

THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTION IN CREATING
COLLECTIVE IDENTITY IN THE STILLWATER
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS AN EXPLORATORY
CASE STUDY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is an exploratory case study that examines the importance of collective identity and emotion. The emotions engendered over various injustices can contribute to the development of collective identity and ultimately to the formation of social movements. In this research I argue that emotions became an important part of the collective identity among the League of Women Voters.

The social movements surrounding pollution, wars, and various injustices, are often sparked by passionate anger. For example, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) formed as a result of one woman's loss of a child by a drunk driver. The name of the organization reflects both threat and blame. "Mothers" places the issue in a framework of violence against children. "Drunk drivers" elicits an image of the DUI as socially irresponsible and out of control. The name MADD, therefore, informs the public what emotions to feel toward the perpetrator and victim in the drunk-driving incident. If there were not emotions to generate the MADD social movement, the processes of assigning blame would inspire little, if any, action (Jasper 1998).

Gamson (1992) argues that it is nearly impossible to imagine mobilization in the absence of emotions and he pays particular attention to the emotive feeling of injustice. The passion for justice is fueled by anger over existing injustices. In contrast, abstract norms of justice gain some positive emotions associated with them (including hope, joy,

and compassion), but probably not a sufficient amount to motivate a social movement in the absence of a contrast with an unjust situation and the negative emotions (sense of threat, outrage, anger, or fear) associated with it. These negative emotions are, therefore, powerful motivators for social movements (Jasper 1998).

Social movements emerge out of a strong sense of collective identity. A collective identity is not only the formation of a cognitive boundary; but can be spurred on by emotion. Collective identity is a positive affect toward other group members premised by a common membership. By feeling a common membership, protest becomes a vehicle for saying something about one-self and one's morals, and discovering joy and pride in them. The strength of one's identity may develop from their emotional side. Further, the strength of one's identity may be cognitively vague, but strongly held in a social movement (Jasper 1998).

Emotion has played a critical role in the development of women's movements. One of the essential elements contributing to the formation of women's liberation movements in the mid-1960's was a series of crises that galvanized people involved in this movement. One such social movement that developed as a result of women feeling the injustice of not being able to vote was the National American Women's Suffrage Association. This organization transformed itself into the National League of Women Voters in 1920 with the goal of fighting for justice to give women the right to vote (Freeman 1975).

United States woman suffragists frequently utilized two types of arguments in their demands for voting rights: justice and reform. The justice argument held that women should vote because they were men's equals and subsequently should have

political rights equal to those of their male counterparts. The reform arguments held that women should have the ballot because, women, given their unique feminist experiences and perspectives, would bring a unique contribution to politics, and thereby make society a more humane place (McCammon, Hewitt, & Smith 2004).

The people who participated in the state woman suffrage movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries rarely engaged in disruptive and militant activities. The primary method of gaining voting rights for women that permeated nearly every tactic employed by the suffragists was argumentation. Consequently, they worked regularly to persuade listeners with their rhetoric that women should be full participants in the democratic system (McCammon, Hewitt, & Smith 2004).

The early suffragists methods consisted of giving public speeches, carrying banners in parades, speaking informally on street corners, writing newspaper articles, distributing handbills, and lobbying lawmakers. This was all done, collectively, with the goal of convincing their audiences, in non-disruptive methods, that women should be allowed to cast their ballots just as their male counterparts did. Taylor (1944) presented a quote from Josephine Henry of Kentucky in her speech before the National Woman Suffrage Association of 1895, that succinctly summed up matters: “Women with no weapon save argument, and no wealth save the justice of their cause, are carrying on a war of education for their liberty” (cited in McCammon, Hewitt, & Smith 2004, p.529-530).

My focus in this study is on the Stillwater League of Women Voters, a grassroots social movement organization located in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The members of this organization have a history of fighting for justice for all citizens. They have done so

locally, nationally, and internationally. The Stillwater League of Women Voters is well-known for their prevention of injustices placed upon the citizens of Stillwater. One such example is the Stillwater League of Women Voter's fight to have mail delivered to the poorer sections of Stillwater, Oklahoma during the early 1960's. The League was angered over these discriminatory practices toward African Americans and they worked diligently to rectify the situation. Ultimately, the League was successful in pressuring local offices to deliver mail to these poor and minority neighborhoods.

The Stillwater League of Women Voters formed a collective identity out of the emotion of anger over numerous injustices. Following the model of the early suffragists, the League engages in activism through holding public forums concerning political campaigns, environmental issues, women's rights, and community issues. They also write newspaper articles and hold public meetings to inform the citizens of Stillwater of their rights and the protection thereof. One of the League's primary goals remains their commitment to registering voters and urging people to exercise their right to vote.

Membership to the League of Women Voters is open to all persons of voting age. Men are also eligible to join the ranks of others concerned about public issues and policy. Membership in the local League, the Stillwater League of Women Voters, also includes membership in the League of Women Voters of Oklahoma and the League of Women Voters of the United States. This grassroots organization works at all three levels of government as a nonpartisan organization to encourage informed and active participation of citizens through education and advocacy.

The purpose of this study is to explore the role that emotion plays in creating collective identity. I examine these issues through an exploratory case study of the

Stillwater League of Women Voters. This research responds to recent calls by social movement scholars to examine the role of emotion in activism. Furthermore, this research contributes to a growing body of literature on the emergence and maintenance of collective identity.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The first part of this chapter focuses on women's social movement organizations, the key mobilizing aspects that drive their emergence, and the strategies and tactics employed by women's social movement organizations to accomplish their goals. The next section of this chapter discusses research on collective identity. I then highlight work that examines role of emotion(s) in creating collective identity in activist organizations. I then conclude with a discussion of the primary research questions that drive this project.

This chapter briefly outlines the history of women's social movements and how the feeling of injustice spurred women into consciousness raising groups and found a collective identity therein. I then discuss different facets of emotions and how they can be transformed into collective identities. The next section explains how narratives by women have manifested their emotions and provided them with a collective identity. This is followed by discussion of women's collective identity and its composition of women's social movements.

Key Mobilizing Aspects of Women's Social Movement Organizations

Social movement organizations recruit members and mobilize supporters and educate members for their campaigns. There are several important variables to consider in relation to mobilization within women's social movement organizations. Ray & Korteweg (1999) found several pre-cursors that contribute to women's mobilization

during their research on women's social movement organizations in third world countries. They argue that collective identities serve to construct their interests and as a result these interests inform women's mobilization. Women's abilities to form collective identities and voice their interests are constructed by political, local, and historically contingent processes. The argument is exemplified by Feree & Martin (1995) who argue that "feminist organizations are outcomes of situationally and historically specific processes." "In each time and place, feminism reflects its history and prior developments, as well as present opportunities and constraints" (cited in Ray & Korteweg 1999, p. 5).

Significant research has been conducted on women's organizing in less developed countries. For example, feminist political organization mobilizing and recruitment among the Macuxi and the Wapixana from the Lavrado, and the Serra with other indigenous women of Roraima. In these cases Third World women began to mobilize when the subsistence level of their communities was threatened. These women have successfully promoted structural improvements that have the snowballing effect of strengthening subsistence levels. Highly educated middle-class women have also successfully mobilized and created non-profit-making organizations that provide services to women in poverty and women who were victims of violence (Simonian 2005).

During the 1990's, thousands of women mobilized throughout the United States to collectively form a social movement to eradicate breast cancer. These included rallies, petitions, and protest. Currently, this women's social movement has actively used education and science as strategies to attain the goal of eradicating breast cancer. They have done so collectively by educating themselves and participating with scientists,

clinicians and policymakers in a consensual manner in making decisions concerning the nature and direction of breast cancer research (Myhre 2001).

Desai (2002) found women's social movement organizations in India employed an ambivalent and complex strategy of working within and against the Indian state to accomplish their goals. This strategy was composed of three phases. During the first phase, urban and rural students, along with some Left and Gandhian parties, organized nonparty political formations to confront the state. The women demanded land reform, minimum pay wages for farm work, and micocredit for the self-employed from local bureaucracies (Meyer, Whittier, & Robnett 2002).

During the second phase, activists dealt with abuse and violence against women. They employed protests and worked with the state and a national commission that resulted in a series of legal reforms. These reforms included amendments in rape, dowry laws, and banned amniocentesis for the purpose of gender selection. By far, the most important achievement of this phase was the assurance that the Indian state recognize the subordinate level of women and gave women's issues increased visibility. During the third and final phase, termed the sustainable development phase, the women worked for marginalized poor and laborers. During this phase the women's organization criticized structural adjustment laws and worked to empower women. This phase took place during the globalization of India's economy. The movement's women actively engaged to protect the poor and women (Meyer, Whittier, & Robnett 2002).

As these studies indicate, women have mobilized around numerous campaigns both within the United States, and in less developed countries. Women engage in a variety of strategies and form coalitions with other groups to accomplish movement

goals. In the next section, I address the importance of collective identity in social movement organizing.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Social movement organizations are not individual entities that progress with similar goals adhered to them by ideologies. Rather, they are organizations of action and complex networks distributed among several different levels of social activism.

