"The women are just back of everything...": power and politics revisited in small town America

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"The women are just back of everything...": Power and politics revisited in small town America

Stall, Susan J., Ph.D.
Iowa State University, 1991
"The women are just back of everything...": power and politics revisited in small town America

by

Susan J. Stall

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: Sociology
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For the Graduate College

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

1991
This dissertation is dedicated to:

Robert O. Richards
for his inspiration

and

Charlie Hoch
for his support
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INTRODUCTION

The community-building work of women in a small midwestern town involves both the preservation and transformation of community. It also changes the attitudes and raises the political consciousness of some of the women who are actively involved in local activities. Previous studies of community have ignored or overlooked the community-building work that women do; as a result important elements essential to our understanding of community have gone largely unrecognized. Through a close examination of selected women's attitudes, activities, and accomplishments in Parkville, the concepts of power, politics, and feminism will be expanded; traditional models of community maintenance and change will be challenged and the linkages between social movements and community ties will be explored.

This study draws upon the sociology of community, political sociology, and feminist theory in order to explicate the experience and contributions of small town women. Although the focus of the study is small-town women, the community serves as the field of action. Thus women are examined in community. This distinction is important for its interactive potential—the effects of a social setting
on the attitudes and actions of the women can be explored, and in turn the effects of the attitudes and actions of these same women on their community setting can be examined.

Simpson (1969) identified three principal approaches in the sociological study of communities. The first approach might be called the "study of life in community." According to Simpson (1969:49), "These are not really studies of communities as such, but of social life which happens to take place and be studied within community settings." Here a researcher might focus on the occupational structure of workers in a community, or its workers. The community may provide a sample of respondents, but the community itself is not under study.

The second approach in community studies is "research on social life as affected by community settings" (Simpson 1969:50). Again, the community is not the object of study, but now the behavior and actions of respondents are explained by referring to community characteristics.

The third approach is the one most identified with traditional community studies. Within this approach researchers select, identify, and examine processes and dimensions that are specific to a community (i.e., the community power structure, the class structure).

Within Simpson's framework, this dissertation most
nearly approximates the second approach, a focus on how the attitudes and actions of selected women in one small town are shaped by the community setting. A complimentary analysis of how the community is reproduced, maintained, and altered through women's experiences in this town is also included.

Current literature on rural women suffers from both data gaps and research limitations (Bescher-Donnelly and Smith 1981). Bibliographies (Joyce and Leadley 1977) and researchers (Haney 1982) have pointed to the need for a more systematic and detailed portrayal of rural women. All too frequently in the literature on rural women, researchers do not specify the nature of the population studied; thus rural women are equated with farm wives. Yet, while a quarter of the female population lives in rural America, according to the 1980 census less than 8 percent of rural women live on farms (Joyce and Leadley 1977; Bescher-Donnelly and Smith 1981). Moreover, the continued reorganization and rationalization of agricultural production, the migration turnaround, and the growth of extractive industries will contribute to a continual decrease in the number of farm women, in proportion to their small town rural sisters (Haney 1982).

To date, only a limited number of studies exist that
have made small town women and their activities the central focus of research (for exceptions see Margolis 1979, Bokemier and Tait 1980, Fink 1986, Margolis 1979, Stoneall 1983). This is partly due to the narrow socio-historical lens used by social researchers to conceptualize women's roles (Acker 1978). Dominant research paradigms, such as structural functionalism, have viewed "...women's activities and their positions in society as subsidiary to those of men" (Haney 1982:124). Traditionally, the majority of studies that have examined the lives of small town women concentrate on their position as wives, mothers, and members of families (see Joyce and Leadley 1977) or incorporate "only those aspects of their lives that relate to men and children" (Haney, 1982:124).

In community studies women are "there" (Lofland 1975:145) but are often analytically invisible because these studies view women as peripheral to the more "public, official, visible and or dramatic role players and definitions of the situation" (Millman and Kanter 1975:x). Since the majority of the community studies focus on the visible actors in business, political, and economic contexts (Frankenberg 1976, Lofland 1975), community support services are rarely examined (Haney 1982).

Despite the fact that women in small towns have
received scant attention, the community-building work (Reinharz 1984) they do is significant. Small town women provide essential services in the creation, maintenance, and reproduction of local economic, political, educational, health, religious, and cultural institutions (Colfer and Colfer 1978, Fink 1986, Margolis 1979, Stoneall 1983). Yet, it is only recently that scholars have asked, "Isn't it possible that 'the unofficial, supportive, less dramatic, private and invisible spheres of social life and organization may be...important [areas of research]" (Millman and Kanter 1975:x, see also Bernard 1981; Smith 1979)?

An important effect of the women's movement is that scholarly debates waged first within the women's studies literature and more recently within the broader social science literature have begun to shift the acceptable research emphasis. This research focus starts by posing questions about what women do in their everyday worlds (Lofland 1975, Smith 1979). Focusing on ordinary women as subjects and examining their activities in all their complexity, these analysts argue that most women are attached to a specific locale (Bernard 1981) by bonds forged through complex acts of caring (Noddings 1984) built around an ethic of care (Gilligan 1982). Selected researchers have
pointed to the importance of focusing on the everyday actions and work of women, work which often takes place in the interstices between the public (paid work and politics) and private (family and home) worlds (Daniels 1987, Wadel 1979). Empirical studies of neighborhood-based women have been on the cutting edge in underlining the essential nature of this work for both the maintenance of community ties and for the alteration of personal, organizational, and community inequities (Bookman and Morgen 1988, Feldman and Stall 1990, McCourt 1977, Naples 1988, Reinharz 1984, Seifer 1973, 1976). The implications of this approach for political activity are drawn out most fully by Evans (1983) who wrote that a democratic politics that will appeal to a broader base of women should build on their concrete experience and complex attachments within their local communities (see also Ackelsberg 1988).

In related arguments, selected feminist researchers and activists have called for an expanded view of feminist politics (Bookman and Morgen 1988, Elshtain 1981, Evans 1983, Ginsberg 1984, Harding 1985, Haywoode 1985). The surprising support of community-based women for female equality, although they reject the feminist label, and their quiet efforts to improve women's position for themselves and their daughters challenges the accepted labels of feminist
or anti-feminist (Luttrell 1984). Indeed, their work to reproduce community often requires community-based women to challenge outmoded gender restrictions (Fink 1986). Yet, as women committed to the retention of the social ties they have built through years of community participation, they have developed particular strategies for dealing with the problems of gender inequality in local organizations and institutions (Ackelsberg 1988, McCourt 1976, Naples 1988, Seifer 1976). Knowledge of these strategies in small towns can greatly enhance our understanding of how the goals of the women's movement are acted upon and altered in a rural community setting by pointing to the linkages between social movements and community ties.

More specifically, to the extent that one town reflects community life in heartland small towns of the Midwest, it may serve as a bellweather of experiences and attitudes among women who, while perhaps not part of the leading edge of social change, are certainly participating in that change.

Organization of the Study

The treatment of women in selected community studies is analyzed in Chapter 1. The researcher's use of the qualitative grounded theory method is explained in Chapter
2; the community that is studied and the fifty-nine women and five men who were interviewed are introduced. The voluntary community work that women do in all-female organizations and auxiliaries, and the social attachments that inspire this work is examined in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 describes women's work to reproduce local politics, and examines the barriers to women's local political participation. In Chapter 5, the attitudes of Parkville women towards equality and the women's movement are examined, and selected female-initiated challenges to the local organizational and institutional male hierarchy are explored. The major themes of the study are summarized, and implications of this analysis for an expanded understanding of power, politics, and feminism are discussed in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER I.
WOMEN IN COMMUNITY STUDIES

Apart from family studies, community studies have had the greatest potential for incorporating details about the lives of both women and men into the traditional sociological literature (Stacey and Thorne 1985). Yet, since the mid-1970s, the intellectual impact of the women's movement, both in the United States and in Great Britain, has resulted in numerous critiques of the treatment of women in the literature in sociological literature (Bernard 1981; Daniels 1975, 1979; Huber 1979; Millman and Kanter 1975; Smith 1974, 1979; Snyder 1979, Westcott 1979) and more specifically in the community studies literature (Delamont 1980, Frankenberg 1976, Gillespie et al. 1985, Lofland 1975, Stoneall 1983). These critiques point to specific problems with both the relative absence of women and their portrayal—when they do appear—in community studies.

Frankenberg (1976) applied a feminist critique to both his own work (Frankenberg 1957) and the work of other scholars of British community studies (see also Frankenberg 1966). He reviewed British community studies from the perspective of "their adequacy in dealing with the relationships between the sexes and the significance of"
gender within society" (Frankenberg 1976:25) and noted the lack of theoretical sophistication in the treatment of relationships between males and females.

Lofland (1975), also concerned with the significance of gender, discovered in her selective review of North American community and urban studies a phenomenon which she aptly named the "thereness" of women. Lofland (1975:145) explained:

They [women] are part of the locale or neighborhood or area--described like other important aspects of the setting such as income, ecology, or demography--but are largely irrelevant to the analytic action. They may reflect a group's social organization and culture...but they seem never to be in the process of creating it. They may be talked about by actors in the scene...but they rarely speak for themselves.... They may participate in organized groups, but such groups are tangential to the structuring of community life or to the process of community government.

Thus women are "present" in the community studies, but they do not control the action.

Moreover, Delamont (1980), in her development of a sociology of women, included a critique of the portrayal of women in British community studies in which she both borrowed from and expanded upon the critiques of Frankenberg (1976) and Lofland (1975). In referring to Lofland, Delamont argued that the "thereness" of women exists to an equal extent in British community studies.

In a more recent review of American community studies
from 1977-1981, Stoneall (1983) asserted that few community researchers responded to Lofland's (1975) critique. Her examination of twenty-nine articles related to community uncovered only two that made use of gender variables. Moreover, a perusal of fifteen articles in 1980 on community change found only two that referred to women.

No article or book synthesizes the feminist critiques of women's portrayal and position in community studies. Although there has been a cross-fertilization of ideas across disciplines and geographic boundaries in other gender-related areas, and numerous literature reviews of women in sociology, political science, and environmental studies, no similar review exists for women in community studies.

Evidence of the "thereness" of women in community studies will be introduced in this chapter. Arguments will suggest that traditional community researchers have misjudged the foundation of community creation, maintenance, and viability because they have focused primarily on men's work/actions within the formal economic and political structures (public sphere). Moreover, researchers have further reinforced female invisibility by relying on traditional theoretical and analytical frameworks, thus overlooking the significance of gender, and by failing to
examine community from the standpoint of women. Evidence to support these arguments will be derived from feminist critiques of sociology, political science, community studies, and environmental studies, and more recent studies of women in community.

Theoretical Frameworks

Until the 1970s there was no theory that systematically conceptualized society as containing both sexes as equally significant partners or explained female participation as anything other than secondary participation (Aker 1978:137).\(^1\) Parsons (1955), taking "American society of the 1940s and 1950s and its conventional nuclear family as the basis of his theory" (Okin 1979:242), described women's roles as expressive. This in turn was used by theorists to justify the relegation of female societal contributions to the private sphere through their emotional work within the family and extended volunteer work as helpmates within the community (Oakley 1974). Men, on the other hand, were to play complementary roles as instrumental decisionmakers within the family and as political actors in the public sphere.\(^2\) The implications of the Parsonian structural functionalist expressive/private-instrumental/public split for community studies were deep and longlasting. This split
influenced both what was studied in many American and British community studies and how data gathered in the field were to be analyzed and evaluated (see Delamont 1980, Oakley 1974).

In a related way, the Marxist perspective, with its attention to production over and above reproductive activities, has influenced the content and critical structure of some British community studies (Frankenberg 1966, 1976). Women, who have traditionally been primarily defined through their reproduction of the family and its attendant housekeeping activities, are either invisible or secondary to the males involved in economic production (see Dennis et al., 1969). An exception to this was the work of Frederick Engels ([1884]1972). Engels provided an evolutionary framework to explain how private property originated and gained strength at the expense of women's societal position (Sacks 1975). Within his stage theory, it is in the third stage—"civilization"—that industry is introduced and the production of commodities for exchange values takes on increasing importance. This parallels the increased emphasis on monogamy and the importance of tracing inheritance rights. According to Engels ([1884]1972:125), the monogamous family "...is based on the supremacy of the man, the express purpose being to produce children of
undisputed paternity; such paternity is demanded because these children are later to come into their father's property as his natural heirs." Moreover, within this period of industrialization, household management lost its public character, and became a private service; "...the wife became the head servant, excluded from all participation in social production" (Engels [1884]1972:137). Yet, even Engels, with his careful attention to women's secondary roles within the family, did not criticize the sexual division of labor (Delmar 1976), nor did he analyze women's specific roles as workers in his analyses of the paid labor force (Epstein 1974).

