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BLACK WOMEN AND POLITICS: INTERSECTIONALITY OF RACE
AND GENDER AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE PRODUCTION OF
KNOWLEDGE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

PROJECT DEMONSTRATING EXCLELLENCE

Presented to
The Graduate College of The Union Institute

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in
Political Science

by

Delores J. Anderson

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Acknowledgments

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ABSTRACT

Project Demonstrating Excellence

Black Women and Politics: Intersectionality of Race and Gender and the Transformative Production of Knowledge in Political Science

This is an exploratory study that examines the production of knowledge in political science about black women and their political experiences. Knowledge about the experiences of black women is limited in the discipline of political science. The discipline has failed to racialize gender and genderize race to adequately include the broad range of political experiences of black women. Current knowledge leaves the impression that the experiences of black males represent the totality of black experiences, resulting in the invisibility or diminishment of black women's political experiences. This invisibility and diminishment extends to women's experiences as well. Current knowledge also leaves the impression that the experiences of white women represent the totality of women's experiences. Invisibility and diminishment gives the false impression that black women are not engaged in political activity in a significant way. I argue that the discipline should not abdicate its responsibility for developing a theoretical framework that acknowledges the intersectionality of race and gender. Failure to do so will result in other disciplines producing knowledge about black women without benefit of the scholarship of political scientists. Therefore, it is necessary to restructure knowledge that results in an enhanced analytical tool that embraces qualitative research.

Black women have participated in political affairs since their arrival in the United States. Forbidden to vote and participate in traditional political action, black women early on engaged in actions to change the circumstances in which they found themselves and to benefit the entire black community – men, women, and children. Black women have participated in every major movement including the Abolition, Anti-Lynching, Civil Rights, and women's movements. They have participated in electoral politics, holding elective office at the national, state, and local levels. Chapters Two and Three examine what we know about blacks and politics as well as women and politics, and how we know it. Chapter Three examines black women and politics, highlighting the fact that much of what we know has been produced outside the discipline of political science. Chapter Five is a case study on the intersectionality of race and gender that examines the political experiences of the first black congresswoman, Shirley A. Chisholm.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Political science is often seen as the study of politics. This definition does not really explain the essence of political science. A more fitting definition is that political science is the study of who gets what, when and how. This statement says a lot and provides the perspective of a hierarchal and interlocking approach. The working definition used in this study is derived from the title of a classical political work.[1] Another way of saying the same thing is that political science looks at the issue of power in the decision-making processes and distribution of resources.

Arriving at a working definition of what constitutes political science is necessary to figure out what is meant by "politics." In the traditional sense, the discipline of political science views "politics" in terms of formal institutions and processes that involve government and its operations. Debates have been engaged in over the years regarding the narrowness of this focus.[2] Arguments have been made that "politics" must extend beyond the formalness of institutions to include a wide range of activities that reflect the political nature of all experiences. For purposes of this study "politics" is expansive and not limited to formal institutions. It includes experiences beyond electoral politics to include grass-roots community organizing, coalition building, and agitation.

Looking again at political science as the study of who gets what when and how it becomes necessary to break down the "who," "what," "when," and "how." At first blush determining "who" ought to be easy. "Who" is seen by some within the discipline as

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[1] Laswell, Harold. *Politics: Who Gets What When and How?* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1936).
[2] e.g. Walton 1973; Holden, Jr. 1973; Carroll and Zerilli 1993, 65.

everyman. This is a shortsighted view. First, the use of the term "everyman" does not necessarily constitute sexism and racism. However, within the discipline it can certainly be argued that the term is sexist and racist because for years subjects of political inquiry were limited to the political activities and behaviors of privileged white males. An inclusive view of 'who" includes all persons, regardless of race and gender. The issue of power affects which individuals constitute "who" for the purposes of political inquiry. The dominant culture possesses the power to dictate who is worthy of inquiry. In political science, as is the case in society in general, white males constitute the dominant culture. For years they possessed control and a virtual monopoly over the production of knowledge in the field of political science. Although white males continue to possess control of the production of knowledge in the discipline of political science there is change. Through acts of resistance marginalized groups who heretofore had not been seen as legitimate subject for inquiry purposes have expanded the knowledge base by expanding the subjects to include themselves. Blacks have only been serious subjects for the past thirty to forty years. Although there may be scholars who still question whether blacks are truly legitimate subjects within the discipline, the fact of the matter is that there has been a significant amount of scholarship produced over the last thirty to forty years. Women have only become "who" within the last twenty to thirty years.

"What" also takes on an expansive definition and includes not only the resources of society but also the authority to make decisions about the allocation of various resources and benefits. I think about the vast amount of spending power the black community possesses and the amount of taxes paid. Yet blacks are often excluded from the institutions (i.e. political, financial, educational, etc.) that hold authority to make

decisions about the allocation of resources and benefits. Controlling and owning

resources coupled with the ability to impact allocation is a power issue. "When" is an

important part of the equation defining politics. When resources are allocated affects the

quality of life. I think about the plight of the black farmer whose has steadily lost

valuable farmland over the years. Although the United States Department of Agriculture

is attempting to rectify the discrimination faced by black farmers for years the question is

whether it is too late to really help them. "How" looks at the ways in which resources and

benefits are distributed. "How" affects who receives what and when. For example, a tax

credit that favors homeowners adversely affects those persons who lack the financial

resources and credit to purchase a home. Therefore, they cannot take advantage of the tax

credit until and if they purchase a home.

These four questions intersect and so intertwined that it is impossible to create

neat little boxes containing each individual question. There is overlap. The combination

of these four questions not only affect but are affected by the constructed categories of

race, gender, class, orientation, nation, and similar categories.

THE STUDY

This study seeks to look at how knowledge is produced within the discipline of

political science in relation to the constructed categories of race and gender, particularly

the intersectionality of race and gender. Knowledge is power, so it is imperative that

analytical engagements determine the extent of knowledge about women of color.

Research about race and politics has been going on for several decades but is

generally peripherally to the general academic study of politics. The extent and quality of

the research is affected by the discipline's continued focus on theoretical and methodological strategies and assumptions that view people of color as problems thereby limiting the need to research them holistically. The study of "minority" group members is being done today. However, the serious study of blacks only goes back to the 1960s despite the fact that the discipline of political science was organized in 1903. The research treatment of other "minority" groups (i.e. Latino, Asian, and Native American) is an even more recent phenomenon. Women have only received research attention within the last twenty years or so. Unfortunately, little has been done to look at the intersectionality of race and gender in a political context.

A recent occurrence illustrates the discipline's lack of understanding or intentional neglect in identifying and utilizing the intersectionality of race and gender as an analytical tool. Both race and gender are used individually as analytical tools in the discipline. My research supports the notion that as a discipline political science is way behind other disciplines (most notably literature, sociology, and history) in recognizing the existence of this intersectionality, particularly as it applies to women of color. There is a growing body of scholarship that recognizes the fact that women belong to *at least* two constructed categories, i.e. race and gender. [3] Arguably, the vast majority of this work concerns women of color. Furthermore, the intersectionality of these categories affects the life experiences of women in different ways depending on race. Women cannot belong to either group exclusively. It is impossible to split oneself into two distinct and separate categories. Political science has tended to be slow in recognizing intersectionality as viable and relevant. Within the last thirty years there has been

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[3] e.g. see Collins 1990; Higginbotham 1992; Davis 1983; Giddings 1984; Brown 1986; Hull, et al. 1982.

movement towards racializing and genderizing political science. However, this movement generally has been one of separate analysis.

During early August 2000 the moderator of RACE-POL sent a message providing the breakdown of the membership of the American Political Science Association by race and gender.[4] RACE-POL is a listserv with over 400 members. Although the listserv is opened to anyone interested in scholarship on race, a substantial number of the members are political science faculty or graduate students. This information was timely in that faculty recruitment for the 2001-2002 academic year would begin in earnest at the 2000 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in late August.

Dissemination of the data generated a spirited discussion on the listserv. Most of the discussion centered on the very large number of people who refused to self-identify by race. I waded into the discussion by offering my views on why the number was so large.[5] Although this is an important issue, I was more concerned that the American Political Science Association did not maintain a breakdown of gender by race. To my mind this was additional proof that the discipline just did not get the concept of intersectionality and its relevance.

There were only three responses to my message. Interestingly all of the messages were sent to me directly rather than posting them on the message board. One response came from a representative of the American Political Science Association who informed

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[4] As of July 28, 2000, the American Political Science Association has 13, 723 members of which 9,346 self-identified as male, 3,638 self-identified as female and 739 gave no response. Ethnicity breakdown: Caucasian (8,379); African American (437); Asian American (502); Latino (317); Native American (40); Other (519); Declined (3,529). Source: Membership and Technology, American Political Science Association.

[5] I argued that although there may be some international members whose conception of race differ from the use of this category in the United States, in my experience as a former affirmative action officer the majority of people who refused to self-identify were white males. I further argued that the white males I encountered questioned the validity of whiteness as a construct although they had no problems attaching "race" to people of color, particularly African Americans.

me that the association did have the data I requested. She provided me with a breakdown of gender membership by race.[6] My guess is that she had to calculate the data because I did not receive the data for a couple days after my request. This suggests to me that the data is not generally maintained in the manner I requested. The data is important so that we have some sense of the possible pool of political scientists who may want to study race and gender issues. I hope my inquiry will result in a shift of policy in the future and the gender data will be routinely maintained and disseminated by race. The second response came from a member who supported my view on why the refusal to self-identify number was so high.

The third response was by and far the most interesting. The member misunderstood my concern and thought that I was raising issue with race as a construction. He suggested that I look at the work of a very prominent political scientist whose research focus includes issues of race. In my response to him I explained that I was interested in the intersectionality of race and gender, particularly the lack of scholarship in the discipline on intersectionality. The member responded and apologized for his misunderstanding and requested information about my research. The request was flattering because the member is a well-known political scientist and author of a significant portion of the scholarship on race and politics. His upfront admission that he was not familiar with work on intersectionality serves to illustrate my concern about the absence of significant work on intersectionality and the impact this has on research involving black women and politics. This exchange reinforced my decision to refocus

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[6] As of August 2, 2000 the gender breakdown by race for membership in the American Political Science Association were: Caucasian (2,303); African American (188); Asian American (143); Latina (107); Native American (9); Other (104), Declined (796). Source: Membership and Technology, American Political Science Association.

this study to look at the production of knowledge in political science around the intersectionality of race and gender.

This study began as the result of my interest in electoral politics and the role black women play. I grew up in a household where politics were discussed on a daily basis by my parents and where voting was not seen as an elective choice but a right that must be exercised at every opportunity. Throughout my formative teenage years I engaged in political activities to improve the lives of black people. During my college years I came to understand black feminist thought although I did not know to call it that at the time. I started pursuing intellectual inquires into black women's experiences. How do their experiences compare with white women? How different are their experiences compared to black men? Is it possible to split one's gender and race? How are black women viewed by white men? black men? white women? My intellectual inquiries evolved from general ones to very specific ones dealing with the nature of politics. I bridged my intellectual quests with activism. I participated in partisan politics and even co-founded a black women's political group in my hometown. I have worked on numerous campaigns for both candidates and issues at the national, state, and local levels. So it is only natural that I want to see the political experiences of black women treated legitimately by the discipline.

The original study would have looked at these issues through survey results and research of the literature and records. I wanted to focus my attention on black congresswomen because of my fascination with pioneering black women elected to an overwhelming white male dominated institution that is the United States Congress. I was interested in learning if the experiences of these women were similar or dissimilar to the

experiences of others serving in the United States Congress and if dissimilar why. As I progressed in my research it became clear that the discipline of political science has failed to adequately look at the intersectionality of race and gender. Race based scholarship focuses mostly on men. Gender based research is almost exclusively focused on white women. Assumptions and generalizations are made about women of color, black women in particular, based on race research that has not been genderized and gendered research that has not been racialized. Each step along the way of my research journey for this study raised more questions and raised my level of frustration because the political experiences of black women appeared to be so unimportant to the discipline. This lack of research has resulted in invisibility that is only now being addressed in a meaningful way.

As a result of these profound experiences the focus of this study shifted to a more important one. The discipline needs to be transformed to be inclusive of all experiences, including those of black women. As a first step I decided that it is more important to look at the production of knowledge within political science regarding the intersectionality of race and gender, specifically black women. I became obsessed with what knowledge is known about black women and how is it known. I wanted to know what theoretical tools are used to examine the experiences of black women. I wanted to seek an answer to the question of why women and people of color are still not considered legitimate subjects by a substantial part of the discipline. Why is the discipline reluctant to think about race and gender? How does the discipline conceptualize race and gender? How is race and gender viewed in research? I decided that the shift was necessary to lay a foundation for future endeavors undertaking the crucial work of examining the political experiences of black women.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

My study is exploratory, designed to develop a way to look at the intersectionality of race and gender that results in transformative analysis for use in future theoretical and empirical research. I am looking at the development of conceptual tools for analytical purposes. The central question is what do we know about black women and politics, and how do we know it? This study involves a review of the literature on race and politics as well as gender and politics. The content analysis of biographical and autobiographical materials provided a wealth of information about the political experiences of black women. In addition, I reviewed archival documents and accessed databases. Upon completion of my research I examined the political experience of black congresswoman Shirley A. Chisholm. Positioning Ms. Chisholm's political experience as the center of analysis, I examined how her political life was affected by the intesectionality of race and gender exemplified by her status as a black woman. To date seventeen women have served or are serving in the United States Congress, with ten currently serving in the House of Representatives today[7].

I decided to focus on congresswoman Chisholm for several reasons. First, Chisholm was the first black woman to serve in the United States Congress. Although blacks served during Reconstruction they were all men. She parlayed her grass-roots activism in New York City into a successful bid that overcame not only racism but also sexism. Second, Chisholm's arrival in Congress followed the path of the faithful grass-roots organizer, paying her dues at the local level and advancing to elective office at the

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[7] There has only been one black woman U.S. Senator. Carol Moseley-Braun (D-IL) was elected during the aftermath of the Clarence Thomas – Anita Hill sexual harassment hearings. Senator Moseley-Braun served six years and was defeated in her reelection bid in 1998. It is also worth noting that two of the black women now serving in Congress are non-voting representatives. Eleanor Holmes Norton represents the District of Columbia and Donna Green represents the Virgin Islands.

state level in New York. Chisholm studied the game and played it well. Third, her personal background is different than other blacks, including black women, elected to Congress. She is the daughter of immigrants. Being a black woman in an institution that was so overwhelming white and male must have been a challenge and certainly worthy of examination. During her political life she had to face negative images of black women as well as fight to make sure the concerns of black women were given due consideration by one of the most influential institutions in the United States, the United States Congress. Ms. Chisholm's experiences paved the way for the black congresswomen who followed her.

There are several limitations to this study. First, it is not a quantitative study designed to produce empirical data. I am attempting to examine the experiences of my subject in a way that numbers will not justify. Although quantitative study is valuable and can produce good information, qualitative study is also valuable for its richness in providing information. Second, it is very obvious that the construct of class is absence from my analysis. This is a conscious decision on my part. Although I recognize the fact that the construct of class attaches to every person and this construct intersects with other constructs such as race, gender, orientation, and nation resulting in different experiences. In order to keep this study manageable I elected to exclude class from examination. Certainly there will be future research opportunities for scholars to include a class analysis in their treatment of various subject matters. Finally, the results of this study are limited to the time frame of Ms. Chisholm's tenure in Congress and caution is necessary not to generalize the results to other time frames and people. Hopefully, there will more

studies in the future on African American women in Congress. Studies that facilitate the telling of black women's political experiences in their own words.

ASSUMPTIONS

One of the principal assumptions important to this study is that there is a relationship between power and knowledge. Power is used to construct and validate knowledge. The power dynamic manifests itself in the institutions that control the production of knowledge. These institutions are invariably controlled by the dominant culture, i.e. white males. The controllers of the power to determine the construction of knowledge are the same persons who "validate" what is accepted as knowledge.

Another assumption is that the lack of knowledge about people of color and women is the result of either intentional omission or gross negligence inherent in our interlocking hierarchal system of oppression, including racism and sexism.

TERMINOLOGY

A few words about terminology are necessary so that the reader understands how certain words are used in this study. When referring to race I am taking about the social construct that has been developed to classify persons. Although the construction of race has remained constant during the history of the United States, the meaning of "race" changes depending on the need of the dominant culture to justify actions. Race is not fixed and immutable; therefore there is no basis in a biological argument to explain difference.

The use of gender is similar to the use of race. Gender is a social construct that reflects the socialization process in United States in which the characterization of one's

gender role as male or female is a function of a hierarchal system of domination that is patriarchal in nature.

Throughout this study I use the words Negro, black and African American to describe black people. I use these words interchangeably to mean black people in the United States who are of African ancestry. In no way am I trying to be confusing. The fact is that throughout the history of the United States blacks have been referred to by different names depending on the time. Until the days of civil rights blacks were referred to as Negroes. The use of this defining term was decided upon by the dominant white power structure. In response to the black power movement in which the rallying cry was "black is beautiful," many people of African ancestry in the United States demanded to be called black as a reflection of their heritage. Unlike the use of Negro the use of black was self-defining. This self-defining process has evolved to present day in which a substantial number of black people want to be referred to as African-American to reflect a connection with Africa. In most instances I will use black. However, reference to various sources use either Negro or African-American. I will use these two terms where appropriate for consistency with the terminology referred to in the source.

Although it may seem that every person is knowledgeable about the existence of the United States Congress (hereafter Congress) and therefore no explanation is needed, I am offering a brief description of Congress to ensure that the reader understands the institution. Congress is the chief law-making institution under our political system. A representative body elected directly by the people, it is comprised of 535 members. Congress is divided into two separate chambers. The United States Senate has 100 members, two senators for each of the fifty states. The House of Representatives has 435

members with the number of state representatives dependent upon population. Senators serve for six years and representatives serve for two years.

ORGANIZATION

This study is organized and presented in six chapters. Chapter One is the introduction. Chapter Two discusses how it is known and what we know about blacks and politics. Each of the four generations of research about blacks and politics is examined in terms of its analytical focus. Chapter Three discusses how it is known, and what we know about women and politics. This discussion includes the three main approaches of gendered analysis. Chapter Four places special attention on what we know about black women and politics, and how we know it. Chapter Five examines the intersectionality of race and gender through a case study of the political experience of former congresswoman Shirley A. Chisholm. The final chapter discusses future research opportunities.

CHAPTER TWO

Knowledge in Political Science: Race and Politics

> Since the beginning of the nation, white Americans have suffered
> from a deep inner uncertainty as to who they really are. One of
> the ways that has been used to simplify the answer has been to
> seize upon the presence of black Americans and use them as a
> marker, a symbol of limits, a metaphor for the "outsider." Many
> whites could look at the social position of blacks and feel that
> color formed an easy and reliable gauge for determining to what
> extent one was or was not an American.
>
> Ralph Ellison, *What America Would be*
> *Like Without Blacks* 1970.

The history of blacks in the United States is a complicated reflection of the

domination of a group of people based on the social construction of race. Although there

were free blacks, the majority of blacks during the colonial period were slaves. Slaves

who were people of African descent taken from their homelands and brought to a strange

country and treated inhumanely as chattel. The marginal economics of the English

colonies expanded to commercially productive ones that exported commodities such as

tobacco. This prosperity was the direct result of slave labor (Robinson 1997).

As slavery progressed those with privileged status devised a system of political

order designed to maintain their status. During the first half of the Seventeenth Century

there was little official attention paid to African slaves, black servants and free blacks.

However, this changed during the last half of the century. For example, in 1639 Virginia

enacted a law forbidding slaves to possess firearms and other weapons. In addition, other

laws were enacted that "provided a window into the colony's troubling relationship with

slavery and slaves" (Robinson 1997, 2). Several of the new laws specifically addressed

slaves (1662 -child of a Negro mother cannot inherit father's status; 1667 - prevented

baptism from freeing "slaves by birth"; 1680 – law passed prohibiting Negro insurrection; 1692 – law established special courts for slave trials). Laws were also enacted that affected free blacks (1668 – law enacted that made free black women subject to poll tax but did not extend the obligation to others; 1670 – forbade Christian blacks from purchasing Christian servants; 1691 – banished anyone from the colony involved in interracial marriage). There is this mythical notion that blacks did not resist slavery but meekly accepted their fate. There are countless stories of resistance, which assumed various appearances such as appeals to the courts, physical violence, flight, and rebellions (Robinson 1997, 8).

The framers of the Declaration of Independence acknowledged slavery and the status of slaves by the language in Article I, which characterized free persons to include those bound to service for a term of years, excluding Indians not taxed and 3/5 of all other persons. Blacks did not count as a whole person. The proportional counting of blacks reinforced the notion of blacks as chattel. If there was any doubt about the new nation's attitude towards slavery and black people it was erased with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 by the Second Congress. The act condemned any person who provided aid or protection to fugitive slaves. History has witnessed the passing of legislation designed to keep blacks powerless and without protection. Throughout time blacks have struggled against oppression and for equality as evidenced by the abolitionist, anti-lynching and civil rights movements.

In identifying, reviewing and analyzing knowledge about race and politics in political science it is necessary to understand the epistemology, forms, and practices of knowledge within the discipline. The understanding of the contours of knowledge is

important in answering the pivotal questions about the study of politics, i.e. who what when and how. Power is an integral part of the construction of knowledge. Answering the pivotal questions relies on the power dynamics of constructed knowledge.

This chapter will examine what is known about race and politics in the discipline of political science and how it is known.[1] The knowledge about race and gender is limited within political science. Although political science has been an established discipline since 1903, the study of blacks did not begin until the 1930s. Ralph Bunche initiated the study of blacks and politics through his seminal work on the status of Negroes.[2] Despite Bunche's efforts and the attention of several other scholars (Nowlin 1931; Gosnell 1934, [1935] 1967), research on blacks and politics did not begin in earnest until the 1960s.

Blacks and politics became a sub-field in the 1970s despite the continued belief among some political scientists that the area is off beat and not worthy of serious consideration. One scholar stated that political scientists "did not perceive those black-white relationships in American society to raise *critical intellectual problems* for scholars in contrast to raising (social problems) for social activists" (Holden Jr.1983, 34). An interesting point about studying race and politics in political science is the fact that scholarship analyzing people of color is limited to people of color. Looking at whites is not considered part of race and politics.[3]

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[1] Within the discipline of political science "race and politics" is generally referred to as the "politics of race." I prefer using "race and politics" and will continue to do so throughout out this study. "Race and politics" connotes a power analysis, which is the basic underpinning of knowledge in the discipline. The "politics of race" infers a negative relationship and fails to appreciate the construction of race as a category for analysis

[2] Bunche was the first African American male to earn a Ph.D. in political science. He received his degree in 1934 from Harvard University.

[3] An interesting note is the lack of political scientists actively engaged in whiteness studies, which is traced back to the early 1990s. The study of whiteness came in response to the growing interest in the study of people of color. Whiteness studies is not the study of a supremacist movement but the exploration of what it means to be white in the United States.

There are two anthologies central to the study of race and politics. In *Political Science: Looking at the Future*, Michael C. Dawson and Ernest J. Wilson, III, examined African American politics in their essay, "Paradigms and Paradoxes: Political Science and African American Politics" (Dawson and Wilson 1991). Several years later Paula D. McClain and John A. Garcia expanded on race and politics in "Expanding Disciplinary Boundaries: Black, Latino, and Racial Minority Group Politics in Political Science," which appeared in the American Political Science Association's anthology, *State of the Discipline II* (McClain and Garcia 1993).[4] Both anthologies include essays by black and Latino scholars on race and politics.[5] In the earlier work, Dawson and Wilson reviewed literature about blacks and politics. McClain and Garcia expanded their study beyond a mere literature review of blacks and politics to look at the development of people of color and politics.

Of the four generally recognized racial groups,[6] blacks are the oldest racial group within "minority politics." The history of the study of the other "minority" groups is similar to blacks except organized study began much later. If there is concern about the limited scholarship on blacks and politics, there should be alarm at the paucity of research on other people of color. For purposes of this chapter I will look at blacks and politics. This decision is in no way a negative reflection on other people of color. Nor

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[4] *State of the Discipline II* is a resource tool published by the American Political Science Association. In the previous edition there was no discussion of race and politics.
[5] Within the discipline of political science "race and politics" is generally referred to as "minority group politics." I object to use of the word "minority" and prefer "race and politics." "Minority" connotes a lesser than status based on the assumption that people of color are not "the same" as members of the dominant or majority group. In most instances I will use race and politics unless the literature cited specifically refers to "minority group politics" and to change the wording would affect the point being made.
[6] The racial classifications used by the discipline of political science are the classifications developed by the federal government for various purposes, including affirmative action and civil rights. The groups are African American/black, Asian, Latino/Hispanic, and Native American).

does this decision impart a lack of importance of the other groups. Studying these groups is extremely important in analyzing politics, particularly in light of changing demographics. However, my focus on blacks and politics is dictated by my experiences as a black person and my interest in the intersectionality of race and gender as it applies to black women.

McClain and Garcia identified three paradigms useful in the analysis of blacks and politics. The three paradigms are organized along generational lines. The first generation of research looks at the modern beginning. The second generation of research analyzes the protest/accommodation paradigm. The final paradigm looks at power relations and field definition. As one progresses through the paradigms theoretical development is evident. There is a fourth generation of research that is under development and evolving. Perhaps by the time the next edition of *State of the Discipline* is published this generation will have evolved to such a point that it will be included and officially change the number of generations from three to four.

First Generation Research: The Modern Beginning

The earliest intellectual basis of black politics comes from anti-slavery pamphlets written during the early 1880s as well as the early memoirs of black congressmen who served during Reconstruction[7] (Walton et al.1990). The first major work by a black political scientist was a book written by William F. Nowlin in 1931. The book examined the role of the Negro in American national politics.

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[7] Reconstruction is the period of time following the Civil War in which blacks actively participated in electoral politics. During this time two black men served in the United States Senate and one black male served as governor. Twenty black men were elected to the United States Congress from 1870 to 1901. Interestingly, all were Republicans because at the time the overwhelmingly majority of blacks were Republicans.

Despite the achievement of Nowlin's book being published, there was more excitement about Harold F. Gosnell's 1934 article printed in the *American Political Science Review* and his 1935 book on Negro politicians. Both the article and book focused on Chicago. Gosnell's article and book are referred to as the first works by a mainstream political scientist. This reference is loaded with meaning regarding the validity and quality of work done by black political scientists. Does Gosnell's race (white) legitimatize his work over that of Nowlin's? It does not escape me that Gosnell's work was considered more legitimate. One might ask: At the time did race play a role in the validation of knowledge within the discipline? If the answer is yes, what does this say about the contributions of black political scientists and the study of race and politics during this period and the impact on the future scholarship provided by black political scientists interested in self-reflective work on race and politics.

McClain and Garcia state that Gosnell intentionally avoided using the existing political science paradigms. Instead he used a series of questions based on the assumption that minority status and oppressive conditions "would result in a variety of political relationships between white power structures and the Chicago black community" (McClain and Garcia 1993, 249). Although the study developed a broad portrait of black Chicago politics and made no attempts to generalize the results beyond Chicago, the question remains whether the assumption was necessary.

Nowlin's book and Gosnell's works only scratched the surface of blacks and politics. Bunche complained that publication opportunities for works on the political behavior of Negroes were limited. At the 1941 conference on Interdisciplinary Aspects of

Negro Studies, Bunche stated.

> In some field[s] this [publishing] is relatively easy.
> Anthropologists deal with the Negro as a respectable
> topic, and the journals of anthropology take such
> articles without hesitation. In respect to my own
> field, which concerns the status of the Negro, except
> insofar a papers having to do with colonial problems
> and the like are involved, there isn't a very cordial
> reception for papers dealing with the Negro (quoted
> in Holden 1983, 34)

The above statement was made several years after Bunche began his scholarly

writings. He began with a little known but very important article in 1928, in which he

stated,

> Any minority group which can and does control a
> mayoralty election in the nation's second largest
> municipality must be of more than passing interest
> to the student of political affairs (Bunche 1928, 261).