Collective identity within social movement organizations is the result of exchanges, negotiations, decisions, and disputes among movement organizations is the result of exchanges, negotiations, decisions, and disputes among activists (Gaskell 2004).

One of the outstanding components of a social movement organization is a meaningful statement of an identity in the public sphere. Taylor (1989) Taylor and Whittier (1992) and Taylor (1996) define collective identity as the “shared definition of a group that derives from members’ common interests, experiences, and solidarity” (Rupp & Taylor 1999, p. 365). These analysts state that in order to comprehend collective identity as a key component that is constructed, activated, and maintained by interaction within social movement organizations, one must look to three processes involved in the formation of collective identities. These are: (1) “the creation of boundaries that mark off a group; (2) the development of a consciousness of the group’s distinct and shared disadvantages; and (3) the politicization of everyday life, found in symbols and actions that solidify members of the group and link their everyday occurrences to larger social injustices” (Rupp & Taylor 1999, p.365).

The notion of collective identity emerged out of the tradition of New Social Movement Scholarship. New social movement theorists conceive of collective identity

in opposition to the dominant theories. For example, Melucci (1989) argues social movement organizations construct submerged networks of political cultures that are added to everyday life and provide new expressions of collective identity that challenge the dominant order. Pizzorno (1978) argues the purposeful and expressive admittance to others of an individual's subjective feelings, desires, and experiences or collective identity, for the purpose of achieving recognition and influence can be stated as collective action (Taylor & Whittier 1992, p.110).

In recent years, U.S. Social Movement scholars have incorporated collective identity into their analyses. Gamson (1992) argues that when women are subordinated or excluded by restrictive state policies and social practices it prompts them to form a unified group identity with the goal of addressing the common threat. This action serves to shape a collective identity that is oppositional in nature. In some cases the emergence of a unique collective identity encourages women to define themselves in a new light (Reger & Taylor 2002).

Taylor and Whittier's (1992) research on the lesbian feminist communities found the construction of boundaries to distinguish members from non-members within the women's movement. These social movement communities construct an oppositional consciousness based upon cultural and other activities. In addition, much contemporary activism is dependent upon discursive and other cultural strategies with the intention of redefining a challenging group's stance on an issue (Reger & Taylor 2002).

Taylor and Whittier (1992) further argue that in lesbian feminism in the 1970's and 80's, the creation of boundaries between males and females contributed greatly to the kind of oppositional consciousness required for organizing their life around a feminist

collective identity. Therefore, social movement communities cannot create impenetrable boundaries between themselves and the rest of society. They are required to develop methods that serve to interact with the groups and institutions they seek to change. This method of negotiation – or practices of everyday life that affirm the collective identities shared and embraced by members serves to contribute to the formation of a shared group consciousness (Reger & Taylor 2002).

History of Women's Social Movement Organizations and Collective Identity

Several social movement scholars have addressed the role of emotion in shaping collective identity. Rupp & Taylor (1987); Taylor (1989); and Taylor & Whittier (1992) found that women who were involved during the earlier and less endowed periods of feminism's history were motivated to mobilize for women's rights by a deep sense of anger at gender injustices that occurred during those periods. Women are also motivated by positive emotions, such as the joy of participation, the love and comraderie of other women, and the pride of remaining firm in their feminist convictions in the face of strong opposition. Women's social movement organizations have been set apart from other organizations. They have done so by authorizing the concepts of experience and feeling. The term consciousness-raising group began very early in women's social movement organizations. Consciousness-raising groups were organized as forums where women were able to their personal experiences and feelings (Feree & Martin 1995).

Consciousness raising facilitated this in that it served as a supportive social context specifically formed to promote women's understanding of how they have been oppressed as a social group. As other women's social movement organizations emerged

over the next decade, feminist theory and practice gave women's feelings and experiences a important place in feminist epistemology (Ferree & Martin 1995).

The late 1960's and early 1970's saw an organizational revolution among women's social movements. This revolution manifested by drawing together existing and new women's social movement groups. Women's organizations with a variety of motives began to collectively work with each other by pooling resources, blending tactics and strategies, and agreeing on a common political agenda. These women collectively worked for equality. One particular agenda for these new women's movements was working on the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the early 1960's and again in 1975. The ERA was a turning point for the women's movement. It continued to serve as a rallying strategy for women. The women's movement commitment to the ERA was comparable to the early women's suffrage movements (Costain 1992).

Women's grassroots movements have continued to work for justice and equality for the disadvantaged and disenfranchised. One such movement emerged in Central Appalachia, U.S.A during the 1960's. Central Appalachia includes southern West Virginia, southwestern Virginia, western North Carolina, eastern Kentucky, and eastern Tennessee. The women's grassroots movements worked diligently for the impoverished people of this area. Specifically, they worked for the empowerment of the poor women and children in Central Appalachia. The women's grassroots movements worked successfully to return justice, dignity, and empowerment to the poor in this area (Pearson 1999).

Components of Women's Social Movement Collective Identity

Triandis, Chan, Bhawuk, Iwao, and Sinha (1995); and Brewer and Gardner (1996) suggested an enlargement of the primary model of individualism-collectivism to include an individual's close relationships in addition to their identification with in-groups. They argue that there has been considerable discussion concerning the hypothesis that women are more collective, interdependent, relational, and allocentric than men. Allocentric is the inclusion of women's close relationships with others. Allocentric values are similar to collective identity in that women emphasize warmth, interpersonal closeness, sensitivity, and attending to the needs of others. Kessler & McLeod (1984); Nolen-Hoeksema (1987); Robbins & Tanck (1991) and Kenny, Moilanen, Lomax & Brabeck (1993) found women emphasize more importance on harmonious intimate relationships, because these relationships are self-defining for women. Hall (1984) and DePaulo (1992) argue the inclination for women to think about themselves in terms of their relationships with others can help to clarify women's greater nonverbal skills and sensitivity. Women's nonverbal behaviors are effective in communicating emotions and an interest in and concern for others (Madson & Trafimow 2001).

Feree (1992) and Taylor (1995) argue feminist groups are inclined to cause feeling and expression rules that elicit and challenge the dominant ideal of women as nurturers. Morris (1992) and Taylor & Whittier (1992) argue the meaningful and expressive admittance to others of a social movement organizations' common subjective feelings, desires, and experiences, results in not only providing public recognition but also serves as effective tactic for linking women's experiences and disadvantages to structural, cultural, and other systemic causes (Reger & Taylor 2002).

Women participate and form a collective identity in social movements because they can be associated with like-minded women and form networks for emotional support. One woman summed up the importance of this support in response to an interview by stating: “I think that with a lot of women I have talked to, it seems to be about finding other people with similar backgrounds and similar experiences. Suddenly, you realize, I’ve been through that as well, and you think, Oh, it’s not just me” (Kelly & Breinlinger 1996, p.120-1).

Women find close friendships and networks of similar people by joining in a social movement. One woman expressed this succinctly by stating: “friendships that were vital with people who really knew what I was going through” and to the benefits of company with like-minded others—a close network of people who’ve got the same ideas as you and you don’t have to keep arguing with or explaining things to” (Kelly & Breinlinger 1996, p. 121). As a result of these friendships and networks, women find the moral support to work on social movement campaigns and support common goals (Kelly & Breinlinger 1996).

Chafetz & Dworkin (1986); & Margolis (1993) found that with the increase at the different levels of urbanization, industrialization, and education facilitates an increase in third world women’s mobilization. Kandiyoti (1988) argues factors such as women’s rights to land as a primary factor in understanding the breathe of women’s collective identity and resistance to the status quo (Ray & Korteweg 1999).

WOMEN’S SOCIAL MOVEMENT ACTIVISM

The women’s movement in North America in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s was composed of women’s groups with different politics, class, racial backgrounds, and

sexualities. As a result, these early women activists worked in a different political sphere. However, the women's social movement literature, during that time, termed "women" as a group oppressed in both the public and private sectors. Unfortunately women's issues, such as equal pay and political representation were linked in accordance with sexuality, housework, dress, language, media representations, and child raising (Gaskell 2004).

During this time there existed a radical political analysis that treated and endorsed a higher value on consensus and equality rather than on hierarchy and efficiency. This radical political analysis was widely circulated and endorsed. According Taylor & Whittier (1995), the movement began devising new manners of living and the women worked collectively and advocated for equal representation and pay for women (Gaskell 2004).

Many different women's group's demands, in 1967, were responded to by the Canadian government. The Canadian government responded by appointing a Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Florence Bird (named Mrs. John Bird for reference purposes) a journalist was in charge of the Royal Commission. The commission released its report in 1970. Their report comprised mainstream liberal feminism, rather than the politics of the developing women's movement (Gaskell 2004).

The Commission's report resulted in a rallying point for the Canadian women's movement. This was due to the facts that it precisely articulated some of women's issues in a way that contained official sanction. It also initiated and brought about some government resources. Finally, and most importantly, it caused so much public opposition that it served to unite women activists (Gaskell 2004).