Paradoxically, although the ultimate goals of each theoretical perspective are diametrically opposed, their immediate impact on the traditional community studies at home and abroad is surprisingly similar. Within the structural functionalist framework, the patterned maintenance of social systems is of ultimate importance. And while Parsons was aware of the structural ambivalence this constricted expressive role created for women, this merited no substantive response from either Parsons, the structural functionalists (for exception see Coser and Rukoff 1971), nor the community sociologists until quite recently.³
Marxists, whose goal is a radical restructuring of society through class struggle, would ultimately like to see women move into production on an equal footing with men. Marxists treat reproductive activities (i.e., housecleaning, cooking, childcare) as an arm of production—services which ideally will be communalized by women and bought and sold. Yet, in the short run, since the class struggle emanates from economic activities rather than reproductive ones, it is on the former that we find the focus and attention of Marxists (see Glazer 1984) and Marxian British community studies.

Thus the value to the community of women's activities within reproduction—either in the family or in community volunteer work—has been either overlooked or, when noted, undervalued.

The Limitations of the Male Lens/
Focus on the Public Sphere

Empirical accounts of men, such as Street Corner Society, generally don't exist for women (Lofland 1975, for an exception see Stack 1974). Lofland (1975:155) argued that sociology has been limited by "the particular interests, perspectives, and experiences" of males (see also Oakley 1974). According to Acker (1978:135), as the field of sociology developed historically "the patterns of [male]
dominance in the economic and political arenas also held in
the world of ideas. In looking at the society, these
sociologists inevitably looked through male eyes."

Within the community studies of the 1930s through the
1960s women were included but were subject to a particular
socio-historical lens. The rise of capitalist industrial
production in the 19th century separated the home from paid
work and the world of public affairs. "Confined to the
home, which had a diminishing part to play in the production
of income and wealth, and completely excluded from positions
of power, women were easily defined as irrelevant to the
important questions about society" (Acker 1978:135). In
sociology the questions raised and the concepts used
reflected the reality of the so called "public domain," a
male reality. Thus sociology "developed as a male
enterprise, defined by males, and overwhelmingly concerned
with questions about the aspects of society that were almost
entirely populated by males" (Acker 1978:135).

Dominated by the "use of certain conventional field-
defining models" and "restrictive notions of the field of
social action" (Millman and Kanter 1975:ix), sociologists
have frequently selected settings where women are hidden.
Millman and Kanter (1975:x) noted:

Sociology has focused on public, official, visible,
and/or dramatic role players and definitions of the
situation; yet, unofficial, supportive, less dramatic, private, invisible spheres of social life and organization may be equally important.

And, in fact, these are the locations where women participate most frequently. As stated by Daniels (1975:346), women manage the "pressing and grubby details of life...the real world of cleaning up and caring for others." Those experiences that make women different from men, or provide them with unique or unusual approaches to problems are excluded from attention.

Furthermore, Lofland (1975), in analyzing the limitations of the community model as it has traditionally been applied in sociology, noted that community has primarily meant working class and/or ethnic areas or neighborhoods (e.g., Gans 1962, Suttles 1968, Whyte 1955). These are settings where women are most likely to be found in traditional and highly segregated roles (see Komarovsky 1967, Rubin 1976).

Also implicit in the community model has been attention to "extrafamilial, transhousehold, interinstitutional networks" within a bounded space; and within these networks, until quite recently, the "thereness" of women has been an empirical reality (Lofland 1975:153). Moreover, perceived by researchers as "classic servant duties," women's work has been viewed as unimportant, "unproblematic, familiar...and
generally uninteresting" (Lofland 1975:153). As a result, within bounded space analyses, traditionally unattended to are the "space-specific" relations of women as they move through their daily routines. Although researchers have studied men in bars (see Cavan 1963, 1966) and taverns (LeMasters 1973), they have ignored women in beauty parlors and women and their children in parks or tot-lots (Lofland 1975:154-155).

Addressing Lofland's concerns, Genovese (1980) studied a women-organized and women-centered self-help network in a townhouse condominium complex. This informal network of eleven to fifteen women and their children was located in a small town twelve miles outside of a large city in New York. The unofficial headquarters of the network—the common meeting place for mothers and their children—was in the home of a woman who lived next door to the playground. At this home women could both socialize and watch their children. Genovese studied both the community-building and self-esteem building activities of this network. The network provided services for active participants and other townhouse residents (i.e., child care, transportation for errands, shopping); pooled resources (i.e., household equipment, bulk buying of food or gardening products); and supported cottage industries (i.e., hairdresser, clothes
alterations, makeup sales). In addition to the network's instrumental contributions, "informal social gatherings provided a welcome break from the daily domestic routines, giving the women a chance to discuss their lives and concerns.... [The network] performed a major function in providing women with social and psychological support" (Genovese 1980:254).

Noteworthy is the fact that the work of this self-help network studied by Genovese (1980) takes place in the interstices between the public/private spheres. Tiano (1984) and others (see Daniels 1987, Glazer 1984, Saraceno 1984, Siltanen and Stanworth 1984) have argued that the traditional dichotomy between the public/private "...is an ineffective lens for conceptualizing such activities which do not fall smoothly into either category" (Tiano 1984:21). Interestingly, Tiano's (1984) critiques of the public/private dichotomy, while based on research on Third World women, has direct applicability for women in the First World. Tiano's (1984:23) concern that the "subsistence agriculture, domestic labor, and informal activities" of women in non-industrialized sectors are devalued can be translated to concerns that the unpaid home and volunteer work of women in industrialized sectors is also devalued. Therefore, when community researchers conceptualize reality
in terms of the public-private dichotomy, and selectively focus on the "public," they "contribute to the tendency to ignore much of women's work" (Tiano 1984:21). Moreover, they continue to undervalue the vital contribution of this work to "making community" (Daniels 1987:412).

The Community as a "Single Society"

Sociologists have assumed a "single society" for men and women from which generalizations can be made about all participants (Frankenberg, 1976, Lofland, 1975). In their pathbreaking critique of women's treatment in the social sciences, Millman and Kanter (1975:xiv) noted that "sex is not taken into account as a factor in behavior, yet sex may be among the most important explanatory variables."

In his community study, Williams (1956) was astute in his social class analysis of a church meeting but overlooked the significance of sex in this same setting. Williams provided detailed evidence of class divisions in church volunteer work between the gentry, who made recommendations and decorated the pulpit with flowers, and the working class, who found volunteers for janitorial work and cleaned the church. But he failed to note that all of this volunteer work was performed solely by women. Thus the work was "divided by class but united by gender" (Frankenberg

Another important critique of the single society analysis of sociology is that women have often been "measured in masculine terms" and have been defined in terms of their relationship to men (Westkott 1979:423). In her feminist review of the stratification literature, Acker (1973) challenged the explicit and/or implicit assumptions inherent in stratification studies that determine the social position of women. These assumptions include the fact that the family is the unit of analysis, and the "social position of the family is determined by the status of the male head of household" (Acker 1973:937). Thus females, unless they are not attached to a man, derive their status from males. This hides the fact that women, due to gender inequities, are at a disadvantage in hierarchies of wealth, power, and prestige; yet it also implies that women do not have their own status resources. Acker (1973:176) queried,

In a society in which women, as well as men, have resources of education, occupation, and income, it is obviously not true that women have no basis for determining their own status. If women do have such resources, why do we assume that they are inoperative if the woman is married?

Interestingly, in his earlier review of British community studies, Frankenberg (1966:71) had chided a community
researcher (Williams, 1956) for his "refusal to accept the convention that a women's social class is that of her father or husband."

In Warner's ([1941] 1963) study of New England's Yankee City, the economic structure is seen as the fundamental organizing structure in the community. The researchers analytically devised a class system built primarily on the power, wealth, and prestige of the male breadwinner. As Warner (1963:45) explained:

Our study of family membership demonstrated that the vast majority of families had but one class represented in their membership. Although there were very minor rank differences in family membership, the members of a family ordinarily participated as a unit in their place in the social structure.

In Yankee City women carry, reproduce, and pass on the family status, but they do not create it. In fact, elite women, women of "good breeding" (Warner [1941] 1963:37), are given in marriage to men like themselves. These women cannot marry beneath their status or they lose their higher class position. The cause and effect of this restriction is that women of the upper class are more numerous than men since "the necessity to marry within the class has left many females single" (Warner 1963:56).

Previous critiques of Yankee City have raised questions about the assumptions, methods, and conclusions of Warner's class analysis (see Bell and Newby 1974, Kornhauser 1957),
yet no one has specifically addressed how his framework of analysis leaves women's secondary position underexamined or unexplained.

Hidden in the stratification analysis as it is conceptualized in *Yankee City* are the gender differences in resources, income, and prestige that can exist within a family that has been assigned the same class membership (e.g., working class) even when both husband and wife are working outside the home. Female dependence is often further exacerbated when the wife does not work outside of the home (Rubin 1976). Yet, as Acker (1973:127) so well explained:

The relations within the couple, and particularly the relations of economic dependence, are always treated as secondary [in stratification studies] since the shared social status—seen as more general and therefore carrying more weight in determining an individual's situation—is supposed to override internal disparities. Unfortunately, this "parity of status" is based necessarily and exclusively on the woman's dependence.

Therefore, when sociologists assume a single society exists for men and women, there is the danger that women's contributions and/or secondary status are overlooked or ignored.
Women As Secondary Citizens and/or Objects

Researchers in sociology frequently have failed to discern the "significance of the distribution of the sexes in various locations" (Millman and Kanter 1975:iv), nor have they seen male dominance as a problem that needs to be explained. In Yankee City (Warner [1941], 1963), 29% of the paid workers are women. The researchers reveal the sex segregated nature of the employment in the community, but a bit of detective work is needed to uncover the vertically segregated nature of this work (see Richardson 1981). Proportionally more women than men are employed in the shoe factory, the "largest and the most important industry in Yankee City" (Warner 1963:88), where the authors report the greatest levels of mechanization. Men, on the other hand, are disproportionately located in the silverware industry where there are highly trained workers, and in craft positions in other local industries (e.g., auto body; building trades). Thus we can surmise, although this is neither noted nor analyzed by the authors, that women occupy the least skilled and lowest paid positions in Yankee City (see Haddad 1987).

Frankenberg's reexamination of his own Village on the Border (1957) is also enlightening as an example of a researcher ignoring the evidence of female inequality in his
own findings. This was a study of a Welsh village in which married women dominated since for the most part men were not there. Paid work for married men existed only across the England border. In restudying his findings Frankenberg (1976:36) noted that he had not "commented on the lack of women as officials of village societies despite their informal leadership" nor had he provided an adequate analysis of "the defeat of the women's parish council candidate." According to Frankenberg (1976:36) this oversight is due to the fact that he failed to realize that any female display of independence was only "being asserted through their simultaneous dependence." Thus, women's inability to achieve formal power in the political sphere must be traced to their economic dependence on their husbands in the domestic sphere.

In Coal is Our Life (Dennis et al. 1956), a study of a Yorkshire mining village, women are oppressed by the conditions of their spouses' work and dependence on wages. They are oppressed by their objectification by their husbands. And ultimately the women are oppressed by the male researchers who identify with the perspective of their male subjects. Frankenberg (1976:38) described how sociologists "accept their own miners' eye view" and describe and see women only as objects and enemies--"a
passive object for the support of whom he [the miner] is driven to unpleasant underground work." From this restricted perspective, Dennis et al. ignore the evidence of their own data, failing to appreciate the activities of the women's section of the Labour Party which, not insignificantly, had resulted in electing two females as district councillors. A distinct counterpoint to *Coal is Our Life* is the documentary film, *Salt of the Earth*, produced in 1956. This film focused on the work of women during a miner's strike to challenge both the patriarchal relationships in the home and the capitalist work relations in production. Rather than trivializing women's activities, they were instead seen as the source of the strike's success (Rosenfelt 1978).

