous. Blee (2002) asserts that women, who are formal leaders, are a rare find in organized separatist groups, and even these women often engage in informal leadership. Of the twelve women in this study, six hold titled leadership positions: National Membership Coordinator, Grand Klokard, Regional Coordinator, leader of a Proto-Unit, secretary and treasurer, and Assistant Unit Coordinator. Yet, as Blee (2002) points out, titles often misleadingly imply a hierarchical structure of authority, sometimes suggesting an allegiance of many, if not hundreds of followers. Conversely, there are those who actually perform as leaders within their chapter or unit, and have no titles. Duhl (1997) asserts that when analyzing women's leadership, the traditional definitions do not fit. For women, leadership is not just being in charge of a group of people. It is often a process of networking, facilitating, educating, collaborating and cooperating.

All of the women in this study, whether they hold formal titles of leadership or not, work through grassroots channels. They are social homemakers and recruiters; they are working in their communities for social and educational reform: they are nonmarket workers, they are volunteers. The women who participated in this study perform a multiplicity of tasks, such as initiating and organizing action, formulating strategies, and providing the essential resources that are necessary to move their cause forward. The findings from this study have shown that these women give speeches and arrange for speakers at meetings, they plan and organize events and rallies, and they help to create, print, and distribute flyers. They help to recruit new members, setting the stage so other women will feel more comfortable bringing their families into membership and affiliating themselves with a group that complements their ideals. These are women who used their position to speak out in the community against illegal immigration, the ills of school bussing and affirmative action. They work on petition drives to grant ballot access

to Klanswomen or Klansmen who run for political office. They are a visible presence at rallies and they are all actively writing and participating on internet forums, the new face of white supremacy.

Throughout history women's roles in organizations have been multifaceted. They assume the position of leaders, making speeches, or as organizers handling much of the paperwork. In fact, when many of the women I interviewed spoke of typing correspondence or distributing leaflets, they made their duties sound like those of a Sunday school teacher arranging a church social. For the women who participated in this study, their work as leaders is a continuum, connecting their family and community life, all the while contributing to the empowerment of themselves and their organizations. Blee (1996) asserts women's entrance into organized separatist groups is an effort on their part to create a connection between themselves and the goals of racist politics. From the findings I have shown how these women were able to mobilize and organize members of their organizations, targeting what they perceive a racist social system, with the goal of protecting and preserving the white race.

A Choice of Tactics

The women who participated in this study have come to their positions as leaders for many reasons. Though there may be similarities between the goals of women and men who are active in white supremacist organizations, the similarities end when the women describe how they perform their job as leaders. The women in this study tell how the men in their chapters or units use the power that comes to them through their position, relying on a more formalized authority. Conversely, the women in this study speak of their own power as coming more from their relationships with other members or their hard work, not a title, relying on a more informal authority.

Through an analysis of the interviews, I found that these women have reconfigured the male dominated structure in their units and chapters and have found a way to make a space for themselves. All of the women believe that their contributions are invaluable to the men, and I found that they have capitalized on this need. Each woman that I interviewed partly framed her discussion of her activities in terms of family, claiming that her particular chapter or unit promotes qualities of caring and responsibility to each other and to the family. These are women who have assumed the responsibility of socializing their children into the white supremacist movement, indoctrinating them with the philosophies and ideals of white supremacy. They also spent an enormous amount of time in their interviews convincing me that they are not oppressed and that the men in their organization have nothing but the utmost respect for them.

Blee (2002) reports that several of the Klanswomen she has interviewed complained that their organizations were too sexist, too male-oriented. Other women she interviewed complained that all the men want them to do is to have white babies. Of the twelve women that I interviewed for this study I found none of this. In fact, the women offered opinions that are in direct contradiction of Blee's finding. They continually emphasized that men recognized the importance of women in their struggle, one even going so far as to say that the men see women's positions as exalted. They believe that the men in their organizations recognize the influence they have in recruiting members and deny any type of oppression, stating that the men in the white supremacist movement treat them as equals and better than other men in other social situations. However, what can not be ignored is that this respect is most likely framed around the fact that it is the men who hold firm to their belief that women are the ones who are ultimately responsible for the procreation and survival of the white race.