Women in Mumbai, India and London, England with their gendered collective identities began movements to assist the most disadvantaged in their communities. In both England and India, these movements organized a series of national conferences. The conferences began in India in 1980 and from 1970 to 1978 in England. The women presented a series of demands by developing joint manifestos. For example, in Pune, India women rallied and joined hands with other social organizations. The result was a manifesto of the women's movement. These women fought for equal pay, joint ownership of property and the resolve of domestic labor as productive work (Barry, Honour, & Palnitkar 2004).

The Women's Liberation Movement of the 1970's resulted in significant changes in policies relating to women and gender equality in Britain at both local and national levels. British legislation that has outlawed discrimination on the basis of sex has become a pivotal part of Britain's political agenda. Also, there is a national child care strategy and a different view of domestic violence. The Women's Liberation Movement in Britain has also brought about changes in the gender composition of its legislative bodies. Consequently, the 1997 general election doubled the number of women MPs at Westminster, and the elections of 1999, resulted in women placed in new tiers of devolved government in Scotland and Wales. In the 1999 elections women were elected to offices in unprecedented numbers (Charles 2004).

Kandiyoti (1991) argues that women's activism for equality should be treated as both intensely local and international between women's social movement organizations in the third world, in which, they are connected to on the other side of the continuum. Women in all areas of the world are grappling with their own histories and collective

identities. Tucker (1993) argues the very existence of European feminism has proven to be difficult for women working both within nationalist and anti-colonialist social movement organizations. Tucker's (1993) reason for this, she argues, is due to the fact that third world women are more easily suspect if they are seen as connected to a movement with imperial power (Ray & Korteweg 1999).

Sperling, Feree, and Risman (2001) have stressed the importance of transnational advocacy networks and a world wide civil society to enact social change. Women's transnational advocacy networks began organizing based on principles of challenging gender hierarchy and improving women's lives. These women work collectively for women's suffrage, protective legislation, prevention of violence against women, and reproductive rights. Although they are several miles apart these women work with a collective identity, as women, for women's rights throughout the world (Sperling, Feree, & Risman 2001).

Rupp (1997) found that during the mid-nineteenth century, women with a variety of interests started interacting internationally. These transnational interactions resulted in the beginning of the first enduring transnational women's social movement organizations during the mid-nineteenth century. While these transnational movements worked and interacted with each other and with the more defined transnational women's social movement organizations, these women formed an international women's movement. They mobilized and fought, particularly after the formation of the League of Nations, to bring women's international issues on the international agenda. These women, by actively working together, served to form a transnational women's collective identity (Taylor & Rupp 2002).

In spite of the fact the women in these transnational organizations rejected the idea of any limitation on the types of women who could participate in the organization, they enthusiastically endorsed a different type of boundary. This boundary was gender. These international bonds of womanhood relied upon the assumption that all women possess and share particular characteristics, discussed above. In so doing, they would naturally join together in women's organizations and they would embrace women's differences from men (Taylor & Rupp 2002).

This discussion of collective identity and women's social movement activism provides the backdrop for the introduction of emotion. In the next section I outline literature addressing the role of emotion in shaping collective identity.

SHARED EMOTIONS AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

The rationalist assumptions of resource mobilization theory have prevented, until recently, the incorporation of emotions into social activism (Gamson 1995; Jasper & Poulsen 1995; Taylor 1996; Goodwin 1997; & Hercus 1999). However, other theoretical work has stressed the affective as well as the cognitive aspects of collective identity (Taylor 1989; Melucci 1996; Taylor 1996; & McAdam 1998). A social movement organization's collective identity can be derived from a source of pride, joy and affection (Taylor & Rupp 2002).

The key underlying foundation of shared emotions may be derived from emotional states experienced outside of the social movement organization. An example is a reaction to a moral shock such as the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings (Anita Hill, a black lawyer accused Clarence Thomas, a black judge, of sexual harassment). A woman who had been watching the hearings stated:

“When the Anita Hill incident took place in this country, I was watching it on television. I felt...rage. It was so blatant and powerful that I needed to be...to partake in a larger experience with it” (Reger 2004, p. 207-8 & 213).

Women, in particular, are more likely than their male counterparts, to describe themselves by using allocentric cognitions that stressed interdependence, friendship, and sensitivity to other activists. Women have also reported a greater proportion of collective cognitions than their male counterparts. Women think about themselves in terms of their relationships with others, including both personal relationships and group identities, more so than men (Madson & Trafimow 2001).

Emotions, such as solidarity, are an important part in women’s social movement organization cultures and feminist collective action. Sinha and Verma (1987) argue this emphasis and attention given to emotion draws on the concept of the feminist standpoint epistemology. This situates women’s experiences at the center of analysis. Feminist scholars have long valued women’s emotions which in turn they value women’s experiences (Madson & Trafimow 2001).

Emotions also play a primary place in the collective identity of the memory of previous social movement organizations. Woliver (1993) argues the experiences of participating in a social movement organization results in memories of injustice and experiences that contribute to the development of subsequent collective action. However, the revival of the new movement requires a new crisis or issue. Lichterman (1996) argues in contrast to the requirement for a new crisis or issue, people who are motivated by personalized commitments are more likely to continue their activism indefinitely (Staggenborg 1998).

Hochschild (1983); Taylor (1996); & Hercus (1999) argue that emotions are contextual and can be connected to larger systems. Taylor & Whittier (1992); Whittier (1995); & Lichterman (1996) argue oppositional emotions, like collective identity, are created through interactive processes found within micro-mobilization contexts and are relayed publicly. They can be challenged and debated, and consequently, are subject to change over time. Also, activists can experience and interpret emotions collectively as well as individually. There to, participants are at liberty to discuss and write about (and disagree with or strengthen) these emotions and their meanings. Consequently, they make sense of and reconstruct emotions collectively through social movement organization practices (Whittier 2001).

Taylor (1995) (1996); and Whittier (2001) argue that emotions aid in the transformation of women to become political activists and concurrently provide structure for the development and managing of social movement organizations. They use the emotion of anger as an example. Hercus (1999) argues anger is a primary emotion that motivates women into collective action and result in their involvement in social movement organizations (Reger & Taylor 2002).

“Emotion Work”

Social movement organizations, in addition to relying upon pre-existing emotions, can facilitate as free spaces wherein emotions can be changed or established. Jasper (1998) found it is within these free spaces that participants can vigorously and collectively re-frame and re-think their beliefs and passions. In addition, Hochschild (1979) found one method of transforming emotions is facilitated through adherence to

“feeling rules”. These “feeling rules” shape activists emotions to fit the social movement organization (Reger 2004, p.207).

“Feeling rules” include specific rules pertaining to how the organizations’ participants should feel about themselves, in addition to how they should manage and express feelings formed by daily encounters with dominant social groups. Hochschild (1979) (1983) termed these rules of meeting or challenging emotional expectations and managing feelings as “emotion work” (Reger 2004, p. 207). On the other side of the dimension are reciprocal emotions. These are directed to other activists and link to the creation of feelings such as friendship, love and loyalty among social movement organizations’ participants (Reger 2004).

Reciprocal emotions may be linked to the maintenance of movement mobilization and organizational participant. Shared and reciprocal emotions serve to create and facilitate a common collective identity through interaction and emotion work. Consequently, social movement organizations, and the free spaces within, serve to facilitate the creation of shared and reciprocal emotions, establish feeling rules, and prompt participants’ emotion work (Reger 2004).

Emotion work is frequently discussed in a micro manner. However, it can also be influenced by organizational, meso, or level factors. A social movement organization’s strategies, goals, and ideologies can mold the emotion work done within an SMO. Taylor (1996) illustrates this by giving an example of how postpartum depression groups transform depression, shame and fear into anger as a vehicle to mobilize collective action (Rupp & Taylor 1999 & Reger 2004).

Hercus (1999) found women can emotionally negotiate a feminist identity during

moving in and out of women's movement organizations. Emotion work is critically important to women's involvement in social movement organizations and to their collective identities. In summary, women's social movement organizations have resulted from a sense of collective identity based upon emotion work (Rupp & Taylor 1999 & Reger 2004).

Emotion Cultures

Social movement organizations are started, in part, by the desire to transform negative and stigmatized identities that elicit shame, guilt, and self-hatred into positive and valued identities. Taylor & Rupp (1993); Marx Ferre & Martin (1995); & Taylor (1996) in researching and examining women's social movement organizations, argue that these organizations frequently form emotion cultures. These emotion cultures conform to a feminist thinking by treating emotional expressiveness and caring nurturant personal relationships as a primary factor (Taylor & Rupp 2002).

Taylor & Rupp (2002) drew from social constructionist theories to use the concept of emotion culture. Gordon (1981, 1990); Hochschild (1983); Thoits (1990); & Barbalet (1998) found emotion cultures can be perceived as emotions influenced by larger historical and cultural processes that serves to aid in understanding how women in major transnational women's social movement organizations, from the late 19th century through WWII, achieved and constructed solidarity across international boundaries (Taylor & Rupp 2002).

These transnational women's social movement organizations provide a useful and worthwhile case for analyzing the relationship between emotion and collective action. The international women's social movement organization was not easy to form during

this time. The world was ravaged by war, depression, revolution, and the beginning of fascism. However, these women who were members of the international women's organizations succeeded in forging international love in the face of national hatreds (Taylor & Rupp 2002).