In reviewing *Coal is Our Life*, Frankenberg (1966:138) called for a comparative study in the coalfields of Britain that would look specifically at the "linked question of the role of women and of clubs and welfare institutes." In 1976, Frankenberg underlined his suggestion made a decade earlier, and noted that:

...such a study...might well reveal that bingo is not the unimportant mindlessness that even women intellectuals dismiss it as being. It may be the thin edge of a thick wedge—asserting not only a right to share the gambling interests of the men, but also the right to a night out of the house, and to spend money as one pleases (38).
In support of Frankenberg's suggestion, Stoneall (1983) in her study of the dairy farming village of Zenda, located on the Illinois-Wisconsin border, discovered that female activities and organizations make essential contributions to the community. Community building through club work includes organizing and sustaining local community rituals, supporting local arts and crafts, and providing student scholarships and canvassing for local charity drives. Also, Colfer and Colfer (1978), in researching Bushler Bay, a rural logging village in the State of Washington, found the activities of both formal and informal organizations accomplished a great deal in the community. Thirteen of the eighteen formal organizations were all-female or female dominated, and women-initiated activities ranged from the on-going support of a Preschool Co-op to a "Mother's March" organized to support the passage of a school tax levy.

Community From the Standpoint of Women

Since the 1970s some sociologists have asked whether it might be possible that "men and women may actually inhabit different social worlds" (Millman and Kanter 1975:xiii, see also Bernard 1973). In fact, the major premise of Bernard's book, The Female World (1981:14), is that "...there does exist a female world separate and distinct
from the male world, intellectually neglected, and worthy of study in its own right."

Frankenberg (1976:31), in reviewing Rees's (1950) research on the central Wales parish of Llanfihangel-yn-Ngwynfa, queried "whether the whole basis of the analysis would not change if the community were seen from the point of view of women instead of men." As an example, Frankenberg noted Rees' argument that a network of scattered farmsteads, rather than the village, was the center of social life, and instead pointed to evidence that women's social world may be more inclusive than the farmstead. Married women (two-thirds of females in the study) had multiple reasons for participation in village life; they still visit kin there, child rearing involves shopping and taking their children to school in the village, and female economic independence necessitates their contribution to the farm economy through eggs and dairy products which they sell in the central market. Thus the village or hamlet may well have more significance for wives than for their husbands.

A more recent community study by Stoneall (1981) supports Frankenberg's hypothesis in a different setting and time. Her research revealed that when fifty residents of a small, midwestern unincorporated rural village, Farmland, were asked to draw maps of their community, the maps
revealed a gender variation in the perception of community. Stoneall (1981:125) found that "women seem to have certain people in mind whom they want to include in the community." And, in fact, forty-four percent of women mentioned specific families on their maps, while only one man did. These differences were explained by referring to the kinds of interests and activities women and men engage in the community. Women drew schools (no men did). Women went to others' homes for such things as club meetings, which means they viewed the community in terms of people. In contrast, men were more involved in the township government, volunteer firefighters, and police work, and therefore followed political township boundaries more than women, and tended to draw grid maps. Based on her findings, Stoneall concluded that since women and men participate in the community differently, this segregation of activities may result in gender differences in both experience and in the perception and/or mapping of their community.

Research on the structure of network relationships in a rural American community by Gillespie et al. (1985) support Stoneall's finding of the gender segregation of activities. The researchers reported that the community "sort[ed] itself out into male and female sectors, each with relatively independent sets of network contacts" (Gillespie et al.
They found that 88% of the people males named as regular contacts were male, while 87% of female contacts were other females.

The Significance of the Researcher's Gender

The significance of gender differences in experience is also relevant in data-gathering. Lofland proposed that the sex of the researcher matters, and the ensuing problem of access is one of the major explanatory variables for the "thereness" of women. According to Lofland (1975:159) "Male researchers will be limited in their access to women's places and women's minds [and vice versa]." Bell and Newby (1971:67), in their overview of American, European, and British community studies, advised,

The collection of data by women on some male activities is well-nigh impossible, and certainly the opposite is true. The oft-thanked wife who appears in the last line of the acknowledgements of a monograph has, in fact, in many community studies been responsible for more than the index. The male researcher will have been dependent upon her for much of his data. They argued for the necessity for community research teams to have "at least one female member" to overcome the "sex division" (Bell and Newby 1971:67). Wax (1980:509) expanded on this theme, arguing that in fieldwork basic aspects of personal identity such as age, gender, or ethnicity become "magnified in the process of developing interactions with
strangers."

Gans is an experienced community researcher who has been sensitive to the problem of male-female access. In reflecting on his participant-observation role in his research for The Levittowners, he related:

The participant-observer must talk to a fairly representative cross section of the population.... And having enough interest in small talk about sports, sex, automobiles, weather and other staples of male conversation, I had no difficulty in participating in the regular evening and Saturday morning bull sessions on the front lawn. Relaxed conversation with women was more difficult, except in a group of couples, and observing women's meetings was out of the question. Perhaps they would have let men in, but we would all have been uncomfortable. However, women enjoyed being interviewed--they like having their housework interrupted--and I could always go to see anyone I wished to find out what happened at their meetings (Gans 1967:xxiv-xxv).

Problems of access become most extreme in sex-segregated settings. In undertaking a study of education in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Wax (1980:510) and her spouse assumed "that each of us would be able to talk to and interview Indian parents of both sexes about their children, though we took it for granted that Murray would concentrate on the men and I on the women." However, on entering the field they discovered:

Sioux men...tended to talk, work, and "go around with" men. Sioux women tended to talk, work, and "go around with" women. Married couples did not publicly socialize with each other.... This meant that Murray and I were not able to use one of the most easy and natural ways of getting acquainted--visiting and
talking with married couples like ourselves (Wax 1980:510).

This access problem became even more pronounced when the Waxes' learned that matters involving children or childrearing, either at home or at school, were culturally defined as women's business. Thus mothers and grandmothers were the primary sources of information for their research purposes.

The problems of sex-segregated settings are not restricted to Indian reservations. Researchers also confront this issue in traditional ethnic and/or working-class communities, as Gans (1962:159-160) again explained, reflecting on his study, The Urban Villagers:

...West Enders socialize primarily with people of their own age and sex and are much less adept than middle-class people at heterosexual relationships. In many working class cultures, the man is away from the house even after work, taking his leisure in the corner taverns that function as men's clubs. But since the Italian culture is not a drinking one, this is less frequent among West Enders. Consequently, much of their segregation of leisure takes place within the home; the women sit together in one room, the men in another. Even when everyone gathers around the kitchen table, the men group together at one end, the women at the other, and few words are exchanged between them.

The importance of female researchers who can obtain access to all-female gatherings, whether these are formal (e.g., women's organizational meetings) or informal gatherings (e.g., at the ends of a kitchen table), is clearly evident in Wax's (1980:511) reflections on the
research at Pine Ridge:

All of the Indian women were willing to answer my questions [in English or Dakota] and, once the short questionnaire was finished, we ladies would visit and gossip. It was from these gossip sessions that I began to understand "what was really going on" in the local community.

As Gans (1962) so honestly noted, male access to these informal women's "gossip sessions" would be severely restricted. Thus, without a female research partner the expanded understanding of "what was really going on" in the communities he studied would also be restricted.

Summary

Women's contributions to the creation, maintenance, and viability of community have traditionally been overlooked or devalued. Theories that have shaped community studies, both structural functionalist and Marxian, have resulted in the devaluation of women's work. Structural functionalists, relatively undisturbed by women's unequal position in society, designate women's primary roles (in the home and the community) as expressive, thereby downplaying female participation in paid employment and ignoring the instrumental characteristics of women's work--both paid and unpaid. Marxists, with their focus on production (the public sphere) as the source of revolutionary activity and liberation, overlook the essential contribution of women's
work in reproduction (the private sphere). Thus in both a
descriptive and interpretive sense, community studies have
been shaped by the emphasis and valuing of the
instrumental/public over the expressive/private.

Recently, feminist social scientists have argued, and
community researchers have discovered, that the "work" women
do in neighborhoods and communities remains largely
invisible, for it often takes place in the interstices
between the public and the private spheres. Daniels
(1975:354-355) challenged researchers to study the "lives of
ordinary housewives, clubwomen, or church women...in order
to learn more about the unexamined and unrecorded patterns
of domestic and feminine work." Haney (1982:132) noted our
relative ignorance about the "everyday worlds of rural
women," and called for research that would document "the
extent to which rural communities rely on the volunteer
efforts of women for the delivery of many community
services."

In her study of women in three rural Iowan small towns,
Fink (1986) documented the institution-building
contributions of women in local churches and female
organizations. Stoneall (1983:21), in her community study
of Zenda, found that women, in addition to their political
and employment roles, make important contribu- tions and
"maintain a distinctive local culture by perpetuating the symbols and rituals of the community" through their work in women's organizations. Stoneall (1983:25) challenged community researchers to bring women into community studies.

Bringing women into community studies means moving formerly invisible activities to the center stage, resulting in a "broader, more inclusive conceptualization of community" (Stoneall 1983:17). Furthermore, a focus on women's community-building activities will increase our understanding of both social reproduction—"...the process by which a community is built up and destroyed; by which unions or schisms take place; by which loyalty is created, legitimacy accepted, and love fostered" (Boulding 1973:5)—and the roots of social change.
1. Socialist Feminism was the first theoretical framework which recognized the work of women in reproduction (both bearing and rearing children) and treated it as significant as the work of men in production (see Hartman 1981; Rowbotham 1974). Socialist Feminists also realized that women would not be equal in the "public sphere" (paid work and political life) until men participated on an equal footing with women in the home and in extended reproductive work such as in daycare and elementary teaching.

2. In addition to what he called the "pseudo-occupation" of housewife (Parsons 1942:609), Parsons recognized that some women would work outside of the home. Yet, he pointed to the fact that in the paid workforce women hold predominantly expressive roles, "supportive to masculine roles...analogous to the wife-mother role in the family" (Parsons 1955:15). For Parsons, the evidence "that even in the world of work women play nurturing roles supposedly reinforces the conviction that this is their proper role within the home" (Okin 1979:244). He observed, "Even if, as seems possible, it should come to pass that the average woman had some kind of a job, it seems most unlikely that this relative balance would be reversed, or their qualitative differentiation in these respects completely erased" (1955:15).

3. Parsons (1942:605) acknowledged that inequities due to the sex-role structure of the nuclear family resulted in the "asymmetrical relation of the sexes to the occupational structure," with attendant problems for both men and women. Moreover, he admitted that the restrictions would be most acutely felt by females. As Parsons (1942:613) wrote, "It is quite clear that in the adult feminine role there is quite sufficient strain and insecurity so that widespread manifestations are to be expected in the form of neurotic behavior."

Yet, in weighing the needs of women for an expanded social role, over and against societal needs for the vital functions which the traditional family performs, Parsons viewed the societal function of the mothering role within the family as paramount to either female mental health or occupational equality.
4. Two Hollywood films, in the 1980s, have done an excellent job of using space-specific relationships in a female-dominated location to capture discrete issues and concerns of "the female world." Both "Steel Magnolias" and "Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean" (originally developed as plays) utilized the beauty parlor to dramatize the conflictual and supportive nature of female relationships. Perhaps more sociological, "Metropolitan Avenue" (1985), a documentary film set in a Brooklyn neighborhood, tells the story of how grassroots women broke down ethnic/race/class barriers through interactions and relationships forged across space. Motivated by their concerns as mothers and community members, they addressed such issues as the proposed loss of a local police station, and the demolition of neighborhood housing for urban renewal. With her attention to detail the filmmaker, Christine Noschese, directs the viewer's attention to the organizing that takes place through ordinary street interactions and coffee klatches.

5. In the nineteenth century the production process was transformed through mechanization; this allowed the "breaking down of complex tasks (craftsmen's skills) into fragmented, standardized production processes requiring little or no skill" (Haddad 1987:39). Thus household goods that women had formerly produced at home could now be mass produced in factories (see Ehrenreich and English 1979; Kessler-Harris 1982), and women were recruited for these new unskilled factory positions. As early as 1840, women outnumbered men in shoe factories and in textile mills (Kessler-Harris 1982 as reported in Haddad 1987). Historians Scott (1982) and Kessler-Harris (1982) have challenged the belief that the Industrial Revolution liberated women by providing them the opportunity to elevate their socioeconomic status. These feminist historians note that the societal expectations about the traditional roles of women as wives and mothers were not challenged by their paid factory employment. The fact that women's factory work was viewed as secondary was reflected in the gender bias in wage rates, job classifications, training, and promotion (Scott
Throughout the eighteenth century shoemaking was a male-controlled skilled domestic trade. Women (wives and daughters of craftsmen) worked as "binders" in cottage industries in their homes. "The development of the factory system in this industry, which began before mechanization and was spurred by the introduction of the McKay and Singer stitching machines, took women's employment out of the home but did little to alter gender-based divisions of labor...[although] data...reveal that the number of women aged sixteen years old and older working in this industry increased by 97 percent between 1880 and 1905, years characterized by increased mechanization and standardization of the industry (Abbott [1910] 1969 as reported in Haddad 1987:37 38). Thus, although the number of women in this industry increased, their secondary position within the shoe industry was maintained.