In this study, through my examination of the practice of women in white supremacist organizations, I have been able to show how these women have achieved an understanding of their position within the patriarchal structure of their organizations. It is necessary to reevaluate the traditional way leadership is defined and consider the work that women are doing and the strategies they employ. The women recognize the tactics that they have chosen to help the cause of white supremacy and they have made sense of their gendered self-interests and adapted themselves to fit within the agenda of their male dominated organizations. Membership into white supremacist organizations is often a choice of tactics for the Klanswomen who express a desire for change. These are women who see themselves not just as women, not just as a cog in a machine, but rather the heart of their family and of the white supremacist movement.

Opposites are Similar

At first glance, the Civil Rights Movement seems to be a polar opposite of the white supremacist movement, and indeed in many ways it is. Yet there is one critical area of similarity: the arena of women's roles. Gender, though often ignored in much of the scholarly literature on the white supremacist and the Civil Rights Movement, actually figures heavily into the basis of these two specific movements. Women who are active in both movements have the same incentive, but directed at different goals. Both groups of women are seeking political changes in policy, both groups are seeking solidarity and unity, and both are seeking to raise racial self-esteem (Crawford, 1990)

Just as family is an important component and driving force for the women in this study, the same was true for women who were campaigning for Civil Rights in the 1960's (Crawford, 1990). For both white supremacist women and Civil Rights women, it is not just their families they are fighting for, but an opportunity for their families to exist without oppression in America.

In addition, another comparison between groups can be found when examining their efforts directed towards fighting discrimination in housing. Just as the women in this study fought for changes in public law, so did the Civil Rights women in the 1960's. The common bond that is held between these two very different groups of women can be found in the roles they perform as leaders in their organizations. Both groups of women were able to recruit and persuade others to follow; both were able to raise money for the causes of their movement.

There is another parallel between the women in the white supremacist movement and the women in the Civil Rights Movement and that is the problems and issues they had in common. Both portray themselves as a part of a group that is threatened, both view their life position as one that is disadvantaged and oppressed, and both view themselves as a minority fighting for equal rights.

Another shared issue between the two groups of women is their common attitude of disdain directed towards feminism (Giddings, 1984). According to the women who were interviewed for this study, they did not feel that they were being excluded from the main business of their chapters or units, but by carrying out the traditional female responsibilities, such as hostessing a gathering, they felt fulfilled and were quite satisfied. Just as the white supremacist women were in partnership with the male members of their group, so were many of the women who were involved in the Civil Rights Movement. Many of the black female activists felt that the women's movement was an anti-male movement rather than a pro-female movement, and for them the main concern was the impact that racism had on their lives rather than sexism (Giddings, 1984). In other words, they believed that the issue of race was more important than gender issues. "They were not interested in joining the feminist movement, but rather in helping black men get the rights they had been denied so long" (Giddings, 1984, p.

309). Clearly their thinking was that the rights of the black men had to be assured first, and then and only then would they, as women, achieve any status. Many of the same sentiments were expressed by the women in this study.

As the data revealed, the women who participated in this study were grassroots activists. Similarly, the women who participated in the Civil Rights Movement used their varied skills and resources to mobilize others at the grassroots level. Both groups of women created social networks which not only helped to incite action but provided a source for spiritual and intellectual empowerment. Black women who worked for Civil Rights were supporters as they fulfilled traditional women's roles, nurturing and caretaking, but they were also major leaders, organizers, and strategists (Crawford, 1990). For both groups of women, it is their centrality in families and community that validates them as activists seeking social change.

Implications for Theory, Practice, and Research

In terms of theoretical implications, I believe that this study adds to the growing body of literature within adult education that examines women's leadership practices in volunteer organizations. Duhl (1997) has stated that gender and leadership is a rapidly changing phenomenon with less and less clarity as to how to define leadership and more importantly how to know who exactly is the leader and why. Males are more used to defining their role through the organization itself; women define their role through their actions. I have chosen women in white supremacist organizations to exemplify women's leadership in volunteer associations. I have shown how these women gained access to power through their work in different societal structures, with a focus on the variety of leadership practices in which they have engaged. These women have positioned themselves in order to achieve goals and connect with the world outside of their homes.