Whittier (2001) found women employing emotional strategies in a social movement organization formed against child sexual abuse. An example of this emotional strategy is a forty-year old woman who went on television and told of her horrific experience of physical and sexual child abuse. She periodically weeps during the interview. The result of this woman's interview and other women who have suffered physical and sexual abuse, a social movement organization was formed against this horrific crime (Whittier 2001).

The female activists in this social movement organization devised and publicly presented oppositional emotions as part of their strategies to bring about social change for victims of physical and sexual abuse of children. These public emotional displays developed from processes of emotional reconstruction and politicization that occurred within social movement organizations and their communities. However, the diverse contexts, within which this social movement organization operated, possessed their own emotional cultures (Whittier 2001).

Anger and Collective Identity

When the emotional component is recognized during activists mobilization, the emotion of anger appears significantly in their collective action. Gamson (1995) argues a pivotal component of collective action is a perceived feeling of injustice. According to psychologists injustice is not solely a cognitive or intellectual feeling about what is just

and fair. Psychologists term this feeling a ‘hot cognition’ that is submersed with emotion. Therefore, collective action frames provide, not only, an intellectual interpretation of an injustice, but they also condone the expressions of moral indignation and righteous anger aimed at what they interpret as an injustice (Hercus 1999).

Scholars of emotion literature have found that anger can facilitate a collective identity and lead to collective action. Their appraisals of the link between unfairness and emotional support can serve to promote collective action, because they promote action-oriented emotions like anger. Also, social opinion support can result in the increased level of anger by validating other participants opinions about their collective disadvantage (van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach 2004).

Whittier (1995) found emotional processes, such as collective anger, are not only a part of how people form their own oppositional feelings; they also form emotional labor. They do so because they encourage politicized emotional responses in other participants. For example, an open display of the emotions connected to trauma can trigger similar feelings in others, because they are reminded of similar experiences. Also, they cause a feeling of anger. Social movement activists have discussed how it is sometimes easier to feel angry about someone else’s trauma than their own (Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta 2001).

The pivotal point of anger that develops into collective action is the result of its tie with action. The central point of anger is its mobilization of energy to overcome a barrier. Harrington and Flint (1997), in their research of class passivity found anger, as the most agentic emotion, is an imperative component of efficacy. They argue that for

efficacy, which as the belief of the attainable possibility of achievement for change, a person must know, feel, and be aware of the relationship between the two (Hercus 1999).

This also applies to women's collective action. Fraser (1996) found the energizing contagion of anger results in primary facet to causing social change. She bases her argument on an article of her involvement and working with survivors of sexual violence. She further argues that working with sexual violence involves mobilizing the force of the survivor's submerged feeling of anger and assisting them to direct it on the perpetrator(s) who committed the violent act and on the social forces that form the existence of the perpetrator(s) (Hercus 1999).

In addition, Taylor (1996) argued that women's social movement organizations work to change destructive emotions such as shame, fear, and depression into anger. Taylor's (1996) research was based upon a post-partum depression self-help women's movement. She specified that there is a connection between gender inequality and women's motherhood experiences. The post-partum depression women's social movement organization served as a vehicle for members (with their collective identity) as a method of dealing with the emotional feeling of anger (Hercus 1999).

Summary

This review of literature has explored the importance of collective identity in social movement activism. Specifically, I have explored the role of collective identity in women's activism. I then highlighted the importance of emotion in shaping collective identity. In the next section I address the literature that will inform my analysis.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

I draw heavily from literature on collective identity to shape my analysis.

Collective identity serves as a useful and conceptual tool for comprehending the way in which social injustices are generated and transformed into social movement activism. Several analysts have emphasized the importance in creating shared meaning in order to act collectively as opposed to individually to confront problems. Thus, the emergence and maintenance of collective identity is critical to social movement activism.

Taylor and Whittier (1992) state “identity construction processes are essential to grievance interpretation in all facets of collective activism” (cited in Pelak 2002, p.95). They further proposed three factors that are essential in the construction of a collective identity. These are boundaries, shared consciousness, and negotiations. They go on to define each of these factors. Boundaries consist of the social, psychological, and physical structures that manifest the differences between subordinates and dominants. A shared consciousness is indicative of the interpretive frameworks employed by a challenging group to state and realize its interests. Finally, negotiations are the symbolic and everyday actions that activists of subordinate groups employ to resist and restructure existing facets of domination (Pelak 2002, p.95).

I will draw heavily from the conceptual theme related to collective identity to examine the Stillwater League of Women Voters. The boundaries of the League consist of the shared identity of the League in respect to their respect for but distancing from groups they perceive as denying justice to disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups. They develop these boundaries in order to be more effective in their work for social, structural, and psychological justice for these groups. The structural setting that they

devise consists of an arena where these groups can be heard, such as in non-disruptive and peaceful protests.

The second dimension of collective identity theory is a shared consciousness. The members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters' shared consciousness is that of belonging to a movement wherein they share the views, ideology, values, and concerns of the other members. The members join the League because they choose to work and be associated with people who share their feelings and attitudes towards social and political issues. They also feel comfortable in expressing their opinions even though they may differ and/or disagree with the other members. Herein, members are aware that their differing views will not be admonished or discarded. Instead, they will be welcomed and embraced by other members of the League.

The final dimension of collective identity theory is negotiation. This is where the opinions of all League members can be voiced and heard. Collectively, the League members use their expertise of research, lobbying legislative bodies, and reporting on studied issues to advocate change and justice for subordinate groups. They do so in a peaceful and concerted manner. Everyone's voice is heard and the voice is more effective when negotiations are conducted collectively, as opposed to individually.

Collective identity theory serves as an effective analytical tool for this case study. Furthermore, I highlight the role that emotion plays in maintaining the groups' collective identity. The members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters rely upon a collective identity that enables them to work in a concerted manner to accomplish their goals. Also, their collective identity reassures the members of the League that they have a shared understanding of the work that they do and the injustices they seek to rectify peacefully.

I also examine the importance of collective identity in shaping social and political activism.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the primary reasons for women's participation in the work of the Stillwater League of Women Voters?
- 2) What are the key components of collective identity among the women in the Stillwater League of Women Voters?
- 3) What role does emotion play in the development and maintenance of collective identity in the Stillwater League of Women Voters?
- 4) What are the key factors shaping social and political activism among members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Because there is lack of research on the importance of emotion in creating collective identity, I chose to use a descriptive, exploratory case study approach for this study . The exploratory approach allowed the respondents' stories to be grounded in richly detailed narratives of their lived experiences in the context of the Stillwater League of Women Voters (Patten 2002).

Social science exploratory case studies are broad-ranging, purposive, systematic, prearranged undertakings designed to maximize discovery of generalizations leading to an area of social or psychological life. Further, it is a distinctive method of conducting a scientific process, a special methodological approach and a pervasive personal orientation of the explorer. As a result of my exploratory case study, emergent generalizations will be varied. They include the descriptive facts, folk concepts, cultural artifacts, structural arrangements, social processes, and beliefs and belief systems normally found in there (Strauss 1987; Schwandt 1997; Stebbins 2001; Denzin & Lincoln 2003; Berg 2001 & 2004; & Heaton 2004).

Obtaining data for an exploratory case study involves utilizing a number of techniques. These can be life histories, documents, oral histories, in-depth interviews and participant observation (Berg 2001 & 2004). I focused on in-depth interviews and participant observation. In addition, I analyzed relevant Stillwater League of Women

Voter's documents and artifacts. These multiple methods gave me a broad overview of the League's activities, as well as their maintenance of a shared collective identity.

BENEFITS

Shaugnessy & Zechmeister (1999) state the scientific benefit of an exploratory case study is in its ability to open the way for discoveries. The benefits of case studies include objectivity and generalizability. Objectivity is closely linked with reproducibility or replication. Herein, I clearly articulated what areas have been investigated and in what manner. I presented my findings from the three methods of data collection in-depth interviews, collection of documents and artifacts, and participant observations in a manner that will provided depth, insight, and reasons for the importance of emotion in creating collective identity in the Stillwater League of Women Voters (Berg 2004).

The second scientific benefit of case studies is their generalizability. Case studies, when properly undertaken, should not only fit the specific individual, group, or event researched, but also generally provide a comprehension of similar types of individuals, groups, or events. The logic behind this generalizability has to do with the fact that few human behaviors are unique, idiosyncratic, and spontaneous. If this were true, it would be useless to do any type of survey research on an aggregate group. In sum, if researchers accept the fact that human behavior is predictable-a necessary assumption for all behavior science research is to accept that case studies have scientific benefits (Berg 2001).

I conducted an exploratory case study on the Stillwater League of Women Voters which is a grassroots social movement organization. The exploratory case study of this organization, which involved the systematic gathering of data, allowed me to investigate

insight into the life of this organization. This exploratory case study will be an extremely useful method for researching the relationships, behaviors, attitudes, motivations, and stressors in the organization's settings (Berg 2001).

This allowed me to determine the importance of emotion in creating collective identity in the Stillwater League of Women Voters. As stated, this was accomplished by in-depth interviews, participant observations, and the collection of artifacts, documents, and literary materials.