Gosnell was clearly aware of Bunche's influence in the production of knowledge about

race and politics because he included Bunche's article in his references. Bunche's initial

work contained the theme of dealing with strategies for overcoming political exclusion

for the Negro. He also concentrated on his belief that economic conditions and race were

very important in analyzing the situation of the Negro. These themes continued in later

articles (Bunche 1935,1936). The Republican National Committee asked Bunche to

investigate why black voters deserted the party in two previous national elections. His

investigation produced additional scholarship about blacks and politics (Rivlin 1990, 8-

9).[8]

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[8] Blacks originally supported the Republican Party, home to Abraham Lincoln. As with many whites,
blacks started abandoning the Republican Party during the new deal period and became Democrats. This
shift helped to propel the Democratic Party into the dominant party. Given the current state of affairs in
which the Republican National Committee is encouraging blacks to return "home" perhaps the party needs
to revisit Bunche's work for an understanding of why most blacks overwhelmingly vote Democratic.

Gunnar Myrdal played an important role in the study of the Negro during this period. In the late 1930s and early 1940s he directed a study on the Negro in America for Carnegie. Bunche participated in the study during 1939 and 1940. The memoranda he produced focused on Negro leadership as well as the dialogue and tactics of Negro organizations. He also looked at the political status of Negroes and conceptualizations of the Negro problems. In terms of theoretical development, Bunche's work was critical for two reasons. First, he attempted to develop an analytical tool for the analysis of blacks and politics. Second, he attempted to ward off any notion that Negroes should be researched only as a "problem." Bunche's efforts were not successful because years later the notion of blacks as a problem still prevailed (Holden 1983). Much of Bunche's research was incorporated into the original Myrdal study for Carnegie.

In 1944 Myrdal published his highly recognized and influential book that looked at Negro leadership styles.[9] His concept resulted in the development of one of the first dominant paradigms on blacks and politics research, i.e. protest versus the accommodation approach. Myrdal strongly criticized the hypocrisy of American democracy in its treatment of blacks. His criticism led to the development of a theoretical framework referred to as the moral dilemma perspective. This framework was used in assessing race relations in the United States and served as a foundation in the development of race relations literature.

At the time Myrdal's work was profound in its approach of looking at blacks and politics. However, in recent times his work has come under attack for its failure to address power dynamics (Cox 1948). V.O. Key's *Southern Politics* provided the impetus for early paradigmatic themes that evolved into the next generation of research on black

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[9] *An American Dilemma* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1944).

and politics (Key 1949). Key argued against studying the black vote because of its low number of black voters. He reasoned that because of their low numbers, black voters were not important to Southern politics. His work led to the body of political research referred to as leadership studies. Key took issue with Bunche's and Mrydal's categorization of black leadership.

<u>Second Generation Research: Protest/Accommodation Paradigm</u>

The limited analysis of scholarship generated in the first wave of research about blacks and politics led to increased attention to black leadership. This approach utilized the protest-accommodation paradigm as its foundation (Killian and Smith 1960; Dunbar 1961; Tilman and Phillips 1961; Burgess 1962; Wilson 1961; and Walker 1963). The paradigm became identified through several seminal works on black politics (Wilson 1960; Ladd 1966; and Matthews and Prothro 1966). It appears that although there was no general consensus on the definition of Negro leadership (Smith 1982, 4), the literature seemed to agree that "(a) leadership involved affecting the attitudes and behavior of Negroes insofar as social and political goals and/or methods are concerned; and (b) Negro leadership is not limited to Negroes but may and indeed does include whites" (McClain and Garcia 1993, 250).

Three essential works characterizes this period, in which two are principally black leadership studies. James Q. Wilson conducted a black leadership study that focused on black Chicago politics. Wilson's study was the opposite of Gosnell's positive look at black political leadership. He painted black political leadership in an unflattering light (Wilson1960). Wilson considered black leadership ineffective because there was no agreement on goals. He associated status goals with a militant or protest style and welfare

goals with a moderate or bargainer style. Scholars took issue with this assessment. They pointed out that Wilson's was bias because he worked backward from a preconceived set of conclusions. They further argued that Wilson's approach concluded the black community had no political life that was not a reflection of white politics within the city.

Everett C. Ladd followed up on Wilson's work in 1966 where he looked at Negro leadership in the south (Ladd 1966). Although Ladd purportedly started out to examine the thesis that Negro leadership is primarily a response to particular societal conditions, the major focus of the work was on race leadership as opposed to political leadership. Ladd concluded that Negro political leadership was an issue-based one and involved three types of leadership. The first type is the conservative leader, older men who focused on welfare goals. Militant leaders who pushed for status goals constituted the second type of leadership. These were younger men with low-income status. The final type, moderate leaders, included all ages.

The final seminal work "rejected a restricted focus of black leadership as the core of black politics" (McClain and Garcia 1993, 250) and centered their study on "[n]egro political participation and its consequences" (Matthews and Prothro 1966, vii). Matthews and Prothro utilized behavioral research techniques in which they examined black voting and other aspects of political participation. They controlled for demographic characteristics concluding that regardless of the level of political information available, higher income blacks engaged in political activity at a higher rate than low-income

blacks. In order for blacks to be a significant force in southern politics the authors concluded that black political organizations must be created and maintained.[10]

The protest/accommodation paradigm did not escape criticism. The two main arguments against the dichotomy concerned the focus on leadership styles and theoretical frameworks. Scholars criticized the Negro leadership studies for focusing exclusively on the personality and style of individual leaders versus studying the behaviors of the black community at large. Furthermore, the theoretical frameworks utilized derived from research on groups who possessed access to the political system. At the time blacks did not have meaningful access. Therefore, as a consequence the research did not include any of the black experience in the United States.

Ultimately leadership studies fell out of favor as the primary form of black politics research. Its demise came about because of three political and intellectual events. First, the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 allowed for the study of black voting behavior and black elected officials. The second event was the urban rebellions of the 1960s. The final event was the shift of the dominant paradigm in political science to pluralism. Pluralist notions involved lessening the importance of group identity and interest through assimilation into the political mainstream. This was expressed in the ethnic politics model, which attempted to draw a parallel between white ethnics in urban areas and blacks in both urban areas and the south regarding political progress. A critical assumption of the ethnic politic model is that in a pluralistic democracy ethnic integration is inevitable. Scholars argued that political and economic assimilation would result in the

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[10] Matthews and Prothro were the first scholars to study one of the most visible tactics of the Civil Rights Movement as a component of black political leadership. They examined black student sit-ins to desegregate public accommodations.

disappearance of ethnic identity. They further argued that diminished ethnicity would no longer be an organizing principle for political activity.

Mack Jones (1972) expressed criticism of the ethnic politics model as a theoretical framework for examining the black political experience. The two issues that formed his critical analysis rested on the history of blacks in the United States. First, he argued any comparisons of blacks to white ethnics were superficial. He contended that such comparisons ignored the "unique and peculiar conditions of African Americans in the United States" (McClain and Garcia 1993, 251). Second, he argued that the ethnics politics model did not consider the "... historical and extant constraints imposed on blacks..." (ibid). In addition to the two aforementioned arguments, Jones argued that the comparisons actually highlighted the accomplishments of the white ethnic groups rather than both whites and blacks. Finally, he considered the standard used to assess the political progress of blacks faulty. Other scholars made similar critical assessments of the ethnic politics model. (McLemore 1972; Holden, 1973; Morris 1975; Barker and McCorry 1980; Pinderhughes 1987).

There was intense dissatisfaction with not only the theoretical approaches but also the direction of research regarding black politics. This dissatisfaction resulted in concerns about the direction and development of the subfield of blacks and politics. As a result, black political scientists such as Mack Jones, Hanes Walton, Jr., and Matthew Holden engaged in a new generation of research.

Third Generation Research: Power Relations Paradigm and Field Definition

McClain and Garcia stated that, "the research of this period sought to move black politics toward definition and rigorous theoretical development, while simultaneously

attempting to direct the field away from the 'ambiguous concepts' of the protest/ accommodation paradigm and the ethnic politics/pluralism approach" (McClain and Garcia 1993, 251). *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* was published in 1967. It served as the bridge between the second and third generations of black political research. Charles Hamilton and Stokely Carmichael made the concept of power central to the book. They presented a dynamic critique of pluralism including ethnic politics and coalition theory. Further, they analyzed the relationship between pluralism. One of the remarkable differences about this book and previous books on blacks and politics is the fact that it is activist in orientation. Hamilton and Carmichael laid the foundation for the development of the power relations paradigm.

Mack Jones followed Hamilton and Carmichael's lead. He constructed a theoretical framework for the study of blacks and politics that was consistent with black political experiences in the United States. He felt that this framework would aid in the understanding and appreciation of black political participation. Jones added his voice to those advocating a power analysis. He argued that essentially there was a power struggle between blacks and whites, with whites trying to maintain their superior position. Jones expanded the notion of the power struggle by arguing that whites adopted an ideological justification for their superior position. Furthermore, this justification was institutionalized to the extent whites considered themselves inherently superior.

Despite the advancement of the power relations framework (augmented by the concepts of dominant and submissive groups) by many scholars, it was not totally successful in redirecting blacks and politics research toward alternative frameworks. Unfortunately, there was still a strong tendency to use traditional political science

frameworks. Still, there were scholars who continued to fight for alternative frameworks. Walton (1972) introduced the black/white political conflict system as a framework for analysis of blacks politics. Like Jones he was not successful in transforming traditional frameworks.

However, he did meet with success in two other ways. First, he was successful in broadening the definition of what activities and behavior constitute the subfield of blacks and politics. This was extremely important because the expanded definition allows for a more inclusive analysis of blacks and politics. Limiting the definition of black politics to electoral politics fails to properly include a wide array of nonelectoral activity that do impact the black political experience (Walton 1973). These scholars include within the definition of politics such activities as community organizing and protest. Second, he was successful in arguing that black politics must not be viewed as monolithic. He raised the notion that patterns of black political behavior and activities will vary depending on a host of variables, including geographic locations.

The push for a broadened definition of the sub-field of blacks and politics was aided by the efforts of Holden (1973). He focused his work on the organizational aspects of black "quasi-government" He looked at the potential public policy issues involved in "quasi-government's activities" (Holden 1973, 3).

Fourth Generation Research: Multiplicity of Topics and Approaches

Walton and Holden's efforts to broaden the definition of blacks and politics to be more inclusive and reflective of an array of black experiences contributed towards the development of the fourth generation of research. This generation is still developing and is marked by the multiplicity of topics and approached. No longer are political scientists

interested in black politics limiting their scholarship to one dimension or approach. Currently there are six topics that make up the focus of on-going research regarding blacks and politics.

Urban politics remains a topic that generates substantial research. Beginning in 1967 with the election of big-city black mayors and city council members, increased attention has been given to researching black political aspirations and successes in urban areas (Gomes and Williams 1992). The early research of black mayors focused on the similarities and differences in blacks elected in predominately white populated cities versus black mayors elected in predominately black populated cities. (Preston 1976, 1983, 1987, 1990; Preston et al. 1987; Jones 1978; Nelson and Meranto 1977). Later research expanded the focus to look at the differences (if any) big-city mayors made in urban politics. (Nelson 1990; Rich 1989; Persons 1985, 1987, 1993). Jennings studied black women mayors (1991). Scholars examined black representation on city councils (Robinson and Dye 1978; Karing and McClain 1985; Pinderhughes 1987). One of the popular areas of research is proportional representation and council districts as a way of increasing black representation (Bullock and MacManus 1987; Welch 1990).

Another topic involves voting rights and public policy. The Voting Rights of 1965 created research opportunities on the election of black officials as well as the empowerment of the black electorate. (Grofman and Davidson 1992; Gomes and Williams 1992; Rueter 1995; Marable 1995). These expanded research opportunities included empirical research on the election of blacks and Latinos to the House of Representatives (Lublin 1997) and the second Reconstruction (Marable 1990). A variety of public policy issues received attention due to the passage of various civil rights statutes

(health care - Barnett and Hefner 1976; implementation of civil rights statutes - Rice and Jones 1984; public employment – Preston 1984; urban violence – McClain 1992; race and redistricting – Grofman, 1998; McClain 1992; Hurwitiz and Peffley 1998).

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies has evolved into a national think tank providing vital data for research, including data on elected officials (Bositis 1998). The 1993-1997 statistical summary of black elected officials was the last bound version published by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. The Center has not abandoned collecting this important information. Now statistical information is available at no cost through the Center's website at www.jointctr.org. The statistical summaries provide data on nationwide trends, state-by-state trends, women, statewide elected officials, state legislators, mayors, Congress, and regional patterns. This information is provided through a series of tables. The center's efforts make it easier to conduct research, particularly quantitative research, by providing detailed information including names, addresses, and levels of office for purchase as labels and list printouts and on diskettes and CD-ROM.

Scholars are still doing research on the Civil Rights Movement (Morris 1984; Norell 1986; Branch 1989; Weisbrot 1991; Dittmer 1994; Payne 1995; Levy 1996; Pomerantz 1996; Wirt 1997) and leadership (Marable 1990; Smith 1996; Walters and Smith 1999). There is also on-going efforts to analyze black movements (Robinson 1997).

Political scientist Ronald Walters has carved out a niche researching presidential politics (Barker and Walters 1989). Political socialization and attitudes have produced substantial scholarship. A significant portion of this research is empirical. Studies have

included research on black school children feeling less politically efficacious (McClain and Garcia 1993); how small sample sizes in national surveys have a limited and negative effect on aspects of black political attitudes (Walton 1985); studies of conservative versus liberal ideological orientations among blacks and the importance of racial issues to blacks and whites (Hoffman 1998). Interest in political attitudes led to the National Black Election Study (NBES) in response to the small black sample sizes in the 1984 and 1988 national elections. (Tate 1991; Welch and Foster 1992). Eventually there was expanded study on black political behavior (Allen, Dawson and Brown 1989; Dawson, Brown and Allen 1990; Welch and Foster 1992; Welch and Foster 1987; Walton 1994).

The rising number of blacks elected to the United States Congress and serving on courts at all levels generated research on the black political experience including the Congressional Black Caucus (Lublin 1997; Barnett 1975, 1977, 1984; Levy and Stoudinger 1976, 1978; Smith 1981, 1988; Swain 1993; Berg 1998; Barker and Jones 1994; Singh 1998; Barker et al 1999). Research on the judicial system include both scholarship on jurists and court decisions, particularly those handed down by the United States Supreme Court (Barker 1973, 1992a, 1992b; Bybee 1998; Howard 1999)

During this generation research era an area was carved out to examine black women and gender issues. Although the literature on black women and politics will be reviewed extensively in Chapter Four, a few words need to be presented here. Research on black women and politics has not been extensive within the discipline of political science and is in fact a recent phenomenon. As with the general subfield of "minority" politics where research improved with the increase in the number of political scientists of color, gender issues received increased attention when the number of women political

scientists rose. The same can be said of research on black women and politics. Black women make up a very small percentage of political scientists with the Ph.D. The rise of research on black women and politics corresponds with black women entering the discipline. It was long thought that Jewel L. Prestage was the first black female recipient of a Ph.D. in political science, which she earned from the University of Iowa in 1954. She has taught political science for over forty years and is currently the fellow at Prairie A&M University. Much of her scholarship deals with women, particularly black women.[11]

Previous research on blacks and politics failed to adequately address the experiences of black women. In the literature there is very few instances in which the examination looked at black males and black females separately. Growing research genderizes the experiences of politics for black women (Prestage 1991, 1984, 1977; Darcy and Hadley 1988; Bryce and Warrick 1977). One of the major issues that directed attention to issues of sexism (both in general and within the black community) and gender equality (particularly for black females) was the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas sexual harassment controversy (Mansbridge and Tate 1992). Research on black women and politics counteracts generalizations based primarily on the studying of black men and may not lead to the same conclusions for black women when gender is considered.

Scholarship is being conducted in the area of blacks and foreign policy or international relations, an area traditionally *perceived* as beyond the scope of black

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[11] During the Black Women and the Academy II: Service and Leadership conference held during June 1999 in Washington, D.C., political scientist Dianne Pinderhughes discussed her research in which she discovered the real first African American female recipient of the Ph.D. in political science. Her name is Merze Tate and she taught at Howard University. She earned her Ph.D. from Radcliffe College in 1941. It was not known that Dr. Tate was a political scientist because she taught out of the History Department due to the sexism she encountered in the Political Science Department.

political interests. Recent publications include *Foreign Policy and the Black (Inter)National Interest* (Henry 2000), *Beyond the Boundaries: Reverend Jesse Jackson in International Affairs* (Stanford 1997), *Black Atlantic Politics: Dilemmas of Political Empowerment in Boston and Liverpool* (Nelson 2000), and *Globalization and Survival in the Black Diaspora* (Green 1997).

Several different approaches are being used in the fourth generation of research on blacks and politics. One approach is the re-emergence of pluralism as a theoretical framework.[12] Although many opponents found the pluralism paradigm "inadequate to rectify the massive problems facing the black community" (Dawson and Wilson 1991, 200), many of these same opponents research the same areas as pluralists. The pluralist model depicts the United States as a

> a society which moves predeterminedly towards a state
> of equilibrium characterized by countervailing forces which
> insure that no one group predominates and all groups get
> something substantial. The model views the United States
> as a series of ethnic communities which over time are
> melted into an integrated nation. The model assumes
> new groups are at first considered outsiders and are
> relegated to a subordinate status, but that over time they
> will become more and more Americanized and in the
> process strengthen their competitive position until
> they are ultimately accepted as equal ingredients in
> the American nation. The histories of Irish Catholics and
> European Jews are often cited as empirical examples which
> validate this theory. It is only a matter of time, the model
> infers, before African Americans like European ethnic
> groups, become an equal partner in a new equilibrium
> (Barker and Jones 1994).

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[12] An important note is that the ethnics politics model that originated in the second generation of research has not enjoyed the same resurgence. The model has been "almost universally rejected as an appropriate framework for analysis in black politics (McClain and Garcia 1993, 255).

As years ago when the pluralism model was heralded as the optimum analytical approach, critics are quick to point out that the history of African Americans precludes use of this model. The fact that African Americans were brought to this country in chains and kept in bondage and were not considered human does not allow for a perfect "melting pot" scenario. This idea is supported by the notion that African Americans were in this country long before some ethnic groups and they have not evolved to "insider" status. There are those within the discipline who will continue to use the pluralism model thereby evoking continued criticism.

Marxist analysis is another research approach (Marable 1983, 1985; Robinson 1983). This approach originated in the race and class analysis of Bunche and found maturity in the fourth generation of research. Race was not a central part of Marxist analysis where focus is on class. However, when a Marxist analysis is used in examining blacks and politics, race becomes a central factor because "the role of blacks in society has been fixed and noncontradictory" (McClain and Garcia 1993, 255). Rational choice theory and formal modeling theory are two additional approaches in use. Although its use has been limited, rational choice theory is being used to examine group behavior and group consciousness (Dawson and Wilson 1991, 212). The use of rational choice theory has met with resistance because of its focus on the individual. Opponents argue that this focus fails to include the contextual aspects necessary for the understanding of black political experiences in the United States.

The debate over appropriate approaches for examining blacks and politics continues. There are scholars in the discipline who resist limiting research to race alone (Carmines and Stimson 1989, xiii). Others, exemplified by Mack Jones (1990) argue that

black political scientists have been mainstreamed to the extent there is no (or limited)

discussion of alternative frameworks with which to examine black political experiences

and behavior. Furthermore, these political scientists do not challenge the assumptions in

political science regarding the study of blacks and politics. The issue of "deracialization"

is the focus of much debate about the mainstreaming of political science research on

blacks and politics. Deracialization refers to an electoral strategy by black candidates that

"explicitly avoids race-specific issues and advocating issues that are perceived as racial

transcendent" (McCormick and Jones 1993, 76).[13] Some scholars argue deracialization is

contrary to the fundamental *essence* of black politics because it diverts attention

> [f]rom the substance of what constitutes African-American
> politics – using electoral politics as a lever to maximize
> group power in the fight against racism, exclusion, and
> marginalization while promoting African American
> specific policy preferences with the political system.
> (Starks 1991, 216).

Political Scientist Ronald Walters questions the need to identify deracialization as black

politics. One scholar sees an analogy of deracialization of black politics to the decision

by some black artists to mainstream their music for white society (Smith 1990, 160).[14]

The Twenty-First Century will provide greater opportunities for political science

scholars to produce additional scholarships on blacks and politics. The Race and

Ethnicity section of the American Political Science Association as well as the National

Conference of Black Political Scientists will undoubtedly play major roles in broadening

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[13] An excellent discussion of decracialization can be found in Huey L. Perry's *Race, Politics and Governance in the United States* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996).

[14] "The new black politics initiated in the late 1960s, like the music of the ear, was conceived as social change agent, the continuation of movement politics by other means. It would indeed be sad if the conditions for its success require it to become a 'deracialized' mainstream shell of itself."

the definition of politics even more to include the total black experience and developing

theoretical frameworks needed to address blacks and politics.

CHAPTER THREE

Knowledge in Political Science: Women and Politics

"The most important finding ... is that political woman exists."

Kirkpatrick 1974, 217.

Many of the old masters whose work make up a substantial part of the canon of political science argued that women were different from men. Furthermore, this difference made them incapable of civic virtue. They also believed women were a threat to the well-ordered state, which deserved protection at all cost. This old world argument formed the basis for viewing women in a negative political light.

The first notion of Western political theory flourished in Athens during the fourth century B.C. Athens was the home of Plato and Aristotle, who are most often associated with the origin of political theory. Both Plato and Aristotle's pronouncements have remained influential to this day. Plato and Aristotle's writings were done within a tradition of misogyny predicated on a social context of women's subjugation. As the centuries progressed a clearer picture of women's inferior status emerged. This negative portrayal of women was disseminated through myth, drama, science, and philosophy. The earlier works were not political in nature but they did provide ideas about the sexes, which later political writers seized upon.

From the beginning of the development of political theory women were not seen as capable of possessing the mental ability to be "citizens." Women were equated with children and slaves. Since women were not a principal part of political theory they were not studied and thus excluded from the debates surrounding citizenship, freedom,

equality, and justice. Since women were not considered legitimate subjects of study they were either ignored or misrepresented resulting in the notion that women were apolitical.

The view of women's role in society has been impacted by feminism. By placing women at the center of analysis their experiences are given voice. From this standpoint a picture emerged of women as capable of engaging in public affairs, including political ones.   It is generally recognized that there are three waves of feminism. The first wave began in the Eighteenth Century and lasted until the1920s.

The second wave of feminism began in the 1960s and is divided into three categories, i.e. liberal, Marxist, and radical. The second wave of feminism concentrated more on women's structural position in a capitalist environment. It continued focus on the role of the family in sustaining women's structural positions. This was a marked difference because not only were women oppressed by their exclusion from work but also their inclusion. The impetus for second wave feminism grew out of the new left, student, and civil rights movements of the 1960s. Decline of a Marxist analysis of feminism resulted in a loss of discourse that critically looked at women's continuing material oppression. Radical and postmodern feminism shifted attention to the cultural aspects of feminism. There was scant attention given to economic aspects resulting in little attempts to integrate economics into sexual politics.

The third wave of feminism (which we are now experiencing) renounces the sort of histories that would allow feminism to be seen as a unified theory. It has evolved towards a greater truth about and liberation from a patriarchal world.

The study of women and politics within the discipline of political science is the direct result of the contemporary feminist movement and women's studies (1970s and

1980s). The contemporary feminist movement and women's studies provided the impetus

for the development of feminist political theory to the point today where one cannot

discuss political theory without including feminist political theory.

Prior to the 1960s few books and articles about and by women were

published within the discipline of political science. Between 1901 and 1966 there were

only eleven dissertations on women and politics. Women's Studies began in the 1970s

and gained momentum in the 1980s. This development helped to propel the scholarly

study of women and politics.

The Women's Caucus for Political Science was founded in 1971. In 1972 the

Caucus began to sponsor papers on gender at the annual meeting of the American

Political Science Association. At the beginning only a few papers were presented. Today

many papers are presented and panels offered at the annual meeting. During the early to

mid-1970s the first ground breaking books on women and politics were published.[1]

Since it's beginning, the subfield of women and politics has grown at a

phenomenal speed.[2] The number of books, articles and papers written by political

scientists on women and politics and feminist theory has mushroomed. Two examples

illustrate this growth. First, the 1992 annual meeting of the American Political Science

Association witnessed sixty gender-related papers. Second, *Women and Politics* was

founded in 1991. The journal is scholarly in nature and committed to publishing

empirical and theoretical work on women and politics. During 1991 twenty-four articles

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[1] See Kirsten Amundsen, *The Silenced Majority: Women and American Democracy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971); Jane S. Jaquette, ed. *Women in Politics* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1974); Jane J. Kirkpatrick, *Political Woman* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1974); Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, (New York, NY: Longman, 1975). Kirkpatrick also wrote *The New Presidential Elite: Men and Women in National Politics* (New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 1976).

[2] The growth of scholarship on women and gender within the discipline of political science has paralleled similar growth development in the humanities and other social sciences. In some instances growth has been more rapidly. This growth has been aided by the influence of interdisciplinary work in women's studies.

and twenty-one book reviews were published on women and politics and feminist political theory.

The study of women and politics was further institutionalized in 1986 with the formation of the organized section on Women and Politics Research within the American Political Science Association. Rutgers University became the first United States university to offer women and politics as both a major and minor in a Ph.D. program. Now most of the larger political science programs have at least one faculty member specializing in gender politics. Women and politics courses are an integral part of the curricula.

Susan J. Carroll and Linda M.G. Zerilli identified three analytically distinct categories of research on women and politics (Carroll and Zerilli 1993). The first category critiques the ways in which political theory and empirical research in political science have traditionally excluded women as political actors and rendered them invisible or apolitical. Political science is interested in the question of citizenship. Many feminists turned their attention to the historical tradition of Western political thought. Past political theorists excluded women from participation in the public sphere. This was not done simply as an act of neglect. There were deep worries about the disorderly influence of women on political affairs. The "patriarchal attitudes" of political theorists from Plato to Hegel declared women not fully human and rational therefore incapable of being fully political beings.

The earliest feminist critiques were concerned with breaking the silence about women that existed - and to some extent still does - in the scholarly literature in the canon of political theory. Feminists wanted to make two points. First, they wanted to show how

tradition justified the exclusion of women. Second, they wanted to show how exclusion has defined what counts as citizenship. Much of the writings by traditional political scientists during this period sought to legitimatize the differences between males and females in addition to interpreting the research to make women appear apolitical.

The second category consists of research that has attempted to add women into politics, to make them visible as political actors, while accepting the existing dominant frameworks of political analysis. During the 1970s and 1980s theoretical and empirical work was aimed at making women a visible part of political theory and utilizing behavioral research. The work also sought to correct past biases. Feminists used existing disciplinary frameworks and approaches to examine the portrayal of women in the works of major political theorists and the political behavior of women at the citizen and elite levels. The focus of their work was aimed at dispelling the notion that women were/are apolitical beings and the idea that women and men's roles in society were/are dictated by nature and thus immutable. Underscoring this work was the notion that liberal feminism involves more than achieving bourgeois male rights earlier denied women. However, the inclusion of women should not be viewed from an additive approach.

During this period there was a great deal of research on female officeholders, the visible political elites. There was no monothlic view of the focus of research under this category. Other feminists argued the problems lied in its appeal to the bureaucratic apparatus of the state and of the corporate world to integrate women into the public sphere.

The final category consists of research that calls existing frameworks and assumptions into question. Work within this category suggests that our dominant

frameworks cannot accommodate the inclusion of women as political actors and that many of the frameworks, assumptions, and definitions central to political science must be reconceptualized. Much of political science research about women is riddled with untested assumptions and methodological flaws. A dualistic conception of public and private as largely separate and mutually exclusive spheres of existence does not adequately portray the reality of women's lives. Rather, public and private spheres in the lives of women officeholders seem to contribute a holistic system of interrelated social relations where choice of action has repercussions throughout the systems.

Feminists employ qualitative research where open-ended interviews capture rich histories and the full range of the flavors of women's lives. They use women's standpoints as points of departure for rethinking politics. Gender is used as a category of analysis for studying political structures and processes. Recent research points to a new incarnation in which gender differences are generally viewed as an asset, not a deficiency. Women are seen as bringing perspectives to politics that are currently lacking. A good example is the gender gap.