6. Lofland (1975), while noting that male researchers have traditionally identified with their male subjects and their (male) interpretation of reality rather than the females in community settings, did not see this as inevitable. She wrote, "All human beings have the potential for taking the role of all other humans. But as long as socially defined categories create structurally separated 'persons,' this potential will remain only that" (Lofland 1975:159).
CHAPTER II
STUDYING THE WOMEN OF PARKVILLE

From 1980 to 1982, a qualitative study was conducted in a small town in the upper midwest. Over a two year period 64 people were interviewed; additional fieldwork and secondary research also were completed. This investigation included women who served on local volunteer boards, who were active in business clubs, who were involved in local political organizations, who worked in local service organizations, who were members and/or officers of local women's clubs, who belonged to church groups, or who participated in cultural activities in the town. The major question organizing this research was how the concepts of power, politics, and feminism—as traditionally defined—would be expanded when women's community building work is uncovered and explored.

This chapter will include a brief introduction to Parkville. An explanation of the fieldwork techniques employed in this study, and some demographic data about the respondents and the larger Parkville community will be noted as well.
Gaining Access to Parkville

The research site was given the pseudonym "Parkville," partly in recognition of the large city parks with which the town is identified, and largely in honor of Robert E. Park, whose conception of dynamic scholarship in the study of community provided the intellectual heritage for this research (Richards 1980).

I originally gained access to the field through Dr. Robert Richards, who in 1979 had begun a community study in Parkville, as he named the town. He was interested in testing the prevailing sociological view of rural communities as dominated by the leadership of businessmen who surrendered to the forces of mass society (see Vidich and Bensman 1958). This eclipse of the community (Stein 1960) was conceptualized as resulting from an increase in vertical ties between the local community and the larger community. Richards argued that this was an overgeneralized proposition (see Bernard 1973b; Richards 1978); he hypothesized that a current community field study would reveal the extent of local resources for community decision-making. In addition, Richards, as part of his larger community study, was interested in examining the extent of female participation in local decision-making. Aware of rural women's increasing role in paid employment, Richards
was curious whether new employment roles translated into formal roles in the local community power structure (Richards 1981). Richards was sensitive to the fact that as a male researcher, he was not obtaining the same quality of responses from the females as he did from the male interviewees (see Wax 1980). Thus, I was invited to join the project in the fall of 1980 as Richards' research assistant. It was understood from the beginning of my involvement in the project that independent research questions could be pursued as they developed in the field.

Parkville

Local histories of Parkville tell the story of the trials and adventures of individual families who founded this rural community in the decade before the Civil War. Ultimately, these accounts underline the fact that it was "the city fathers" who built a mill, a grain elevator, several churches, and founded the Civic Club resulting in a string of prosperous businesses that continue to line Parkville's main street.

In 1982, Parkville, still formally led by its city fathers, was a viable town in the 1,000-10,000 population category. Although not unscathed by the recession of the early 1980s, the preceding years of community-building
efforts allowed Parkville to weather this economic downturn and the ensuing farm crisis more successfully than many other rural midwestern communities of comparable size. Parkville experienced a growth rate of approximately 25% in the first forty years of this century. In the last forty years its population nearly doubled. Between 1970 and 1980, Parkville added more than 30% to its population and more than 40% to its housing units (Richards, 1982).

Parkville's economy has traditionally been based upon its role as a rural marketing center, and it continues to serve as a farm service center with a grain elevator, a feed store, farm implement dealership, and several service stations. The town has an elementary school, and in the 1950s local residents won a significant battle to retain their now consolidated middle school and high school. Parkville residents support numerous churches, and community members speak proudly of their local hospital, church-supported retirement home, and senior citizen center.

According to census data, in 1979 48% of all women in Parkville over 16 years of age were employed (Goudy and Burke 1981). The primary employers in Parkville were the retirement home with 99.5% female personnel and several small manufacturing plants with a 24% female employment rate. In addition, in 1982, Parkville women owned about
one-third of all Parkville's main street businesses, and as partners with their husbands were involved in almost half of the other firms in the town.

Parkville is a Scandinavian, predominantly Lutheran, politically conservative rural community. Apart from a small enclave of Asian refugees, there are few people of color in Parkville. Although the community is overwhelmingly Republican, voting for local officials (e.g., school board, town council, mayor) is nonpartisan, and at times Democrats have been elected to these positions.

The local community power structure continues to be overwhelmingly male (Richards 1982). Male business executives and main street business owners dominate community decision-making in Parkville; yet, women have made some inroads into public life. In 1981 the first woman was elected to the board of directors of the Civic Club, the largest civic association in Parkville. And as business owners and partners, women are actively involved in the local Chamber of Commerce. One of Parkville's social service clubs became open to women in the late 1970s, despite threats of disaffiliation by its national organization. And significantly, a woman has just concluded a six year term as the first female elected to the prestigious Parkville Hospital Board. Yet, in comparison
with their success in civic appointments, women have not fared as well in citywide elected office. In 1982, no woman had ever been elected to the town council, and only three women had served on the school board (none since the 1950s). Women did run for local office. During the two-and-a-half year period of this study, several women ran for city council and for school board; one of the female school board candidates made a particularly good showing.

Research Design

In this study, the fieldwork techniques of direct observation and structured and open-ended interviews were utilized; the theoretical frameworks within which these techniques were used changed during the course of the project. From the fall of 1980 to the summer of 1982, I commuted to Parkville. Throughout the data gathering process I was known as a researcher/graduate student and was accepted as such.

Development of a Research Framework

Originally, the research question concerned whether women's increased paid work roles in Parkville had translated into increased public and political decision-making roles in the town. It became clear through initial
observations and interviews that, except for two notable exceptions, women were not part of the traditional community power structure. Moreover, an initial assessment about the position of Parkville women in public life was much too simplistic; the theoretical framework could neither capture nor explain the perspectives and the behaviors of the respondents (Taylor and Bogdan 1984).

Local female activists offered multiple explanations for women's exclusion from locally elected positions. These responses were often contradictory and it was only through intensive probing within interviews, observations of female participation at community events and organizational meetings, and at times reinterviewing, that some theoretical explanations could be developed for what at first appeared to be conflicting and/or ambiguous information. For example, women qualified for local office sometimes stated that they did not run for such positions because of their paid work and home and family commitments. However, in further probing they revealed that they were "not interested" in city council politics which they viewed as "boring" or "male-oriented." It became apparent that they were involved in the community in numerous other less visible ways. Moreover, a significant number did not believe that women had an equal chance of being elected to
Women were excluded from the official community power structure, but that did not mean that they were powerless. On the contrary, it became clear through on-going fieldwork that the women of Parkville had significant organizational, institutional, and cultural responsibilities in the community, and in fact exerted a type of quiet (McLeod 1984) or informal power (Rogers 1975).

It was hypothesized that these female leaders, active in community-building activities, constituted a type of invisible power structure (see Stall 1981). But this conceptualization neither captured the relational intricacies or political ramifications of women's community work, nor did it reveal their own complicated analyses of female equality and the position of women in Parkville's public life. For example, women active in traditional and conservative institutions, such as the church, overwhelmingly supported the principle of female equality; through their volunteer commitments they would at times quietly confront institutional power brokers, chipping away at the male-dominated church hierarchy, rituals, and traditions. Eventually a theoretical method that would capture the complicated nature of these women's contributions and their lived experiences within community
was adopted, this was grounded theory. This approach, advanced by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is an open-ended and inductive research process. In the application of this approach, insights, concepts, and understandings arise from the data and are "systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of research" (Glaser and Strauss 1967:6). Grounded theory is derived through theoretical sampling, a data collection process that is controlled by the emerging theory, and, in fact, generates theory. Through this process of data collection, the researcher simultaneously "collects, codes, and analyzes...data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop...theory as it emerges" (Glaser and Strauss 1967:45). Thus, rather than a preconceived theoretical framework, initial decisions for theoretical data collection are based on a general problem area—for instance, an examination of the ways that women contribute to community and participate in public life in Parkville. The importance of this qualitative interpretive method is that data can be obtained on ambiguous or contradictory areas of social life that cannot be easily tapped by quantitative data collecting techniques (Glaser and Strauss 1967:17).
Respondent Selection Process

Initially, respondents were selected based on their visibility as "public actors." Thus, women who were most obviously active in government or local politics, in business, and in power brokering in Parkville were interviewed first. These women were identified through an informal application of the reputational technique traditionally utilized to identify members of the community power structure. As the lens shifted, assumptions about the meaning of particular concepts, such as public, political, and power actors, also shifted. Thus, a better understanding of the value of the work women do in the community was achieved. Utilizing theoretical sampling, additional interviewees were selected "according to the potential for developing new insights or expanding and refining those already gained" (Taylor and Bogdan 1984:18). The research expanded to include women who would certainly be ignored by traditional community power studies and would most likely be missed even by the more inclusive community studies--women who were active in areas located in the interstices between the traditional public and private spheres such as in church and women's volunteer organizations. This shift occurred after about one year in the field. The focus on main street and traditional public
role players shifted to such people as volunteers at the Senior Citizen Center and the retirement home, quilters, women active in church work, and a founder of the local library. Also, as much as possible, interviews were sought with a diversity of respondents--women who varied in age, marital status, length of time in Parkville, participation in paid employment, and levels of activism in local volunteer service.

Fieldwork Techniques

The research project involved, first, extended interviews with fifty-nine women (fifty-five Parkville women) and five Parkville men. Observations at selected organizational meetings and social gatherings followed; and documents were studied.

Interviewing

The primary research instrument, an interview schedule, served as a guide for open-ended interviews. The purpose was to develop questions that would result in a rich understanding of selected women's activities in their communities, their personal biographies which led them to become publicly active, and finally their attitudes about female equality and the women's movement. This interview
schedule (see Appendix) had four parts: personal history, community service, women's equality attitudinal scale, and status of women in Parkville.

Interviews ranged from one to three hours, averaging one hour and a half. In all but nine cases, the interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. In all but two cases, the interviewees seemed to accept the tape recorder as a necessary part of the documentation process. And except for two occasions, the respondents were interviewed alone. Although a standard interview outline was utilized, in most interviews these questions served to open extended accounts which the interviewees themselves shaped. Also, particular questions were formulated in order to tailor each interview to the role and knowledge of each respondent.

After introductions were completed and the study was explained, respondents were assured that their responses would be confidential. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of the respondents; and when necessary, specific biographical details have been obscured or altered in order to more completely ensure their anonymity. Moreover, the topics but not the substance of the issues and events described in this research have been altered to protect the confidentiality of the community. Except for topic references and certain biographical information, statements
from interviews are reported verbatim.

My status as a graduate student, age, sex, marital status, and even my urban roots proved to be advantageous in establishing trust and rapport in the interview process. As a graduate student, rather than a professor, I was less intimidating (Taylor and Bogdan 1984). Many of the respondents, if not college graduates themselves, had taken courses, and/or had spouses, children, or nieces and nephews who had some college affiliation. According to local norms I was viewed as "young," and therefore less threatening, and my student and childfree status underlined my youth, especially in the eyes of respondents over fifty years of age. My ascribed female status was essential to the data gathering process, and the fact that I was married also proved to be advantageous. My gender facilitated entry to all-female gatherings, organizations and events. My marital status eased the way for honest discussions about work-home related struggles, while the fact I was female permitted women to speak honestly about questions of gender inequities without the expectation of male misunderstanding or defensiveness (Wax 1980). As a former urban dweller, I sensed that women enjoyed educating me about the advantages of small town life, while my "more urbane" background allowed a few women to voice their complaints to an
empathetic ear about the limits of small town life.

I was graciously accepted into respondents' homes, where the majority of the interviews were conducted. In addition, I received personal invitations to attend local meetings, public events, and at times more intimate social events. My presence was accepted and at times clearly welcomed. The majority of women appeared pleased to be interviewed, and in fact a few informed me that "it was high time that someone focused on the women in Parkville." Apart from one woman who refused to be interviewed due to her withdrawal from all public activities, the only resistance experienced was from women who, as an expression of their humility or devaluation of their own contributions, would insist that they had nothing of importance to convey. After assuring them that they had been recommended because of their community work, all agreed to be interviewed.