DATA COLLECTION

NON-PROBABILITY PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

I used purposive sampling to begin my research. Qualitative research often uses non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling is a category of non-probability snowball sampling. By using non-probability snowball sampling I did not base my research on probability theory. Instead, efforts were undertaken to 1) create a quasi-random sample and 2) to have a clear understanding about what larger groups of the sample may reflect. Further, non-probability snowball samples offer the benefits of not requiring a list of all possible elements in a full population. It also offers the ability to access otherwise highly sensitive or difficult to research study populations (Strauss 1987; Strauss & Corbin 1990; Schwandt 1997; & Berg 2001 & 2004).

I used my existing organizational ties with the Stillwater League of Women Voters to select subjects who represented the organization. Although purposive sampling has a serious limitation in that it lacks wide generalizability, it is highly used by qualitative researchers (Berg 2001). I conducted a purposive sample of twenty people from the Stillwater League of Women Voters.

SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

IN-DEPTH SEMI-STANDARDIZED INTERVIEWS

The primary form of data collection included in-depth semi-standardized interviews with twenty people from the Stillwater League of Women Voters. Ten of the interviewees had served on the Board of the Stillwater League of Women Voters. While a substantial number of interviewees were involved in leadership of the organization, I was confident that there was a wide representation of members. Semi-standardized interviews involved the implementation of a number of pre-determined questions and special topics. The questions were posed to the interviewees in a systematic and consistent order. However, these types of interviews afforded me the freedom to probe for more data from the interviewees. Herein, I used probes to go beyond the responses to my prepared standardized questions (Berg 2004).

Respondents were asked a total of twenty-two open-ended questions (See Appendix A). The questions fell under the following headings: basic information, League campaigns, core values/principles, strategies and tactics, recruitment, group solidarity, and demographics (general background information). I used open-ended questions and probes to allow the interviewees the privilege of having their voices heard. They were interviewed at a location convenient for them and free of distractions. The interviews were tape-recorded and lasted approximately forty-five minutes to an hour. I maintained the interviewees' confidentiality by using pseudo-names and the tapes were only be heard and recorded by me. Also, the interviewees signed an Informed Consent Form before each interview that adhered to Oklahoma State University's Internal Review Board (See Appendix B). Upon completion of the study, I erased the tapes.

DOCUMENTS AND ARTIFACTS

I collected literary materials, newspaper articles, historical materials, and letters containing personal communications between members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters. I did so simultaneously while conducting the in-depth semi-standardized interviews. This afforded me valuable information as to how the members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters express themselves to each other.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

The final type of data collection procedure conducted was participant observation. I attended numerous types of functions conducted by the Stillwater League of Women Voters. I carefully observed the legislative forums, unit meetings, board meetings, and social events pertaining to the League. I requested permission from the Stillwater League's president before conducting my participant observations. Participant observation afforded me the advantage of observing how the different contexts unfolded naturally. It allowed me to observe behavior and meanings as they occurred in their natural contexts. Finally, participant observation allowed me to observe the League's group interaction (Berg 2001).

DATA ANALYSIS

In qualitative research data is continually analyzed during the research process. Upon completion and transcription of all the interviews, I searched for common themes from the data. These common themes afforded me the ability to discern what was important to the formation of the League of Women Voter's collective identity. I coded each theme and compiled them in an organized manner.

Due to the fact that I was unaware of what the responses to my interview questions would contain, I used open coding for my analysis of their responses. I began by using a line-by-line coding scheme. After I coded the responses, I developed specific categories for each response. I made certain that these categories remained both exhaustive and mutually exclusive. I condensed the categories into specific emerging themes and used them for my final data analysis (Babbie 1995).

I conducted similar analysis of organization documents and artifacts. I took copious notes during my participant observations and analyzed my notes to also reveal common themes. I compared the common themes from all three types of data collection to determine what is most important to the League of Women Voter's members. I merged common themes from all three types of data collection procedures. This achieved not only triangulation, but explained the importance of emotion in creating collective identity in the Stillwater League of Women Voters. In the final phase of the data analysis, the interviewees were sent a draft of their responses to solicit feedback from their responses to determine accuracy on the part of the interviewer. This process, termed, "member checking", was used to verify credibility of the data analysis, which is also a form of trustworthiness (Patten 2002)

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

INTRODUCTION

The League of Women Voters' name was adopted when the organization was founded in February 1920, shortly after ratification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution by which women were given the right to vote. The League's purpose was to continue the participation in public affairs by those who had worked for over fifty years toward the achievement of suffrage for women.

In the following sections I will analyze and discuss the data gathered from in depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The first section focuses on components of collective identity for the Stillwater League of Women Voters. The second section addresses social and political activism. Throughout my analysis I'll pay close attention to "emotion work" in the formation of a collective identity and social and political activism.

COMPONENTS OF A COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Collective identity has many components. Jasper (1998) found that a collective identity is not only the formation of a cognitive boundary, but it can be created by emotion. In this section, I will present data from indepth interviews that illustrate the creation of a collective identity among members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters. These

components include: identifying with like-minded women, the need for a separate identity from husbands, giving women a voice, and shared ideals, goals, and ethics.

Identifying with like-minded women

Several of the members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters expressed the need to be associated with like-minded women for joining the Stillwater League of Women Voters. By like-minded women, they referred to other women who are not afraid to express their opinions and are willing to speak out publicly for the betterment of society. They wanted to be associated with women who think for themselves and work towards making the world a better place. An example of this was expressed by one of following respondents who wanted to be with other politically-minded women:

A friend was mayor of Lincoln, Nebraska when we moved there, and she also ran for governor. However, her career started with the League of Women Voters and a League member brought me into the League and I've always been politically minded. I've marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in Lincoln, Nebraska for different causes. I marched down Pennsylvania Avenue for ERA (equal rights amendment).

Another member stated that she became a member of the Stillwater League of Women Voters because the members are like-minded in their care about issues and people in general. She states care collectively rather than by one individual:

Well, I just think they're intelligent and interesting and they just seem to care about society. You know they care about things, care about people, care about issues and I admire that. And I was going to say early on I remember that I actually canvassed, it was a part of financial canvass. I

think one of our old members was the chair of that and I did pretty well. It surprised me because I always thought I'd be way too shy to ask for money. But I wasn't at all.

One respondent expressed that she wanted to be associated with other dynamic women. She was a professional woman and she seeks out organizations that meet her intellectual needs. She stated: I think I just read about it in the paper. I was new in Stillwater and I wanted to be associated with dynamic women. I knew that they studied issues and so I went to a meeting.

Another respondent enjoyed being with women who thought like she did.

Well, from what I can tell people are pretty much on the same wave. Most of the people are on the pretty much the same wave length and that's one reason I've been involved. It's comfortable to be around because most of them think like I do.

Need for separate identity

Several of the respondents stated they needed a separate identity from their husbands and home life. They joined the League to create their own identity and thereby enrich their personal life on a separate level. One of the respondents stated this explicitly,

Well, my husband was employed at OSU and I wanted a separate identity. And because I was of the age I was I knew that was going to be difficult to do: he had already lived here for 15 years and he had an established identity, and I was new to the community and therefore, I didn't want to go the OSU path.

Another respondent stated she joined the Stillwater League of Women Voters as a means for an identity other than being a mother. She stated:

I knew someone who was a League member and I wanted to find some activity outside the home since I was home all day with three small children. And the League sounded like a good way to achieve an identity separate from being a mother. So I joined. The League has afforded me opportunities to achieve a separate identity. I have been fairly active in the League. I've been on the League's Board lots of times both as program chairman and as committee chairman on several League studies.

Another respondent expressed these feelings along the same line as the previous respondent. It was a relief for her to be associated with something other than her husband and children. She stated: "When we moved here, my youngest child was nine months old. My other two children were in school and someone from my church informed me that the church provided what they called Mother's Day Out. Therefore, when another member of the League asked me to attend a League's meeting, I would leave my children at the church, and go to the meeting. This provided me a way to be away from home and have a separate identity from being solely a wife and mother."

Giving women a voice

The majority of the women in the League of Women Voters expressed that by identifying with the League they could project a stronger voice than with other organizations. They could do so effectively without the requirement of affiliation to a particular political party. They felt empowered by the League to accomplish the League's objectives of fostering education in citizenship and supporting needed

legislation, encouraging interest in government and national problems, promoting participation in the civic life of the United States, and stimulating activity in public affairs. They were particularly interested in registering and voting in every election. Several of the respondents expressed their need for having a “collective voice” and giving a “voice” to women via these objectives. One interviewee stated:

Well, you have more of a voice if there’s more people than just one person. Well, I think it’s just giving a voice to what our programs are, what our beliefs are, and letting people know that.

Along these same lines, another respondent expressed the value of everyone having a voice and expressing that voice both individually and collectively for the betterment of women and society as a whole. She stated:

Well right, if you feel strongly about something, it’s very difficult to plunge ahead and do anything as an *individual*. But if you have a group working toward it, it’s much much better. I think it’s more effective in trying to get something done.