For purposes of this study I will utilize Carroll and Zerilli's three analytically distinct categories to discuss what we know about women and politics and how we know it.

<u>Invisible/Apolitical</u>

At the beginning the main focus of women and politics research focused on making women visible and political. This was no different than other disciplines whose feminist origins began with critiques of the ways knowledge is produced. Since the beginning of the discipline political scientists excluded women and their experiences

from research inquiry. This intentional or neglectful action rendered women invisible. Because women and their experiences were excluded the known and accepted knowledge of women's apolitical status and behavior were based on stereotypical assumptions. These assumptions are rooted in the writings of Plato and Aristotle and carried forward through history.

From the beginning of the feminist analysis of women and politics, women political scientists focused on "breaking the silence" about women's political experiences and behavior. The initial focus centered on examining the works of past political theorists to determine what was said and not said about women. This was accomplished by critiquing classical works (Angus Campbell et al. 1960; Lane 1959; Greenstein 1965; Almond and Verba 1963; Dahl 1961; Morgenthau 1948; Bourque and Grossholtz 1974; Sapiro 1979; Tichner 1991). Reviews of the scholarship on the canon of political theory revealed that women were neglected by outright dismissing them as legitimate subjects of inquiry or slightly mentioning women and failing to provide critical political analysis (Elshtain 1979). Women are portrayed as lacking in political interest and involvement (Berelson, et al. 1954, 25; Campbell et al. 1960, 489-90); having low political efficacy and holding belief systems that lack conceptual sophistication (Campbell et al. 1960, 490-2); voting less often than men, and when they do vote, they tend to defer to and vote like their husbands (Campbell et al. 485-6, 492-3); personalizing politics and paying more attention to personalities than to issues (Greenstein 1965, 108; Almond and Verba 1963, 535); being more conservative in their political preferences and voting, despite the fact that they vote like their husbands (Almond and Verba 1963, 535); and less tolerant of left-wing political groups such as Communists and socialists (Stouffer 1955, 131-55).

Sometimes women appeared, albeit slightly, and often conscious decisions were made to read them out of the Western political theory literature (Jones and Jonasdotter 1989).

These pioneering political science feminists critiqued what the past political theorists had to say because of their interest in how and why the theorists justified the exclusion of women from political life. Justifications include alleged disruptive sexuality, lack of justice, and incapacity. The justifications were important but did not matter in the long run because "women were excluded from the public, political and economic spheres" (Clark and Lange 1979 viii).

Concentrating on what was said about women was important to the conceptualization of citizenship. Since women were not deemed political actors (and not worthy of inquiry) their experiences and behavior were not used to craft the concept of citizenship (Paterman 1980b; Eisenstein 1981; Elhstain 1981; Saxonhouse 1985;Carroll and Zerrili 1993). Central to the conceptualization of citizenship are notions of justice, rights, and consent. The absence of women affected the theorists' notions of these ideas. Carroll and Zerille stated, "this core insight, although not fully developed in the feminist literature of the late 1970s and early 1980s, was crucial for the scholarship on gender for at least three reasons: one it enabled feminists to contests the ' add women and stir' approach to political theory; two it offered ways of thinking through women's contemporary status as second-class citizens; and three, it suggested that the legacy of the Western tradition on the discipline of political science has been to treat women as political outsiders whose place is in the family" (1993, 57).

The few works that did examine women's political behavior offered the portrait of women as apolitical or politically deficient. However, feminist scholars successfully

questioned the validity of this research. They argued that such research is not valid when the researchers embraced gender-related bias. They further argued that the research is "riddled with untested assumptions and methodological flaws (see Jacquette 1974; Bourque and Grossholtz 1974; Goot and Reid 1975). This research reinforced the notion of a public and private split in which women's place is in the private sphere with her primary responsibility being taking care of the family. On the other hand men were head of the family and an active participant in the public sphere. Given the critique of feminist scholars it probably is wise to question prefeminist writings on women and politics.

Research continues on examining past political theorists' portrayal of women as apolitical and invisible. (Randall 1991; Ackelsberg and Diamond 1987; Nelson 1989; Sapiro 1989; Grant 1991; Halliday 1991; Kelly et al. 1987; Coole 1993).

Feminist political scientists have identified several ways behavioral political scientists engaged in faulty research on women and politics. One example is that legitimate differences between females and males are interpreted in such a manner that females appear apolitical (Greenstein 1965, 116; Bourque and Grossholtz 1974, 243). Another example of faulty interpretation were findings extolling men's political competence and women's incompetence when there were findings of lower levels of political (efficacy) participation for women (Bourgue and Grossholtz 1974, 231). Some researchers were clearly blatant in their biases because of faulty constructed questions designed to elicit responses to justify the characterization of females as apolitical and males as political (Greenstein 1965; Hess and Torney 1968; Andrain 1971). Bourque and Grossholtz concluded such questions portrayed politics as "a male-only world by the unvarying use of the male gender, the pictures chosen; and the limited and stereotyped

choices of answers provided" (1974, 33). The final example is "fudging of the footnotes." This occurs when political scientists reference a source in which the statements provided did not say what was critically attributed to the person (Bourque and Grossholtz 1974, 234-5).

<u>Additive Analysis</u>

Scholars interested in women and politics used existing disciplinary frameworks to examine the works of past political theorists who concluded women were apolitical. Critiquing the notion that women are apolitical served an important function. It supported the critical use of gender as a category of analysis. Using gender as a category of analysis highlighted the limitations of ungendered frameworks. Feminist political scholars used a genderized analysis to examine past historical events resulting in the conclusion that the modern public sphere was historically constructed through the exclusion of women (Carroll and Zerille 1993). Within the discipline there is a tension between women as rights-bearing citizens and women as an oppressed sex class. Gendered analysis highlighted this tension and is the underpinning of liberal feminism. Zillah Eisenstein concluded that the above tension would be more exposed as more feminists radicalized their agenda. (Eisenstein1984). There are feminists who reject liberal feminism as a tool for change because of its reliance on the state. These critics see it as antiethical to an anti-hierarchical "vision of individual and collective life" (Ferguson 1984, 5; Elshtain 1981; Ruddick 1989; Denhardt and Perkins 1976).

Empirical feminists take an opposing view. They argue the political arena is the best way to achieve equality. During the 1970s and 1980s empirical feminist scholars generated an impressive body of work on electoral politics. The first books published

examined women public officeholders and party activists (e.g. Kirkpatrick 1974, 76; Diamond 1977; Githens and Prestage 1977). The research rendered false the notion of invisibility by highlighting women officeholders and activists. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick's study concluded political women in her study were similar to male politicians in many respects, including social backgrounds and psychological characteristics (1974, 220). Despite this pronouncement, Kirkpatrick went on to discuss the political woman as normal. She states

> ... *political woman is not grossly deviant from her female peers*. She is not necessarily "masculine" in appearance or manner; she has not necessarily rejected female roles and interests. Quite the contrary. The political woman on whom this book is based are ... [almost all] wives and mothers ... Well-groomed, well-mannered, decorous in speech and action, these are "feminine" women in the traditional sex-stereotyped sense of that word (1974, 219).

Kirkpatrick argued that the research tended to treat women as monolithic, which she declared a noticeable shortcoming in the literature. Kirkpatrick's book has been criticized as "cautious, conservative, and restricted in scope" (Carroll and Zerrili 1993, 61). Perhaps this is a legitimate criticism based on today's analysis. However, Kirkpatrick's book must be viewed in its historical context. Viewing her work in a historical context there can be no denial of its importance in making women visible and political.

During the 1970s and 1980s women and politics scholars engaged in studying mass political behavior conducted their research in a manner that countered the accepted image of women up to this point, i.e., apolitical and politically deficient. There were some researchers whose research still concluded there were clear differences between the political behavior and orientations of men and women (Jennings and Farah 1980;

Rapoport 1982, 1985). However, most research concluded there was little evidence in this regards. This conclusion was based on two factors. First, the elimination of much of the gender bias that influenced methodological approaches and interpretation of findings was successful. Second, the studies conducted during this time "reflected actual changes in political behavior that had taken place as differences between men and women's social roles, education, and employment decreased" (Carroll and Zerille 1993, 62). These studies concluded that women were more likely as men to engage in a variety of political behavior including working in campaigns and contributing money to candidates or parties (Hansen, et al. 1976; Welch 1977; Baxter and Lansing 1980; Beckwith 1986). Baxter and Lansing further noted that women were just as interested in following campaigns as men. This observation they noted, "contrasts sharply with the myth of nonpolitical woman" (1980, 46). Bennett and Bennett concluded that women vote in national elections at the same rate as men but still are less politically interested (1989).

Differences between women and men are not natural and immutable therefore they are changeable. A whole body of research was advanced which looked at factors affecting difference (increased education, increased participation for women - Sapiro 1983; Hansen, et al. 1976; Welch 1977; Poole and Zeigler 1985; working outside the home - Andersen 1975; Welch 1977, 244-45; having children - Sapiro 1983, 177; Jennings and Niemi 1981, 286-7).

Another area that received increased attention was women and electoral politics. Researchers examined the question of why so few women held public office. Researchers looked at delegates to national party conventions and other party activists, who formed the pool for potential candidates for the future. Findings indicated that women were less

ambitious than men when it came to public office (Jennings and Thomas 1968;

Constantini and Clark 1977; Kirkpatrick 1976; Fowlkes, et al. 1979; Sapiro and Farah

1980; Jennings and Farah 1981; Constantini and Bell 1984). The less ambitious stance of

women was contributed to gender differences in political socialization and gender roles.

The notion was prevalent in a great deal of the literature during the 1970s. Identifiable

factors contributing to less ambition include dual demands of homemaking and career,

fear of sex discrimination, responsibility for the care of young children, and their

perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate roles for women.

Emphasis on what contributed to fewer women in public office shifted in the

1980s. Scholars criticized the socialization and gender roles explanation as blaming the

victim. These scholars instead focused on the political system as a variable (e.g. Carroll

1985; Darcy et al. 1987). The research indicated a number of factors within the political

system contributed to the underrepresentation of women. These factors include the power

of incumbency and lack of winnable open seats (Andersen and Thorson 1984; Darcy et al

1987; Carroll 1985; Studlar et al. 1988) as well as electoral arrangements [multimember

versus single-member districts](Rule and Zimmerman 1992; Welch and Studlar 1990).

Rethinking Traditional Frameworks and Assumptions

In response to criticisms of the additive analysis approach, feminist political

scholars have shifted focus. Carroll and Zerilli sum up the shift by stating

> In recent years many women and politics scholars
> and feminist theorists have produced work that
> more explicitly confronts and challenges the
> dominant frameworks and assumptions of the
> discipline. Often influenced by the interdisciplinary
> perspectives of women's studies, these scholars
> have raised new questions and introduced new
> frameworks into the study of gender and politics.

Their work suggests that we need to rethink and
reconceptualize various approaches, assumptions,
and concepts that are central to the discipline (1993, 65).

This shift in focus has manifested itself in three approaches. The first approach

places women's perspectives and experiences at the center of analysis. As a result

feminist political scholars have challenged traditional definitions of politics. One

example is research that has questioned the traditional notion of a private and public split

in affairs. Susan J. Carroll's study did not find evidence of such a split. She therefore

called for a new conceptualization for analysis. Carroll found that women's personal life

choices affected their public lives as well as their public life choices affected their private

action. She concluded,

A dualistic conception of public and private as
largely separated and mutually exclusive spheres
of existences does not adequately portray the
reality of these women's lives; rather, public
and private in the lives of women officeholders
seem to constitute a holistic system of inter-
related social relations where any action taken
has repercussions throughout the system (189, 63).

Centering women as the point of departure in political analysis extended beyond

focusing on the public and private spheres. Scholar Diane Fowlkes used a qualitative

research approach to interview twenty-seven white female activists about their

experiences. The focus of the study was not to test a political hypothesis but "intended to

explicate the various meanings that *these women* give to their political actions" (1992,

97). Not only did these women touch on the notion of power that is a central component

of political study, but they also discussed themes that generally do not find their way into

traditional political study such as educating oneself and consciousness-raising (1992,

184-214). Carroll and Zerilli concluded that

> By allowing women to speak from their own perspectives
> in their own terms, Fowlkes's work suggests that the
> discipline of political science must expand its conception
> of politics if it is to encompass the ways that the women
> she interviewed think about politics (1993, 66).

Cynthia Enloe used women's experiences to rethink international politics (Enloe 1990). Enloe's work has had the same effect as Jeane Kirkpatrick's work in making women visible in American politics. Through her work Enloe made women visible in international politics. The difference between their works is that Kirkpatrick relied on dominant assumptions and frameworks. Enloe dismissed them and used women's experiences as the standpoint for her study.

The second approach involves not only centering women's experiences as the point of departure for political analysis but also utilizing a historical approach. Historically, women's work has been viewed as "philanthropy, service or disorderly conduct" but not as politics (Lebsock 1990, 35). The dichotomy of the public/private split played a large part in viewing women's activities as other than politics. Feminist historians learned all too soon that the male definition of politics (based on the public/private split) was too narrowing resulting in the exclusion of women's activities that should have been viewed as political. Mary Beth Norton stated that, "[w]omen's historians broadened the category to include women's attempts to gain control over their own lives ..." (1980, 40).

The discipline of political science has been slow to move in the direction of feminist historians, but there has been some movement. In *Women and the Politics of*

Empowerment (Bookman and Morgen 1988), the editors included several case studies on the activism of working-class women.

The third and final approach uses gender as a category for analysis. This is a relatively new development because the previous use of gender as an analytical tool was limited to individuals. Gender difference theorists in women's studies (e.g. Gilligan 1982; Chodorow 1978; Ruddick 1989) have influenced gender analysis in political science. Carol Gilligan's work on gender differences in moral reasoning was and still is important to feminist political scientists. She challenged the notion that women advance to a heightened level of moral development in which "goodness is equated with helping and pleasing others" (1982, 18). This notion of goodness has been used to justify the argument that women lack a sense of justice because of their incapacity to make impartial judgments. Gilligan observed, "The way traits that traditionally have defined the 'goodness' of women, their care for and sensitivity to the needs of others, are those that mark them as deficient in moral development" (1982, 18). Burrell relied on Gilligan in her study of women campaigning for Congress in the feminist era (1994). She concluded that women operate in a different voice. The study indicated that the notion women are disadvantaged in the financing of their campaigns was not supported by empirical evidence. Perhaps this is so but can we wonder if there is a legitimate difference between the ways men raise money and women raise money. Gilligan's work also underscores the notion that women legislate differently than men (Thomas and Welch 1994).

The application of gendered analysis is seen in the recent works on the welfare state and its formation (e.g. Gordon 1990; Sarvasy 1992; Nelson 1990; Diamond 1983). The welfare state is viewed as paternalistic [Rivlin 1990] and reinforces inequities based

on gender, race, and class (Mink 1990). Gendered analysis has been used in recent research on the voting behavior of women and their presence in public life. This new incarnation of gender difference is "generally viewed as an asset, not a deficiency; women are seen as bringing perspectives to politics which are currently lacking" (Carroll and Zerilli 67).

One of the aims of gendered analysis is a transformation in how research is conducted about women and politics. Most political science research is empirical and the accepted approach is quantitative. However, the richness of qualitative research may provide us with more and better information about women and politics. Janet Flammang argues that traditional political scientists did not properly analyze the women's movement because they failed to see its political significance (Flammang 1997). This failure can be attributed to two factors. The first factor is the absence or low number of women in the discipline. The second factor is the discipline's reliance on flawed epistemological, methodological, and empirical tools.

Transformative feminist scholars critiqued the model of political ambition. This model uses a four-prong analysis. First, politicians tailor their political behavior in accordance with their goals for public office. Second, they utilize a broad rather than narrow policy perspective. Third, policy perspectives are associated with the higher posts politicians aspire to. Fourth and finally, politicians are sensitive to the constituency of the aspired-to office. These scholars developed a new model of political ambition that reflects women's experiences. Their model is two-fold. The first fold is the notion that women are socialized to serve others rather than advance their own goals. Second, women possess a tradition of seeing politics as nonpartisan public service rather than as

partisan career advancement. Therefore, the factors in the decision-making process used by women in deciding to run for elected office is different from the calculus process used by men.

Without a woman-centered, gender analysis, we would not know as much as we do about women in Congress. Recent works highlight the experiences of congressional women providing us with a historical framework to analyze their role in politics (Burrell 1994; Hertzog 1995; Gill 1997; Kaptur 1996; Pollack 1996; Boxer 1994; Wallace 1995; Bingham 1997; Whitney 2000).

Women have been portrayed as apolitical and later through "visibility" scholarship as political. However, a transformative gender analysis has allowed us to see women as intelligent strategists (Bingham 1997). The inclusion of "sex" in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (hereafter Title VII) illustrates the notion of women as strategists. Prior to the 1960s most bills that affected the lives of women were sponsored by male lawmakers. In 1963 this changed. Congresswomen Edith Green, Edna Kelly, and Martha Griffiths supported the Equal Pay Act, which became law.

Today we automatically think of sex as a protected class status under Title VII. It comes as a surprise to many people that sex was not originally included in the proposed bill. The inclusion of sex was the result of a shrewd strategic move by a woman. Martha Griffiths was a Democratic representative from Michigan. Although she supported the idea of a civil rights bill, she considered the proposed Title VII blatantly unfair without a sex clause (Bingham 1997, 17). Griffiths was concerned that white women would be without protection although black women would have protection because of color. Griffiths prepared an amendment to add a sex clause stating, "I made up my mind that all

women were going to take one giant step forward, ..." (Bingham 1997, 17). However, before she could introduce her amendment a male member introduced his amendment calling for the addition of a sex clause to Title VII. Howard Smith was a Virginia representative. He served as leader of the Southern conservative members of Congress. In addition, he was chairman of the Rules Committee. Smith was vehemently opposed to the civil rights bill and saw introduction of the sex clause as a way of defeating the bill without the opposition appearing racist.

Griffiths allowed Smith to introduce his amendment. Her decision was a tactical one based on power. She reasoned that Smith's sponsorship would garner more conservative votes than she could have if she sponsored the amendment. Griffiths made a calculated decision to use Smith to gain passage of the amendment. Smith spoke in favor of his amendment declaring it would "set aright the imbalance of spinsters" (Bingham 1997, 18). The seventy-five-year old chairman of the Judiciary Committee, New York Democrat Emmanuel Collier joked that in his family "women were not considered a minority."[3] His statement was greeted with peals of laughter. Griffiths addressed the body and stated, "I presume that if there had been any necessity to point out that women were a second-class sex, the laughter would have proved it".[4] She went on to appeal to the members' conscience by stating, "Your great-grandfathers were willing to be prisoners of their own prejudice to permit ex-slaves to vote, but not their own white wives. A vote against this amendment today by a white man is a vote against his wife, or his widow, or

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[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

his daughter, or his sister."[5] Griffiths speech is credited with the passage of the amendment by a vote of 168 to 138.

There are many more stories about women and their political experiences that need to be shared. The future of research on women and politics using a gendered analysis is bright. The organized section on Women and Politics in the American Political Science Association continues to sponsor sessions specifically on women and politics at the annual meetings of the association. Often the Women and Politics section will co-sponsor sessions with the Race and Ethnicity session as a means of racializing gender. In 2000 the second "Frontiers of Women and Politics Research" seminar was held prior to the annual meeting. The seminar is aimed at providing research and mentoring to graduate students interested in teaching women and politics or feminist political theory. The first seminar was held in 1998 and was successful.[6] In addition, the Women's Political Science Caucus continues its efforts of keeping political scientists informed about recent books, articles, and dissertations on women and politics.

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[5] Ibid.
[6] I attended the first seminar, which was held at Harvard University.

CHAPTER FOUR

Knowledge in Political Science: Black Women and Politics

"I learned to make my mind large, as the universe
is large, so that there is room for paradoxes"

Maxine Hong Kingston [1]

In some respects the study of black women and politics mirrors, in general, the study of blacks and politics as well as women and politics. One similarity is the notion that like white women and black men, black women are viewed as "other" whose knowledge and thinking are valueless in a society where white males are the center. Since "others" project little or no value there is no necessity for studying their experiences and behaviors. However, there are two significant differences.

First, although the discipline of political science has undertaken the focused study of blacks and women earnestly only within the last thirty or so years, there has been a measurable increase in scholarship. So we do know something about blacks and politics as well as women and politics. Second, the study of blacks and whites has essentially been limited to black men and white women. Concerted efforts to racialize gender and genderize race in political science to reflect the experiences of black women have occurred within the last five years or so. This neglect (intentional or not) is exemplified by the title of a classic black feminist work, *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us are Brave: Black Women's Studies*.[2] Christine Stansell captures the feeling of this title when she stated

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[1] Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* (New York, NY: Vintage 1977), 35.
[2] Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds. (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1982).

> In her classic study of the rupture during Reconstruction,
> Ellen Dubois reminds how different the alignments
> would have been had feminists campaigned for the vote
> for women white and black. Their failure to do so, along
> with the Republicans' abandonment of syllogism of
> American political understanding: if the "Negro" was
> male, than the "woman" was white (Stansell 1992, xx).

The vast majority of black women came to the United States as slaves. Separated

physically from their homelands, loved ones and cultures; black women's relationships

were shaped and colored by enslavement. Black women worked long, hard hours under

oppressive conditions where they did not benefit from their own labor. As Maria

Richardson noted, "[w]e have pursued the shadow; they have attained the substance: we

have performed the labor, they have received the profits: we have planted the vines; they

have eaten the fruits of thine" (1987, 59). Black women were not viewed in the same

light as white women who were deemed frail, fragile and in need of protection. Black

women recognized the apparent contradiction in their own lives and the lives of white

women. They indeed were not "protected" but forced to do the same physically

demanding work as black men.

Black women's oppression has been structured to the extent there are three

identifiable, independent dimensions (Collins 1991, 6-7). Dimension one involves the

exploitation of black women's labor (Davis 1981; Marable 1983; Jones 1985) and is

referred to as the economic dimension of oppression. Like other oppressed and

marginalized groups, black women have yet to receive the true value for their labor. The

second dimension, referred to as the political dimension of oppression, exist because

black women were not (and still are not) afforded the same rights and privileges routinely

accorded white males (Prestage 1980; Burnham 1987; Scarborough 1949). The

<u>ideological dimension of oppression</u> uses controlling images of black women that originated during enslavement (King 1973; White 1985; Corky 1987). The ideology underscoring this dimension is critical in projecting negative images of black women as mammies, Jezebels, breeders and matriarchs (Collins 1991, 67-90). These images are used in a manner representing the "process by which certain assumed qualities are attached to black women and how those qualities are used to justify oppression" (Collins 1991, 7).

The three dimensions function together to form a system of social control resulting in putting black women in assigned and subordinated places. When black women step out of their assigned and subordinated places they are punished with negative images that affect every aspect of their lives. At the core of black feminist thought are the efforts by black women to challenge controlling images. Self-identification is a core principle of black feminist thought. The necessity of self-identification is illustrated by Trudier Harris in *From Mammies to Militants: Domestics in Black American Literature* (1982). Harris states black women are

> Called Matriarch, Emasculator and Hot Momma.
> Sometimes Sister, Pretty Baby, Auntie, Mammy
> and Girl. Called Unwed Mother, Welfare Recipient
> and Inner City Consumer. The Black American
> woman has had to admit that while nobody knew
> the trouble she saw, everybody, his brother and
> his dog, felt qualified to explain her, even to herself
> (Harris 1982, 4).

The question before us is what do we know about black women and politics, and how do we know it. This question will be answered in three parts. Part one will address the invisibility of black women in the knowledge of political science. This analysis will be limited to the Twentieth Century for reasons that become clearer in the discussion.

Part two will examine the ways in which black women have become visible. The final part will look at transformative politics that reflect the experiences of black women in a more meaningful way.

In Chapter Three I discussed what we know and how we know about women and politics. It would be redundant to present the entire chapter again. Instead I offer a brief synopsis. Prior to the 1960s few books and articles by and about women were published within the discipline of political science. During the early to mid-1970s the first ground breaking books on women and politics were published. Since then the amount of scholarship generated has increased tremendously.

Invisibility

In analyzing the "invisibility" of black women in political science scholarship there are three frames of reference. The first frame of reference is the complete absence of black women from scholarship. Failure to distinguish between black women and white women constitutes the second frame of reference. This frame of reference also encompasses the failure to distinguish between black women and black men. The third frame of reference is diminishing the relevance of black women's lives.

A.   Complete Absence

For centuries both women and blacks were invisible in the matters of politics. Given the fact that the old political theorists declared that women were unfit for civic duty and therefore incapable of engaging in political activity, it is not surprising that women's lack of recognized participation resulted in them being viewed as apolitical. Slaves were also viewed in a negative light. This is evident when theorists compared women to slaves in justifying their conclusion that women lack the ability to reason.

Interesting is the fact that these theorists did not distinguish between white women and other women, so it is with difficulty that we can conclude they were talking about all women. In the same vein distinctions were not made between male and female slaves. It is sufficient to say that regardless of whether the reference is to women or slaves, black women were just as invisible. For practical purposes the issue of invisibility will be confined to the Twentieth Century.

Even though a reasoned person can argue against the complete absence of black women from political scholarship prior to the Twentieth Century, it is understandable since political science failed to consider women in general. However, carrying invisibility through the Twentieth Century is harder to understand. Although the discipline of political science was slow in recognizing women for legitimate study, eventually such scholarship was generated. This being the case why did it take so long for political science to study black women as distinct from white woman and black men?[3] An argument can be made that black women were not invisible because women were studied and black women can be included in the category of "woman." Also, blacks were studied and black women are black too. However, the argument is flawed on three grounds. First, such an argument ignores the history of this country in treating black women as anything other than a "woman." Second, it assumes that the experiences of all women are similar if not the same. Just as white feminists argue that gender is important and therefore must be a part of the analysis equation, black women can argue that race is equally as important.

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[3] Although I characterize the absence of black women in political science scholarship as invisibility, other scholars refer to this notion as erasure. There are several critiques of the erasure of racial differences in feminist discourses. Three examples are: Maxine Baca Zinn, Lynn Weber Cannon, Elizabeth Higginbotham, and Bonnie Thornton Dill, "The Cost of Exclusionary Practices in Women's Studies." *Signs* 11(2): 290-303 (1986); Marivan Clech Lami, "Feeling Foreign in Feminism," *Signs* 19(4): 865-93 (1994); and Ann duCille, "The Occult of True Womanhood: Critical Demeanor and Black Feminist Studies," *Signs* 19(3): 591-629 (1994).

Therefore, race ought to be part of the analysis equation also. Third, it ignores the historical construction of race in general and black in particular as male. The argument assumes the experiences of black men and black women are the same or similar and not subject to a gendered analysis.

Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia[4] illustrates the absence of black experiences from political science literature. Until President William Clinton honored Irene Morgan recently, very few people knew of her role in the fight for racial equality.[5] President Clinton honored Ms. Morgan, now eighty-three-years old, for her civil rights activism. Until recently her story was virtually absent from history. Ms. Morgan refused to sit in the back of the Greyhound bus traveling from Gloucester County, Virginia to Baltimore, Maryland. She was arrested. Represented by Thurgood Marshall in her appeal to the United States Supreme Court, Morgan argued that she was an interstate traveler and as such it was unconstitutional to require her to sit on the back of the bus. The United States Supreme Court struck down segregation on interstate bus travel as unconstitutional. Not taking anything way from Rosa Parks but it must be mentioned that Ms. Morgan's defiance occurred ten years before Rosa Parks' action.

Irene Morgan is just one instance where black women appear absent in the discourse on blacks and politics. When examining the anti-lynching movement black women are often times totally erased from scholarship. There have been instances in which black female historians have brought to life the role of black women in the anti-

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[4] 328 U.S. 373 (1946).
[5] Law students are required to take constitutional law, usually during their first year of law school. As a law student I took Constitutional Law I and II. My fellow students of color and I were generally aware of the cases involving people of color. However, when Morgan v. Commonwealth was discussed in my constitutional law class it was referenced as ending segregation in interstate transportation. I do not recall hearing the specifics of the case nor being made aware that Morgan was a black female.

lynching movement. Without the efforts of these historians we would still think black women were missing in action during one of the most painful periods in American history.