Observations

Over the course of the two years of data gathering as a passive observer, I attended various meetings and organizational functions. These included merchant, civic, and political groups such as meetings of the Chamber of Commerce and the Civic Club, a local political caucus, and a community meeting organized specifically to respond to the
firing of a local public official. Local women's organizational meetings were observed such as the Federated Women's Club, the adult women's sorority, Beta Sigma Phi, and the American Legion Auxiliary. I attended the church services of the local Lutheran churches and female church related groups, including a meeting of the American Lutheran Church Women and a quilting session. Also attended were the festivities in connection with the annual Fjord Festival in Parkville.

Document Study

Minutes, newsletters, and historical accounts of clubs and organizations were studied in order to get more background on town activities. Historical town scrapbooks were important in providing clues to changes in female status and roles. Parkville has a weekly newspaper which was useful in obtaining more information on the individuals and groups involved in the community. The paper proved important for my research purposes because articles identified community issues as well as the nature of the leadership and participation in a particular issue over time.
The Women of Parkville

Of the 59 women interviewed, 55 lived, volunteered, and in the majority of cases worked in Parkville. Of the four non-Parkville residents, three of the women worked in Parkville (a teacher, a senior home administrator, and a social service program director), and the fourth woman had a one-year funded appointment to live in Parkville and to work on a community project.

In addition, five Parkville men were interviewed: the police chief, the hospital administrator, a newspaper reporter, a Lutheran minister, and a retired main street businessman and founder of the Civic Club. These men were selected because of their insider information on specific institutions in which Parkville women were active. Throughout this study, unless otherwise stated, interviewees and/or respondents will refer to the 55 Parkville women interviewed.

Forty-seven of the respondents (85%) had resided in Parkville over seven years. In fact, 24 (44%) had made Parkville their home for 30 years or more. Only eight (15%) of the women interviewed could be considered "newcomers," with less than seven years in the town.
Rural Background of the Respondents

The women of Parkville are "rurban" women (Joyce and Leadley 1977:6). Although they resided in a small town, the majority (31) of the respondents had some farming involvement before residing in Parkville. In fact, 21 of these women had grown up on a farm. This agricultural heritage is contradictory for it may permit increased opportunities for gender role expansion; at the same time it adheres to an ideology of separate male/female spheres.

As a reflection of the potential for gender role expansion, Flora and Johnson (1978:168) noted that "The roles of rural women have always exhibited greater diversity in content than those of urban women" and "include some tasks heretofore defined in the urban context as men's work." Numerous Parkville women described their participation in activities which challenged traditional gender stereotypes.

A local business administrator recalled working on her family's 400 acre farm. The oldest of five children, she described this work as, "A little bit of everything.... I remember milking cows and gathering the eggs and helping bale and things like that." Another Parkville woman, now a professional, was raised on a farm as the oldest of three girls and remembered they "raised lots of chickens, pigs,
and cattle," had a "big garden," and as she explained:

I ran the tractor a lot. I worked my way through college in the summer by hiring out to run the tractor and the bailer and when they used the old binders for harvesting oats, walking beans, and at that time we also had to walk corn. It was before they had spray. We spent many weeks each summer doing that—doing our own hiring out around the neighborhood. That's how I put myself through college.... I think I did just about everything on the farm.

Nine of the female respondents had farmed as adults, the majority for only two to five years. Yet, Catherine, who was a farmer for years, described doing "everything" as a farmer:

We would get up in the morning and many times I would go out and help my husband milk the cows. We had ten. Then [we] would even help out in the fields. One day I dragged the ground all day so he'd get ready for plowing and things like that. We helped wherever we could. I raised chickens. That was our income for the groceries. Then we raised hogs and I helped take care of them. I was busy all the time. I did the children's sewing, and everything like that.

For the most part the respondents who did not have direct farm experience, if not born in Parkville, had moved to Parkville from other small, primarily midwestern, towns. Nearly all of the respondents were socialized within the rurban or rural value system.

Ages and Educational Background

The women interviewed ranged from 19 to 85 years of age. Ten of the respondents (18%) were under 34 years of
age, 35 of the respondents (64%) were 35 to 74, while 10 of them (18%) were 75 and older. In comparison, according to 1980 census data, nearly half of all Parkville women were 34 years or younger, with the vast majority of this category under 20 years of age (Goudy and Burke 1981). About one third of all Parkville women were in the 35 to 74 year range, and a fifth were 75 years or above. In Parkville, women's local leadership participation has traditionally increased with age due to both lack of small children and an increase in status through aging. This is reflected in the fact that a disproportionate number of respondents (64% versus one third in the larger Parkville population) selected through theoretical sampling for their community-building activities were in the 35 through 74 age range. Local activism dropped off as women reached their mid-70s and 80s, and a growing concern was expressed by older women that younger women were "too busy" to take on traditional volunteer roles.

The educational achievement of the respondents ranged from completing eighth grade to graduate degrees. Of the 50 respondents (of 55) whose educational attainment was known, only three (6%) had less than a high school education. Moreover, 34 (66%) had additional college work beyond their high school diploma, with a significant number, 19 (38%),
achieving a college degree or beyond. The respondents were much more highly educated than the general Parkville population. According to 1980 census data, of all Parkville residents 25 years and over a third had not completed high school; only a quarter had attended college; and just a tenth achieved a college degree or beyond (Goudy and Burke 1981).

A significant fact that emerged from interviews was that 21 (38%) of the Parkville respondents had worked as teachers; of these women 12 had graduated from college with teaching certificates. Although some of the women taught for only one year, the majority had taught from two to four years. Nine of the 21 women continued to work as teachers after they were married. This high ratio of teachers is not so surprising since community activists and leaders were interviewed. Previous research on community power structures has shown that community influential have high levels of education and are most predominantly drawn from managerial and professional occupations (Aiken and Mott 1970, Hunter 1953, see also Bokemier and Tait 1980, Moyer et al. 1977). Until quite recently the only professional paths available to women who pursued higher educational degrees were teaching and nursing. Reflecting these historically narrow options for women, Genevive, a Parkville activist in
her early sixties, explained that she was the only one in her large family who went to college. The daughter of a farmer:

I was the first one to get to go to high school.... My father didn't think children needed to go to high school, they didn't need more education on the farm--get married and live on the farm. But I wanted to be a school teacher.... I spent one entire summer between high school and college on my knees begging to go to college. With the help of a few other people who had gone to college I finally convinced my father that I could go to college, but girls did not need to go to college so I went to a two year college [teacher's college]. ...Had I wanted to go off and do anything else, I don't know if my father would have let me go to college, but a teacher was accepted. He was the school director of our country school [a volunteer position], and teachers were a must, and women teachers especially. He wouldn't have hired a man teacher I don't think. But women were in that role, you either got married, or you taught school or you were a nurse. Secretary he wouldn't have allowed. I wouldn't have gotten to go if I'd wanted to be a secretary. There were definite lines there that I don't think we think of anymore.

Marital Status/Family Size

Researchers argue that we must understand the rural value system in order to comprehend changing gender roles and the position of women in rural America (Bescher-Donnelly and Smith 1981). Studies underline the importance of marriage and family roles to rural residents and find that rural people marry younger and have more children than their urban counterparts (Brown 1981) and experience less divorce (Flora and Johnson 1981, Bescher-Donnelly and Smith 1981).
Fifty-one of the respondents (93%) were or had been married. Thirty-five of the women (64%) were married at the time of the interview. This was higher than the marriage rate of all Parkville women reported in the 1980 census (1980 Census Report). Fifteen of the respondents (27%) were widows; this was close to the rate reported for all Parkville women (Goudy and Burke 1981). Of the women who were not married, four (7%) had never been married versus more than twice that rate for all Parkville respondents 16 and older (Goudy and Burke 1981).

Although only one of the respondents was currently divorced at the time of the study, five women had experienced a divorce earlier in life, but had remarried. Although the divorce rate in rural America is rising, Flora and Johnson (1978:171) predicted "that because of the rural traditionalism about marriage, the percentage of these [women who have divorced] marrying again will probably be greater than that of their urban sisters."

As small town women, the Parkville respondents are caught between the more traditional values of their farmbound neighbors and the more liberal values of urban residents. Reflecting these different pressures, the great majority of respondents reported that a woman could still lead a full and happy life if not married. For some
respondents the increase in the number of divorces and family break-ups were of significant concern, however. As a reflection of this concern, a resident for several decades commented:

The attitude on divorce has changed, because it is getting more common. In fact, a lot of them call this a little Peyton Place. It seems like there are so many that are getting divorced now. You hate to see it.

Interestingly, at the same time this awareness of the increased incidence of divorce also led to women's acceptance of a female career after marriage.

Several of the respondents had been, and some continued to be, the sole supporters of their families due to a divorce or premature death of a spouse. At the time they were interviewed six women (11%) were the sole breadwinners for their families; this was similar to the 11% rate of female-headed households in Parkville (Goudy and Burke 1981).

Only four (8%) of the 51 respondents who were married or had been married had no children. A married respondent with no children shared that "Not having children in Parkville is difficult." Nineteen (35%) of the respondents had one to two children. The majority, 28 (55%) had three or more children, with 17 (nearly two-thirds) of these women having four or more children. In addition to childrearing, the majority of these women were engaged in some type of
paid employment, and were active in volunteer work in Parkville.

**Employment and Family Responsibilities**

Brown (1981), in his analysis of sociodemographic data in reference to the structure of the American family, found that regardless of residence, paid work has become an integral part of women's lives. Between 1970 and 1980, "the number of nonmetropolitan women 16 years and over participating in the labor force increased by 4.5 million persons, or 53%. By 1980, 48% of all nonmetropolitan women were in the labor force" (Bescher-Donnelly and Smith 1981:170). In Parkville, in 1980 about half of women over 16 years of age were employed. For women with children under 6 years of age, the labor force participation rate was substantially lower%, but this rate was higher for women with children 6 to 17 years of age (Goudy and Burke 1981).

Among the Parkville respondents, the labor force participation rate was higher than the census data figure for all Parkville women. At the time of their interview, 34 (63%) of fifty-four respondents (63%) were employed (a full-time college student was excluded here). Eleven respondents (20%) were retired from former paid employment. And four of the women were currently not employed outside of the home,
although these women had moved in and out of the paid labor force. Only five (9%) of the respondents had never been employed outside of the home since marriage. The majority of the fifty-four women interviewed (56%) had been employed nearly all of their adult lives. An additional 18 respondents (33%) had worked outside the home since their children were in school or grown.

Of the 34 women who were employed, 28 worked in Parkville (two in their homes), while six commuted for employment. The paid employment of respondents ranged from waitressing and nurse's aide to business management and ownership. Eleven of the currently employed respondents were owners or partial owners of main street businesses. Of these eleven, six of the respondents were sole proprietors of these local businesses while five women worked with their husbands.

In Parkville, as in urban America (Hochschild 1989), women who are employed outside the home still bear the major home care and child care responsibilities (see Bescher-Donnelly and Smith 1981). The ideal situation was to have a job that could adjust itself to childrearing duties. Several women mentioned that they selected employment in Parkville, although this limited their career choices and advancement possibilities, because of home responsibilities.
One respondent, a widowed single mother, selected a local white-collar position versus a teaching position outside of Parkville "which would have been a better paying job" because she was "thinking of the children's lifestyle and that Parkville was a nice place to raise a family." Another respondent, Mary, a married mother of five, had always worked outside the home in unskilled positions. At the time of the interview, Mary had worked in a local pink collar position for the past several years. She described her current job as a mixed blessing:

> Look at my job, it's a good job for an in-town job, which I want right now. I don't want to go an hour out of town. It's not a job that's helping and preparing me for the future, not many benefits. There are supposed to be raises, but it seems like they quit after you work.

All daycare is arranged informally in Parkville, as there is no licensed daycare facility. The one preschool that exists is organized in such a way as to make it impossible to use for full time working parents. However, no one identified the lack of daycare as a problem in the interviews. Parkville women who worked while their children were pre-junior high had usually pieced together an assortment of daycare arrangements, often involving extended family networks. Rebecca, a local career woman whose child had recently graduated from high school, described it as "rather easy" to find daycare for her son. When her son was
an infant, she "started out with family and basically word
of mouth" and "if somebody was going to start doing
something else and quit babysitting." She and her spouse had
friends who took over the childcare responsibilities.

Rachel also underlined the importance of family members
in explaining her daycare arrangements for her two young
girls:

[M]y sisters at different times have stayed at home
with their kids, and so I've been lucky that they've
[my children have] always been in with my family. It's
worked out real well.