Another respondent expressed how the League’s strategy of working together in a concerted effort and by employing their strategy of consensus when studying issues the League is working on allows everyone to have a voice in decision making.

Consensus, right and we work together and try to educate people who aren’t with the majority. Consensus assures that even those with a minority opinion are heard when we study issues. Everybody has a voice.

The Stillwater League of Women Voters host a legislative reception at the Stillwater Public Library every January. The public is welcomed to attend and voice

their concerns to their legislators. They also have what is termed a “Legislative Day” at the State Capitol of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City. One respondent expressed how important it is for the citizens to be able to participate in these events and how it can give not only women, but all citizens a voice in governmental affairs. She stated:

They took the women in this group of people to the Capitol. They met their state legislators. They learned about the League and about voting. Basically it was to help them to vote. Having a *voice* in government is so important.

The final resonating themes of components of a collective identity in the Stillwater League of Women Voters centers on shared ideals, ethics, and goals. Respondents expressed they valued this component of the League.

Shared ideals, ethics, and goals

Nearly all of the respondents expressed a collective sense of the League’s shared ideals, ethics, and goals. They place great importance on educating people so they will have a better future. They also want to facilitate intelligent voting and political awareness. The process of consensus is vital to the League and is one of the group’s main principles. Consensus in the League means agreement among a substantial number of members (representative of the membership as a whole) reached after sustained study and group discussion. It is not only a simple majority nor necessarily unanimity. One of the respondents expressed her admiration for the League’s ideals, ethics, and goals. When talking about a new fruit drink being imported from South America, which serves as an antioxidant. She stated:

I just want to make sure the company is ethical and is good to where they're taking these berries from (an antioxidant juice derived from the berries of trees in South America). I don't want to strip another country like oil companies have done and some of these other companies. That's my biggest concern.

Another respondent expressed the sense of collective goals with the League and admiration for the fact that the League has clear goals and objectives. She stated: "Well, in Stillwater, I think we have a lot of women who are connected with OSU or they're not just busy people. They're people who have *goals* and *objectives* and they want to get things done!"

One respondent expressed that it is a typical objective and goal of the League to inform citizens of the issues affecting not only women, but all of society, in an ethical manner. She stated:

It is a typical League kind of interest. It involves women's access to government and political systems and issues that face women. And I'm really not an expert on who and how they select those but those that would have credentials that would be involved in it. It would generally be something that affects female voters, though not exclusively, but groups of people who might be underserved in voting opportunities or ease of voting, and that kind of thing, and I think the main objective is to inform voters.

As stated earlier, “the principle of consensus” is very important to the members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters. One respondent expressed her admiration for the League’s process of consensus. She stated:

To start laying the ground work for either what we need to do to get the study going or even projects and things of that nature. Then the group will meet with the general membership, either at our luncheon meetings or at our evening meetings, and continue that until we’re at the point where we think we have done what needs to be done. The end result of this will be to say, “We’re going to reach consensus and consensus does not mean that their will be unanimous approval. It means the gist of the feeling of the group is such and that we’ve always said. You don’t have to totally agree with everything. You just have to generally say that’s what you were sort of thinking.”

Another respondent expressed how the process of consensus is not only ideal and ethical, but includes all of the members. A consensus model is encouraged in order to study the issues at length, and take it seriously, with the goal of the advancement of rights for society. She stated:

Well it’s generally a committee effort...This would be my experience with it. They look at issues that confront the community and nation and the political environment. By consensus they determine which issues they will pinpoint and look at most clearly. Very often we’ll work with other entities as we to study issues and politically, topical areas.

Several of the respondents expressed the admiration and agreement with the manner of consensus, and the fact that it is done in a collective and concerted manner.

One respondent summed it up as follows:

And from studying the issue, we can, in a collective and concerted way, then determine recommendations and positions. I love that part of it, taking positions on something, not party positions, but positions on a studied issue, and not just talking about it with people, but actually studying it. From study materials, questions are developed to ask and so on. It's an educated and intelligent way of studying government and issues I think they do the best. I think the League of Women Voters does the best of all groups for this.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM

The members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters participate and identify collectively with society and politics. They work to get the vote out and they hope to make society a better place. In this section, I discuss the social and political activism of the Stillwater League of Women Voters. I examine how the Stillwater League of Women Voters, as a grassroots social movement, can serve as a free space wherein the members' emotions can be transformed or generated into action.

Jasper (1998) found that it is within this free space where people can actively and collectively re-frame and re-think their beliefs and passions. Hochschild (1979) (1983) termed the process of meeting or challenging emotional expectations and managing feelings as "emotion work" (Reger, 2004, p. 207). The main areas I will focus upon in

this section are: working for the benefit of the disadvantaged and disenfranchised, networking, and collective emotions towards action and while working together.

Working for the benefit of the disadvantaged and disenfranchised.

All of the respondents highlighted the importance of working for the betterment of the disadvantaged and disenfranchised. One of the League's campaigns focuses on prison sentencing. The League's position on those in prison and sentencing is that the primary purpose of imposing criminal sanctions is for the protection of the public, and they believe that rehabilitation is one means of achieving that purpose. They believe sentences should be uniform throughout the state. Furthermore, they believe there should be no gross disparity between sentences imposed for the same types of crime. They argue that sentences should be fair, provide certainty for the convicted, and be linked in a reasonable way to the crime.

They advocate that sentences be imposed within specific guidelines established by the legislature or by a sentencing commission. They argue that judges should be accountable for imposing sentences within these guidelines. They also advocate a wide variety of alternative sentences closely tied to community resources and involvement should be used. The League also believes that because they are most effective in economic and human terms for the protection of society, alternatives to incarceration must be an integral part of the sentencing process. Lastly, the League's position is that the community has the *responsibility* to be involved at all stages of the criminal justice system, including study, planning, education, and policy making. The community should provide support for a sound restitution program, reintegration of violators into community life, and prevention programs.

During the time of my gathering of this data, the State of Oklahoma, requested the local Leagues to work to determine what services are available to women who are released from prison. Several of the respondents expressed their thoughts and feelings about this particular study. One respondent felt a specific *connection* to the Oklahoma prison system because from her own personal experience of having had two family members who had been in prison for drug use. She stated:

I must see what else I can do and meet with them. And that's the one on women prisoners re-entering society. I am very interested in that because we've had problems in our family with, you know, drug abuse and incarceration and the problem people have coming back. We have all sons and we know firsthand how hard it is not just for women but those poor people coming out of jail or prison and getting a job. It's terrible. It's just so outrageous. It isn't Christian-like. We call ourselves a Christian country. We come to this country, but we're just so punishing instead of rehabilitating and trying to help people to become better citizens.

Another respondent expressed her concern for the re-entry study of women who have been incarcerated and admired the League for taking on such a study. She stated:

I guess you'd call the support system that is or is not available to a woman returning to a community after having been incarcerated. This is going to be a two-year study. This is the first of the two years so they're doing studies on what support is available. And then, in connection with that, how do these women about these support services. If they do learn about

them; how can they avail themselves of this and how affective is it? So I think it will be a rather interesting program to follow through on.

The members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters care deeply about these re-entry and incarceration programs, particularly the one's concerning services for women who have been in prison. One respondent expressed her feelings for women with children re-entering society with no means of support. She stated:

And how you go on an interview and that type of thing. Housing seems to be a problem, especially if they happen to be single mothers. And that many times is the case. Child care, while they're either trying to get the education they need, or the job that they need, or whatever it is.

This same respondent expressed how the League felt unanimously on how important it was do to the study on the re-entry of incarcerated women into society. The collective action originated with the State League, but it spreads throughout the local Leagues and the members feel passionately about it being a worthwhile endeavor for the organization. She stated:

Nobody seems to recognize there is a problem concerning re-entry of incarcerated women into society. We didn't seem to be able to get any attention, so the Tulsa League took that on as a project and then they thought it was such a worthy one that they brought it to the state convention. And the members of the other Leagues in the state agreed that these are problems that are not unique to Tulsa. They're universal. I think as a group, the Oklahoma group probably would not be able to swing the entire League of Women Voters of the U.S. in that direction, but I

wouldn't doubt that they'll talk to people about that at the national convention. And it wouldn't surprise me that somebody somewhere will pick that up and say; Hey that's something that we can help with. Maybe they'll make it go even further.

Another area in which the League is highly involved is in educating the public. They are particularly interested in education for those who are disenfranchised and disadvantaged. The League of Women Voters takes a strong position on education in Oklahoma. They believe there needs to be support of strengthened financial and administration structures which would provide for quality education in Oklahoma. They believe that improved financing is the key to providing equal opportunity for quality education for all children in Oklahoma. Further, they believe the state should assume the major responsibility for financing common school education.

The League believes the state should also assume the responsibility for improving and equalizing financial resources among the school districts. The major portion of financing for common schools should come from state funds moving away from a base of ad valorem taxes. They argue that overall tax reform must be achieved with continued improvement of assessment practices and the removal of constitutional limitations on millage.

The League also believes that improved financing, accountability of expenditures, and more efficient financial resources are the basis to providing quality higher education in Oklahoma. State government should assume the primary responsibility for financing state institutions of higher education.