The absence of black women's experiences has also occurred in women and politics. There has been substantial scholarship on the suffrage and abolitionist movements. There is an impressive body of literature chronicling the actions of white women in both the abolitionist and suffrage movements. However, as with the anti-lynching movement, black female historians have been the impetus in making us aware that black women were active in both movements and their participation went beyond the important speech made by black feminist and abolitionist Sojourner Truth in which she asked, "Ain't I a Woman?"

B.   Failure to Distinguish

Much of the scholarship on women and politics uses a gendered analysis. Until recently many feminist political scholars failed to racialize gender to include the experiences of women of color. The failure to distinguish between black women and white women has resulted in another form of invisibility. Despite arguments of good intentions in seeing all women as the embodiment of "woman" in this culture, this purported inclusion actually results in exclusion or invisibility. A quick review of scholarship generated during the 1960s and 1970s reveals a failure to include the experiences of black women (e.g. Amundsen 1971; Bourque and Grossholtz 1974; Burgess 1962; Diamond 1977; Freeman 1975; Hansen et al. 1976; Holden 1973; Jennings and Thomas 1968; Jones 1972; Kirkpatrick 1974; Lee 1976; Matthews and Prothro 1966;

McLemore 1972; Morris 1975; Smith 1982; Tilman and Phillips 1981; Walker 1963; Walton 1972; Welch 1977).

Conclusions were made about all women although studies only focused on white women (Andersen 1975; Bourque and Grossholtz 1974; Lee 1976; Pateman 1980; Welch 1977).

Elizabeth Spelman sparked a debate over essentialism when she authored her feminist *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*. She raised the level of discourse around the issue of racializing gender as a theoretical framework. Essentialism articulates a position that "woman" encompasses all women regardless of race, class, religion, orientation, nationality, and other differences. Spelman provides a focus for her thoughts on essentialism and the point of her book when she stated

> The word "inessential" in the title of this book is ambiguous on purpose. On the one hand, it is intended as a reminder that women have been said by many Western philosophers to lack what is essentially human and to be inessential to whatever is most important about human life. On the other hand, it is meant to point to and undermine a tendency in dominant Western thought to posit an essential "womaness" that all women have and share in common despite the racial and cultural differences among us (Spelman 1988, ix).

The important point Spelman attempts to make is that "generic woman," which forms the basis of essentialism, operates in the same manner as the "generic man" in Western philosophy. Both function in a way that prevents the examination of race and other categories in feminist political theory and political activity. She argues that gender does not exist in isolation from race and class. Furthermore, gender is not parallel to race and class. It is intertwined with these two categories and the process of intertwining categories affects women in different ways.

Spelman identifies two assumptions in feminist theory that erroneously justify the notion of essentialism. The first assumption is that "gender is ... a variable of human identity independent of other variables such as race and class" (Spelman 1988, 18) . This assumption supports the notion that a woman is not affected by her race or class.[6] There are those within the discipline who advocate women's political behavior and experiences occur without regard to race or class. In other words women operate under "universal" experiences. This approach undercuts the visibility of women of color, particularly black women, because their different experiences due to race are not advanced and placed in position for study. Essentialism clearly robs black women of their voices and ability to share their experiences in their own manner, style, and time. The other assumption is that "sexism is distinctly different from racism and classism" and " that whether and how one is subject to sexism is unaffected by whether and how one is subject to racism or classism" (1988, xx).

Spelman argues that the work of feminist Nancy Chodorow forms the basis of the two above assumptions.[7] Although her work has been severely criticized by some feminists, many more feminists believe her work provides a "rich understanding of gender."[8] Criticism of Chodorow's work by feminists fall into three areas: 1) reliance on troubling aspects of Freud's work, 2) her failure to critically analyze the distinction

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[6] Spelman makes an interesting observation. "Notice how different this is from saying that whether one is *female* is unaffected by what race or class one is" (1988, 203).

[7] Chodorow concludes that there are systematic differences between men and women resulting from the sexual division of labor in which women "mother." *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978).

[8] Feminist support of Chodorow's work crosses disciplines. An interesting note is the early support by Jane Flax in "Political Philosophy and the Patriarchal Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Epistemology and Metaphysics" in *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and the Philosophy of Science*, eds. Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1983) cited in Spelman 1988, 203 n.3. This support is interesting because she makes an argument for anti-essentialism in a later work (Flax, 1995). For a more exhausting list of works supporting Chodorow see Spelman 1988, 203 n.3.

between "public" and "private" spheres, and 3) her assumption that all women are heterosexual. Spelman's agrees with these criticisms but she chose to focus on an area of Chodorow's work that had not received much scrutiny. Although Spelman was pleased that Chodorow acknowledged mothering occurred in a social context, she expressed concern that Chodorow failed to look at other forms of domination beyond the mother's relationship to the husband. Without a racial analysis Chodorow's conclusions are faulty when examined in the context of black women's experiences such as enslavement, poverty, being single heads of their households, the necessity of working outside the home, and being domestic servants.

Spelman does not stop at the notion of simply challenging the idea of "generic" or "universal" woman. She argues that simply "adding" black women is not sufficient to negate the "invisibility" of black women caused by the generic approach. This point will be discussed in detail in the next section, which deals with black women and "visibility."

An interesting exchange took place between two feminist political scientists. These two scholars debated essentialism and anti-essentialism. Their debate was played out in a well-respected and recognized forum – one of the discipline's professional journals, *Political Theory*. Both political scientists are women. Of particular note is the fact that both are white females. Essentially black female political scientists stayed out of the debate as it played out in the political science journal. In some respects this is not surprising because often black women stay out of feminist debates and question the relevance of white, middle-class feminism to their own lives. This is not to advocate that black women should avoid participating in all debates about feminism. Certainly their self-reflective experiences can enrich discussion and raise the level of discourse.

Susan Moller Okin examined gender inequality and cultural differences.[9] She wondered if "stressing differences, especially cultural differences, lead to a slide towards relativism" (Okin 1994, 5). In answering the question of "how can all the different voices express themselves and be heard and still yield a coherent and workable theory of justice," Okin argues that generalization among women regardless of race is possible and preferable. She further argues that research done empirically makes such generalizations acceptable.

One can characterize Okin's position as one in which women experience oppression in similar ways and black women's experiences are the same *but* "maybe just a little harsher." She took issue with Spelman's *Inessential Woman*, arguing that Spelman's anti-essentialist arguments were flawed because the examples she used were from ancient Greece and pre-Civil War days. Okin questions the relevance of comparing the experiences of white slaveholder's wives and black female slaves to issues of today. Obviously Okin does not believe the relationships between white slaveholder's wives and black female slaves have impacted the relationships between black women and white women today. She also identified two other problems with Spelman's analysis. First, she disagrees with the notion that gender identity is bound with other socially constructed categories such as race and class. Okin argues that all women feel the effects of sexism in the same or similar manner regardless of race. The second problem she saw was the fact that Spelman misplaced the burden of proof. In her mind Spelman fails to accept the burden of proof of showing how essentialism omits or distorts the experiences of women "not included."

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[9] "Gender Inequality and Culture Differences." *Political Theory* 22(1):5-25, 1994.

Political scientist Jane Flax responded to Okin's article.[10] She argues that Okin fails to understand the "genealogy, content, and ethical consequences of discourses of differences" (Flax 1995, 500). Flax further argues that one cannot engage in discourses of differences without understanding and acknowledging the specific historical contexts and purposes involved. Without paying attention to difference the ability of "other" women to articulate their experiences disappears.

Despite Okin's argument that anti-essentialism came from three sources, including women of color, Flax argues Okin only cited one article by an African American woman. Instead, Flax believes Okin's major goal was to attack Spelman's *Inessential Woman*. Flax argues that Okin's notion of "universality" of oppression for all women ignores the hierarchical forms of domination that under gird oppression, including the domination relationships between women. Flax sums up her position by stating, "[a]ll women are not situated identically in relation to men, nor are men situated equally in relation to each other or to women."[11] The failure to acknowledge differences allows white women to ignore their privileged status and complicity in oppression.

As one might expect Flax's reply did not set well with Okin.[12] She dismisses Flax's analysis as personal attacks against her. I imagine she specifically took offense with Flax's declaration that Okin "splits agency and determination so that the agency exercised by racialized and 'Third World' women and the determined aspects of First World women theorists are invisible. This implies that a group of objective intellectuals

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[10] "Race/Gender and the Ethics of Difference: A Reply to Okin's 'Gender Inequality and Cultural Differences'" *Political Theory*23(3):500-510.
[11] One of the points that must be emphasized when discussing oppression is the fact that privilege does not attach to all persons in the same manner. Not discounting the racism and sexism exhibited by a good number of white males, it is a fallacy to think all white males are privileged in the same manner. There are white males who lack the power or access to power to obtain certain privileges in the economic and political arenas.
[12] "Response to Jane Flax." *Political Theory* 23(3): 511-516, 1995.

exist who can locate and speak for the interests of others" (Flax 1995, 503). If there was any doubt that Okin took Flax's criticism personally the following statement will dispel such a notion. Okin stated, "While I am not only open to, but ready, to respond to criticism on the grounds that I am wrong, I am unsure how to respond to criticism on the grounds that what I have done is offensive because of who I am" (Okin 1995, 513).

The fight to maintain reproductive rights for all women illustrates how the failure to distinguish between women on the basis of race and class results in continued oppression for groups of women with the fewest resources. In the section on transformative politics I discuss in detail the circumstances surrounding congressional legislation involving abortion funding for poor women. Although I can discuss the matter here because it would be appropriate to do so, it is also appropriate to discuss later. The impact of the discussion later is greater because it involves transformative politics at its best.

It is a mistake to assume that because we have entered a new century the idea of failing to differentiate between black women and white women has been laid to rest. Within the past six years scholarship has been generated that fails to differentiate black women from white women and black men. Consequently, black women still must face "invisibility" within the discipline. Barbara Burrell authored a study on women's campaigning during the feminist era.[13] Although the book is well written and provides valuable information, Burrell does not racialize gender. One of the arguments advanced is that women are at a disadvantage in fundraising. Burrell concludes this is not true and women do indeed raise funds as well as men. By failing to racialize gender Burrell's

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[13] *A Woman's Place is in the House: Campaigning in the Feminist Era*. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press).

conclusion cannot apply unequivocally to women of color, particularly black women, without further analysis.

C. *Diminished*

One of the recent trends in political science is the inclusion of black women in blacks and politics as well as women and politics. Under normal circumstances such inclusion would be cause for celebration, particularly in light of past exclusion. However, inclusion does not necessarily mean full inclusion in every sense of the word. Inclusion ought to mean embracing the fullness of experiences about and by black women. It certainly should not mean mentioning black women and diminishing their presence by trivializing their experiences.

This trend is clearly evident in scholarship about blacks and politics. A substantial amount of scholarship has been generated about the Civil Rights Movement (e.g. Killian and Smith 1960; Ladd 1966; Levy 1996; Marable 1985). We know a lot about some of the men involved in the Civil Rights Movement. There are numerous books, articles, and dissertations about the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We know about Dr. King's educational background, marriage, ministry and social action. His speeches have been collected and are available for study. More than thirty years after his assassination there is still interest in him. We know a lot about Dr. King's thinking on subjects such as equality and citizenship. Other scholarship has highlighted the political work of such luminary men as Whitney Young and Ralph Abernathy. The amount of research about legal eagle and future Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall is substantial.

However, we do not know a lot about black women active in the Civil Rights Movement. Sure, we know the story of Rosa Parks and her role as the "mother" of the

Civil Rights Movement. We know that Rosa Parks stood up against oppression and refused to give up her seat on a bus. The picture we see is one in which black men strategized and black women served as symbols. Equating Rosa Parks' efforts to the status of a symbol diminishes the political work done by countless black women during the Civil Rights Movement. Little is known about the process of selecting Rosa Parks as the person to defy southern bigotry. In actuality, women strategized around who would be the person to ride the bus. Care was given to selecting a person who did not fit the negative stereotypes of black women. One young woman was rejected because she had a child out of wedlock. Another woman was not selected because of her dark skin. Instead, female strategists thought Rosa Park was a better selection because of her age, skin color, and work ethic. The strategists were very aware of media coverage and wanted to project a certain image for the American public. Regardless of whether we agree or disagree with the rationale used to select Rosa Parks, the *important point is that black women engaged in strategic political activity*. Despite the notion that Dr. King was the architect of the Montgomery, Alabama boycott the honor belongs to the women of the Women's Political Council.

Despite the popular notion that black women were peripheral in the Civil Rights Movement and were *just* secretaries or assistants and helpless, there were many black women who played important roles. We may hear their names but know little about them. Although Mary Wright Edelman played an important role in the Civil Rights Movement and has been the director of the national Children's Defense Fund for years, we rarely hear her mentioned in connection to the movement.

Visibility

In recent years black female historians have done a tremendous job of documenting the experiences of black women, including their political experiences. In actuality the very act of writing about black women is transformative and can be placed under the next section. However, I am discussing black women's history under this section to illustrate the ways in which black women became "visible." Although I discuss invisibility, visibility and transformation in separate "neat" sections, reality does not allow for such neatness. Black women's experiences flow back and forth.

Black women have a long history of engaging in political activity. This history goes back to slavery. The following historical facts were excerpted from an encyclopedia on black women.[14] Contrary to popular belief, black women were active in the abolitionist movement. In 1833 nine black women were among the charter members of the interracial Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (Margaret Bowser, Grace Bustell Douglass, Charlotte Forten; Sarah Louisa Forten, Margaretta Forten, Sarah McCrummell, Harrett D. Purvis, Lydia White, and Mary Woods).

In addition, black women were active in the anti-lynching movement. Their activism was not limited to the fact that black men were lynched. Between 1882 and 1927 at least twenty-six black women were lynched in the United States. Furthermore, between 1918 and 1927 three of the eleven black women lynched were pregnant. Journalist Ida B. Wells (Barnett) highlighted the evils of lynching through her articles and editorials.

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[14] *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, 1993) is a two- volume set that contains over 450 photographs and over 800 entries in the form of biographical essays on individual women and broad topical essays. The encyclopedia was edited by historian Darlene Clark Hine, with Elsa Barkley Brown and Rosalyn Terbog-Penn as associate editors.

The activism of black women involved strategizing and executing political actions. For example, black women in St. Louis, Missouri, and Cleveland, Ohio devised selective buying campaigns aimed at creating employment opportunities at clothing and department stores heavily patronized by black women. The campaigns were successful and eventually led to the widespread "Don't-Buy-Where-You-Can't-Work" campaigns.

During the Civil Rights Movement women such as Ella Baker, Doris Robinson, Mary Wright Edelman, and Septima Clark assumed important roles as strategists even though they fought sexism within the movement. Of the nine black students who integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957, six were girls (Minniejean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Thelma Motershed, Melba Pattilo, Gloria Ray, and Coretta Walls). Black women continue to agitate, struggle, strategize, and affect change not only for themselves but also for black men and children as well as other marginalized groups.

The first concerted efforts to develop a body of scholarship on black women and politics focused on making black women visible. This approach was predictable and took the same route as the efforts to make women and blacks in general visible within politics. Much of the earlier work was descriptive and designed to show black women engaged in political activity. Following the tenets of the discipline a lot of this work focused on electoral politics.

In 1977 Marianne Githens and Jewel Prestage edited a groundbreaking book on the marginalization of women in politics. A substantial portion of the essays deals with black women and offer important information on their experiences and behavior. In the introduction to the section "Black Women: A Minority Within a Minority," Githens and

Prestage state that because for so long politics has been a "man's business," black women have been doubly excluded from the political arena. (Githens and Prestage 1977, 339). The goal of the section was to examine black women's experiences in light of double marginalization. Because of their work we know that Crystal Bird Fauset was the first black woman to serve in a state legislative body (Pennsylvania in 1938). We also know that Cora Brown became the first female black state senator in 1952 when she was elected in Michigan.

Mae King examined the stereotypical images of black women and the implications of using such images to maintain power in a racist society (King 1977). King utilized three models in her examination, i.e. nonfeminist, depreciated sex object, and loser image. These stereotypes are "in turn complemented by what appears to be an otherwise general policy of invisibility by the mass media in respect to black women" (King 1977, 347). The stereotypes are in sharp contrast to the stereotypes attached to white women, who are seen as small, delicate, soft, light, peaceful passive. In contrast to the "gentle" description of white women the "nonfeminist" image provokes negative opposites. Black women are seen as tough, "hard-working, domestics who assume the role of matriarch in the home but somehow manages to know their place and remain appropriately submissive in the white world" (King 1977, 352). This stereotype reinforces the notion that the black woman is the dominant one in the family.

The loser image serves an important political function because it stifles or destroys black women's self-esteem, respect and aspirations.

Based on a study of black women and their feelings towards the Nixon-Agnew administration, Inez Smith Reid concluded that black women are not traditional political

animals. They do not hesitate to voice their opinions and loudly. When Richard Nixon

became the thirty-seventh president of the United States he ignored traditional black

leadership. Since ninety percent of the black vote went to Hubert Humphrey, Nixon saw

no need to extend an "open invitation" to black leaders nor appoint a black to a cabinet

position. After repeatedly refusing to meet with the black political leadership all twelve

of the black congresspersons boycotted Nixon's 1971 State of the Union address. Only

after the boycott did he meet with the representatives.

Reid conducted a survey to determine black women's feelings about Richard

Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew. Although black leaders "chastised" Nixon for

his actions, the study participants were more vocal and used more vivid and colorful

terminology in describing their feelings. Labels ranged from hound dog, ass hole, pig,

son of a bitch, and nut. The participants were very specific about how they perceived

both Nixon and Agnew. For example, one participant stated that Nixon was

> just an example of white America, what they represent:
> white supremacy, middle-class values, narrow isolation
> philosophy about other countries, just all the negative
> things that anybody has written about white middle-class
> America seems to me to be Richard Nixon and everybody
> that supports him (Reid 1977, 368).

Of Agnew, another participant stated that he

> is nothing but a downright, no good, low lifed racist and
> is only doing his job as far as the power structure is
> concerned, reflecting what they want him to reflect:
> the right wing views and to frighten whites more to make
> them think we, black people, are their enemies and that
> the power structure is their friend (Reid 1977, 368).

Marjorie Lansing examined the voting patterns of American black women. Based

on data from the 1972 presidential election she concluded black women held the lowest

levels of political efficacy in comparison to black men and whites of both sexes. In addition, black women's trust in the federal government was the lowest. Despite these conclusions voting records from the late 1960s and early 1970s reveal that black women's rate of increase in voting was greater than black men and whites of both sexes. One explanation given for the rate increase is sex-role reversal. It was argued that black women have been more aggressive and achievement oriented. Perhaps women as heads of household contributed to this notion. However, Lansing's study could not confirm or deny this. She did conclude "black female heads of household voted in 1968 at the same rate as wives of household heads" (Lansing 1977, 390). Two other essays looked at black women in electoral politics (Bryce and Warrick 1977), and an examination of black women state legislators (Prestage 1977). A study published in 1993 concluded that both blacks and women are underrepresented in American elected offices. Black women are more likely to win election from multi-member district systems, regardless of whether there is an overwhelming white or black majority constituencies (Darcy et al. 1993).

Ralph C. Gomes and Linda Faye Williams included the efforts of black women in their analysis of African American political power.[15] Gomes and Williams concluded that black women played an important role in forming and maintaining black political organizations. During the Civil Rights Movement its organizational and strategic foundations were assisted by members of black sororities and The Club Women's Movement.

Civil rights activists Ella Baker and Septima Clark self-analyzed their roles in the Civil Rights Movement (Gomes and Williams 1992). Both concluded their efforts were

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[15] *From Exclusion to Inclusion: The Long Struggle for African American Political Power* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992).

unappreciated for two reasons. First. there was no way women could assume leadership in the traditional manner. The traditional roles of social authority within the black community were held almost exclusively by men in the black church. In most churches black women were not allowed to become ordained as ministers or assume leadership roles. Second, Baker and Clark found fault with the notion of developing leadership authority and creating organizational authority around charismatic male leaders as opposed to other ways of development and creation.

Transformative

Within the discipline of political science it is critical that political scientists engage in transformative politics that reflect the experiences of black women. A theoretical framework that racializes gender and genderizes race acknowledges the intersectionality of race and gender. It is important that as a discipline political science not abdicate its responsibility for developing a theoretical framework based on black feminist theory to examine the political experiences of black women. If the discipline fails to engage in such theoretical development it is certain that scholars in other disciplines will eagerly undertake such work.

Political science is a traditional discipline that refuses to look outside its "square box" to engage work produced in other disciplines to assist in the theoretical development of an appropriate framework for analysis. Embracing interdisciplinarity should not be viewed as a rejection of traditional political science theory but as an enhanced analytical tool that allows for a more inclusive sharing of experiences of all people, including black women. The late Twentieth Century has seen a restructuring, although subtle, of knowledge (Klein 1990). This restructuring has affected the

traditional divisions of knowledge, lessening the notion of sharp defining lines between disciplines. Viewing interdisciplinarity as a common epistemology of convergence one can appreciate the fact that it is rooted in the ideas of unity and synthesis. Borrowing is a central component of interdisciplinarity. One of the criticisms of interdisciplinarity is the notion that borrowing will erase the idea of attributing to a particular disciplinary source. This fear is unwarranted. Credible scholarship demands proper and accurate referencing. Proponents of good scholarship will acknowledge disciplinary origins.

Development of a theoretical framework based on black feminist thought by necessity will be interdisciplinary. There is no sense in reinventing the wheel. We can look at other disciplines for guidance and adapt what we need to a political context. It will take time to develop a theoretical framework that can be used as a tool in analyzing the experiences of black women. Such a framework must include several frames of reference. First, it must include intersectionality that acknowledges the dualness of black women. Second, it must recognize the historical focus of race and gender and how the intersectionality of race and gender structure black women's positions. Third, it must recognize a critical component of black feminist thought that calls for self-identification by black women. Fourth, it must recognize how negative stereotypical images adversely affect the lives of black women. Finally, it must include black women's commitment to community.

Although the discipline of political science has been slow in producing knowledge that is transformative in its efforts to portray a wide array of women's experiences, there is movement. One of the recent attempts to engage in transformative politics is the alternative reader edited by Cathy J. Cohen, Kathleen B. Jones, and Joan C.

Tronto.[16] In "Introduction: Women Transforming US Politics: Sites of

Power/Resistance," the three editors state

> By continuing to define politics as what happens
> exclusively within the institutional arena of the
> governmental process, or by allowing traditional
> practices of political interest brokering to limit the
> scope of our understanding of the political process,
> political analysts have missed ways women's actions
> have transformed politics even though women do not
> hold the majority of seats in the legislature or have
> access to most of the economic power (Cohen, et al., 1997, 1).

The editors acknowledge that within the last two decades more women have been

elected to public office in the United States than ever before. However, the number of

women of color and working class women, including black women, elected to public

office remains insignificant in comparison. They explain this situation by stating

> We start from the premise that racism, sexism, class
> exploitation, homophobia, and other institutions of
> control are interrelated sites of domination and struggle
> that have left a long legacy in U.S. politics and continues
> to shape the life choices of all those who find themselves
> in North America. These systems of power create political
> divisions such as race, gender, economic and social class,
> sexual orientation, ability, ethnicity, religion, age, region,
> and language by making these categories formative of our
> sense of who we are and where we stand. Furthermore,
> these categories constitute identities whose complexity we
> cannot grasp when we isolate discourses of race, class,
> gender, or sexuality from one another (Cohen, et al., 1997, 1).

The alternative reader contains a series of essays that address the experiences of

women that expand the traditional ways political scientists examine women and politics.

Several of the essays specifically address black women. I highlight two essays that are

illustrative of transformative politics. In "Women of Color in the Eighties: A Profile

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[16] *Women Transforming US Politics: An Alternate Reader* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1997).

Based on Census Data[17], Tamara Jones and Alethia Jones indicate that "the common

understanding of what it means to be a woman of color in the United States continues, by

and large, to be more informed by social myth than empirical evidences" (Jones and

Jones 1997, 15). This is a very important observation because many political scientists

like to rely solely on empirical data to explain political phenomena. Although

quantitative research can be useful in explaining many political experiences, sometimes it

cannot explain adequately what we know or should know.

The authors emphatically state that negative stereotypical images of women of

color have "played a significant and insidious role in the social, political, economic, and

institutional histories of the United States (Cohen, et al., 1997, 15). Some of the more

popular negative images see Latinas as sexually promiscuous, Asian women as passive

Geisha girls, and black women as welfare queens. During the Victorian era the idea of

femininity attached to white women who were described as delicate, passive, chaste, and

the epitome of morality. In contrast, black women were viewed as physically strong,

aggressive, sexually promiscuous, and lacking moral worth. The authors pointed out that

the racializing of gender is further complemented by traditions in the black community.

Through these traditions gender has been used in particular ways to understand and

articulate racial identities. An example illustrative of this notion is the Million Man

March held in Washington, D.C., in October 1995. The organizers excluded women from

participation. They made certain assumptions about the role of black women in

community and political affairs. This resulted in black women being relegated to

providing clerical assistance and absent from the strategic planning for the march.

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[17] In *Women Transforming US Politics: An Alternate Reader* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1997).

In "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom,"[18] Elsa Barkley Brown challenged "scholars assumptions of an unbroken line of exclusion of African American women from political association in the late Nineteenth Century" (Brown 1997, 343). Brown argues that these assumptions have "obscured fundamental changes in the political understandings within African American communities in transition" (Brown 1997, 358). She provides an example that challenges the assumption of exclusion. The female members of the First African Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia, participated in the political affairs of the church when they successfully petitioned to vote on the new pastor. In the years immediately after the Civil War women voted in mass meetings and Republican party conventions held at the church.

Political scientists Jane Mansbridge and Katherine Tate utilized a feminist analysis to examine Clarence Thomas' nomination to the United States Supreme Court (Mansbridge and Tate 1992). They focused their attention on how Thomas' nomination played out in the black community. Despite the notion that black women have given stronger support to the women's movement than white women, the black community came down clearly on the side of Clarence Thomas. Majority of black women did not believe Anita Hill. This disbelief was based on several factors. First, the complicated history of race and gender relations that structures relationships within the black community was reflected in the fact that many blacks were concerned that this black woman was publicly attacking a black man. This notion underscores a belief within a substantial portion of the black community that you do not "air dirty laundry." Second,

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[18] In *Women Transforming US Politics: An Alternate Reader* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1997).

there was difficulty among black leaders in organizing effectively against Clarence

Thomas. Third, the media did a poor job of presenting information on why Hill waited so

long to raise her allegations.[19] Finally, it may have been difficult for working class

women to empathize with Hill, a professional woman. Hill fell victim to the myth of the

"strong black woman" who should have cussed him out at the time and forgot about it.

Mindless endorsement of this myth fails to acknowledge the dual oppression faced by

black women who at times cannot speak or act because of their positional relationships to

oppressors. It also fails to acknowledge dominating factors that call into question a black

woman's veracity. Mansbridge and Tate summed up the feelings of many in the

community when they observed that "the image of the greatly advantaged Black super-

female versus the besieged Black male has particular resonance today as much public

attention is focused on the plight of the Black man" (Mansbridge and Tate 1992, 490).

There has been one black woman in the United States Senate in its history. Carol

Moseley-Braun was elected as the first black female senator in 1992. Prior to her election

there was limited representation by blacks in the Senate but they were males. During

Reconstruction Hiram R. Nevels (R-MS) served in the forty-first Congress (1870-71) and

Blanche K. Bruce (R-MS) served in the forty-fourth through the forty-sixth Congress

(1875-1881). In the Twentieth Century Edward W. Brooks (R-MA) served from 1967

until 1978.