This study also has implications for critical educational practice with adult education. It is no mystery that people come into leadership positions for a variety of reasons, which may include personal situations or a crisis they have experienced in their lives, always with the goal of seeking pragmatic solutions. I believe that this is the key as to why many of today's emerging leaders are women. The connection between women and leadership is crucial. We must begin to study and look at groups and organizations of many varieties in order to gain a more holistic understanding of leadership. Traditional definitions no longer fit and though there are certainly similarities in women and men leaders, it is the differences that adult educators must recognize. This will offer a more precise lens to allow us to ultimately discern not just how and why women come to leadership positions, but how they negotiate their power that will guide them towards a more effective leadership.

There are three important directions that this study points to for future research that will move us toward a more complete understanding of the modern white supremacist movement. The first is the use of technology. The organizations, units, and chapters that are founded on the ideologies of white supremacy are in much different configurations today. There is a much more subversive influence that is being wielded throughout society and this is through these groups's use of the internet.

Technology has made a huge difference for women who participate in white supremacist organizations, and this should be explored. For those women who have jobs, they are able to have a career and still have time to work to mobilize and influence vast groups of people, and they can do this very quickly and efficiently. For the women who are stay at home moms, they can take care of the children and still commit themselves to social reform without ever leaving the home front. Through their communications on the internet they are able to educate the

masses in an effort to strengthen their communities against what they perceive as a threatened existence.

Contemporary white supremacist organizations exist as a growing presence across the United States and they are reaching and recruiting members through a variety of mediums, including the internet. In this study I was seeking to understand women's participation in white supremacist organizations, with a focus on women in the Ku Klux Klan. The development of technology and the growth of the internet have created entirely new ways for controversial groups, such as white supremacists, to reach a massive number of people.

The second direction that this study points to for future research is the need for the inclusion of women in any analysis of contemporary white supremacist organizations. Just as we cannot understand racism by looking only at the extremes, we cannot understand the modern supremacist movement without considering the activities and influence of women. Most prior studies conducted on the activities of white supremacist organizations have focused on men's participation. There has been an absence of attention to women's participation which has consequently led to the assumption that women are not part of white supremacist activities today. Also, because there has been almost exclusive attention given to men in white supremacist organizations, our theoretical understanding as to why individuals become involved in separatist activities is compromised. My research has challenged this assumption and has ultimately shown that not only has women's participation expanded but their leadership has expanded as well.

The third direction this study points to is the need for an expansion of how Adult Education defines social action movements. Adult Education has historically defined social action movements as part of our literature, but we have confined our studies to those movements that have a social justice component. What is left out are social action movements such as the

contemporary white supremacist movement. We assign negative characteristics to white supremacy and therefore it is something that is deemed not worthy of academic study. In other words, we have assigned a right or wrong as qualifiers for research, moving forward with research we consider valid, and ignoring research that is deemed problematic.

This study is an effort on my part as an Adult Educator to contribute to the limited body of knowledge and literature that exists with regard to women's activities in the contemporary white supremacist movement. As a discipline, adult educators must recognize that there are an increasing number of women, men, and children who are participating in organized white supremacy. We must recognize that this is a social movement that is undergoing social change, and though the white supremacist movement of today is still politically and socially marginal, it is a movement that is growing and getting stronger.

Summary

While this study does not intend to represent every woman in every organization, it does contribute a perspective that can be used to understand certain dynamics that are created through the involvement and influence that women bring with them when they join an organization committed to goals that are compelling to them. It was my intention to give these women a voice, which has traditionally been left out of research. This study has given a space for women to speak, to have voice, and offered to outsiders an opportunity to make meaning of these women's experiences.

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APPENDIX A
COVER LETTER CONSENT DOCUMENT

COVER LETTER CONSENT DOCUMENT

I agree to take part in a research study titled "The Leadership Roles of Women in the Ku Klux Klan", which is being conducted by Michele C. Burch, and her co-investigator Dr. Ron Cervero, Department of Adult Education, University of Georgia (706-542-2214). I do not have to take part in this study; I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this research is to gain knowledge and understanding of the leadership roles of women in the Ku Klux Klan.