One League member, who is a minister, felt very strongly about the importance of an educated public for all people, particularly the disadvantaged and disenfranchised. The following are excerpts of her views on the importance and value of the League's ensuring education for all people:

The League takes on a project because they feel it's important, like education. We have to have an educated society because it makes the world, this country, better if we're educated. That's prime importance, as far as I'm concerned, to have a good education. Well I believe the major core value is to make this a better place to live.

Respondents explained that one of the primary strategies of the Stillwater League of Women Voters is educating the public in order that people can be well-informed and educated before voting on issues and/or candidates. For example, a respondent explained:

Well, from what I can remember, I guess the League's primary strategy is the education of voters. That's our main thing. Something that the League has just started to work on, and that I haven't been a part of, is DHS is having classes for women that are involved in DHS. They're trying to help and educate them, so they all can be on their own and not be dependent on the state. And our League was asked by DHS to come up with an educational tool to take to these women. And the first class was held last week and it was very successful.

A respondent elaborated on how the League implements the strategy of making certain that the public is educated and informed on issues before they vote.

We have tools that we use. We have signs that we put up. We put signs on bulletin boards and posters and that sort of thing in order to educate people. You know you try to educate people from several different aspects: from visual, audio, audio, and whatever.

Networking

By being a member of the Stillwater League of Women Voters, the members are afforded the opportunity to network with other social movements. Several of the members belong to other organizations that, like the League, work for the betterment of all citizens. One respondent belongs to a neighborhood alliance that advocates for safe neighborhoods for all of the public. She stated: “Yes, I belong to other organizations. One in particular is the neighborhood alliance. They try to be advocates for safe neighborhoods.”

The members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters are comprised of empowered women and men. They are people who work for the betterment of all people and the League’s influence spurs them on to higher positions. One respondent, in particular, was a city commissioner. She stated: “Okay, one right now that’s really taking off, most of my time is the commission, Oklahoma Commission, on status of women. I’m the immediate past Chair of that commission and we’re preparing for a summit on the 28th of April.”

This same respondent talked about the importance and value of the networking influence of the League of Women Voters: “You know what I’m saying, because of this group. There may be a subgroup and so the networking there or the pipeline. It just gets stretched and stretched and stretched.”

The respondent goes on to state that there is a “spiritual connection” to belonging to the League of Women Voters. Several members are also members of Church Women United (an ecumenical group) that works towards the betterment of all citizens. She explained:

And it’s (Church Women United) an ecumenical group that we try to pull together something that is going to be of interest to everybody, number one. We’re all connected through some church.

Through their networking, League members become involved in numerous organizations that work for the benefit of all society. One such organization is “Habitat for Humanity,” which was started initially by former President Jimmy Carter. The organization solicits volunteers to help build houses for people who are of low income. The people for whom the houses are built agree to do approximately three hundred hours of community service to pay for their new home. It has been highly successful. Once the house is built, another group, called The Family Support Group, helps the family with the initial essentials for moving into their new home. One member of the League of Women Voters talked about her involvement in both of these organizations:

I am more involved right now with Habitat for Humanity. I’m on the Board. That just means that I go to the monthly meeting. I also happen to be on the finance committee of that group and so there are times that we get a little more involved in the operation of the organization. And I also help when they have what they call “The Family Support Group.” This is when a new family moves into the house and we have a welcoming event to their new house. There are other members of “The Family Support

Group” that have more interaction on a day in day out basis with families than I do, but I help when I can on those.

Collective emotions and League Activities

Several respondents of the League expressed the importance of *passion* related to activism on various issues. They noted that when members feel *passionately* about an issue they come together and work on it collectively. A respondent stated: “There’s some people in the League who are passionate about issues and develop a great deal of expertise.” Another respondent notes how passion brought members together:

It seems to me that some of the women will have a passion for something and she will involve the League of Women Voters. If they’re *like-minded* or they feel that’s an appropriate thing for us to do, they agree to join in action.

Another respondent discussed how members feel passionate about certain issues and how that passion invigorates their political activism.

Oh, all organizations that have members certainly when you have a lot of public issues that are passionate issues. And that would certainly lead people to be more involved in politics in general and certainly might come to an organization like the League more but we’re not just one issue or an event organization. We’ve looked at wide spans of time and wide spans of issues.

Another respondent stated how the issues that the League works on are *emotional* for her. She explained that this passion is facilitated by being involved with a large group of women. She explained: “If everyone is running and jumping into the Lake, you

know, I'll run and jump in there too. But it's an emotional thing with me. I have to be very passionate about it."

One respondent expressed that she felt all sorts of emotions while working on projects with the members of the League. She stated:

Energized. There are 5 basic emotions...And I've probably have felt all of those at some point. I felt *mad* when I learn more about the undoing of Roe vs. Wade and I see how it's being done. I feel *bad* from the fact that the educational study didn't come to fruition. I feel *sad* with the level of state support in education. I feel *glad* when we're able to be heard on a national level as we were on the civil liberties, the "Patriot Act". Even though we didn't win, we were *heard*. We were acknowledged. I think I've had every emotion and then when I saw the video that was made on the beginning of the League about the suffragettes, I was just so proud...

Other respondents of the Stillwater League of Women Voters expressed their emotions of "pride" and "frustration" while working on projects with the League. They felt pride by working on a worthwhile project and frustration when a project was unsuccessful. One respondent explained the contrast in pride and frustration:

I feel a lot of pride working with the League, both from its history of concern about community and its devotion to participatory democracy. I feel frustration if there are not enough people that are willing to give the time and effort to these important concerns.

Another respondent noted:

Well there's times, I guess, I've felt frustrated. I guess that's an emotion, in trying to get things done. And when they try to lobby. I mean, that's another big thing we do is lobby our legislators. And then they don't vote the way we want them to.

Finally, a respondent acknowledged the importance of pride:

We're working right now with making walkways, trails in Stillwater, and we're just helping out other groups. But when those trails are put together it's going to be really special, to have done, to have had a part in that. I guess *pride* is another emotion.

OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter has indicated that the members of the Stillwater League of Women work towards achieving goals and objectives in a concerted and collective effort. They are in agreement with the strategies and tactics of education and consensus that the League employs to carry out their work. They are stimulated by working with like-minded people. Those with a need for a separate identity seek the League for that purpose. Nearly all of the members are professional by nature and all feel a sense of pride by working with their counterparts on projects.

They are very concerned with what occurs in society, particularly with the disenfranchised and disadvantaged citizens. They are motivated to collective action with the same ideals and ethics. The members belong to other organizations and have networked to these organizations and from them to the Stillwater League of Women Voters.

Finally, the role of emotion is linked to the members collective identity. These emotions range from feeling passionately towards a project to a sense of pride while working with the other members and their accomplishments. Some have felt frustration and anger when certain projects did not come to fruition as they had planned. Consequently, emotion appears to play a significant link to the creation of a collective identity for the members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Since the 1990's social movement scholars such as Gamson (1992) and Jasper (1998) have begun to explore the link between emotion and collective identity. Concurrently, academic scholarship on this topic has not kept up with the rising interest in this area. In the introduction to this thesis, I argued that emotions may be linked to the development and work of social movement organizations. Specifically, the emotions engendered over various injustices can contribute to the development of collective identity and the formation of social movements.

I employed a theoretical framework of collective identity theory as a lens to conduct this exploratory case study on the Stillwater League of Women Voters. Work on collective identity is largely found within new social movement scholarship. Thus, this intellectual trajectory served as the guidance influence in my analytical choices. I also presented literature on the importance of emotion and its link to collective identity in social movements. This allowed me to explore the concept of emotion and how it may be linked to collective identity in the Stillwater League of Women Voters.

This exploratory case study utilized a qualitative methodological approach. The research methods included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. While multiple methods of data collection were employed, the primary data for

this project came from in-depth interviews. The twenty interviews were semi-structured in format. Participant observation and document analysis served to enhance and complement the data from the interviews.

The findings of this case study fell into two broad areas. The first section explored the components of collective identity with the Stillwater League of Women Voters. The key findings centered on: identifying with like-minded women, the need for a separate identity from husbands, giving women a voice, and shared ideals, goals, and ethics. The second section addressed social and political activism. Here, I identified three core themes: working for the benefit of the disadvantaged and disenfranchised, networking, and collective emotions and League activities.

The findings related to the components of collective identity indicated a strong need for an outlet from home based activity. Most of the respondents were well educated and they wanted to be associated with similar other women. Being primarily professional women, they indicated that they were well aware of their collective power in giving women a “voice” to express the concerns of the Stillwater League of Women Voters. Also, these women were very concerned about ethics and they praised the manner in which the Stillwater League of Women Voters conducted its social and political activism. Consensus was of primary importance to the respondent and they found a collective identity in their shared ideals, goals, and ethics.

The findings related to social and political activism, addressed how the League approaches its different projects for the betterment of society. Nearly all of the respondents were interested in working for the benefit of the disadvantaged and disenfranchised. I explored one of their current studies which was related to the services

provided to women after they've been incarcerated. For this project, they visited with local social service agencies to discuss issues such as education, childcare, employment opportunities and housing for these women.