Moseley-Braun's election was truly transformative. When she assumed office in

1993 the Senate no longer remained an all-white and overwhelmingly white male

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[19] Two pivotal facts did not appear in many of the news reports generated by the traditional media. It was never widely reported that Hill did not voluntarily come forward to raise allegations against Clarence Thomas, but responded as a matter of civic obligation when asked to provide information. Also, the allegations raised by Hill did not constitute a legal claim at the time therefore she would not have been successful in pursuing a sexual harassment claim.

institution. Senator Moseley-Braun was elected in a wave of disgust among women who objected to the all-male Senate Judiciary Committee's handling of the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings. She defeated a prominent Democrat, incumbent Senator Alan Dixon, in the primary. Her victory was an upset. Part of her victory can be attributed to the outrage of women at the confirmation of Clarence Thomas as a Justice to the United States Supreme Court. Dixon voted for Thomas' confirmation.

Very little has been written about Carol Moseley-Braun, even in light of her failed reelection did in 1998. There were numerous media stories during her senatorial campaigns and Senate tenure regarding several scandals, including the Medicaid issue involving her mother as well as her personal and intimate relationship with her former campaign manager. Despite the media stories there has been virtually no attempt to scholarly analyze how the intersectionality of race and gender affected her image, legislative work, relationship with her colleagues, and her defeat. Much of what we know about Moseley-Braun's thoughts and ideas comes from newspaper articles. She has been mentioned in at least two books.[20] It is probably only a matter of time before we read more analytical pieces about Moseley-Braun's tenure in the Senate. Analysis of Moseley-Braun's experiences in the Senate is important to understand her experiences as a black woman in an institution not reflective of the diversity in America as well as provide guidance for other black women interested in national politics.

There is hope that scholarship will be generated that properly includes a theoretical framework that acknowledges the intersectionality of race and gender. In the most recent edition of *African Americans and the American Political System* (Barker et

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[20] Bryna J. Fireside's *Is There a Woman in the House ... or Senate?* (Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Company, 1994), and Clara Bingham's *Women on the Hill: Challenging the Culture of Congress* (New York, NY: Times Books, 1997).

al., 1999), political scientist Katherine Tate examines African-American female senatorial candidates (Tate 1999). She asks the following question: Is being a black female twin assets or double liabilities? Tate provides an excellent analysis of why Moseley-Braun was successful in her first senatorial bid. Although women's (i.e. white women) agitation over the Clarence Thomas – Anita Hill controversy played an important part in her victory, other factors played an important role also. These factors include the fact that the primary had been a fiercely fought three-way race between Moseley-Braun, Dixon, and multimillionaire Albert Hofeld. Dixon and Hofeld engaged in an expensive and negative campaign against each other, which worked in Moseley-Braun's favor. Another factor was the issues. Dixon was portrayed as too conservative for Illinois Democrats. Finally, "Dixon lost because he was an incumbent seeking reelection in an anti-incumbent political environment" (Tate 1999, 271). Two other incumbents also lost along with Dixon, Representatives Charles Hayes and Gus Savage.

Analyzing the experiences of black women is critical in transformative politics that racializes gender and genderizes race. This analysis serves a valuable function of "telling the real story" that often goes untold and unheard. Contrary to popular belief Moseley-Braun was not handpicked by feminists angry against Dixon and his role in the Clarence Thomas controversy. Although women's support was present it was modest at best and did not generate until later in the campaign. Moseley-Braun did not receive funds from Emily's List until days before the primary. Emily's List raises money for female Democratic candidates. They were convinced that Moseley-Braun had little chance of winning. And the amount given to her was only $5,000. The day after she defeated Dixon in the primary the Women's Campaign Fund sent her $5,000. The

National Women's Political Caucus pledged to do a mailing to its members. Moseley-Braun's support in the African-American community was in sharp contrast. The African-American community support was more solid. During the primary she received eighty-five percent of the black vote.

Analysis of Moseley-Braun's experiences can shed light on a number of issues, including the classic dilemma faced by numerous black candidates: "How to hang on to her core of black voters as well as win over many conservative downstate whites" (Tate 1999, 272). Also, an analytical examination can address the often tenuous relationship between white feminists and black women.

Clara Bingham authored a transformative book on women and Congress.[21] Her work provides us with more information about women's experiences in Congress then previous works. One important aspect of her work is the attention she pays to black congresswomen by recognizing their dualness and not treating them in the same manner as white congresswomen. She paints a picture of black women aware of their dualness and commitment to serving the entire community as opposed to limiting their attention to narrow issues affecting women only. Three examples illustrate her transformative analysis.

One example deals with the tension between black and white women regarding representation and leadership in the women's caucus. Patricia Schroeder (D-CO) was the co-chair of the caucus along with Olympia Snowe (R-ME). At the January 1993 meeting Schroeder called for a vote on caucus officials. This was unusual because the meeting was only eight minutes old and members were still entering the room and trying to find seats. Another white congresswoman followed Schroeder's lead and moved to reelect last

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[21] *Women on the Hill: Challenging the Culture of Congress* (New York, NY: Times Books, 1997).

year's leadership slate, which included Schroeder and Snowe as co-chairs, black congresswoman Cardiss Collins (D-IL) as secretary, and Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) as treasurer. The vote was quickly taken and Schroeder was reelected for a twelfth year and Snowe for a tenth year. Both black and white freshmen congresswomen were dismayed and stunned at the turn of events. Cynthia McKinney (D-GA) is a black female who was elected to Congress in 1992. She was eager to become involved in the caucus. Recognizing that the seniority system placed her at the bottom of the ladder in terms of plum congressional committee assignments, McKinney hoped the caucus would be different and more inclusive. McKinney and another black congresswoman, Maxine Waters (D-CA) called for more racial diversity in the leadership of the caucus and its all-white staff.

The second example provides a glimpse in the early congressional tenure of black congresswoman Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), elected to Congress in 1992 and began serving her term in the 103rd Congress, which began in 1993. McKinney was different from her colleagues in many aspects. As a black woman she was only one of nine black women serving in the 103rd Congress. At the age of thirty-seven she was one of forty-seven out of 435 members under age forty. She did not have long blond hair like white congresswomen nor a perm most of the other black congresswomen wore. Instead she wore her hair in plaits. McKinney's dress set her apart. Favoring comfort and individuality over fashion she wore gold sneakers. Unlike many in Congress who hold law degrees, McKinney has done doctoral work. She has completed all of her work except the dissertation. Prior to her election to the Georgia House of Representatives she

taught at Clark Atlanta University and Agnes State College. McKinney is described as feisty and a go-getter.

Two events illustrate McKinney's treatment as an "other" by her colleagues and congressional staff. Initially she was often mistaken for support staff. It would take over a year for Capitol police officers and elevator operators to allow her to pass unquestioned. This speaks to the invisibility of black women. Since there were only nine black congresswomen at the time how difficult could it have been to identify nine black women of out 435 people. One way marginalized people are dismissed is by failing to take the opportunity to know who they are. Unfortunately black people participate in devaluing also. An incident with an elevator operator illustrates this point. The elevator operator of the members only elevator on Capitol Hill "knew" the members of Congress. Having worked as an operator for twenty-two years she did not have to ask what floor when the House was in session. One day McKinney enters the elevator only to be told "members only." That day McKinney wore a white silk pantsuit, a floppy green ribbon holding back her hair, and her trademark gold sneakers. McKinney continued to enter the elevator and pointed to her congressional pin around her neck. The customary spot to wear the pin was on a suit label. This custom is certainly based on the fact that for many years only men served in Congress and men wear suits. The operator was stunned to learn McKinney represented Georgia's 11th district, which happened to be the district the elevator operator came from. McKinney's response to the shock of the elevator operator was simple, "You see we now come in all shapes and hues (Bingham 1997, 97).

McKinney's tenure in Congress has been one of going against the gain whether it is her gold sneakers or asking questions not expected. She observed the interactions in the

House of Representatives that caused her to conclude that the debates were more civilized than she anticipated. She reasoned that it is hard to stay mad at a colleague because of the antiquated and stilted language used such as referring to an opponent as "gentleman" or "gentlewoman." McKinney asked an innocent question of the sergeant-of-arms which displayed her inexperience and probably should not have been asked. After observing for a month the movements of the Mace from pedestal to pedestal she inquired why. The Mace is a forty-six inch tall ebony pillar, with a silver eagle perched atop a globe. The sergeant-of-arms, Warren Brandt, explained the position of the Mace indicated whether the House was in session or in the "Committee of the Whole." When not in full session the House can only vote on amendments. Brandt followed up McKinney's inquiry by informing her that she was violating a House rule by wearing a hat in the chamber. Again, another rule that reflects male domination of Congress.

McKinney violated protocol when she asked Speaker of the House Tom Foley and Majority Leader Richard Gephardt if she could serve on the Rules Committee. She felt her experience in the Georgia state legislature provided her with ample experience to serve on the Rules Committee. Despite the fact that most freshmen were vying for other committees since these members were guaranteed reelection because early donations would scare off opponents, McKinney did not want money. She wanted power. The Rules Committee is powerful because it decides which bills reach the House floor. McKinney requested a seat on the Rules Committee despite the fact that there was no vacancy. Instead she was appointed to the Agriculture and Foreign Affairs committees. The appointments were not without value. McKinney has a strong interest in international relations and her district includes farm country. McKinney is ABD in International

Relations at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. International relations was her major at the University of Southern California.

Although McKinney recognized the value in serving on the Agriculture and Foreign Affairs committees she felt "she wouldn't be taken seriously by the foreign policy community, one of the last of Washington's white-shoe male bastions" (Bingham 1997, 102). McKinney's assessment was right. When she attended her first Western Hemisphere subcommittee meeting McKinney arrived characteristically late. As she entered the meeting room the nine other subcommittee members were in small clusters. She was not acknowledged and the other nine just kept on talking. Being new and not knowing any of them, McKinney sat down by herself at a long table on the other side of the room. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), a third term congresswoman, announced she wanted to take a group picture. Ros-Lehtinen corralled the members together and had a staff member snap a picture. McKinney sat on the other side of the room, alone and uninvited. During the committee meeting she was ignored.

Bingham offers one final example of McKinney's naivety and inexperience. McKinney wanted a good seat for President William Jefferson Clinton's first State of the Union address. She arrived ten hours early and staked out a good seat. As the time approached for the address McKinney was joined by a fellow black woman freshman, Carrie Meek. Standing with Meek was William Natcher, a Democrat from Kentucky. Natcher was eighty-four at the time and had served in Congress for many years. The three of them discussed ways in which Congress could cut its operating costs. McKinney piped up that instead of cutting congressional staff it would be better to cut the operating budgets of some of the committees. She further stated that cutting the Appropriations

Committee budget was a good idea because its operating budget in 1993 was $20 million annually. Natcher politely acknowledged the comment and turned to greet other colleagues. At that point Meek told her to be quiet because Natcher was chair of the Appropriations Committee. Natcher never forgave McKinney and she never apologized.

The third and final example involves the issue of abortion rights. This is a good example of depicting how the intersectionality of race and gender (and class) results in different positions held by black and white congresswomen. The legalization of abortion has always been a contentious affair in Congress, with members lining up on opposite sides of the issue. In 1973 the United States Supreme Court legalized a woman's right to abortion in the landmark case of *Roe v. Wade*.[22] During the summer of 1993 things heated up in Congress over the issue of providing federal funding for poor women. Pat Schroeder (D-CO) fought for twenty years for abortion rights. She would be in charge of spearheading the troops opposed to the Hyde Amendment.[23] The debate surrounding the Hyde Amendment illustrated two important points. First, it exposed "Schroeder's strengths and weaknesses, illustrating her ability to negotiate intricate parliamentary intrigues, as well as her inability to forge and sustain coalitions among her own ranks" (Bingham 1997, 125). The second point, more important for the focus of this study, is that the debate revealed "the deep racial divisions underlying much of the abortion debate.[24]

Six months prior to the defining events surrounding the Hyde Amendment, President Clinton signed an executive order on the Twentieth anniversary of *Roe v.*

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[22] 410 U.S. 179 (1973).
[23] The Hyde Amendment provides federal funding for an abortion only when a pregnant woman's life is in danger.
[24] Ibid.

Wade. The order made good on his campaign pledge to overturn the "gag rule." This rule prohibited abortion counseling in federally funded family planning clinics. The executive order allowed abortions in overseas military hospitals among several other pro-choice measures.

Schroeder was blindsided. For weeks she had met with House parliamentarians regarding the rules that regulate floor votes. The parliamentarians are nonpartisan officers and their responsibility is to referee floor action. Schroeder sought and received assurances from the parliamentarians that Hyde could do nothing else to prevent a vote. The night before the vote the parliamentarians did not give a complete assurance when asked about Hyde's options. Instead one of the parliamentarians made a statement about the creativity of motivated people.

The Hyde Amendment raised critical questions for poor women. A disproportionate number of poor women needing federal funding were black. These women would be affected adversely simply because of their inability to pay. Three black women felt strongly that the poor black women in their districts should have access to federally funded abortions. The three were Cardiss Collins (D-IL), Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), and Carrie Meek (D-FL).

Hyde had changed the language of his amendment to set limitations on the use of funds in the appropriations bill. This is important because the amendment was not granting new responsibilities to federal officials. This was crucial because such action could withstand any challenge of "legislating." The so-called non-partisan parliamentarians knew about the language change for five days before the vote and did not share that the change with Schroeder and her supporters.

Many Democratic male colleagues abandoned Schroeder. It did not help that the pro-choice members and pro-choice groups had become splintered over the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA). The legislation, championed by Planned Parenthood and NARAL (an abortions rights group), was designed to codify Roe v. Wade and prohibit states from enacting restrictions on abortion availability. McKinney was skeptical about FOCA because it did not address the issue of public funding for abortions for poor women. Schroeder shared McKinney's position. Those cautious about FOCA advocated for a lower priority since Clinton was president and the threat of the United States Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade* was no longer there.

During the afternoon of June 30, 1993 McKinney rose to make her one minute argument for public funding. She was in the middle of her prepared remarks when she was notified her time was up. McKinney stopped reading her prepared statement but in a raised voice she said, "Quite frankly, I have just about had it with my colleagues who vote against women of color, vote against the poor, and vote against women (Bingham 1997, 135). Henry Hyde displayed his contempt for the Democratic women, including black women in particular when he made statements on the floor of the House that were disrespectful, misogynist, and racist. He told the Democratic women that he was glad they had not been aborted. He saved his most wicked words for black women. He replied directly to McKinney, thrusting his index finger in the air, and stated, "About those people that say the poor are discriminated against, you know what we do? We tell poor women, 'You can't have a job, you can't have a decent place to live ... I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll give you a free abortion because there are too many of you people, and we

want to kind of refine – refine the breed. ... And I tell you, if you read the literature, that is what is said, and that is what is done. ..."

Cordiss Collins (D-IL) was offended and asked the "gentleman" to yield so she could speak. Hyde responded he did not have time. Collins kept talking. The chairman had to hit his gavel eight times. However, Hyde turned and pointed his finger at Collins stating, "I am going to direct my friend to a few ministers who will tell her just what goes on in her community" (Bingham1997, 136). Collins, Meek, and McKinney requested that Hyde words be "taken down." This is a disciplinary censure when offending comments are directed specifically toward a colleague. Their request was denied. However, later in the day Hyde apologized to Collins and had two of the offending statements removed from the *Congressional Record.*

Despite Hyde disrespectful performance he raised the negative imagery of black women to support the notion that he was intimidated. He told the *Washington Post* of his fear, stating, "It is intimidating to have five or six women all glaring at you. It was like lighting a firecracker."

It would not have been difficult to understand if black women had left the women's caucus. None of the white congresswomen came to Collins' defense on the House floor. Schroeder did not come to Collins' defense in her speech nor did she yield her time to Collins. Publicly McKinney confirmed black women would not abandon the women's caucus stating, "What we realized that day is that we can only count on each other" (137). Privately, McKinney was not as kind. She stated, "White women don't know how to fight as well as black women do." She compared the stormy debate to her

tenure in the Georgia state legislature stating, "It felt like the Georgia legislature. Because there was a touch of racism. There was disdain for the position of women" (138).

The fragile coalition did not last long before black and white congresswomen faced another challenge over abortion funding. Senator Carol Moseley-Braun was a co-sponsor of FOCA, which had been endorsed by the women's caucus following behind the scene maneuvering by Nita Lowery (D-NY). Within two weeks of the Hyde Amendment fiasco Moseley-Braun announced that she was taking her name off the co-sponsorship list. Her surprised announcement was met with alarm. Moseley-Braun stated that FOCA "discriminates against young and poor women" (Bingham 1997, 143). She further stated FOCA "trades off the rights of some women for the promise of rights for others."

After the announcement the critical question became: Would African American women in the House follow suit? Although she had originally co-sponsored FOCA, Cynthia McKinney had second thoughts because of the affect on poor women. McKinney was faced with a dilemma. She was now in a position of power. No longer naive McKinney decided to stay put and use her leverage on the inside. She stated, " I did not want to become a tool of those whose ultimate goal is to divide white women and women of color" (Bingham 1997, 146). McKinney told the pro-FOCA groups that she would not publicly discuss her differences with the bill if they made funding for poor women a top priority.

The need to teach transformative politics in the discipline is apparent. However, Jewel Prestage notes that any successful attempts to racialize gender and genderize race in the teaching of political science will depend on two factors. Factor one concerns who teaches the courses. Success will depend on having someone committed to transformative

politics teaching the material. Certainly there are white males and males of color in the discipline committed to transformative politics. But we cannot escape the fact that having women of color as part of the discipline faculty will help to ensure the success of advancing transformative politics. The second factor is making sure there is information available. This will require the discipline to recognize the value of studying the experiences of black women and providing resources to encourage research. As Prestage states, "If race makes a difference in the larger society, then race makes a difference among women in terms of life chances and access to power (Prestage 1994, 721).

One way to ensure the transformative production of knowledge about black women is for scholars, particularly black feminist scholars, to take control of the production process. This control can exhibit itself through scholarly publishing in academic journals and nonacademic publications. In addition, writing books in which the focus is on the experiences of black women contributes greatly to the expansion of the knowledge base.

Another worthwhile endeavor is presenting at academic conferences and meetings. For years black feminist scholars have raised issue with the total lack of exclusion or marginal inclusion of black women's experiences in various academic conferences and meetings. Responding to this concern a group of black feminist scholars organized a national and international academic conference on black women. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology agreed to host the conference, which was held during the weekend of the federal Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday in January 1994. The conference organizers anticipated 500 participants. Actual attendance greatly exceeded the organizers' estimation. Over 2,000 black female faculty, administrative,

professionals, staff, graduate and undergraduate students, and community activists gathered in the bitter cold to learn more about black women. The reception received by the presenters was exhilarating. Audience members clapped earnestly and cheered loudly at the conclusion of sessions. The response was so positive that the then president of Spelman College, a black liberal arts college in Atlanta Georgia for black women, agreed to have Spelman host the next conference.

Conferences of this magnitude require significant resources including funding and personnel. Dr. Johnetta Cole, president of Spelman College, finally concluded that Spelman College was not in a position to host the conference. Howard University agreed to host the conference provided Spelman College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology assist with planning. The African American Women's Institute at Howard University accepted leadership responsibility. In 1998 conference organizers issued a call for papers for the 2nd National and International Conference of Black Women in the Academy. The first conference, Black Women in the Academy I, adopted the theme of "Defending our Name." The 1999 conference was titled, "Black Women in the Academy II: Leadership and Service," and attracted over 1,000 women to Washington, DC during June.

The sessions covered many disciplines and the knowledge disseminated greatly enhanced what we know about black women. Sessions included topics such as Black Feminism in the Millennium, Women Directors of Black Studies, Research and Development by and for Black Women in the Academy, The State of Black Women's Health, and Historical Sexism in the Black Community.

One of the sessions underscored the necessity of expanding how we research black women. Although quantitative research methods have their place qualitative research can provide rich information about black women. The discussion group on "Black Women's Autobiography as Narrative of Transformative Historical, Political, and Psychological Perspectives" encouraged participants to allow black women to tell their stories in their own words. An attempt was made to extend knowledge expansion beyond the geographical borders of the United States. Three examples are "Gender, Race, Class and Nation: Critical Analytic Frameworks in the Era of Globalization," "International Women in South Africa," and "Status of Black Women in Brazil." One session was designed to show black women academics how to develop a circle of scholars focusing on black women in which constructive criticism is offered to assist the academics in becoming better scholars. The roundtable, "Sistercircle – Creating a Community of Black Women Scholars" highlighted the efforts at the University of Maryland at College Park to create a circle of black women scholars.

There were several sessions dealing with political science issues. The importance of these sessions is that conference participants were able to learn more about the political experiences of black women. The political science sessions covered a wide array of issues and the presenters were diverse in their institutional representations. A roundtable was held on politics and public policy in which staff members of congressional representatives and senators discussed the public policies of their bosses. In "Gender Dynamics and Political Movements" presenters talked about the leadership and service of civil rights activists Fannie Lou Hamer, Septima Clark, and Ella Baker; black women activists as catalysts for a new democratic revolution in the Twenty-First

Century, and negotiating labor solidarity during the Cold War. Other sessions examined women in prison and welfare reform. During a roundtable discussion titled, "Advocates for Women in the State House – Black Women Legislators and the Legislative Power Structure," black women legislators discussed their political experiences. Another session, "African American Women in Politics" examined the role of African American women as activists and policymakers in the Civil Rights Movement. As with Black Women in the Academy I, it is generally anticipated that at least one book of essays will be generated from Black Women in the Academy II. Therefore, it is possible that political science papers presented may be included in a book generated from the conference.

Another way of transforming the production of knowledge is allowing black women to tell their stories through biographies and autobiographies. Without the use of biographies and autobiographies as analytical tools to address the intersectionality of race and gender, we would not know details about the political experiences of black women. For example, former black congresswoman Barbara Jordan is viewed as a political hero. Although there are books and articles on Jordan[25] and she co-authored an autobiography,[26] it was not until author Mary Beth Rogers wrote about Jordan after her death that we really have a more complete picture of Barbara Jordan that reflects her strengths and weaknesses as well as successes and disappointments.[27] Rogers was able to analyze Jordan's life in terms of the intersectionality of race and gender. Jordan is seen as a very strong black woman consistent with the imagery of black women as domineering

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[25] E.g. Ida Bryant, *Barbara Charline Jordan: From Ghetto to the Capitol* (Houston, TX: D Armstrong Co., 1977); "Comet to Congress: Barbara Jordan's Star Reaches Dizzy Heights for House Sophomore." (*The Wall Street Journal*, February 6, 1975, A1); James Haskins, *Barbara Jordan* (New York, NY: Dial Press, 1977); Laura S. Jeffrey, *Barbara Jordan: Congresswoman, Lawyer, Educator* (Springfield, IL: Enslow Publishers, 1997).

[26] Barbara Jordan and Shelly Hearon. *Barbara Jordan: A Self-Portrait* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1979).

[27] *Barbara Jordan: America Hero* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1998).

and nurturer of white people. Rogers allows us to see Jordan as a well-educated, articulate, politically astute black woman. Rogers also provides us with the opportunity to see Jordan as a woman aware that she does not fit the model for womanhood and with doubts about her physical attractiveness and femininity. She also made us aware that despite efforts to portray Jordan as colorless to explain her appeal to whites as well as blacks, Jordan was very aware of racism and sexism and these two constructs determined her reality.

Cynthia Griggs Fleming's book on Civil Rights activist Ruby Doris Smith Robinson provides a glimpse into one black woman's experience in the movement. Robinson was a Spelman College coed when she became involved in the Civil Rights Movement. She played a critical role in the development and evolution of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Robinson joined the Civil Rights Movement in 1960. Although she died at an early age in 1967, Robinson lived a committed life as an activist dedicated to freedom for black people. Fleming's book is important because it addresses the issues of race and gender, and how the intersectionality of these two constructs affected the role of black women in the Civil Rights Movement. Through Fleming's work we are able to gather a very personal look at Robinson's experiences because Fleming relied heavily on oral interviews with Robinson's family, co-workers, and friends. Shedding light on Robinson's experiences illustrates the notion that black women held leadership positions despite the fact that most of the scholarship focuses on black men.

Former black congresswoman Shirley Chisholm authored two books about her political experiences. The first book deals with her childhood experiences and early

political participation.[28] The second book focuses on Ms. Chisholm's presidential

campaign.[29] Both books allow Ms. Chisholm to share her experiences in her own words.

She provides information that is not found elsewhere and if it does appear elsewhere it

has been trivialized.

There have been other biographies and autobiographies that present the political

experiences of black women (e.g. Septima Clark – Brown 1986; Fannie Lou Hamer –

Mills 1993, Lee 1999; Ella Baker – Grant 1998). These works play an important part in

establishing women as political actors. A good example is Elaine Brown's

autobiography, which includes her experiences as a leader in the Black Panther Party.[30]

Her autobiography provides us with an in-depth peek at gender politics within the party.

The need for additional research black women is apparent. As discussed, there are

a variety of ways to increase both the quantity and quality of scholarship about black

women. The task is great but not unobtainable. Although there are only 188 self-

identified black women members of the American Political Science Association out of a

total membership exceeding 13,500, there is hope that the number of black women will

increase. Arguably a significant number of black women will choose to research and

write about black women. In addition, there are other political scientists committed to

equality and justice who will continue to produce transformative scholarship, including

scholarship about black women. The continuation of projects aimed at increasing the

number of political scientists of color and women will undoubtedly aid in the efforts to

transform the production of knowledge about marginalized people, including black

women.

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[28] *Unbought and Unbossed* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1970).
[29] *The Good Fight* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1973).
[30] *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1992).

CHAPTER FIVE

A Case Study of the Intersectionality of Race and Gender in the Political Experience of Shirley A. Chisholm

I ran for the Presidency in order to crack a little more of the ice
which in recent years has congealed to nearly immobilize
our political system and demoralize people. I ran for the
Presidency, despite hopeless odds, to demonstrate
sheer will and refusal to accept the status quo.

Shirley A. Chisholm[1]

Shirley A. Chisholm was the first black woman elected to the United States Congress. She arrived on the national scene with a reputation as a fighter for the poor, women, and people of color. Her life experiences shaped her into a political maverick. There have been several books written about Chisholm's life and experiences. She wrote her autobiography in which she shared her childhood and foray into politics.[2] Chisholm followed up with a book on her experience running for the Presidency of the United States (Chisholm 1973). There have been several other books written about Shirley Chisholm.[3] Two of these books are children's books (Brownmiller 1971; Haskins 1973).

In addition, essays on Chisholm appear in several books (e.g. Gill 1997; Pollack 1996; Bingham 1997; McCartney 1992). Given the historical significance of Chisholm's election to Congress one would think that there would be much more written about this important woman. The above-mentioned works provide us with knowledge about

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[1] "Preface," *The Good Fight* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1973).
[2] *Unbought and Unbossed* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1970).
[3] Susan Brownmiller, *Shirley Chisholm: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971); Nancy Hicks, The *Honorable Shirley A. Chisholm: Congresswoman from Brooklyn* (New York, NY: Leon Books, 1971); James Haskins, *Fighting Shirley Chisholm* (New York, NY: Dial Press, 1973); Catherine Scheader, *Shirley Chisholm: Teacher and Congresswoman* (Hillside, NJ: Enslow Publisher, 1990).

Chisholm's life and political experiences. However, they do not essentially analyze

Chisholm's experiences in a transformative way that illustrates how the intersectionality

of race and gender constructs reality for a black woman.[4]

This chapter will examine the political experience of Shirley Chisholm. The

examination will begin with her childhood because these experiences shaped Chisholm's

commitment to equality and social justice. The theoretical framework I will use is based

on several frames of references. These references are essential parts of black feminist

thought. The first frame of reference is intersectionality that acknowledges the dualness

of black women. The second frame of reference recognizes the historical focus of race

and gender and how the intersectionality of race and gender structure black women's

positions. The third frame of reference recognizes a critical component of black feminist

thought that calls for self-identification by black women. The final frame of reference

recognizes the use of negative stereotypical images to control and dominate black

women. Also, in examining Chisholm's political life I will utilize the new model of

political ambition developed by feminist scholars. Under the traditional model, which is

male based, a four-prong analysis is used to determine political ambition.[5] Feminist

political scholars determined that the traditional model did not represent the experiences

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[4] The absence of black women in the analysis of blacks and politics underscores the notion that the experiences of black women are irrelevant and unimportant. Although Shirley Chisholm is an important figure in blacks and politics, there are instances where she has been excluded from analysis. A good example is Ronald W. Walters and Robert C. Smith's *African American Leadership* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999). The book chronicles a study of overall black leadership. Although the book is not designed to focus on one particular leader there is a substantial number of black leaders mentioned by name. Amazingly, Shirley Chisholm is not mentioned at all. Also, John Berg examines class, gender, and race in Congress (*Unequal Struggle: Class, Gender, Race, and Power in Congress*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998). It is hard to come up with a reasonable explanation for the exclusion not only of Shirley Chisholm but also Barbara Jordan, Maxine Waters, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, and Cardiss Collins.