The benefits that I may expect from it are that I will have the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon my leadership role in the Ku Klux Klan in a confidential manner. I will have the opportunity to explain how I am able to commit to and achieve goals that are compelling to me.

The procedures are as follows: (1) I will be expected to meet with Ms. Michele C. Burch at a mutually agreed upon time and location and discuss semi-structured questions pertaining to the above stated research for approximately one hour. Unless I prefer otherwise, the interview will be tape recorded. These tapes will be erased by March, 2005. **OR** (2) Interviews may be conducted electronically, using the internet.

The discomforts or stresses that may be faced during this research are recalling unpleasant experiences or answering difficult questions.

No risks are foreseen with this interview. I will be assigned a pseudonym for my protection and my identity will not be revealed. For data collection that takes place over the internet it should be noted that "Internet communications are insecure and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. However once the materials are received by the researcher, standard confidentiality procedures will be employed." All materials that are collected electronically will be saved to a file that can only be accessed by the principle investigator, Michele C. Burch **Pseudonyms will be used from the outset in notes as well as audio recordings. The principle investigator, Michele C. Burch, and her co-investigator Dr. Ron Cervero, will be the only persons who will have access to the data for the purpose of analysis.**

The results of this participation will be confidential and will not be released in any individually identifiable form, unless required by law.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at: 706-542-2214.

I understand that by participating in this interview, I am consenting to participation in the research outlined above.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D. Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide

1. Describe your time in your organization, telling me especially about your path to leadership?
2. How did you become a “leader” in your organization? (Were you appointed? Were you elected? By whom? How long do you hold your position?)
3. Describe the difference in the leadership paths of women and men leaders?
4. As a woman who is in a leadership role, how do you think that you have contributed to your organization?
5. What is your primary role as a leader?
6. What part does education play in your duties and responsibilities as a leader? (Who do you educate?)
7. What methods do you use to educate?
8. How do you see yourself “doing” your job differently from the men?
9. How does your leadership role in the organization compare to the leadership role of the men in terms of style, power, and influence?
10. Why do you participate in this movement?
11. How do you share your beliefs in your community?
12. What do you see as some of the most important issues that your organization is trying to address or to change?
13. How do you see yourself involved in helping these changes to come about?

APPENDIX C

BIOGRAPHY OUTLINE FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

BIOGRAPHY OUTLINE FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

2. What year were you born?

- ☐ 1920-1929
- ☐ 1930-1939
- ☐ 1940-1949
- ☐ 1950-1959
- ☐ 1960-1969
- ☐ 1970-1979
- ☐ 1980-1989

3. Do you have any siblings?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If so how many and what gender?

4. What is your marital status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced

5. Do you have any children?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If so how many and what gender?

6. What is your religious preference? _____

7. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

- ☐ Employed full-time
- ☐ Employed part-time
- ☐ Unemployed, seeking work
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Full-time homemaker
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

8. If you are currently working, what is your approximate annual salary?

- ☐ Less than \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 – \$29,000
- ☐ \$30,000 – \$39,000
- ☐ \$40,000 - \$49,000
- ☐ \$50,000 – \$59,000
- ☐ \$60,000 – \$69,000
- ☐ \$70,000 - \$79,000
- ☐ \$80,000 - \$89,000
- ☐ \$90,000 or more

9. Please describe your highest educational level.

- ☐ No diploma
- ☐ High school diploma/GED 19_____
- ☐ Some College 19_____
- ☐ Associates Degree 19_____
- ☐ Bachelors degree 19_____
- ☐ Graduate degree 19_____

10. Please describe your parents' highest educational level.

Mother or other guardian

- ☐ No diploma
- ☐ High school diploma/GED
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ Associates degree
- ☐ Bachelors degree
- ☐ Graduate degree
- ☐ I don't know

Father or other guardian

- ☐ No diploma
- ☐ High school diploma/GED
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ Associates degree
- ☐ Bachelors degree
- ☐ Graduate degree
- ☐ I don't know

11. When did you become a member of a white supremacist organization?

12. Are there any other members of your family who belong to the Ku Klux Klan or other white supremacist organizations? If so, please tell me their gender, age, and relationship to you.