Education was of primary importance to the respondents. They believe that education is the main vehicle behind intelligent voting. They also believe that education is crucial for the betterment of society. They argue that people need to be educated in order to understand the complicated issues facing society. Furthermore, they believe education is a key variable in garnering support for their social and political campaigns.

My findings indicate that networking was also a primary issue in social and political activism. Some respondents had been active in political offices and others were active in such groups as Habitat for Humanity. This presented important networking opportunities between different organizations as well as opportunities to network with traditional political officials. Many members also had strong ties to religious organizations. As a result of this networking, the women found a collective identity in their association with the other members of the Stillwater League of Women Voters, as well as with other organizations sympathetic to their social and political activism.

The findings also indicated that collective emotions were critical for garnering support for their political campaigns. The emotion of "passion" was highlighted by several respondents as a driving motivation for their active participation in the group. Emotions, such as "passion" and "anger" also facilitated the development of a cohesive collective identity among the women in the League. A range of different emotions brought these women activists together to work for the betterment of society.

The purpose of this study was to explore collective identity and emotion in the Stillwater League of Women Voters. I employed a theoretical framework from new social movement theory to gain a better understanding of the role that collective identity and emotion played in this social movement. The data clearly indicate a link between emotion and collective identity in garnering support for the group's activities.

One of the limitations of this study may have been my association with the League. I am a member of the organization and I have existing ties to the respondents. It is possible that my existing relationship affected the responses of the interviewees. I made every effort to maintain distance and objectivity.

Second, all of my respondents belonged to the League, and had served on its Board in one capacity or another. Therefore, their responses may have been unconsciously biased in favor of presenting the League in a positive light. Also, all of the respondents were local. Additional interviews with non-local members would have further strengthened the richness of the data.

A third limitation relates to the relationship between emotion and collective identity. While the direct connection between these two concepts needs further investigation and development, this research clearly indicates that a relationship exists. I have argued that emotion is an important component of collective identity in the Stillwater League of Women Voters.

The primary significance of this study centers on the contribution to the growing body of literature on collective identity and emotion. Viewing this grassroots movement through the lens of new social movement theory provided key insights into the conditions necessary to create and maintain a collective identity. I also emphasized the importance

of emotion in determining women's collective identity within a grassroots social movement context.

This is a new area and this study provided a fresh perspective on collective identity and emotion. My findings indicate the need for strong emotions in garnering support for women's activism related to a range of injustices.

In conclusion, this study has provided a starting point for future research in this area. Future analyses should consider the role of emotion in shaping collective identity in a range of women's social movement contexts. Also, there is a need for future research into other grassroots social movements using collective identity theory as a lens.

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APPENDIX A

League of Women Voters

Interview Guide

I. Basic Information

1. When did you join the League?
2. Was there some event, observation, or experience that led you to the League?
3. Describe how active you are in the organization?
4. Did you have friends who were in the League [preexisting ties/networks]
5. How many active and non-active members are there in the Stillwater League?
6. Do you belong to other organizations? Explain.

II. Projects

1. Can you discuss some of the projects the League is currently involved in?
2. Discuss how the League decides to become involved in various projects?
3. What are the primary factors?
4. Why does the League work on certain projects?
5. What would you say is the most important factor in determining whether the League takes on a project?
6. Could you describe the decision making process that occurs when deciding on what projects to work on?

III. Core Values/Principles

1. Beyond the practical projects, could you discuss some of the core values/principles that guide the League's activities?
2. Are there times with there is disagreement within the League over issues?
3. If so, can you give some examples?

IV. Strategies & Tactics

1. Can you describe some of the common strategies the League uses in its projects?
2. How do you determine those strategies?
3. Do you think these approaches have been successful? [describe]

V. Recruitment

1. Can you describe how the League recruits new members?
2. Does membership increase/decrease depending on the particular projects the League is involved in?

IV. Group Solidarity

1. What are the most important benefits that members gain by working together?
2. If you had to narrow that down to one, what would it be?
3. One of the specific things I'm interested in in doing this research is how emotion is involved in community organizing. Can you describe some of the emotions you felt while doing projects with the League?

VII. General Background Information

1. Age?
2. Sex?
3. Race?
4. Highest level of education?
5. Marital Status?
6. Kids? How Many?
7. Current occupation?

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title: The Importance of Emotion in Creating Collective Identity in the Stillwater League of Women Voters.

| | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| OSU | |
| Institutional Review Board | |
| Approved | 2/22/06 |
| Expires | 2/21/07 |
| Initials | MS |
| | AS 0660 |

Investigator: Joanne Murer, EdD.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to determine the importance of emotion in creating collective identity in the Stillwater League of Women Voters; a grassroots social movement organization. I am requesting your participation in this research because you are and/or have been an active member in the Stillwater League of Women Voters. I am trying to determine how emotions play a crucial role in the development of a collective identity in your organization.

Procedures: There will be a total of twenty-two open-ended questions for you to answer to the best of your ability. The questions will fall under the following headings: six for basic information, six for projects, three for core values/principles, three for strategies and tactics, two for recruitment, two for group solidarity, and seven for demographics (general background information). I will use open-ended questions and probes to allow the interviewees the privilege of having your voice heard. You will be interviewed at a location convenient for you and free of distractions. The interviews will be tape-recorded and will last approximately forty-five minutes to an hour. I will maintain your confidentiality by using pseudo-names and the tapes will only be heard and recorded by me. Upon completion of this study, I will erase the tapes. There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits: By participating in this project; you will be contributing to the research of the importance of emotion in creating a collective identity. The Stillwater League of Women Voters, as a whole, will gain added recognition as a result of this study.

Confidentiality: The tape-recorded interviews will be maintained at the home of Joanne Murer, (PI) (interviewer) and will only be heard by Ms. Murer. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the privacy of the interviewees in the transcription process. Only Ms. Murer will be transcribing the interviews. Upon completion of this research; the tapes will be erased by Ms. Murer. The data will be reported in summary form in the findings chapter of Ms. Murer's thesis. Again, only pseudonyms will be used to further ensure confidentiality. Ms. Murer does not foresee any foreseeable risks in maintaining your confidentiality. Finally, The OSU IRB has the authority to inspect consent records and data files to assure compliance with approved procedures.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for your participation other than the opportunity to express yourself freely.

Contacts: You can contact the researcher of this study at any time with questions about the research and your rights as a participant at the following:

Joanne Murer
919 E. Knapp Ave.
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74075
(405)-377-6711
mtck@brightok.net

You can also contact the IRB at: For information on subjects' rights, contact Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst Hall, 405-744-1676.

Participant Rights: Your participation is voluntary and you may discontinue the research activity at any time without reprisal or penalty.

Signatures: I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form has been given to me.

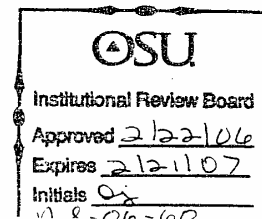
Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2006
IRB Application No AS0660
Proposal Title: The Importance of Emotion in Creating Collective Identity in the Stillwater League of Women Voters
Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 2/21/2007

Principal Investigator(s)
Joanne Murer Thomas E. Shriver
919 E. Knapp Ave. 006 CLB
Stillwater, OK 74075 Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

- 1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sue C. Jacobs

Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Joanne Murer

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTION IN CREATING COLLECTIVE
IDENTITY IN THE STILLWATER LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS: AN
EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

Major Field: Sociology

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Rome, New York, on November 12, 1950, the daughter of Howard and Josephine Murer.

Education: Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Sociology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2008. Graduated from Rome Free Academy High School, Rome, New York in June 1969; received Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 1986. Received Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration, specializing in Accounting, in June 1990, from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. Received Masters of Science degree in Occupational and Adult Education in June 1994, from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. Completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree with a major in Higher Education and Administration from Oklahoma State University, in May 2002.

Experience: Employed as Accounting Assistant at Lone Star Shipping, in Houston, Texas 1971-1974; employed as office assistant at Ruska Instrument Corporation in Houston, Texas 1974-1975; employed as division order assistant at Crown Central Petroleum Corporation, Houston, Texas 1975-1977; and employed at Arabian American Services Company. .

Name: Joanne Murer

Date of Degree: May, 2008

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTION IN CREATING COLLECTIVE
IDENTITY IN THE STILLWATER LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS:
AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

Pages in Study: 76

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Sociology

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to explore the role that emotion plays in creating collective identity in the Stillwater League of Women Voters. I examined these issues through an exploratory case study of the League. I employed qualitative research methods to conduct the study. I interviewed twenty respondents from the League. The interviews were open ended and in depth in format. In addition to the interviews, and to achieve triangulation, I also did participant observation and examined League documents.

Findings and Conclusions: The overall findings of this study fell into two categories: Components of a Collective Identity and Social and Political Activism. Overall, the members of the League of needed an outlet from home and being in the company of like-minded women who and work to right any injustices. This study was significant in that it centers on the contribution to the growing body of literature on collective identity and emotion.

Name: Joanne Murer

Date of Degree: May, 2008

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

ADVISER'S APPROVAL Dr. Tom Shriver