[5] The four prongs are: 1) Politicians tailor their political behavior in accordance with their goals for public office, 2) They utilize a broad rather than narrow policy perspective, 3) Policy perspectives are associated with the higher posts politicians aspire to, and 4) Politicians are sensitive to the constituency of the aspired-to office.

and socialization of women. They developed a simpler model that uses a two-fold analysis. The first fold is the notion that women are socialized to serve others rather than advance their own goals. The second fold recognizes that women possess a tradition of seeing politics as nonpartisan public service rather than as partisan career advancement.

Growing Up Black and Female

Shirley Chisholm was born Shirley Anita St. Hill on November 30, 1924 in Brooklyn, New York to working-class immigrant parents. Her father, Charles St. Hill was born in British Guiana and her mother, Ruby Seale St. Hill, was born in Barbados. Mr. St. Hill grew up in Cuba and Barbados. Chisholm's parents knew each other in Barbados but not well. They came to Brooklyn separately, met again, fell in love, and married. Chisholm is the eldest of four daughters. She developed fast, learning to walk and talk early. She quipped in her autobiography, "I was already dominating other children around me – with my mouth (Chisholm 1970, 4).

Mr. and Mrs. St. Hill were having difficulty establishing suitable living conditions for the family so they sent the girls to Barbados to live with their maternal grandmother, reasoning the farm would do the girls a world of good. Barbadians in Brooklyn all dreamed of owning a brownstone and providing their children with college educations. The St. Hills knew they could not achieve their dreams without saving money. It was impossible to save money with the girls living with them. When Shirley and her two sisters (the youngest was not yet born) left for Barbados in 1928, she was three years old and her sisters were two years old and eight months.

This was not a vacation. Shirley's maternal grandmother was strict and had high expectations. By her own admission, Chisholm has always questioned authority.

However, her grandmother's authority was one she learned not to question. Living in Barbados, Chisholm and her sisters found themselves in a loving extended family consisting of her grandmother, an uncle, two aunts, and four cousins.

Chisholm excelled in the British school system in colonial Barbados. Schooling was heavily stressed in Barbados. At the time Barbados had the highest literacy rate in the Caribbean. The school system was based on the British model. There was no question that teachers were in control. Teachers possessed unquestioned authority to discipline students, including using corporal punishment when warranted. Chisholm learned to read and write before she was five years old. She attended school from eight o'clock in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon. After school she had chores to complete.

Although the stay was intended as a short one, Chisholm and her sisters stayed seven years. The visit lasted longer than expected because it took her parents longer than anticipated to save money. Returning to Brooklyn in 1934, Chisholm and her family moved several times before her parents bought a home in 1945. Despite the Depression, the St. Hills worked hard to provide their daughters with a good home full of love, discipline, and education. Although funds were short, Mr. And Mrs. St. Hill managed to buy a used piano. Chisholm took piano lessons for nine years, at which time her parents were able to buy a new piano.

Her surroundings in Brooklyn were much different than Barbados, where her classmates and friends were of African descent. In Brooklyn she lived in diverse neighborhoods, including having white and Jewish neighbors. This later experience shaped Chisholm's commitment to what we refer to now as diversity. The experience of living in diverse neighborhoods will assist Chisholm later in fulfilling her political goals.

Shirley and her sisters attended church every Sunday with their mother. Mrs. St. Hill and the girls attended a Quaker – like sect, the English Brethren Church. Mrs. St. Hill wanted her girls to be good Christians. Shirley and her sisters were ridiculed because of their church going, and the control and discipline handed out by her parents, particularly her mother. Mrs. St. Hill clearly took the lead in the social development of the girls and it was clear that Mr. St. Hill felt comfortable with his role. An argument can be made that this assignment of roles was dictated by the fact that the St. Hill children were all girls.

Following church they returned home where her father imparted his nationalist message at the kitchen table. During the evenings Mr. St. Hill brought friends home and they engaged in political discussions covering such topics as oppression, colonialism, unions (Mr. St. Hill was a big supporter), and Marcus Garvey. Mr. St. Hill was an ardent Garvey supporter. A very proud black man, he liked the fact that Garvey instilled pride in the black race long before it was fashionable. The girls slept in a room next to the kitchen so they benefited from the spirited discussions. Arguably, these discussions helped Chisholm to formulate a positive view of herself and her potential.

The St. Hills set a good example, particularly their father. The family ate dinner together every day. Mr. St. Hill always inquired about their day and asked what did they learn in school. Although funds were limited and Mr. St. Hill had the equivalent of a fifth grade education, he purchased two to three papers daily. His example underscored the need to be well informed and prepared.

Chisholm's parents instilled two messages to Shirley and her sisters. First, Mr. St. Hill "instilled a respect for education, a strong religious foundation, and a Marcus Garvey

nationalism into the early lessons" for Shirley and her sisters (Gill 1997, 17). Her mother added to the first message by advising her daughters to "become young ladies – poised, modest, accomplished, educated, and graceful and prepare to take your places in the world." (Gill 1997, 18). In one respect, Mrs. St. Hill's message can be viewed as a counter action to the negative stereotyping of black women as unfeminine, physically strong, and masculine. The second message came from Shirley's father who cautioned his daughters "strong people survive in this world" and admonished them to be strong (Chisholm 1970, 25-27). He further stated, "God gave you a brain use it." This last message was particularly important because often times girls were not encouraged to be smart.

Upon returning to Brooklyn, Chisholm assumed she would be placed in the sixth grade given her excellent academic record in Barbados. Instead she was placed in the third grade with children two years younger than she. Despite her excellent academic background in English and Math, she did not know American history and geography. Chisholm quickly became bored and thus became a discipline problem. Fortunately, school officials recognized the cause of her boredom. She received a tutor for American history and geography, excelling to the point that she was soon placed in the sixth grade and performing better than almost all of her peers.

While her mother worked, Shirley was responsible for her younger siblings. She took her responsibility seriously and made sure they were fed for lunch and returned to school. Although Chisholm displayed many incidents of responsible behavior while growing up, she chafed under the long lists of dos and don'ts her parents had as well as the tight control exercised by them. She rebelled. Her rebellion was exhibited in small

ways such as playing popular songs on the piano or allowing boys to walk her to the front door.

Excelling academically, Chisholm graduated from Junior High School in 1939 and attended the well-respected Girl's High School in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

College

Due to her excellent academic record, Shirley Chisholm received numerous scholarship offers. Of all of the offers Chisholm wanted to accept a scholarship from Vassar or Oberlin. Attending Vassar would have exposed Chisholm to the elite of society, people who make decisions regarding the political, economic, and social state of affairs. She discussed attending an out-of-town university with her parents. Unfortunately, her parents were financially unable to afford room and board, which is a necessity at an out-of-town school. The decision was made that Shirley would attend Brooklyn College.

Brooklyn College was the largest of the five city-operated colleges. It was touted as the institution for bright but lower class or poor students. It was nicknamed the "subway campus" because many of the students took the subway to classes. Given its location Chisholm thought there would have been more black students. Even at her young age she was aware of the lack of quality education for black students. Brooklyn required an 89 average. Consequently, many black students did not have an 89 average because of their miseducation. When Shirley entered Brooklyn College there were approximately sixty black students. The campus was ninety-eight percent white.

By her own admission Chisholm stated that Brooklyn College changed her life. She was not quite eighteen when she started college. Her life had been pretty much

sheltered up to that point. She was accustomed to surpassing most of her classmates academically. However, at Brooklyn College she competed with students just as smart as she. She was amazed at the amount of activity on the campus — there were many organizations and extracurricular activities. She marveled at the notices of meetings, clubs and programs plastered on the bulletin boards.

Chisholm chose education as her area of interest. She had decided to become a teacher. The teaching profession was one that was open to blacks and women. She stated that "there was no other road open to a young black woman" at that time (Chisholm 1970, 23). Given the socialization of women at the time, Chisholm did not even seriously consider law or medicine. Few schools admitted black men so she knew her chances of admission were slim. Besides, law, medicine, and nursing were too expensive. Her family could not afford that. There are a substantial number of black social workers today. However, during the 1940s the profession of social work had not opened up for blacks. Shirley understood that her race and gender proscribed what opportunities were available. She knew that her "youth may have been sheltered from boys and some other realities," but being black she knew "nobody needed to draw me a diagram. No matter how well I prepared myself, society wasn't going to give me a chance to do much of anything else"[6] Chisholm's assessment became all too true for her sister Muriel. She entered Brooklyn College a few years after Shirley and majored in physics. Muriel graduated magna cum laude. However, she could not find a job, not even one as a laboratory technician. Chisholm concluded that, "I knew it would teaching for me." Even though she knew this, Shirley did not take any education courses. Instead she majored in social work and

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[6] Ibid.

minored in Spanish. The selection of her major may have been Chisholm's way of rebelling against societal expectations of her as a black woman.

Brooklyn College introduced Chisholm to personal activism and intellectual growth. True she grew up listening to her father and his friends discuss the pressing issues of the day but she was not personally engaged in struggle or the discussions. During her sophomore year she joined the Harriet Tubman Society, a club that several upperclassmen had started. While attending the meetings Shirley first heard blacks other than her father and his friends talk about white oppression, black consciousness, and black pride. The members sat at their own tables in the cafeteria and discussed many things. Chisholm was more of an observer, drinking up the thoughts and ideas shared. She did participate by sharing her readings since her experiences were limited. She knew about Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Dubois, and George Washington Carver. The public library did not have a lot of books on blacks but Shirley managed to read what they had. These discussions were the training ground for the development of Chisholm's rhetorical skills.

One experience that affected how Chisholm viewed racism and its impact on society was her membership in the Political Science Society. The white members of the society perceived themselves as progressive. However, some would make very patronizing statements about the Negro and his or her limitation, thereby requiring the help of good white people. She recalls when one speaker stated that black people had always been laborers and would always be laborers. This is an interesting statement to make in the presence of black college students.

Chisholm spent considerable amount of time observing white people. She listened to what they said and watched how they treated blacks. She soon realized that there was an expectation of subservience, particularly by black men. She witnessed this behavior even in situations where there was suppose to be equality. It was not lost on Chisholm that some blacks played the role expected of them. If a white person walked in their demeanor and behavior changed. But she was able to recognize that although they played the role there were elements of fear, helplessness, and discomfort. The racist actions of some whites angered Chisholm. She stated

> When I look at the white people who were doing this, consciously
> or not, it made me angry because so many of them were baser, less
> intelligent, less talented than the people they were lording over. But
> the whites were in control. We could do nothing about it. We had no
> power. That was the way society was. I perceived that this was the
> way it was meant to be: things were organized to keep those who
> were on top up there. This country was racist all the way through.
> (Chisholm 1970, 25)

Chisholm continued to develop politically. Other people noticed her and encouraged her. Both whites and blacks told her that she had potential and needed to do something good with her life. Chisholm felt she had potential and wanted her life to stand for something. The following illustrates Chisholm's desire to be a change agent:

> There must be a role for me to play, but what? As a teacher, perhaps
> I could use the talents people were telling me about and which I
> felt were there to do something that would be of service to society –
> especially to children. I volunteered to work in an Urban League
> settlement house, teaching art classes and sewing, and writing and
> producing skits and plays, which I loved. I decided to devote my
> life to children. But the resolve was also there (I did not realize it
> yet how fierce it had grown) to do something about the way whites
> treated my people. Political action was hardly even a fantasy for
> at the time. But I decided that if I ever had a chance, somehow I
> would tell the world how things were as I saw them.[7]

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[7] Ibid.

Brooklyn College also afforded Chisholm the opportunity to interact with a white man as an equal. Louis Warsoff was a political science professor who happened to be blind. He took an interest in Shirley. They had many talks and debates. He encouraged her to consider politics. Chisholm grew to trust Wasoff. Up until that point she did not have whites as friends. Her white neighbors were not her friends. Her father never brought his white co-workers home and their family never visited the home of white co-workers. She believes Professor Wasoff helped her to see that white people were not really different from herself. It was through these discussions with Professor Wasoff that Chisholm came to appreciate the intersectionality of race and gender in her life. On one particular occasion after starring in a formal debate Wasoff suggested that she go into politics. Chisholm was shocked that this educated man could be so naive. She told him, "Proffy, you forget two things. I'm black – and I'm a woman" (Chisholm 1870, 26). He responded, "You really have deep feelings about that, haven't you?" The conversation stayed with Chisholm and later she admitted to herself that she had deep feelings about being black and a woman.

She was painfully aware that women were not elected to campus offices. On two different occasions she worked for white female students running for the presidency of Student Council. She worked hard on the campaigns, painting signs, giving speeches, and organizing rallies. Neither woman won. Chisholm also knew that black students could not join social groups. Demonstrating her creativity and determination, Chisholm formed a group for black women. She named it Ipothia, which stood for "in pursuit of the highest in all." At its height the group had twenty-six members. The group died when the white social groups started admitting black students.

During her time at Brooklyn College Chisholm did socialize. It was common knowledge that she was not allowed to date, attended church three times on Sunday, and spent a lot of time in the college library. She surprised everyone when she showed up at parties and knew how to dance. Contrary to her bookworm image she loved to dance and have a good time. However, even at that age she had to deal with the negative image of an intellectual woman not being desirable. She overhead one young man say, "Stay away from her – she's too intellectual, always talking about some big, serious thing" (Chisholm 1970, 26).

Shirley Chisholm graduated from Brooklyn College in 1946, with honors (cum laude). She set out to find a job, even as a teacher's aide. Unfortunately, she could not find a job at any school. The main problem was that although Chisholm was twenty-two years old, because of her size and youthfulness she looked sixteen or seventeen. At the time she only weighed ninety pounds. She often received responses that she was not old enough to teach. One day she interviewed with the director of the Mt. Calvary Child Care Center in Harlem. Meeting opposition she exploded and begged for a chance to prove herself. The director relented and hired Chisholm. She stayed with the center for seven years. Still thinking that teaching would be her life's work, Chisholm enrolled in a master's program in early childhood education at Columbia University.

Politics 101

Most people involved in politics (both electoral and non-electoral) undergo a "baptism" that amounts to earning a graduate degree in the written and unwritten rules, policies, customs, practices, and norms of political action and participation. Shirley A. Chisholm was no exception. Burning inside Chisholm was the desire to effectuate change

for black people. Chisholm's "baptism" came in the form of participation in the old-time New York political clubs. As we will see, Chisholm was a good student and graduated at the top of the class.

During college Chisholm's political participation was generally limited to attending a few club meetings to hear speakers of particular interest to her. The New York political club system wielded enormous power over the lives of the citizens. The clubs were organized according to state assembly districts. Generally, the assemblyman assumed the additional roles of district leader and state committeeman, resulting in the concentration of a great deal of power in the hands of one individual. Although both the Republican and Democratic parties had clubs, the majority of the city "clubs" meant Democratic. The clubs provided services to people in exchange for "an express or implied pledge" of voting regularity (Chisholm 1970, 9). Club meetings were held once a month. However, the important events were "club nights" generally held on Monday and Thursday evenings. During club nights people came in seeking help with problems. Chisholm resided in the Seventeenth Assembly District. The leader of the Seventeenth Assembly Democratic Club was Vincent Carney. He sat on the dais at the far end of the room, surrounded by political aides or cronies. People came in and took a seat in high-backed chairs, waiting their turn or assistance. The scene was reminiscent of the old days when people sought audience with the king.

During the 1940s the district was approximately two-thirds black. However, the club that ran the district was 100% white male, mostly Irish-American. The club "elected the state senator, assemblyman, city councilman, and other local officeholders and, by treaty with the similar clubs around it, picked the men for congressional seats, judgeships,

and other big-bore political jobs" (Chisholm 1970, 30). Not surprising, seating during club nights and meeting was not integrated. Blacks sat on one side of the room and whites sat on the other side of the room. To Chisholm it seemed like the men glared at each other, daring one another to cross the invisible line. The seating arrangement was not written but reflected "normal" customs of the day. Another interesting practice was the fact that blacks could not attend many of the club nights unless accompanied by a white member, a sort of sponsor.

Blacks did not attend club nights because of a desire to make change in the organization. The bottom line is that they needed help and the club was the source of assistance. Customarily after the speaker finished his remarks, questions were entertained. The unwritten rule was no questions from the floor. Consequently, very few people asked questions. Chisholm being Shirley Chisholm did not abide by the unwritten rule. She asked questions and was always chided after the meetings about her inappropriate behavior. Chisholm feigned innocence, declaring she did not know what questions were permissible to ask. She knew that she was stepping out of bounds and knew that the club leaders knew she was consciously stepping out bounds. On one particularly night Chisholm had the nerve and audacity to walk onto the dais. Two men tried to turn her away but she said her matter was urgent. An exception was made and she was allowed to remain on the dais and talk to the power men. To this day Chisholm does not remember the nature of her "urgent" matter nor how it was resolved by the power men. She just wanted to challenge the system because it was insulting and degrading. Needless to say change did not occur.

Chisholm eventually joined the Seventeenth Assembly District Club. She was placed on the card party committee. The club held a card party and raffle as its major fund-raising effort. Consistent with traditional politics during the time (and still so today) women did the planning and organizing. The women club members were for the most part the wives of the male club members. Chisholm was known for her painting and decorating flair. As a consequence, she was assigned the job of decorating cigar boxes designed to hold raffle tickets and money collected at each table during the card party. She did her usual high quality work. After begging for boxes from candy stores, she painted and decorated them with style. The women club members were impressed with her work.

Chisholm recognized early on that the women were being exploited because of their gender. The club had three sources of income: the annual card party, raffle, and dues. Despite the phenomenal job the women did raising funds year in and year out the men never advanced funds for expenses to cover such costs as printing, supplies, and raffle prizes. The women had to beg, borrow, and steal what they needed with any bills paid after the event. At a committee meeting Chisholm raised the issue and argued that they should seek a particular advancement sum. At the next club meeting the spokeswomen for the group demanded advancement for expenses. The other women joined in. The men huddled together to determine how to respond to these out of control women. Although the chairman declared the meeting out of order, the women did not back down and continued to demand money. Finally, the men gave in and advanced the sum of $700 to the women. The annual card party raised $8,000.

At future meetings women occasionally spoke up, raising pertinent questions. Male club members felt Shirley Chisholm was egging on the women. They probably felt this way because many of the women praised Chisholm to the men. Chisholm was determined not to be their "good black woman in the club" (Chisholm 1970, 34). She declared that she was not a show dog and had no intentions of playing the role proscribed for her.

During Chisholm's senior year in college she met a man that would serve as both a mentor and foe in her political life. Her hairdresser introduced her to a man she thought Chisholm should know, Wesley McD. Holder (Mac Holder). Chisholm had heard of Holder and knew he had a reputation of upsetting white politicians dating back to the 1930s. Holder was from Guiana. A former editor of the *Amsterdam News*, a black newspaper, he worked in Washington, D.C. before returning to New York to agitate for change. He decided to work for the election of black candidates to represent the black communities. Holder was considered the "shrewdest, toughest, and hardest-working black political animal in Brooklyn, probably in New York City, and maybe elsewhere" (Chisholm 1970, 31).

Holder's bold actions were in sharp contrast to many black people at the time who were fearful of the white power structure. Black people in city jobs were neutralized. If they dared to take a stand in opposition to white political leaders they were threatened with the loss of their jobs. People with families need economic stability, which Chisholm recognized and understood. However, she was astute enough to know that since her job as a nursery school teacher was not a city position and she had no family to support that she did not have concern herself with such threats.

Holder had some political successes despite the fact that he never held public office and white politicians still maintained tight control. In 1948 he persuaded a Brooklyn hotel to cater a dance by Phi Beta Sigma, a historically black fraternity. At that time hotels barred black groups. Several years later he confronted city hall over the lack of black representation in government. He succeeded in having Clarence Wilson appointed as a magistrate. Despite his hard work and agitation Kings County had no elected black officials on any level (local, state, and national).

In 1953 Holder formed the Committee for the Election of Lewis S. Flagg, Jr. Flagg was running for the district's seat on the municipal court bench. There were forty-nine judges in Brooklyn and none were black. The political machine ignored black candidates and imported a white candidate to run. This infuriated blacks, Holder and Chisholm included. Holder possessed impeccable campaigning skills. He organized wide spread support among blacks and whites for Flagg's candidacy. Chisholm worked at the grass-roots level, putting in many hours canvassing the area on behalf of Flagg. The committee's efforts paid off and Flagg was elected as the first black judge in Brooklyn's history.

Buoyed by the committee's success Holder declared his intention to live to see a "black city councilman, a black assemblyman and a black congressman representing Bedford-Stuyvesant" (Chisholm 1970, 35). He took the base of the Flagg committee and formed the Bedford-Stuyvesant Political League (BSPL). Chisholm was active from the beginning and was considered Holder's protégée and one of his chief lieutenants. BSPL was considered an insurgent political club. Despite BSPL's hard work it was unable to duplicate the success of electing Judge Flagg. In 1954 BSPL ran a full slate against the

regular Democratic slate. It was unsuccessful; largely due to the fact blacks supported the Democratic machine as faithfully as whites. Over the next ten years BSPL met with no success in it efforts to increase black elected representation.

Although Chisholm was active in BSPL she was also active in community groups such as the NAACP. She remained active in the Seventeenth Assembly District Democratic Club. Hoping to nullify her effectiveness, Chisholm was included in the club's inner circle, first elected to the board of directors and later elevated to third vice president. This was surprising because Chisholm was not only black but also a woman. The problem is that the Democratic leadership underestimated her. Chisholm refused to play the proscribed role and continued to speak out. As punishment Chisholm was notified by letter that she had been removed from the board of directors, which meant she could no longer sit on the dais during meetings. This did not have the desired effect of bringing her in line and compliant. Chisholm kept attending the meetings, raising questions and irritating the powers-to-be. Gradually, she became less active in the club and devoting more of her attention and time to community activities such as BSPL, NAACP, League of Women Voters, and a community center. It was a good thing Chisholm was organized and did not have children. She became a master juggler, juggling her party politics, community activities, teaching during the day, attending graduate school several nights a week, and marriage.

Under Holder's leadership BSPL pushed voter registration. Chisholm was still active and had become vice president of BSPL. She led delegations to city hall and spoke at rallies. Her performance did not go unnoticed among the membership. Many members encouraged her to run for president. At first Chisholm resisted the idea but later changed

her mind. This decision would result in a falling out with Holder that would last ten years. Holder went from mentor and friend to foe. Holder was furious that Chisholm was challenging him for the presidency. Undoubtedly he felt she was ungrateful and considered her action a stab in the back. He told people that Chisholm turned on him.

Holder out maneuvered Chisholm. The battle was a fierce, no holds barred fight. He was a member of a prominent black church, the Mount Lowry Zion Baptist Church. He had raised hundreds of dollars for the church. Holder enlisted the minister of the church to aid him in his bid for reelection. Chisholm knew enough to have her supporters arrive early on the night of the election. An important political tactic is the appearance of wide spread support. Therefore, one of the cardinal rules of political organizing still applicable today is to fill the room with supporters. The meeting promised to be a spectacle – a showdown between a black man and a young black woman.

One of the first things Chisholm faced when she arrived at the meeting place was the circulation of three sheets of pink paper attacking her. Holder wrote the piece himself. According to Chisholm he misrepresented the facts by taking credit for her leadership positions in the Seventeenth Assembly Democratic Club. He also used the allegation of a 'secret" to discredit Chisholm. The "secret" was his allegation that she had never been elected president of the National Association of Women's Brooklyn's chapter. Another thing that undermined Chisholm's efforts was the granting of instant membership. When Holder's supporters arrived many were the nice old ladies of his church. Holder set up tables at the entrance and his representatives made out membership cards for many of the old ladies. Chisholm lost the election. However, many of the churchwomen told her later that when she made her speech it was then that they realized many of the statements

about her were untrue. Several of the women ended up changing their mind and voting for her. The fierce battle and the split between Holder and Chisholm damaged BSPL. The group lasted for a few years before dying a justified death. The battle weakened Holder's effectiveness as a leader. BSPL was unable to elect any black candidates.

Love, Marriage, and Graduate Politics

Chisholm's disassociation from BSPL left her outside of politics for the first time in many years. The lack of political participation did not concern her at the time because she was involved in advancing her profession and concentrating on her marriage. She started out at Mt. Calvary Child Care Center as a teacher's aide. By 1953 she had become director of a private nursery school, the Friend in Need Nursery in Brooklyn. In between this time she had become a teacher. Chisholm remained at Friend in Need Nursery for one year before accepting the director's position at the Hamilton-Madison Child Care Center also in Brooklyn. She remained as director until 1959 when she became an educational consultant for New York City's Division of Day Care.

As politically savvy and professionally competent Chisholm would become, her first love illustrated her naivety when it came to affairs of the heart. In the latter part of her senior year at Brooklyn College, Chisholm met a man who five years later would break her heart and spirit. During Easter vacation Chisholm worked at a jewelry factory in Manhattan. This necessitated that she take the subway to and from work. Although she was an adult her mother gave her strict orders to eat by herself and not to mingle with the other employees. Ever mindful of her mother she complied with her orders for two days. On the third day she was approached by a handsome, older man. He charmed her enormously. He teased Chisholm about eating alone and convinced her the next day to

have lunch with him. During the remainder of her tenure at the factory, she discarded her home-prepared lunch and went out to lunch every day with her new beau.

When she returned to college he insisted on visiting her at home. Chisholm did not welcome this idea because she knew her mother would be upset. Her boyfriend did not take no for an answer and visited her one Saturday. Her mother's reaction was predictable. She was ungracious in her actions and limited in her conversation. Mrs. St. Hill did not like the manner of dress worn by Shirley's beau although he was dressed well in a sports coat and slacks. Her mother felt that a gentleman caller should wear a suit. Her father's behavior was civil. After her beau left Chisholm and her mother had a blowout argument in which Shirley threatened to leave. She and her mother entered into a tentative peace over her relationship with this man.

Chisholm's relationship with this man lasted five years. After the first one or two years they became engaged. She was in love and happy. Later she learned that that he was married and had a family in Jamaica. This came as a shock to her. However, the surprises did not end there. She also found out that he was involved in an illegal immigration scam in which he helped people to enter the United States with phony birth certificates. He would later blackmail them. Chisholm broke off their engagement and shortly thereafter he was arrested and deported by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. She did not react well to the turn of events. Unable to sleep or eat she lost a great deal of weight and looked terrible. She contemplated suicide. Despite her willingness to tackle tough issues, confront racist whites, and the promise of a rewarding professional career, Chisholm thought the world was over. Finally, her parents took action. They took Shirley to a physician who strongly recommended taking her to the country. Her parents

took her to the family farm of old friends in New Jersey to recoup. Chisholm flourished in the fresh air. She started to feel better and gained weight from the good country cooking. She had time to reflect on her future. Chisholm made two profound decisions. First, she decided to focus entirely on her profession - child welfare and early childhood education. Second, she decided never to marry. More pointedly she decided to embrace spinsterhood.

Chisholm had no problem focusing on her profession. She was an excellent teacher and would become a good administrator. However, she was unable to keep her second decision. While pursuing graduate studies at Columbia University she met a quiet, handsome Jamaican named Conrad Chisholm. Nothing became of their initial meeting. Upon learning Shirley was no longer engaged Conrad pursued her. Vowing to maintain her vow never to marry, Shirley did not treat Conrad well in hopes of scaring him off. Conrad was not deterred. He even visited her at home. Her mother liked him and was very gracious and cordial. Chisholm ignored him. Finally, Conrad's calm determination won her over and they were married in 1949. Their relationship was a good one. He was very supportive of her political efforts and career. Conrad Chisholm was so secure in himself that he was not threatened by Chisholm's strong personality. He did not care for the limelight and gladly left it for her. Conrad Chisholm worked as a private investigator until he went to work for the city of New York, as an investigator. Chisholm encouraged him to make the change and thought his acting skills and patience made him well suited for investigating the eligibility of Medicaid claimants. Besides, Chisholm was concerned that private investigating was too dangerous.