A family safety net was also in place for another respondent
who was pregnant at the time of our interview. Jane
reported:

I plan on finding somebody in town, that I'll pay. I'm
very lucky that we have lots of relatives and my
folks..., and in case of emergency that'll be o.k.....
I have lots of friends that have newborns that are
going back to work, and there's really no problem....
[H]ere it's all private homes. I don't know if the
women who are doing it stay in it for one to two years
and then someone else does it, but here seems to be a
lot of them.... I don't think we'll have any problem
in finding anybody. My husband has a relative who
babysits.

Community Involvement of Respondents

Women were primarily selected for their local activism
in Parkville. Twenty-three (42%) of Parkville respondents
were active in three to five community organizations, while
25 (45%) were involved in one to two local organizations.
Only seven of the women (13%) interviewed did not belong to any community organizations.

In Parkville women participate in a variety of community organizations including the two women's associations—the General Federated Women's Club, and the adult women's sorority, Beta Sigma Phi; the women's organizations attached to the Lutheran and Methodist churches; the Chamber of Commerce; the Community Club; local political committees for the Democratic and Republican parties; civic and community boards such as the School Board, Library Board, Park Board, Hospital Board, Senior Citizen Center Board, and the United Way Board; and auxiliary and organizational work for the hospital, nursing home, and historical restoration efforts. Not included as community organizations were strictly social clubs such as sports clubs (e.g., golf and bowling leagues), an elite all-female organization; or volunteer work connected to other churches, because these volunteer efforts did not directly benefit the larger Parkville community.

The women interviewed were not only active in local community organizations; the great majority had assumed leadership roles within these organizations. Of forty-eight women active in volunteer activities, 34 (71%) had assumed a leadership role in at least one organization, and in the
majority of cases women had held multiple leadership posts.

Within their interviews some of these Parkville leaders attempted to provide reasons for their levels of activism. Several themes were evident within these explanations. Respondents registered their frustration with those who would not get involved in local organizations or issues:

I just don't like to see disorganization or people sitting around saying, "We really should do that", and then never act on it. I can remember back in college doing things that you might say everybody sits back and waits for somebody else to do.

I get so frustrated with these friends of mine that won't at least try--and just talk about babies.... There's a woman right over here that has sat in her house, she's 55. She's never had a job. Her children are gone. I don't want to be like that. She just sits there.

Other respondents focused on the rewards garnered from local activism and leadership. One long-time activist, in response to a question concerning her reasons for her years of local leadership and for taking offices in local organizations replied:

Well, some of them say just because I couldn't say "no." [laughs] I don't know. I just feel like you get a lot more out of things the more you're involved in it. I didn't want to take offices either right away, but I found out that it was interesting and quite a challenge.... I still feel like if it's something I can do I'd just as soon do it. Last year when I was off the board [of the Senior Citizen Center], I just felt like I didn't know quite as much about what was going on.

Several respondents mentioned their fears of the
erosion of volunteers as more women have full-time jobs and family commitments. In this regard, a respected local businesswoman and community activist stated:

You have the pushers and then you have the draggers. I happen to be one of the pushers, but the draggers are getting to be more numerous.

Summary

In this study grounded theory was used in the belief that it was the most appropriate theoretical method to capture women's contributions and their experiences within the community of Parkville. Data gathering for this qualitative study included extended interviews, observations, and document study.

An comparison of the 55 Parkville respondents in comparison with the larger Parkville population (Goudy and Burke 1981) revealed that the respondents were older, more highly educated, more likely to be married, and to be employed than the larger Parkville female population. This can be largely explained by the fact that respondents were selected who were community activists in Parkville. These women were disproportionately drawn from the 35 through 74 age range, and as activists were more likely to be college educated and engaged in paid employment (see Moyer et al. 1977, Bokemier and Tait 1980) than their nonactivist
counterparts.

The impact of the rural value system is demonstrated by the respondents greater number of children, the low divorce rate, and the high rate of re-marriage after divorce. In addition, there was a relatively lower rate of female-headed households.

Finally, three measures revealed the respondents attachment to the Parkville community: their length of residence in Parkville, their rate of local employment, and their level of volunteer participation. Only 15% of the respondents were newcomers to Parkville. Twenty-eight of the currently employed (34) women worked in Parkville, and ten of the eleven retired women had worked in Parkville when formerly employed. Forty-seven of the 55 Parkville respondents were active in local community organizations.
For the women in Parkville the development and protection of human relationships constitutes their central activity and source of meaning. This framework of meaning is attached to and derived from community—not community as an abstract locale, but community "...as embodied in specific emotional attachments—in the love of particular people, and sometimes in particular places or institutions intimately associated with the experience of attachment" (Marris 1982:55, see also Stoneall 1981). When attached to their lived experience, the Parkville women reveal their purposes to participate in daily actions and changes which reproduce and preserve the principles of community with attention to organized relationship structures (Chodorow 1974, Gilligan 1982).

Community relationships include the social fabric that women create both through their routine activities, such as childcare, housekeeping, and shopping, which are necessary to the reproduction of individual households (DeVault 1984), as well as the social arrangements they make to protect, enhance, and preserve the cultural experience of all members of the community (Bernard 1981, Stoneall 1983)). These
women not only keep the practical affairs of the household in order, but they participate in churches, committees, organizations, and other groupings that get things done. Furthermore, they participate in community activities in a fashion that knits a fabric of social attachments, a fabric that possesses its own meaning (Stall 1982, 1984). One Parkville woman described this community-building work in the following manner:

I think my sense of things is that women probably are the chickenwire that underlies the whole community. I see them as pulling it together through the different organizations. There's just so many things—when I think of church activities, when I think of school activities, to some degree when I think of political activities and fundraising—it just seems that by and large it's the gals putting together the committees and doing the work and getting the bake sales lined up. Whatever it is, they're doing it. Not to say there are not men involved because that's not my point. But I think they are really fundamental, almost like the way secretaries are fundamental in business organizations.

In support of the importance of this work, Clark (1973), after surveying community studies, concluded that a sense of solidarity and a sense of significance are fundamental to community as it is experienced by the individuals within it. Solidarity is described as a "we-feeling" and includes interdependence, togetherness, social unity, social cohesion, and a sense of belonging. "It encompasses all those sentiments which draw people together (sympathy, courtesy, gratitude, trust and so on)...." (Clark
Significance is defined as a sense of place and status, a sense of achievement and/or fulfillment, so that persons within a community feel that they have important roles to play. These components are not viewed as in conflict or in competition with one another. Rather it is possible that both components may exist in a complimentary fashion.

Underscoring Clark's argument, Boulding (1981) argued that economic exchange relations, and the social relations which are derived from them, have been emphasized at the expense of more altruistic human motivations. Boulding (1969:4) explored the concept of integrity, "...that part of the total social system [or community] which deals with such concepts and relationships as status, identity,... legitimacy, loyalty, trust, and so on."

In his analysis, he contrasted an economy of fear (exchanges of goods or services built on a threat system) with the under-explored economy of love (built on one-way transfers or grants of goods or services arising out of love or care). Boulding believed that it is only by investigating the economy of love (or grants economy) that we will understand how community is created and maintained.

Related to Boulding's analysis, Warren (1973) described two values that he considered integral to community: truth
and love. Truth, which is somewhat like Boulding's economy of fear, is built on a goal or task orientation, where human beings serve as means to an end. As Warren (1973:283) explained it, the truth stance "seeks to bend the other person to one's own purposes." The value of love, on the other hand, coincides with Boulding's economy of love. Here we find relationships of appreciation and respect rather than utility and a process orientation which views human beings as ends. Emphasized is "the building of a set of relationships among the principal parties, encouraging communication and discussion among them, so that they will then set for themselves whatever goals they may wish to set" (Warren 1973:284-285).

Neither Boulding nor Warren are calling for the abolition of the exchange economy or relationships built on a task orientation. But what they do share with Clark is their emphasis on the importance of non-hierarchical caring acts that build both solidarity and significance. These acts contribute to a sense of community and identity for individual participants within the community. Yet, these acts remain largely invisible within traditional community studies.

This chapter will focus on the community-building work Parkville women perform within traditional female
auxiliaries, associations, and organizations. After analyzing the way this work has traditionally been evaluated, the ways that individuals within these local groups develop community bonds at the same time that they pursue explicit goals will be demonstrated. Detailed accounts will show how women community-builders in Parkville nurture feelings of interdependence at the same time that they attain a sense of achievement through these volunteer activities.

The Expressive/Instrumental Split

Although we usually associate women with community volunteer services (Gold 1971), a close examination of the community volunteer literature reveals that women's voluntary groups have traditionally been awarded less prestige than men's (Babchuk et al. 1960). In fact, female-dominated (or all female) volunteer associations have usually been defined by researchers as primarily expressive associations (Babchuk et al. 1960, Booth 1972). According to Gordon and Babchuk (1959:25-26) such organizations "exist primarily to furnish activities for members as an end in itself." All male (or male-dominated) volunteer associations, on the other hand, characteristically receive higher status ranking because they are perceived as having
instrumental purposes. As Gordon and Babchuk (1959:25-26) described them, men's groups "serve as social influence organizations designed to maintain or to create some normative condition or change... [and] focus on activity and goals that are outside the organization itself."

This split still holds in analyses of gender variation in participation in volunteer organizations. Recently Wilson (1990) contrasted the volunteer work of North Carolina farm wives with the volunteer work of their husbands. According to Wilson women participate in "expressive" groups that are leisure oriented or that are engaged in "community housekeeping" (Daniels 1988) or service to others. Men are more likely to join "instrumental" groups, associations "which further their careers and legitimate public standing" (Wilson 1990:108). The contradictions inherent in this distinction (i.e., why providing services for others is deemed expressive rather than instrumental) are neither challenged nor examined by the author.

These traditional evaluative conclusions about female versus male volunteer participation create a false dichotomy and often inflate the value of instrumental actions over expressive ones (Joyce and Leadley 1977). This dichotomy both denies the goal orientation of women's voluntary groups
and devalues the significance of the relational work done within these same volunteer organizations.

An analysis of the community-building work of Parkville women will reveal that the instrumental/expressive split is a false dichotomy. The Parkville women are task oriented in their volunteer activities, but they are at the same time attentive to the development of interdependence and a sense of belonging through these same volunteer activities.

The Early Years

In the 1920s, before federal or state social service systems were in place, Parkville women formed an informal organization to attend to some of the social service needs of the local school. Described by one respondent as "the club," this group consisted of 12 to 15 women who met socially to play bridge and assist Parkville's school-aged children. Elizabeth, an elderly Parkville woman and a long time local activist who still participates in a limited way in volunteer activities, described the group this way:

We had a group...sort of a welfare affair. We would help the children who would come to school who weren't dressed for the weather or if they were sick we would see that the nurse checked them out. If they needed glasses, we bought glasses and things like that--a welfare society.

Another elderly association participant added:

We really did a lot of work like that. We sponsored
milk for the children at school for many years for people who couldn't afford it.

These women would investigate the needs of school-aged children through a variety of local sources and through the school nurse. Necessary monies were provided through local fundraising efforts organized by this same group. Again Elizabeth explained:

Sometimes we would have a whole week that we'd serve dinners downtown. We'd get an old building and fix it so we could serve, and then different organizations would serve dinner one day and then the next day would be another one. The money we brought in went to finance these things.

For these women, the social activity of playing cards was attached to larger community purposes.

Another women's group organized in the 1920s but which has lasted longer than "the club" is the Legion Auxiliary. Elizabeth spoke proudly of her sixty-plus years as an early member of this organization. She described Legion Auxiliary work in the beginning years:

At that time there were more people in need of help financially. I know we had families that we supplied food and clothing to. We made clothing and collected clothing in good condition to give to them.... We've always tried to help any way that we could. It's still going along.

The Legion Auxiliary still meets monthly in the Parkville Legion Hall. The organization has over ninety members, and approximately twenty to twenty-five women are active participants in local auxiliary activities.
Ann, who has been a Legion Auxiliary member for several decades and has held numerous offices, confirmed the organization's current viability. She described it as an "organization that is working." She has used her organizational positions to get what she believes is much deserved publicity for the work of the auxiliary. Ann explained:

I felt we were a worthwhile organization. We do a lot of good for the veterans, for the community...but it was not being put out to the public so people would see we're not just sitting there doing nothing.... I'm kind of proud to belong to it. It's a good civic organization as far as I'm concerned. I like it.

A current Legion Auxiliary officer, Nancy, confirmed the task orientation of this group. She felt the Legion Auxiliary had a business rather than a social focus, their business focus being "patriotism and the veteran" with fundraising directed to providing service to veterans.