Chisholm's absence from politics did not last long. She was drawn back into politics, probably her strongest passion, in 1960. Along with five other people, Chisholm formed the Unity Democratic Club (Unity). The club had an ambitious goal – take over the Seventeenth Assembly District Democratic political organization. Throughout the year there was rebellion all over the city. Reform Democratic clubs challenged the regular clubs for power and control. In the Seventeenth Assembly District a group of whites challenged the old-style club. Unity coalesced with the Nostrand Democratic Club to mount an all out assault on the old-style club. The two groups each fielded a candidate. Unity's leader, black attorney Thomas R. Jones ran for state assemblyman on the same ticket as Nostrand's Joseph K. Rowe, who ran for committeeman. The clubs worked well together. They were very vocal in their demands for more black and Puerto Rican appointments. At one of the Jones-Rowe rallies they enlisted the support of Eleanor Roosevelt as a speaker. Caribbean actor, musician, and activist Harry Belafonte headed a star-studded list of supporters. The causes Unity advocated were the same causes Holder fought for over the years. Holder was running in the Sixth Assembly District. He opposed the sitting Assemblyman, a black man from the West Indies.

Chisholm learned political strategizing well. The two clubs formed a Committee for Full Registration and Adequate Representation (Committee). The Committee recognized the need for people to staff the campaigns. They recruited and properly trained canvassers in voter registration procedures and law. The opposition was fully aware of the good organizing being done by the Committee. To counter the Committee's endeavors the two white candidates "embraced" race by voicing their support of a fair housing bill and condemnation of the lynching of Emmitt Till. Both claimed membership

in the NAACP. Despite the Committee's hard work its candidates lost. However, Jones' ability to draw forty-two percent of the vote must be viewed as a measure of success. Unity did not wallow in pity. Instead the members started planning for the 1962 election. They laid the foundation during 1961, holding political education seminars. Unity undertook the necessary analysis work and analyzed the racial composition of each district. Membership increased tremendously. By the spring of 1962 Unity was on par with the regular Democratic club in terms of membership, knowledge, and funding. This time Tom Jones ran for both assemblyman and district leader. Unity fielded a black woman for the co-leader position with the opposition running a black woman as well.

Unity's campaign literature focused on the issues and fair representation. The Democratic machine focused their attention on Unity and Holder, who was also running for committeeman. The bosses reasoned that Holder's candidacy would split the black vote ensuring the reelection of their candidate. This time Chisholm and Unity were victorious. Tom Jones beat the bosses' candidate and Holder. Unity's candidate for co-leader also won. Basking in the glow of receiving sixty percent of the vote during the primary, the general election was anticlimactic. The Republican and Liberal parties' slates were no threat. With the election of Tom Jones and Ruth Goring, the number of elected blacks increased from two to four. Although four seats out of twenty-two was not significant, the election of Jones and Goring was a historical accomplishment.

Chisholm was placed on the executive committee. This time her experience was far different than when she served on the board of directors of the Seventeenth Assembly District Democratic Club. Chisholm acknowledged the difference by stating, "This time I was one of the leaders of a group that was really representative of the district, and we

were in a position, for the first time, to exert some leverage in the party and the state legislature in behalf of the people who had been second-class citizens all their lives" (Chisholm 1970, 51).

<u>New York State Assembly</u>

At the time of Tom Jones' election to the New York State Assembly, Chisholm had no way of knowing that she would soon be following in his footsteps. Jones severed only one term. In 1964 a vacancy occurred on civil court in Brooklyn. The county Democratic organization was prepared to support Jones. However, there was a problem. The county organization was concerned about Jones' replacement in the Assembly. Under no circumstances did the county organization want Shirley Chisholm filling Jones' seat. Chisholm advised the Seventeenth Assembly District Club that she wanted to replace Jones. Furthermore, she felt that she deserved the position. There was opposition within the Club itself. Several men wanted to replace Jones. Chisholm recalls

> For my part, I was not interested in listening to any reasons why
> I shouldn't run. By then I had spent about ten years in ward politics
> and had done everything else but run for office. Starting as a cigar
> box decorator, I had compiled voter lists, carried petitions, rung
> doorbells, manned the telephone, stuffed envelopes, and helped
> voters get to the polls. I had done it all to help other people get
> elected. The other people who got elected were men, of course,
> because that was the way it was in politics. This had to change
> someday, and I was resolved that it was going to start changing
> right then. I was the best-qualified nominee, and I was not going
> to be denied because of my sex (Chisholm 1970, 52).

Although there was noticeable opposition, the Unity Democratic Club endorsed Chisholm to run for Jones' seat. According to normal rules the county organization accepts the nomination of the regular organization. Chisholm felt comfortable that the county would recognize Unity's nomination. Under pressure from those opposed to

Chisholm's nomination, Tom Jones started expressing misgivings about giving up an active political role for a judgeship, which by its nature is a passive political position. Jones' family and friends prevailed upon him to accept the judgeship because the opportunity may not present itself again. Jones accepted the judgeship and Shirley Chisholm became the official primary candidate. She survived token opposition and turned her attention to the general election.

One of the first hurdles faced by Chisholm was the lack of adequate funds to mount her campaign. Unity had very little funds although it provided invaluable assistance in terms of its organization. Chisholm knew the county organization would not advance her money for two reasons. The first reason was the fact that she was the nominee. The second reason is that the county organization generally gave white clubs more money than it did black clubs. To adequately fund her campaign Chisholm contributed $4,000 from her savings. By today's standard this is not a lot of money but in 1964 it was a considerable amount.

Chisholm met with sexism right from the beginning of her campaign. She was not the first black woman to ever run for the New York State Assembly. In the 1940s a black female Republican ran and almost won the election. She was defeated by a mere 200 votes. Despite the fact that she was not the first Chisholm was constantly berated for not being at home. Chisholm recalls that even women were opposed to her running, greeting her with "You ought to be at home, not here." She recalls one particular day when she was collecting signatures in a housing project in Albany. Accompanied by her husband Conrad, she encountered a very elderly man who expressed his displeasure in these terms, "Young woman, what are you doing out here in this cold? Did you get your

husband's breakfast this morning? Did you straighten your house? What are you doing running for office? That is something for men" (Chisholm 1970, 53).

Chisholm took the position of not striking back. Her general response was to the effect that she had worked hard in the community and there was considerable support that she would protect their interests. Chisholm understood the historical construction of the relationship between black men and women. Therefore, she did not strike back at black men because she "understood too well their reasons for lashing out at black women; in a society that denied them real manhood."[8] Chisholm felt white men were just as afraid of her because of her gender. She states

> "Sexism" – to use Betty Friedan's coinage – has no color line. Sometimes they come straight out like the old man in the housing project and tell an upstart female that a woman's place is in the home. More often their attack is indirect. They stress what are considered feminine foibles: "Women talk too much." "Women are illogical." "Women take everything personally." In politics, the men tell each other, "This isn't a game for women." Or, at parties, in asides that they allow one to hear, they talk about how "it has to be a certain kind who goes for politics ... " By that they mean an easily manipulated type who will follow the dictates of the men. If possible, that is the kind they pick (Chisholm 1970, 54).

Chisholm won a three-way race with what she considered a satisfying margin. I think it is not inappropriate to say the margin was more than satisfying. She trounced her opponents. She received 18, 151 votes compared to 1,893 for the Republican candidate and 913 for the liberal candidate. Chisholm was going to Albany with seven other blacks (five in the Assembly and two state senators). She was the only female in the group. Chisholm's triumphed victory was marred by the death of her father the year before. Because of their closeness based on shared political interests he established a trust fund

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[8] Ibid.

for Shirley despite not leaving a will. Chisholm used the funds to purchase a house, which caused conflict with her family.

Chisholm entered the New York State Assembly as her own woman, which should not have surprised anyone but it did. Redistricting not only allowed for Chisholm's victory but it helped the Democrats to regain control of the Assembly. One of the first acts was the election of the Speaker, who comes from the party in power. During the time the Republicans were in control of lower house Anthony Travia served as the minority speaker. Now that the Democrats were in control Travia expected to serve as the Speaker. However, the Kings County Democratic chairman Stanley Steingut wanted to be Speaker. Steingut wanted to follow in the footsteps of his father who had served as Speaker. Although initially word spread that Steingut had the votes in actuality neither he nor Travia had the votes. Attention by both contenders was lavished on Democrats in hopes of securing their vote. None of this attention was being lavished on Shirley Chisholm. Since Steingut was close with Tom Jones, Chisholm's predecessor, it was automatically assumed Chisholm would support Steingut. Then Steingut learned differently when one his supporters made a comment to Chisholm indicating they were backing the same man. At that point Chisholm announced that she was going to vote for Travia because of his work as minority leader. During the vote Chisholm cast her vote for Travia. A deadlock occurred. At first the Republicans found great joy in the deadlock. However, after two months when it became clear that the senate could not act because of the immobilization in the lower house, and the Assembly could do nothing until officers were elected, their joy turned to frustration. The Republicans did the unthinkable and voted in favor of Travia, who was elected Speaker. Chisholm's independence branded her

as a maverick and out of control. Travia and Chisholm got along pretty well so long as he understood her support should not be taken for granted and she intended to vote in the best interests of the people she represented.

Such a defiant and independent stance normally would result in some sort of punishment such as being assigned to unpopular committees, lack of invitations to important functions, or having your bill doomed to committee. Surprisingly, none of this happened to Chisholm. Of the fifty bills Chisholm introduced in the legislature eight passed. This is a high number considering the hundreds of bills submitted. Two of the bills meant a lot to Chisholm. The first created a program that provided assistance to disadvantaged young men and women to attend college. This bill was in line with Chisholm's long standing commitment to education. The other bill provided the first unemployment insurance coverage for personal and domestic employees. Most of these employees were black women. At one point Chisholm's mother worked as a maid.

Chisholm ran for reelection twice, first in 1965 and again in 1966. She won handily each time, both in the primaries and the general elections. Throughout her tenure in the Assembly Chisholm was an advocate for public education. She sponsored a bill that provided state aid to day care centers. She introduced a successful bill that raised the maximum amount from $500 to $600 per pupil spending. One of the bills she fought was a bill that provided state money to church-run schools. Chisholm clearly thought this was a violation of the state and federal constitutions. Chisholm warned, "We are gradually eroding the public school system. Each of us is going to have to make a very crucial decision soon as to whether or not we believe in the separation of church and state –

whether we believe in our Constitution" (Chisholm 1970, 62). The bill passed the Assembly 136 to 18.

During her terms in the New York State Assembly she learned a lot about how the system works. She learned how the processes of representative government work. She learned "there is little place in the political scheme of things for an independent, creative personality, for a fighter. Anyone who takes that role must pay the price"[9] The Assembly was her training ground for the United States Congress.

United States Congress

Through redistricting an opportunity arose for Shirley Chisholm to run for the United States Congress (Congress). The congresswoman of the old district had to decide if she wanted to run in a district she was more familiar with or the newly created district. She opted for the familiar district. The newly created district, the Twelfth Congressional District, was heavily black and Puerto Rican. This was a golden opportunity to elect a black representative. Several people expressed interest in running, including Chisholm, a city councilman, and a NAACP leader.

The Kings County machine did not endorse candidates. It adopted a position of allowing the "people" to select their candidate. In December 1967 a group of citizens formed the Citizens Committee to identify a candidate that would act in the best interests of the people. They wanted someone who they did not consider a "Tom." The Committee announced that it would interview interested candidates. Several people did interview, including Chisholm who was the only woman. During her interview Chisholm displayed her trademark independence. She openly disagreed with the Committee members who felt strongly that the selected candidate should say and do certain things. Chisholm

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[9] Ibid.

promised to fight hard for the people. It was truly a surprise but Shirley Chisholm was unanimously endorsed by the Committee, which appreciated her candor, honesty, and independence.

The Committee's endorsement did not set well with the county organization. Despite the long held practice of not formally endorsing a candidate, the county organization did everything short of a formal endorsement to express its preference. The organization abandoned its "hands off" policy and rallied around William C. Thompson, a city council member and former state senator. It appears clear that the county machine wanted a black man to run for the congressional seat. Negative comments were made about Chisholm. Although they never questioned her competence or commitment, they expressed many sentiments about their perception that she is hard to control and handle. The eight leaders of the four Assembly districts in the new congressional district met to select "the" candidate. Of the eight votes, Chisholm received two (one of which was her own vote). Thompson initially did not intend to run but at the last minute he took out petitions so Shirley Chisholm found herself in a three-way primary battle.

Something happened to buoy Chisholm's spirit and cement her primary victory. Her former friend turned adversary told Chisholm that he wanted to help her. Mac Holder had stated years ago that he wanted to help elect the first black assemblyman and first black congressman. He told Chisholm that she could not win without him. Later Chisholm admits this was indeed the case. Chisholm started campaigning a full ten months ahead of the election. Starting in February she went straight to the people, walking the streets of the district spreading her message. She did not have a lot of funds but she made up for this deficit with determination, energy, and grit. Chisholm spent a

great deal of time in the ten housing projects in the district. She attended parties and teas.

On the weekends she used a caravan of twenty to fifty cars to criss cross the district. She

passed out shopping bags with her name printed on the sides and containing her

biography, Assembly record, and a souvenir. Chisholm recognized the diversity of her

district. She recalls that, "in the black neighborhood she ate chitlins, in the Jewish

neighborhood bagels and lox, in the Puerto Rican neighborhood arroz con pollo"

(Chisholm 1970, 70). Her campaign slogan reflected who she is "Fighting Shirley

Chisholm – Unbought and Unbossed."

While conducting her grass roots campaign her opponent Thompson felt confident

that he would win since he had the backing of the county machine. While Chisholm

campaigned he vacationed at Cape Cod. He probably felt that Chisholm and the other

candidate would split the black vote and he would carry the white vote. Thompson

gambled and loss. Chisholm won by a decisive margin.

Chisholm's opponent in the general election was James Farmer. Farmer was the

former chair of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). He did not live in the district.

While the law does not require residency during the campaign, Framer rented an

apartment in the district for appearances. The Republican Party saw an opportunity to

elect a black Republican. His campaign was very well financed. He was able to tour the

district with a sound truck "manned by young dudes with Afros, beating tom-toms: the

big black male image" (Chisholm 1970, 71). His people flooded the streets of the district.

His campaign attracted television cameras. Farmer was poised to become the city's

second black congressman after Adam Clayton Powell.

Immediately after the primary Chisholm became ill. She was unable to sleep at night because she constantly got out of bed. Her husband insisted that she go to the doctor. The doctor took one look at her and said either she was pregnant or had a tumor. Chisholm told him that there was no way she was having a baby because she was running for Congress. After his examination the doctor told Conrad to take her to gynecologist and surgeon that night. The doctor contacted a specialist and said he was sending over Congresswoman Chisholm. It was odd that he referred to her as "congresswoman." Perhaps he knew something that she did not know at the time – she was destined to be a congresswoman. She feared that she had a malignant tumor. She underwent a biopsy, which showed the growth was not malignant. However, she needed surgery. Although Ms. Chisholm never reveals the nature of the surgery, I am assuming she had a hysterectomy. Of course, Chisholm objected to the surgery. Not because she did not think it was necessary. She just wanted it postponed until after the election. The surgery could not wait. She had surgery during late July and did not return home until August.

During her absence from the campaign trail Farmer was out and about inquiring about Chisholm's absence. He reminded people that they had not heard from or seen Shirley Chisholm recently. Chisholm had to take action. She informed her doctor that she was going out. In her autobiography she describes what she did

> I took a big beach towel and wrapped it around my hips so my clothes wouldn't fall off. With that, I looked pretty good. Conrad had two women caring for me. I bribed them and called three men to come and take me out on the sound truck. We lived on third floor then, and I had to walk down three flights. I told the biggest one, "You walk in front so if I fall I'll fall on you, and the other two can hold me." We went out. "Ladies and gentle-men," I said on the loudspeakers, "this is Fighting Shirley Chisholm and I'm up and around in spite of what people are saying (Chisholm 1970, 73).

With that Chisholm was back on the campaign trail. She recalls an incident that touched her profoundly. A woman rang her doorbell one day and thrust an envelope at her indicating more would come. The woman had collected $9.69 from a group of welfare recipients gathered for a bingo game.

Her mentor and now friend again Mac Holder was very instrumental in helping Chisholm to deal with issue of sexism being used by her opponent. Farmer was using negative stereotypes to paint her as a bossy female and would-be matriarch. There were many in the community sensitive about female domination and such talk played into their fears. Instead of running an anti-male campaign, Holder did his homework. He studied the voter rolls and discovered that women outnumbered men. For every man registered in the district there were 2.5 women. Chisholm altered her original strategy and targeted women saying

> It was not my original strategy to organize womanpower to elect
> me; it was forced on me by the time, place, and circumstances.
> I never meant and never mean to start a war between women and
> men. It is true that women are second-class citizens just as
> black people are. Tremendous amounts of talent are being
> lost to our society just because that talent wears a skirt. This
> is stupid and wrong, and I want the time to come when we
> can be as blind to sex, as we are to color. But that time is not
> here, and when someone tries to use my sex against me, I
> delight in being able to turn the tables on him, as I did in
> my congressional campaign (Chisholm 1970, 75).

Chisholm approached the presidents and leaders of women's organizations and groups, asking them to help her. She recognized that women do much of the organizing in the community. Men underestimated this phenomenon. She was right when she said that if men thought about it many of the homes in the black neighborhoods are headed by women.

Another asset in Shirley's favor was her fluency in Spanish. During college she minored in Spanish. She was able to go into Puerto Rican communities and converse in Spanish. Voting results would confirm that her ability to converse in Spanish helped her to win the Puerto Rican vote.

Shirley Chisholm's hard work and grass roots campaign paid off. She won the election, beating Farmer 34,885 to 13,777.

One of the biggest challenges facing a new member of Congress is the selection of his or her staff. Congresswoman Chisholm was no different. After taking a much deserved vacation in Jamaica to recoup from the campaign and her surgery, Chisholm came to Washington, D.C., ready to work. She recognized the need for experience in her staff since she lacked experience in Washington. In this sense she acted against the norm, which is to reward supporters whether they have appropriate experience or not. She interviewed a number of applicants. Interestingly, Chisholm decided that the majority of her staff would be young women. She recognized that "Capitol Hill offices swarm with intelligent, Washington-wise, college trained – and attractive – young women who do most of the work, but often get substandard pay for it and little hope of advancing to a top staff job" (Chisholm 1970, 80). Chisholm decided that she wanted her office to be different. Although there was pressure for her to hire an all black staff, she resisted and decided to hire the best applicants she could get. Her staff ended up majority black and female, with white women and black men on her staff also.

The United States Constitution states "all legislative power herein granted is vested in a Congress of the United States ..." In order to carry out this mandate Congress utilizes a basic organization and working unit known as the standing committee.

Legislative formulation and oversight take place in committee. The usual standing committees are organized along subject lines, e.g. agriculture, finance, science, foreign .policy, education, and budget.

Chisholm came to the House of Representatives seeking committee assignments that would benefit her constituents. Because of the seniority system it is virtually impossible for a freshman to gain a plum assignment. The power to assign members to committees lies in the hands of the Ways and Means Committee. When Chisholm entered Congress the Democrats controlled the house therefore the fifteen Democratic members of the Ways and Means Committee made committee assignments. Understandably due to her professional and state assembly experience, Chisholm wanted to serve on the Education and Labor Committee. She also would have been pleased to serve or either the Banking and Commerce Committee or the Post Office and Civil Service Committee. If appointment were not forthcoming for these committees, Chisholm would have accepted appointment to the Government Operations Committee.

The New York representative on the Ways and Means Committee assured Chisholm he would do everything in his power to try and get her appointed to the Education and Labor Committee. This was not the case. She learned that the representative did not try very hard to get her appointed. She also heard that she was being appointed to the Agriculture Committee. Representing an urban district with pockets of poverty seemed to make the Agriculture Committee a poor assignment. Chisholm thought about it and reasoned that it may not be so bad since the Agriculture Committee oversaw the food stamp and food surplus programs as well as migrant labor, issues of interest to the people in her district. Then she found out about her subcommittee

assignments — rural development and forestry. This did not make any sense to Chisholm.

Incensed, she called Speaker of the House McCormack. Admitting that she did not know

if her call violated protocol, she asked for his assistance in getting her a different

committee assignment. He was cordial and sympathetic but told her she had to be a good

soldier. Chisholm replied

> All my forty-three years I have been a good soldier. The time
> is growing late, and I can't be a good soldier any longer. It
> does not make sense to put a black woman representative on
> a subcommittee dealing with forestry. If you do not assist me,
> I will have to do my own thing" (Chisholm 1970, 83).

Speaker McCormack was startled. Chisholm had to explain what "do your own thing"

means. He promised to talk to Wilbur Mills, chairman of the Ways and Means

Committee. Mills (D-AK) was angry Chisholm went over his head. However, Mills did

ask the chair of the Agriculture Committee, W.R. Poage (D-TX) if she could have a

different subcommittee assignment. Poage was livid and made some unpleasant remarks.

She knew that the committee assignments had to be approved by the full caucus of

Democrats at a meeting. Chisholm asked several more experienced members how she

could get her assignment reconsidered. She was warned that she would not be recognized

to make a motion regarding her assignments. This warning was accurate. Chisholm rose

several times to be recognized during the caucus meeting. Each time she stood up two or

three white males rose. Congressional rules stipulate that the most senior member

standing is always recognized first. As one could expect, Chisholm was never

recognized. Tiring of this, she walked down an aisle to the well of the floor and stood

there.[10] Taken by surprise Mills conferred with Majority Leader Carl Albert (D-OK).

Finally they recognized her. Chisholm spoke. She explained why she was vehemently

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[10] The well is the open space between the first row of seats and the Speaker's dais.

opposed to her committee and subcommittee assignments. She shared that she had twenty

years of experience in education and served on the Education Committee of the New

York Assembly. She stated

> But I think it would be hard to imagine an assignment that is
> less relevant to my background or to the needs of the
> predominately black and Puerto Rican people who elected
> me, many of whom are unemployed, hungry, and badly
> housed, then the one I was given. (Chisholm 1970, 84).

It was not lost on Chisholm that the House of Representatives only had nine black

members. She further stated that the House leadership

> Has a moral duty to somewhat right the balance by the
> putting of the nine black members it has in positions
> where they can work effectively to help this nation
> meet its critical problems of racism, deprivation, and
> urban decay.[11]

She offered a resolution removing herself from the Agriculture Committee and

directing the Committee on Committees to return with a different assignment. The

resolution passed. One member advised that she had just committed political suicide. At

the next Democratic caucus she was assigned to the Veteran's Committee. The chair,

Olin "Tiger" Teague (D-TX) said he would be delighted to have her serve on his

committee, to which Chisholm stated that there were more veterans in her district than

trees. He followed up by offering her assignments on the education and training

subcommittee. Despite the dire warnings from some of her colleagues, Chisholm

received editorial support from a number of newspapers across the country, commending

her on having courage.

A number of issues put Chisholm front and center in the spotlight. One such issue

was the Vietnam War. Ending the Vietnam War was not on the top of the list of issues

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[11] Ibid.

Chisholm pledged to work for in Congress. The top six items on her list were jobs, jobs

training, equal and quality education, adequate housing, enforcing anti-discrimination

laws, and support for day care centers. Ending the war was number nine on her list of

nine. However, her opposition to the war moved up on the list when she learned that

President Richard Nixon intended to cut the Head Start program in the District of

Columbia and divert the funds to an ABM system. Chisholm used her maiden

congressional speech in late March to express her dismay. She stated

> I am deeply disappointed at the clear evidence that the
> number one priority of the new administration is to buy
> more and more and more weapons of war, to return to
> the era of the Cold War and to ignore the war we must
> fight here, the war that is not optional. There is only
> one way, I believe, to turn these policies around. The
> Congress must respond to the mandate that the American
> people have clearly expressed. They have said, "End the
> war. Stop the waste. Stop the killing. Do something for
> our own people first" ... We must force the administration
> to rethink its distorted, unreal scale of priorities. Our
> children, our jobless men, our deprived, rejected, and
> starving fellow citizens must come first. For this reason,
> I intend to vote "no" on every money bill that comes to
> the floor of this House that provides any funds for the
> Department of Defense. Any bill whatsoever until the
> time comes when our values and priorities have been
> turned right-side up again, until the monstrous waste
> and the shocking profits in the defense budget have
> been eliminated and our country starts to use its
> strengths, its tremendous resources, for our people
> and peace, not for profits and war" (Chisholm 1970, 97).

As she left the House floor she overhead a reference that she was crazy. One big plus

from her speech was that college students "discovered" Shirley Chisholm.

Another big issue was abortion. Chisholm's stance on abortion illustrates the

extent of her feminist transformation and how the discourse around abortion rights often

ignored how the intersection of race and gender affects the reality for poor women of

color. In August 1969 the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws

(NARAL) asked Shirley Chisholm to serve as the organization's first national president.

The new organization was based in New York City. Chisholm believes she was asked

because NARAL thought she was sympathetic with NARAL's goal to repeal all laws

restricting abortion because of her support for abortion bills while serving in the New

York Assembly. In actuality, this was not Chisholm's position at the time. She was not in

favor of repealing all laws because that would leave the question of abortion entirely up

to the woman and her physician. Chisholm desired to make it easier for women to get

therapeutic abortions.

Chisholm's position underwent a change because of the experiences of many

young women who suffered permanent injures at the hands of illegal abortionists,

resulting in sterility for some of the women. Believing that women will have abortions

whether illegal or not, for Chisholm the question became what type of abortion would be

available – illegal and "criminal operation" abortions or clean abortions performed by

competent, licensed physicians.

Chisholm gave a lot of thought to NARAL's request. She knew that

> For me to take the lead in abortion repeal would be an even more
> serious step than for a white politician to do so, because there is a
> deep and angry suspicion among many blacks that even birth
> control clinics are a plot by the white power structure to keep
> down the numbers of blacks, and this opinion is even more
> strongly held by some in regard to legalizing abortions. But I
> do not know any black or Puerto Rican *women* who feel that
> way (Chisholm 1970, 114).

Chisholm was aware of the roles sexism and classism played in the abortion debate. She

stated, "To label family planning and legal abortion programs 'genocide' is male rhetoric,

for male ears."[12] In terms of a class analysis she stated

> Why then do the poor keep on having large families? It is
> not because they are stupid or immoral. One must under-
> stand how many resources their poverty has deprived them
> of, and that chief among these is medical care and advice.
> The poor do not go to doctors or clinics except when they
> absolutely must; their medical ignorance is very great, even
> when compared to the low level of medical knowledge most
> persons have. This includes, naturally, information about
> contraceptives and how to get them. In some of the largest
> cities, clinics are now attacking this problem; they are
> nowhere near to solving it. In smaller cities and in most
> of the countryside, hardly anything is being done (Chisholm 1970, 115).

After much thought and given her busy schedule, Chisholm agreed to serve as

president but only in an honorary capacity. The announcement was made in September

1969. Chisholm was genuinely surprised at the volume of mail she received, which

mostly supported repeal. Some of her congressional colleagues thought her association

with NARAL was not politically wise. Her advisors, *all men*, concluded such a position

would not help her to get reelected. Chisholm did not back down in her support of

abortion rights and understood the public policy implications of her action when she

stated, "My beliefs and my experience have led me to conclude that the wisest public

policy is to place the responsibility for that decision on the individual."

Chisholm was also keenly aware of the history of the relationship between black

women and men, and how this interaction impacts the nature of black politics. She also

knew that many black men were sexist in their thoughts and political ideas about black

women. To black men Chisholm stated

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[12] Ibid.

> Which is more like genocide, I have asked some of my black
> brothers – this, the way things are, or the conditions I am
> fighting for in which the full range of family planning services
> is freely available to women of all classes and colors, starting
> with effective contraception and extending to safe, legal
> termination of undesired pregnancies, at a price they can
> afford? (Chisholm 1970, 122).