Perhaps the Legion Auxiliary is most visibly recognized for its annual poppy sales and in Parkville its poppy queen contest whose proceeds benefit veterans and their families. Most recently money had been given to a veteran's family toward the expenses of their severely ill child who needed "a lot of expensive treatment." Less recognized are the community services provided by auxiliary members. Every odd year the Parkville Legion Auxiliary sponsors a local girl (preferably a member's daughter) for Girl's State.
Auxiliary women provide graveside services for members and when requested will also serve lunch or refreshments following the services. In addition, they serve at the cribbage tournament during the annual Fjord Festival, support stands at Fourth of July celebrations, and organize a family Christmas party with a talent show presented by the children.

These activities demonstrate Boulding's (1973) economy of love. Women's early social welfare work in Parkville, and the Legion Auxiliary activities such as the provision of graveside services, and assisting a family with medical expenses, transfer services and/or monies at the same time that they build trust and social cohesion among community members.

Club Women

It is only in the last few years that studies thoroughly documenting the varied contributions of women's clubs have been conducted (Blair 1980). Traditionally, women's clubs have been considered to be purely social organizations (Young and Larson 1965) or more critically have been described as a channel for idle labor (Salmon 1897).

Since its founding, the Parkville General Federated
Women's Club (GFWC) has been an integral part of the community. The GFWC was founded nationally in 1889. State branches of the GFWC began to form in 1891. The GFWC was originally referred to as the "Housewife's University" since it provided an opportunity for women to learn and meet socially. Organizational forerunners of the GFWC were Sorosis and the New England Women's Club (NEWC). Sorosis, with its emphasis on cultural uplift, served self-improvement goals, while the NEWC was more directly engaged in reform. Both goals were combined in the creation of the GFWCs of the 1890s (Blair 1980:34).

In Parkville, the GFWC has played multiple roles, acting simultaneously as an organizational force within the community while meeting the more personal needs of its members. Here an early GFWC member, who has served in all offices, discusses the integrative, community-building role that the club played in the parochial, church-dominated town of Parkville in the late 1930s:

Parkville wasn't the most friendly place. The church played such an important part in this town when we came here. There was a bit of a feeling of...being a select group in each church. They weren't too cooperative.... This is fact.... We didn't like it too well at the time. There was a great clannishness.

The Women's Club did more to break that up because here we were, women from all sections of town. They had Child and Youth, Home and Garden. The general groups met every month and they had speakers.... I think that did as much to break the barriers in this town.
To this day I enjoy my Literature group because I am with people I wouldn't see otherwise at all from other sections [of town and other churches].... When you belong to these organizations like Women's Club... you get to see other people. It's just wonderful for a town to have that kind of feeling. It took quite a few years, but now there's such a difference, you can't believe how well the churches get along together.

As documented in a GFWC pamphlet, members have a conscious mission to serve "as community catalysts, assessing the needs of their communities and gathering the people together to meet these needs." In a complementary manner a Parkville GFWC former president and member for nearly four decades, described the organization's dual goals this way:

I think it [Parkville GFWC] has been a good thing for the women. I think that they have worked together... for common goals, the goals being enriching their lives and doing things for the community.

Throughout the years the contributions of clubwomen have been felt in numerous "municipal housekeeping" activities. Historically, municipal housekeeping or social housekeeping referred to women's public work for the home. During the first wave of feminism (mid-19th century through the early 20th century) members of more traditional women's organizations and suffragists utilized the concept of municipal housekeeping as a strategy, using women's traditional role in the home, to justify their nontraditional concerns in public life, such as in
education, health, and welfare (Hayden 1981).²

The Parkville Community Library, which also served as the school library for decades, was initiated by municipal housekeepers, clubwomen in partnership with the male civic association in the 1920s. Since the library received no municipal support until 1938, fundraising efforts were vital to its survival. The female-dominated Board of Directors initiated community fundraisers such as plays, vaudeville acts, films, waffle suppers, and benefit-bridge tournaments. It was a committee of three women who called on the mayor in 1936 "offering to cooperate in getting out a favorable vote on the matter of the town taking over the Hotel Building to be used as a community building--housing the library" (Parkville Post Progress Edition 1982). This same committee met with representatives from six women's clubs and asked for their cooperation in order to secure funds for the library's continued support and to make the community more conscious of the need. In 1938, their request was honored; the library would now be housed in the community building, and the council passed a levy to support its maintenance.

Clubwomen continued to support "their library" by serving on the library's Board of Directors, by participating in activities that would increase library consciousness, and by contributing to the costs of library
maintenance. Children's story hours were begun by women as early as 1943; and a Children's Book Club was female-initiated in 1966. In a study by Reese (1978) of parent participation in urban public education during the Progressive Era, he found that clubwomen played an important leadership role in public school reform. Nationally, local women's clubs popularized Parent Teacher Associations, were instrumental in the formation of kindergartens, and also participated in art and beautification projects at the schools. In Parkville, clubwomen from the Child and Youth division instigated a local petition drive in order to secure a public kindergarten and also played a crucial role in organizing the local Parent Teachers Association. Moreover, due to the impetus of the Fine Arts section of the Parkville GFWC, an art program and eventually art teachers were secured at both the elementary and high school levels. Thus, Parkville's GFWC was carrying on a nationally established tradition.

Municipal housekeeping also has involved beautification efforts; women from the Home and Garden division planted flowers in the downtown area and sponsored a flower show for over twenty years. Within these municipal housekeeping activities, Parkville women engage in purposeful work but also reproduce the principles of community that they believe
are important. In a description of the yearly art exhibit sponsored by the Fine Arts section of the GFWC at the schools, a GFWC member explains what she feels is significant about this event:

We gave ribbons at the beginning and soon decided that it was better that they not be competing against one another, but rather have a comment made on each drawing. And then from there it just became an exhibit where every child could enter something and show it. They have their name on it but there's no judging. It's completely non-competitive in any way. And that's probably the best because some of the children are very talented and some are not at all but if they all can contribute something, they enjoy it. That's better than feeling like Suzy's really good and got a blue ribbon and I didn't even get an honorable mention. Therefore, expanding the sense of achievement was more important than ranking individual accomplishments.

Additionally, club women have provided financial and moral support for such community needs and projects as a college scholarship for local high school girls, the Parkville Hospital, community recreational needs (e.g., swimming pool construction and maintenance), and most recently a cultural monument restoration project. While seldom named as the organizational initiator of community projects, those interviewed agreed that the Women's Club was essential in early discussions about civic projects and for providing the support needed in the later stages to accomplish a particular project. A GFWC member, who had underlined the importance of GFWC's involvement in earlier
projects, discussed its organizational role in the current monument restoration project:

I'm sure the Women's Club did a lot to promote the idea. I know we had a speaker in Home and Garden that told us about the restoration work that would be involved and the amount of money it would cost. I think hearing people talk about it in an organization lends more strength to the effort that you're trying to promote when you have an issue before the community. If you did not talk about it in an organization like the Women's Club then it wouldn't be anything that would be interesting. People would just say, "Oh, well,...," but if you hear it time and time again, and hear it when you have a group organized,...it's more effective than just talking about it individually I think.

An unrecognized by-product of participation in traditional female organizations is that they may serve as friendship and social support networks and as training grounds for the less self-confident woman (Stott 1978). These all-female organizations can provide a context in which women can hold leadership positions (Bers and Mezey 1981) and achieve autonomy (Blair 1980).

Parkville clubwomen spoke of the support garnered from Women's Club membership and relationships for further achievements in the community in a variety of accounts. An active GFWC member describes the impetus behind her decision to open a nursery school in Parkville:

[M]y children were all in school and I felt that desire to teach, to work with children...and saw a need for nursery school. I had voiced my thought about maybe I would start a nursery school.... A Child Development teacher from the university came here...and spoke to
the Women's Club about a nursery school, and several of my friends and acquaintances were there and they heard me express this possibility and they just came running to me and said, "You've got to start a nursery school." So I made my decision and in three weeks time...we opened our door to a nursery school with eleven children.

In another less dramatic but not less important example of club supported leadership development, Elsie described her GFWC organizational experience:

I was an officer several times.... I've always liked to go to convention.... I was not comfortable getting up and talking in front of people at that time but I did go to convention. I enjoyed conventions.

In further explaining why she enjoyed these outings, she added:

I guess part of it was because somewhere along in my life I never got to do any of that and I felt important. I needed that. I would go back and give a report to my group. I belonged not only to Child and Youth, but I helped to establish the Hobby and Craft [has become the Fine Arts division].

Later, in order to start a Girl Scout troop in Parkville, because she felt "it was very important that these girls had something they could belong to," Elsie did speak publicly:

Boy Scouts was very active, and had been for many, many years.... You had to have a sponsor to get Girl Scouting going. We went and asked Women's Club. I remember when the girl and I went and asked, and we were both so nervous. That was a very new experience for me. Had I not been a member of Women's Club I would never have gotten up and asked those women if they would sponsor us, and they did.

The GFWC continues to sponsor Girl Scouts which now involves girls at various levels (i.e., Brownies, Junior Cadets,
Women and the Parkville Churches

Parkville has several churches--Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, and Baptist. A study conducted by Independent Sector, a non-profit coalition of voluntary agencies, foundations, and donor corporations, reported that "Religious activities accounted for the largest segment of volunteered time" and that "women were more likely to do volunteer work than men. Fifty six percent of adult volunteers were women versus forty-four percent being male" (Ames Tribune, 1982:7). In support of these findings two Parkville women explained:

The [women's] church groups are a very strong part of this community. It's definitely a church-oriented community. Maybe it's the stability that it gives--friendliness, community belonging...things of that type.

I don't think that the church would be running if it weren't for women. The men are on the [church] council, but if it weren't for the women in the background in the Ladies Aide...and the Sunday School teaching, it wouldn't be a church today if it weren't for the women.

In Parkville, nearly all women interviewed were church members and played some role, apart from weekly attendance, in their member church. For most women this has meant participation in their church affiliated "Ladies Aide." Historically, this was often women's only community-linked
organizational membership; and it served both expressive and instrumental purposes.

Margaret, who in her late seventies is still active in her Lutheran women's church group, fondly recalls her mother's church participation nearly three-quarters of a century ago:

I was very impressed with what they called Ladies Aide in those days because they met in the homes, and all these ladies would come.... They seemed to have so much fun, and they would be doing things for missions. And they always had a good lunch, and the children went with their mothers.... I know they always had some sort of program and then they would do this visiting. I suppose since kids were there we always thought it was a great deal.... It was really a happy occasion.

Catherine, who had been active in committee work in the Methodist Ladies Aide since the early 1900s, expressed admiration for the early church women's activities:

I tell you, they just worked and worked. A lot of the income came from the ladies. We had dinners, we had different things. I think we met once a month. Then of course we had dues that we paid there. Then they'd quilt and things like that. We would also have programs. I know we even had box socials to raise money.

Currently within the Methodist Church, the "Ladies Aide" is called the United Christian Women. In the Lutheran churches the name was changed in the 1970s from Ladies Auxiliary to American Lutheran Church Women (ALCW), although most women still referred to the Ladies Aide. Active membership entails participating in a church circle every
two weeks, attending the monthly organizational meetings, and providing baked goods or crafts for church bazaars and for the yearly Fjord Festival. Other traditionally female activities that engage women are Sunday School teaching, leading the youth groups, and conducting, playing, and singing in the church choir.

For some women, their work in the church is their first entry into involvement and responsibility outside of the home (see Cott 1979). Moreover, women active in church auxiliaries derive a sense of significance from the roles they play within their churches. A prominent retired community figure recalled her early work in the church:

I really was the first woman Sunday School Superintendent in the Methodist Church, president of the Missionary Society, Sunday School teacher. They'd usually give me a class nobody else wanted.

And Jeanette, a local community activist with multiple volunteer and paid commitments, remembered a time when her work in the church was her only community involvement:

This church...is the church that my family had gone to for years. My grandparents lived here in town and that's the church they were affiliated with. So we came there and the children were in Sunday School there, and I taught Sunday School. I've been Sunday School Superintendent, and have been in a variety of capacities all up through the church. I'm lay leader in the church now...so I've been active in various segments. At one time I wanted to start an evening circle, they didn't have an evening circle. And so I was one of the instigators in the starting of an evening circle and was the president for the first few years...and it's still going.
(What about this position you have now, lay leader; what does that involve?)