Shirley Chisholm played a key role in the formation of the Congresswomen's Caucus (Caucus). The Caucus became a vehicle for women to provide support for each other and advocate on behalf of issues pertinent to women. Chisholm's influence is evident in one of the goals of the Caucus, i.e. not to confine matters of interest to those of white, middle-class women (Gertzog 1984, 182). Her commitment to the Caucus was genuine and reflective of her commitment to empower women. It was agreed that the fifteen members would contribute office funds to cover the hiring of a clerk. However, only eight of the fifteen members actually contributed funds. Chisholm allocated more than twice the amount of the other members (Gertzog 1984, 189).

It was a mistake to assume that Chisholm's participation in the Caucus made her oblivious to the racism of her white female colleagues. Under no circumstances could Chisholm be described as a dummy. New Jersey Representative Millicent Fenwick thought caucuses were divisive and not needed. She raised the question as to what has the Congressional Black Caucus done. Chisholm responded that the Congressional Black Caucus was successful in gaining Small Business Administration set aside loans for minorities to which Fenwick retorted that was irrelevant. She attempted to chastise Chisholm by telling her that she had participated in civil rights longer than Chisholm and she did not discriminate. Chisholm's response was elegant and delivered without rancor.

She simply explained to Fenwick that in a fair society we would not need caucuses but society is not fair (Gertzog 1984, 214).

<u>Running for the Presidency</u>

Shirley Chisholm has been described in dichotomous terms, reflecting the support or lack of for Congresswoman Chisholm. On one hand she is described in very negative terms: headstrong, pugnacious, egotistical, overbearing, expedient, power-hungry, brazen, peevish, and pushy. On the other hand she is described in positive terms: purposeful, magnetic, bright, amazing, courageous, spunky, dynamic, and forthright (Chamberlin 1973, 322). She has been characterized as the black male politician's everlasting problem child. Chisholm's run for the presidency is a classic study of the intersectionality of race and gender as it applies to black women. Her decision to run exacerbated her relationship with fellow male members of the Congressional Black Caucus (Remember, Chisholm was the only female member), antagonized black men in general, and led to the abandonment by white feminists.

On January 25, 1972 in her home district in Brooklyn, New York, Shirley Chisholm announced her candidacy for the Presidency of the United States, saying

> "I stand before you today as a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency of the United States. I am not the candidate of black America, although I am black and proud. I am not the candidate of the women's movement of this country, although I am a woman, and equally proud of that. I am not the candidate of any political bosses or special interest ... I am the candidate of the people. (Gill 1997, 28).

Several events led to Chisholm's decision to enter the presidential race. First, there was the Vietnam War. Because of her opposition to the war and the many speeches she gave on college campuses, students knew and liked her politics. They often asked why she did not run for president. It is an underestimate to say she had student support.

College students liked her very well. Second, plans were underway to hold a National Black Political Convention to decide "how best to influence the 1972 national convention" (Chisholm 1973, 25). Third, Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) came out in support of Mayor Carl Stokes running for president. Stokes was the first black elected mayor of a major United States city. Fourth, Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-ME) stated that the country was not ready for a black Vice President although that was not his personal view. Finally, the pivotal Northlake meeting was held in late 1971.

Northlake was the location of a meeting of black politicians and civil right activists. Northlake is a suburb of Chicago, near Chicago O'Hare International Airport. During a closed two-day meeting the attendees discussed the best option for the 1972 presidential election. The options included 1) running "favorite" sons and daughters in several states,[13] or 2) throwing support behind Senator George McGovern, or 3) supporting a single black candidate (Gidding 1984, 339). Position papers were circulated. Some of the biggest names in politics and civil rights were in attendance: Roy Innis, Julian Bond, Percy Sutton, Richard Hatcher, Willie Brown, Amiri Baraka, Jesse Jackson, and Clarence Mitchell III.

Shirley Chisholm did not attend but she did send as her representative Thaddeus Garrett, who she considered her chief political operative. Congressmen John Conyers and Louis Stokes, as well as Civil Rights activist the Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy did not attend as well. The theme was already being raised that Chisholm could not be their candidate because she would not be the candidate of blacks, but a candidate of women. Garrett argued

When a black politician asks if she would be the candidate of

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[13] In actuality they only considered "favorite' sons", "daughters" were added to appease Chisholm.

> blacks or the candidate of women, and what would happen when the deal goes down and something has to be bargained away, I tell him, "She is a black woman, of the black experience, and from one of the blackest districts in the country. She can do nothing but be black in her dealings" (Chisholm 1973, 30).

Chisholm thinks what really bothered them came out in a comment made to a *Washington Post* reporter in which an anonymous black male attending the meeting stated that the first serious effort in this regard should be by a man.[14] Congressman Ronald Dellums (D-CA) was one black man who could transcend sexism. He told the *Washington Post* reporter that; "She could have a dramatic effect on politics in this country. She could bring together the elements necessary to create a third force in American politics, and by 1976 we would be able to put together a ticket that would win."[15]

Former Congressman William Clay's (D-MO) take on the Northlake meeting is substantially different than Chisholm's. In his book you get a distinct impression that his dislike of Chisholm was established well prior to the Northlake meeting (Clay 1993). A section of the book provides background information on black congresspersons. He indicates that he, Chisholm, and Louis Stokes were sworn in together on January 2, 1969. His analysis of her race against James Framer was interesting for what it left out. He failed to mention anything about sexism and the under handiness exhibited by the Farmer campaign. Regarding the three of them, he states

> The three of us – Stokes, Chisholm, and I came to Washington determined to seize the moment, to fight for justice, to raise issues too long ignored and too little debated. We were described by the media as militant, aggressive new leaders determined to make changes in the way black members of

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[14] Instead of referring to this as sexism, Chisholm called it "the woman thing.' She noted that if we think white men are sexist, then we should check out black men. (Chisholm 1973, 31).
[15] Ibid.

> Congress had been viewed in the past. And we wasted no time
> seeking to establish a forum for articulating our concerns
> (Clay 1993, 116).

What is interesting is that when he talks about them being decision makers he only refers to himself and Stokes. What else is interesting is given his assessment of Chisholm as a fighter; he seems to really dislike that part of her persona when she ran for president.

In discussing Chisholm's presidency bid his tone is angry and dismissive. He expressed anger that Chisholm did not take any of the black congressional members into her confidence. This can be interpreted to mean she did not seek permission from the men. He was angry that she did not attend any of the thirteen strategy sessions, electing to send a representative instead. Julian Bond considered Chisholm's absence an intentional affront stating

> Mrs. Chisholm's candidacy was a unilateral candidacy. A great
> many black politicians resented it. She went off entirely by herself.
> There was a series of meetings of black politicians over the last
> year. She didn't attend one of them – invited to all, but didn't
> attend any. One meeting I had begged her to come. She sent a
> young kid to represent her (Clay 1993, 221).

Clay was steamed that Chisholm allegedly said she did not give a damn what black men thought about her candidacy. He retorted that her statement displayed contempt for black men. In actuality, Clay took Chisholm's words out of context. There is no denying that she was angry when she made her statements. Since Clay relied on Chisholm's book, *The Good Fight*, an examination of Chisholm's writings on this matter should be referenced.

Prior to the formal announcement of her candidacy, Chisholm was scheduled to speak at the Black Expo in Chicago, sponsored by the Reverend Jesse Jackson's Operation Breadbasket. She was scheduled to speak at a workshop on women and

politics, along with Coretta Scott King. As Chisholm entered the convention hall something happened that set her off. She was always aware that she was black and a woman, and how this affected her standing in the black community. As she proceeded to enter the hall, three or four black men were coming out. They saw her and one of them said loud enough for her to hear, "There she is — that little matriarch who goes around messing things up" (Chisholm 1973, 32). At that moment Chisholm knew what she wanted to say during the workshop. She knew that she had to comment on the notion that women were viewed as intruders in politics, a view also held by many black men. Chisholm's words were profound and require restating for their effect. She said

> Black women have got to realize what they are in for when they
> venture into politics. They must be sure they have the stamina to
> endure the endless obstructions that are put in their way. They
> must have enough self-confidence so they will not be worn down
> by the sexist attacks that they will encounter on top of racial
> slurs (Chisholm 1973, 32).

At that point Chisholm made a statement that she had said many times in the past. She stated that she had felt more discrimination against her due to gender rather than race. It is interesting that she phrased her statement the way that she did. As black feminist thought continues to grow and develop, I wonder if Chisholm would alter her statement to say that she was discriminated against because of her gender *and* her race since we now know that socially constructed categories are not separate and distinct.

Congresswoman Chisholm continued with her remarks by saying

> You have heard that I am considering running for President,
> and you may wonder how I have the nerve to say such a
> thing, when I know that the sexist opposition I have had in
> the past, on top of the racial prejudice I have faced, will
> seem like nothing compared to what I can expect to have
> if I do run. Well, I am about ready to make my decision to
> run, and I just want today to say a few things to my black

> brothers, who I know are not going to endorse me. I do
> not expect their support, nor will I bother them about it.
> I know their feelings. I have learned too much for too
> long in my dealings with politicians, black and white.
> There are people who believe I should go to these men
> and discuss my intentions with them, but this kind of
> thinking is folly. Anyone in his right mind knows that
> this group of men, for the most part, would only laugh at
> the idea. They would never endorse me. They are prisoners
> of their traditional attitudes, and some of them are just
> plain jealous because they have been wounded in their
> male egos. They will deny this, of course, but their
> denials are only another aspect of the male vanity at
> work"[16]

Despite Chisholm's heartfelt words the media picked up on one statement and it was

headlined in all of the Chicago newspapers the next day. Reacting to the pain of

malicious and sexist comments by black males, Chisholm cried, "Get off my back."

Chisholm rolled ahead with her campaign. She continued to experience conflict

with some black men who argued she was a tool of the women's movement. She was

continuously subjected to criticism that she was not black enough. Chisholm found the

questioning by black men of her support for black causes laughable. None of her fellow

colleagues would support Angela Davis' fight for bail while she was awaiting trial

because they viewed such support was not politically expedient. Chisholm's portrayal of

herself reflected who she is – black and female – represents a critical element of black

political thought. Chisholm was engaging in self-identification, a necessary act in the

fight against oppression.

One of the allegations constantly hurled at Chisholm was that she was ego-

tripping. Another was the matriarch label. Probably the one phrase used more often by

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[16] Ibid.

politicians is "she is hard to control and handle." All of these comments relied on negative

stereotyping designed to quiet her.

Many black men ridiculed Chisholm's campaign as craziness and stupidity. Former congressman Clay stated that Chisholm spoke of winning a number of states with a coalition of women, Spanish-speaking people, liberal whites, young students, and welfare recipients. He was very condescending when he stated, "It was a frightening bit of fantasy to those of use who were more earthly in our political assessments" (Clay 1993, 222). He concluded that Chisholm was entitled to her hallucinations. Quite the opposite, many women expressed their gratitude to Chisholm for taking a bold step.

Conflict with black male leaders over her presidency run was expected although not justified. The abandonment of white feminists was not only unexpected but unjustified. Shirley Chisholm along with Bella Abzug and Gloria Steinem founded the National Women's Political Caucus. It is not unreasonable to assume that Chisholm expected support from Abzug, Steinem, and the women's movement. This support did not materialize. Although Chisholm received endorsements from several local chapters, the National NOW (National Organization for Women) was ambivalent which translated into no identifiable support. Feminists in general were cool to her presidency. Even Abzug and Steinem let Chisholm down. Chisholm became irate when during an interview Steinem asked if she supported Chisholm and she replied with a vague statement and went on to say McGovern was the best of the *men* running. Steinem idea was to support McGovern during the primary and give Chisholm support during the general election. Chisholm confronted Steinem and told her to get off the fence — either she supported her

or not. Failing to receive the endorsement, Chisholm resigned from the National Women's Political Caucus leading to "I told you so" from members of the black community. Acting on principle, Chisholm never wavered in her support of women's rights even if racism reared its ugly head within the feminist community.

There were two general themes that underlined criticism of Chisholm's presidential campaign. One theme was the fact that Chisholm did not have a chance of winning the Democratic nomination. Consequently, she could not win the presidency. Therefore, it was not politically wise to waste valuable resources and time on a campaign destined to fail. NOW used Chisholm's own words to support its lack of support for Chisholm's campaign. The NOW leadership concluded Chisholm was not a serious candidate because she said she could not win.[17]

Black men also thought that her efforts were futile because she could not win.[18] Political scientist Ronald Walters laid out an argument that Chisholm's campaign did not fit the presidential model therefore it was doomed for failure (Walters 1988). In his book he argues that the mobilization of legitimacy is a critical factor in the nomination process. Thus

> This means that, at the very least, the candidate should have an undisputed leadership profile of a sufficiently high level within the community, and support from a substantial share of a wide variety of leaders necessary for mobilization activity. Then, the extra-community opinion-making publics such as party leaders and the media must credit the candidacy a potential influence role, even it does not perceive that it might actually win the nomination (Walters 1988, 120).

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[17] A side issue was NOW's claim that it should remain nonpartisan and not endorse presidential candidates. However, NOW endorsed two white males in later years – Jimmy Carter in 1976 and Walter Mondale in 1984. NOW failed to endorse either of Jesse Jackson's campaign in 1984 and 1988 (Tate 1999, 279).
[18] Did any of these same men think Jesse Jackson had a real chance of winning the Democratic nomination in 1984 or 1988? Yet the call for the need to support the "brother" was generally unquestioned.

Given the history of race and gender in the United States and the oppression of black women, one can take issue with Walter's assessment. In order to win the party's nomination and eventually the presidency there must be a substantial white voting support for a black woman candidate. Arguably, the black woman in question must be viewed in nonsexist terms. In 1972 there is little doubt that Chisholm was viewed in nonsexist terms and poised to receive wide spread support from "extra-community opinion-making publics," who were for the most part men.

Walters attempted to lay a guilt trip on Chisholm by alleging the negative effect of her presidential campaign could have adversely affected Jesse Jackson's 1984 presidential campaign. He stated

> The first aspect of mounting an autonomous campaign was for
> Jesse Jackson to "mobilize the legitimacy of the idea" of a black
> man running seriously for the Democratic nomination as a
> rational and popular strategy, since it had been called into question
> by the previous campaign of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm
> (Walters 1988, 160).

Despite Jesse Jackson's credible performance he had no more of a chance to win the Democratic presidential nomination than Chisholm. There was no hue and cry that Jackson was not serious in his presidential efforts.

Chisholm never said that she thought her efforts would result in the Democratic presidential nomination despite former congressman William Clay's characterization her campaign as "fantasy" and an act of "hallucination." Her campaign was designed to "advocate systematic change in the country and expansion of opportunity in the party for women and blacks (Gill 1997, 28). Empowerment was always a central part of Chisholm's politics, both as a grass-roots worker and elected official. Her own words illustrate this commitment.

> We must ... the central of the prosaic, the privileged and the old
> line, tired politicians to open our society to the energies and
> abilities of countless new groups of Americans — women, blacks,
> browns, Indians, Orientals, and youth — so that they can develop
> their own full potential and thereby participate equally and
> enthusiastically in building a strong and just society, rich in its
> diversity and noble in its quality of life... I stand here without
> the endorsements of any big-name politicians or celebrities
> (Gill 1997, 28).

The other theme was the disorganization of Chisholm's campaign. Her campaign

was seriously under funded and staffed. She lost her national campaign manager, who

resigned citing Chisholm's candidacy and campaign resulted in "appearances of a

shoddy, poorly organized campaign structure which turns people off, and loss of support

from people who would have otherwise supported the campaign (Chisholm 1973, 58).

Chisholm acknowledged her campaign was disorganized, stating the disorganization

was the result of

> A lack of experienced, competent professionals in the national
> campaign office; eager but inexperienced volunteers were trying
> to do the work but could not possibly handle it all; there was no
> money to hire anybody else, and inevitably the campaign was to
> limps from crisis to crisis in state after state (Chisholm 1973, 57).

Even the disorganization of Chisholm's campaign cannot negate the historical

significance of her decision to run for the Presidency of the United States.

Chisholm hit the primary campaign trail with gusto, despite the lack of support

from black elected officials, party leaders, white feminists, and black males. In Florida

she did not have the support of black elected officials. Alcee Hastings, then a Fort

Lauderdale attorney and former state senate candidate issued a sharp attack on

Chisholm's candidacy.[19] The person who assisted her the most and served as an ally and

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[19] Hastings would later become a federal judge who was impeached but acquitted of criminal wrongdoing. He is now a congressman from Florida.

confidant was Miami attorney Gwen Cherry. Chisholm used her ability to speak Spanish

to garner a substantial portion of the Latino vote. She managed to receive 4% of the votes

in Florida. Chisholm thought she had a good chance in Michigan but ended up trounced.

In California she faced conflict between blacks and white women. The only black group

with a predominately male leadership to endorse Chisholm was the Black Panther Party.

Chisholm entered fourteen state primaries but only made impressive showings in

two states, i.e. North Carolina where she received 7.5% of the vote, and New Jersey,

where she won the primary. In total Chisholm received 430,703 votes, which constituted

a 2.7% of the total vote (Walton 1994, 267).[20]

Retirement?

It is erroneous to believe Shirley Chisholm left Congress to sit in a rocking chair.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Chisholm left Congress on her own accord and

terms – unbossed and unbought. Following her run for the presidency she returned to

Congress, including strained relations with members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

She continued her commitment to people of color, women, and the poor by working on

legislation to provide jobs, adequate housing, and quality education for all.

She became a target of harassment by the Republican administration. A report by

the General Accounting Office (GAO) was leaked to the press. The report accused

Chisholm of failure to keep accurate records, report receipts and corporate gifts, and to

name a chair of her campaign committee. If found guilty she was subject to a year in

prison for each count and a $1,000 fine for each charge.

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[20] The state by state breakdown of primary votes for Chisholm: California (157,435); Florida (43,989); Illinois (777); Maryland (12,602); Michigan (44,090); Nebraska (1,763); New Jersey (51,433); New Mexico (3.205); North Carolina (61,723); Oregon 2,975); Pennsylvania (2,975); Tennessee (18,809); Wisconsin (9,198). (Walton 1994, 268).

Chisholm did not shy away from the allegations. She told the press

> I do not fear an indictment, and I have no fear if I am
> indicted because I have nothing to hide. I don't need
> to use campaign funds. I earn $42,500 a year in Congress.
> I earn a great deal of money lecturing, I earn money
> writing and I thank God that I am a talented woman
> with many resources to make money (Gill 1997, 33).

She endured the scrutiny and harassment for two years until she was absolved of any wrongdoing in 1974. During this time she faithfully carried out her duties as a member of Congress. Support was not forthcoming from her colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus. However, after her ordeal other black members of Congress faced similar harassment.

As the years advanced, Chisholm was becoming disillusioned with Congress. It became harder to get her legislation through. Changes were occurring in her personal life. Chisholm and her husband of almost thirty years divorced in early 1978. In November of that year she married her second husband, Arthur Hardwick, Jr. In April 1979 Hardwick was seriously injured in a terrible car accident that left him bedridden for months. Chisholm attempted to care for her husband as well as perform her congressional duties. She felt guilty about being unable to care for him full-time.

In 1982 Chisholm shocked the nation and sadden her supporters by announcing that she would not seek reelection. "During her fourteen year congressional career, she had proposed funding increases for federal day-care facilities; sponsored the Adequate Income Act of 1971, a guaranteed annual income program; and attempted to thwart the dismantling of the Office of Economic Opportunity under the Nixon administration. She was an early supporter of anti-apartheid legislation and denounced British and American businesses for selling goods and arms to South Africa" (Gill 1997, 33). Chisholm was a

strong supporter of Title IX, which mandates equal educational opportunities for both men and women. During the 91st Congress she co-sponsored the Equal Rights Amendment legislation. While in Congress Chisholm started out on the Veterans Affairs committee. She was finally appointed to her committee of first choice, the Education and Labor committee. In 1977 she won a plum assignment on the Rules committee. In addition, she served on the Committee on Organization Study.

Chisholm did not leave politics all together when she left Congress. She lectured extensively and is still in demand as a speaker on college campuses. She co-founded the National Political Congress of Black Women, Inc. (NPCBW). NPCBW provides political and financial support to black women. Chisholm campaigned on behalf of Jesse Jackson during both his 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns.

There was hope in 1993 that Shirley Chisholm would formally reenter politics, and receive the recognition and reward long overdue and justifiably deserved. In 1993 President William Clinton nominated her as ambassador to Jamaica. Although she started the required training, she reluctantly declined the nomination stating

> I had to make a very, very difficult decision. And it was a personal
> decision I had to make. After I went for the two-and-a-half weeks
> of training at the diplomatic seminars in Washington, D.C., I realized
> I'm suffering from a kind of degeneration of the left eye, and I only
> have peripheral vision. It would cause me not to be able to be as
> effective and to do the kind of job that I would want to do. Because
> I am a person that has standards. So I made a decision to go in and
> tell the State Department that this point, with the possibility of a
> later operation looming on the horizon with the respect to me eye,
> I think it would be better for me to withdraw my name. I am just
> about blind in that eye. And hopefully going through a major
> operation, I might be able to get some relief. This was my reason
> for withdrawing from the position. Of course, I was sorry, because
> I grew up in the islands, not in Jamaica, but in Barbados. My first
> husband was Jamaican. I've traveled a great deal in those islands.
> And I had hoped to complete my entire political career by going

back to my original roots in the Caribbean. That's where my
heritage is. But it was not to be. What's to be will be and what's
not to be will not be (Gill 1997, 16).

When asked about the current political leadership, "Chisholm toned down her

critique, but did not dampen her expectations and standards" (Gill 1997, 34). She stated

My day has come and gone. I continue to be a mentor. I am helping
a number of younger black men and women who are running for
offices on the local level. I help to teach them how to prepare speeches.
I'm a teacher. At heart, I have always been a teacher... Something
I am hearing. Something that really makes me feel good. Both
blacks and whites, old and young, rich and poor say over and over
again, in their own way of putting it, they want the truth. Even if
the truth hurts, they cannot stand to have hypocrisy and the double
and triple standards that sometime appear to emanate from
Washington, D.C. out here to the people all over the country and
then later find out it was just a cover up... I happen to feel that
we do not have the same concern, commitment, courage of old.
There's something missing and it has nothing to do with the
ability. But there is a certain kind of courage that I do not see in
black leaders today like I saw in the leaders of yore (Gill 197-97, 34).

Conclusion

Shirley A. Chisholm's personal, professional, and political experiences reflect the

position many black women in the United States find themselves – both black and female

in a society that views anyone not a white male as "other." This characterization

adversely affects how and what knowledge is constructed. Throughout her life Shirley

Chisholm has conducted herself in the tradition of black feminist thought. Her actions

reflect a knowledge and understanding of the frames of reference that embody black

feminist thought.

Clearly Chisholm understood the intersectionality of race and gender and how this

intersectionality creates a dualness in black women. Black women belong to two social

constructs, race and gender. These two constructs are not mutually exclusive. There is no

way to separate the constructs into separate categories that have no bearing on each other. Chisholm acknowledged her dualness in her writings and speeches. There is no credible documentation that Ms. Chisholm ever denied her blackness or womaness. Quite the contrary, she embraced both her blackness and womaness on a daily basis. All we have to do is think about the words she uttered and the experiences she endured.

The study of Shirley Chisholm shows that she was fully aware of the historical focus of race and gender, and how the intersectionality of race and gender structures black women's positions. One of Chisholm's major themes throughout her political life was the empowerment of marginalized people, particularly women of color. The transformation of her reproduction rights position illustrates that she was aware of how poverty adversely affected the options available to women of color.

Maria W. Stewart was the first American woman to lecture in public on political issues (Richardson 1987). During the middle 1800s, Stewart challenged black women to act in their own best interests. She urged black women to 'forge self-definitions of self-reliance and independence" (Collins 1990, 3). Self-definition empowers black women to resist the negative evaluation of black women by the use of negative images and stereotypes. One of the central questions facing black women in the past and today is how to self-identify themselves to reflect who they are. Shirley Chisholm had to ask herself that question. Although she did not use the word "feminist' on a consistent basis, her self-identification efforts embody the spirit of feminism. She resisted efforts by black men to deny her womaness at the expense of her blackness. She also resisted efforts by white feminists to deny her blackness at the expense of her womaness. Chisholm consistently said, "I am a black woman."

Finally, Chisholm was keenly aware of the use of negative stereotypical images used against her as a means of trying to control and dominate her. Black women, just as other marginalized people, are objectified and subjected to an either/or dichotomous thinking. Objectification is a central aspect of the process of oppositional differences. Throughout her career, Chisholm has been referred to in negative terms. The typical buzzwords to negatively stereotype black women were used against her – bossy, matriarchal, overbearing, and man hating. The use of these negative stereotypes were designed to control and dominate a woman considered out of control because she dared to speak her mind and act in the best interests of the poor, women, and people of color.

As the first black woman elected to the United States Congress, Shirley Chisholm braved a trail never before taken by a black woman. Through her efforts and action she paved the way for all of the black congresswomen who followed. Studying her political life provides valuable knowledge on the experiences of black women pursuing political office at the national level.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

African-American women intellectuals have been
"talking quite a bit" since 1970 and have insisted that
both the masculinist bias in Black social and political
thought and the racist bias in feminist theory be
corrected (Collins 1991, 3).

Chapters Two and Three examined what we know about blacks and politics as

well as women and politics, and how we know it. Despite the fact that the production of

knowledge about blacks and women has been a recent phenomenon within the last thirty

years or so, there has been research on both groups. Although the amount of knowledge

is limited when compared to the amount of knowledge we know about politics in general

and white males in particular, there is no argument that progress has been made.

However, producing knowledge about blacks and women has necessitated theoretical

development that centers the experiences of blacks and women for analysis purposes. The

expansion of knowledge about blacks and women is a direct result of the increase in the

number of black and women political scientists.

Chapter Four examined what we know about black women and politics, and how

we know it. Within the discipline of political science the knowledge about black women

and politics is limited. A great deal of what we do know has been generated in other

disciplines. Although black women are marginalized just as black men and white women

and this marginalization affects the production of knowledge, the failure to racialize

gender and genderize race has resulted in black women being marginalized even further.

The need to develop a theoretical framework to analyze the political experiences of black

women is great. Expansion of the production of knowledge about black women will provide a more complete picture of the behavior and attitudes of black women.

There are two questions that can be asked about my arguments for the need to expand the production of knowledge about black women. The first question: Who will benefit from this expansion of knowledge? The discipline of political science will certainly benefit because there will be a clearer picture of the experiences of black women based on sound research. In addition, the discipline will exercise control over the production of this knowledge as opposed to leaving it to other disciplines to produce such knowledge based on their disciplinary tenets. More information generated about the political experiences of black women will benefit society at large by eliminating stereotypes of black women. Black women interested in various aspects of politics will benefit from the knowledge that there were women before them who struggled, fought and advanced the notion of social justice and equality.

The second question: How can expansion of knowledge about black women be used to transform the discipline? Developing a theoretical framework that centers the experiences of black women will transform the discipline from one that is white-male centered to one that is more inclusive and reflective of the differences brought to politics based on race, gender, class, and other categories.

There are many different areas about the politics of black women that need attention. There is certainly enough research available for scholars interested in black women. In terms of electoral politics more attention must be focused on black women elected officials at all levels, i.e. national, state, and local. Research must be generated that examines how black women campaign for office and comparing their efforts with

other targeted groups. Comparison studies between black women and other groups can generate a wealth of information. Another area ripe for study is leadership studies and the role black women play. There needs to be an examination of the gender gap as it applies to black women. We need to know more about the political experiences of black women in the various social and political movements. Finally, we need to know about the experiences of black women in the discipline and how the intersectionality of race and gender affects their research options and career choices.

Producing this dissertation has helped to focus my research interest. I am committed to researching the political experiences of black women. Given the limited amount of knowledge currently available, focusing on black women will provide tremendous research opportunities. I have decided to carve out a niche examining the experiences of black congresswomen. Areas of interest include examining the role of black women in the Congressional Black Caucus and women's caucus, campaigning and fundraising, analysis of legislative activity, and career development.

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