Supposedly, I am, the definition I believe is, a member of the congregation who is a liaison between the congregation and the minister. Pretty much... representing the congregation in taking up affairs with the minister. The pastor-community relations committee, of which I am a member ex-officio, also does this to a certain extent. But also any-time that...the members of the congregation participate in a church service, I need to line these people up and so forth. Like lay Sunday, when the whole service is done by members of the congregation. It was up to me to provide the people for this and get a speaker, and people to read the scripture, and do this prayer, and this kind of thing. It's a yearly position elected by the congregation.

There are no female ministers in Parkville, but in her role as lay leader Jeanette performs important work and attains a sense of place and status within her church.

Local Missionary Work

The primary work of church affiliated women's groups is to give to the missions. In Parkville, missionary work, although it always involves helping others, has traditionally meant concentrating more on "a country away from here" rather than on community-based issues. One local activist, Cynthia, a woman in her forties, expanded the concept of church missionary work when she served as her church women's group's secretary of stewardship. Cynthia provided the leadership necessary to start the still viable Parkville meals-on-wheels program, which began out of
concern for senior shut-ins. She remembered:

...one lady in particular who died of malnutrition. She ate like cornflakes and that was the only thing she was living on. She had lots of family here in town. Either they didn't check on her or she wasn't telling the truth. It was things like that brought it to a head where we got it rolling.

"Getting it rolling" included talking with the women of the church, who agreed it was a good idea, and as Cynthia explained:

I went to the head administrator of the hospital and he and I sat down and kind of worked things out to cook the meals at the hospital and delivered them around.... I remember I wrote a letter to all the organizations I could find in Parkville asking if they would volunteer to help do this.

An organizational volunteer structure was instituted which continued with slight alterations in 1982. Each community organization was asked to be responsible for a month. This meant finding volunteers to serve eight to ten hot meals daily. Initially delivery speed was essential because there were no insulated carriers. Deliveries take place at midday, and primarily women serve as the volunteer delivery force. A resident who has delivered meals-on-wheels explained that participating groups included: the GFWC, where each department took one week; the churches; the sororities; and the Legion Auxiliary. There were no men's groups participating, because, according to this resident, "I suppose they figure they're tied up over the noon hours
and can't do it."

Cynthia recalled doing a lot of delivering with her kids and "the old folks loved that." Mildred, who has often delivered meals over the years, both through her organizational involvement in ALCW and in the General Federated Women's Club, concurred on the relational significance of these "visits." She explained that the importance of this program "...isn't just that you're bringing the meal, it's the fact that you're somebody to talk to." Mildred expounded on the importance of this interaction for the seniors involved:

I've done it many times and it's really kind of a neat thing. You go and this older man or woman is sitting there waiting for the dinner and wanting to talk and you don't really have time to stay very long, but you try to visit just a little bit. And if you do it more than once you enjoy seeing them again. I feel I do it because I enjoy that. They are so pleased to have you come and so tickled to see you.... They are so appreciative.

A second example of missionary work taking on a local focus is with the Asian refugees in Parkville. Several local women have volunteered their skills to teach English. The most prominent in this work is Florence. Described by two respected church women leaders as an "unsung hero," Florence has provided the only local English instruction for local refugee families for the past few years. This weekly instructional program, located in her church, was originally
started by the pastor's wife in another local church with Parkville's first Asian refugee family. When Florence took over (due to the pastor's illness) "three or four ladies came with their children." In the early 1980s, Florence had four different families that had come to the church for English instruction (materials are provided by a local community college). For Florence this was more than a teacher-pupil relationship:

The rewarding thing about that is they have become my friends. They just practically fall out of the car when they see me down the road because they know me, they know my name, my phone number.... They watch out for each other and me... they have come and brought their friends.... They've brought at times their food for me...their yard-long beans and they brought me tomatoes. I call one lady my lettuce lady because she furnished me with lettuce. They have no idea that I'm not paid for that [teaching].... If they knew I wasn't paid I'd be gifted and gifted. They can't afford that.

Finally, as a third example of community-building in a church-related setting, Grace, a respected church activist, was able to develop a workable public-private partnership through her paid work, her church membership, and her deep community ties. In order to remodel an elderly woman's home, resources were mobilized from many sources. Grace explained:

My whole job...was looking at the needs of people... [O]ne of the things I worked at real hard was working in helping people get home improvement grants.... We ran across a woman...who was severely physically handicapped.... And she was living in this house that the only bathroom was in her basement...and the house
was just terribly, terribly inadequate. She happened to be a member of our congregation.... So I went to our...pastor and said, "If I can get some [federal] money...to fix up Beth's house, do you think we can round up the labor?"

Well, he and his wife got really interested in it, and some other members of our congregation. And so...using volunteer labor and getting donations from John Holland's Building Supplies...and individuals too, an operator...dug the footing, another guy, a block-layer, donated his time in laying the blocks for the foundations...and other people...lots of other people. And...[the federal government] loaned us [some money]..., and we fixed up [that] house.... We tore off...an old lean-to kitchen...put in a new kitchen with a bathroom...and remodeled her house. That was a really, real neat thing. I consider that one of the neatest things I've done.

In initiating this effort, Grace demonstrated the values that Warren (1973) considered essential for community integration—the values of love and truth. The process of rehabilitating Beth's house was initiated because people cared about a fellow church member (the value of love). But this concern was linked to Grace's ability to obtain some federal monies and to mobilize the people and materials necessary to complete a very task oriented project (the value of truth). Grace also played a crucial role in raising consciousness that something could be done about this particular woman's housing needs. As she explained:

Now here people had been aware of Beth for a long time. And had said, "Isn't it too bad?" But hadn't seen there's something that we can do, because it appeared, "Oh, how can we do this for one person," and that kind of thing. But when somebody came along and said, "Here's what we can do, and here's how we can do it,
and here's some money." Then they were more than willing to get in there and help.

(Would you go and ask all of these people?)

Sure, you betcha, that's what I did, knocked on doors. And said, "We're doing this, what will you do?" And you know that was for an individual, but because she was a very well-liked woman, even though she was very, very poor, and always had been very, very poor, people were willing to do that. So that was real exciting.

In all of these local missionary efforts--meals-on-wheels, English for Asian refugees, housing rehabilitation--the transfer of goods and services arose out of caring (Boulding 1969, 1981); also, close attention was paid to creating social bonds. For example, in the meals-on-wheels program, not just a meal is shared with an elderly citizen, but time and conversation. Finally, community solidarity or integrity was heightened as women mobilized other individuals and organizations to assist in these local efforts.

The Parkville Hospital

Parkville residents are proud of their local hospital, a facility which primarily serves Parkville and small nearby towns. Although subject to federal and state regulations and funding restrictions, it continues to serve as a reminder of local community viability and autonomy. Founded several decades ago, the majority of the Parkville Hospital's paid
staff are female. But not surprisingly throughout its history, decision-making positions both paid and unpaid have been held by males; doctors and the hospital administrator are male, while the nursing and clerical staff are female. The hospital is governed by a five member Hospital Board, which had its first elected female member in the 1970s.

Operating much less visibly is a woman's organization, the Hospital Guild, which was organized shortly after the Parkville Hospital opened. Currently, the guild has about 80 members with a core of eight to ten active board members. The great majority of members do not attend the now quarterly meetings, but they pay dues and contribute regularly to bake and plant sales. As in other community involvement, active guild members are proud of their participation and achievements. Several women recounted their earliest contributions, which required much more "hands-on" involvement. A Hospital Guild charter member recalls:

I worked in the mending department. We had baskets of linens and things to mend.... If there was extra sewing to be done sometimes whole bolts of toweling would be divided up between us. I used to do a lot of that at home.

And Joyce, a woman in her eighties who has been active in many local community organizations including the guild, described the hospital as "one of my favorite issues."
I've been on our guild there for many, many years...ever since the guild started. I don't attend too many meetings but I do my duty with bake sales and anything they have doing.... A couple of years ago I got a lot of the younger women to join. They take part in our bake sales to raise money. We've done an awful lot of good for the hospital.... We're always working for something in the hospital, and the guild is responsible for it.

Bertha, who has also been active on the guild board since its founding, serving primarily as the guild's membership chair, responded as follows to an inquiry about the importance of the guild to the running of the hospital.

They are still using the curtains for the nursery that Dorothy Jensen and I made...years ago. Volunteer works around the hospital; I think we have been very active or helpful...financially a big help. We must contribute a couple of thousand a year. We have bake sales twice a year and then we buy television sets and the income from those television sets is turned over to the hospital as part of our...donation to the hospital. Sometimes it's for something specific, but most of the time it's for their [general] use.

Patricia, a respected local main street employee and community activist, described her impressions of the guild:

I think they are a very helpful back-up for many of the smaller projects, and promoting things, and making the public aware of needs. They do purchase considerable things. I'm sure because they are aware of the needs of some of the things at the hospital, they in turn pass this information on to other people.

The hospital administrator concurred with both Bertha's and Patricia's assessments of the guild. He described the Hospital Guild as "not a real active group," but as a "very important" group. He felt that the loss of the guild to the
hospital would be felt both as a loss of finances and of community support. First of all, financially the televisions owned by the guild and rented to patients generate from $2,000 to $3,000 per year. In addition, guild-sponsored fundraising events such as baked goods and plant and rummage sales provide regular yearly monies ($2,300 in 1981). As a supportive group, the hospital administrator explained:

They've helped us with open house, direct traffic. When we've needed bodies in here for special events, they've been available. But it's also a case where if we'd lose people as an active group, is there also a point where we'd lose their support. You know if it came to any bonding issues, or general matters concerning the hospital if they tend to be a special group maybe they'll tend to be a little bit more supportive.

The hospital depends also on the financial support it receives from other community organizations. Women's organizations such as the sororities and General Federated Women's Club are yearly contributors; male organizations such as the Lion's Club, the Kiwanis, and the Community Club are more sporadic donors. When placed against the hospital's overall budget, the amount contributed from community organizations is negligible. But the administrator explained that this is a deceptive comparison, since 80-85% of the business of the Parkville Hospital is paid on a cost basis:
We're a not-for-profit hospital, which means if we make $20,000 at the end of the year, we don't take that money and divide it up among the board members, like you would [for a] corporation or pay dividends. We need to recognize a profit so that we can keep updating things. But [for] 80-85% of our business you aren't allowed to make a profit...which doesn't leave any money for capital improvements, or replacing equipment or things like that...so what we find is that $16,000 is very important to us, because that's the money we are able to use to do some things around here that we need to do like redecorating and whatnot.... It would just eventually be the case where we would be run down, and we would get more and more run down, maybe to the point where we wouldn't meet hospital codes anymore. We just wouldn't have the funds for it.

Through their work in the Hospital Guild, Parkville women provide needed financial support for "their" hospital. Moreover, their loyalty to the hospital is strengthened when they recognize that their contributions--e.g., the curtains they made, and the televisions they purchased--are helping to "humanize" what might be a cold institutional setting.

The Nursing Home

The nursing home in Parkville is ranked highly among similar operations in the midwest. Operated through church support, it has a population of more than 150 residents drawn from the surrounding area. In 1982 it was the second largest employer in Parkville. One of the major reasons cited for the retirement home's success is its large and dedicated volunteer staff, which is nearly all female. One Parkville woman described the home this way:
The retirement home is one of the nicest facilities I've seen around. After being at others, this one is altogether different. It has such a clean smell. They do a real good job of getting the people involved, bowling and all those different things.... I find down here [at the nursing home] there's a different group of girls, quite a few are young. They seem to get involved with the patients.... It's cheerful down here, I really like it.

In 1982 there were approximately 80 volunteers. The majority of them are older women, although there are some young volunteers, and "a couple of real good men volunteers." This "fantastic volunteer program" includes those who participate as individuals and those who participate as part of a larger organizational commitment. Jane, the activity coordinator, credits this large cadre of volunteers to both local church involvement (90% of volunteers are from the different churches) and the center's integration into the larger community. Jane explained:

Parkville I also think makes this home real special. Parkville is a real close-knit community. They kind of take care of each other.... I think the nursing home has been here so long that it has always been included.... The churches make sure it's not excluded. I think that's the real key.

Jane speaks regularly to all of the women's church groups for volunteer recruitment. The nursing home is also the beneficiary of volunteers from RSVP, a community-based organization for volunteers, and the Senior Citizen's Center. In addition the Parkville sororities, students from the local schools and interested individuals from Parkville
and neighboring small towns donate their time and skills to the home.

Volunteers help in a diverse number of activities, and Jane described some of these:

Some come in and help...the residents bake, reading groups, rhythm band, crafts, a sing-a-long, take residents shopping, do bingo and cards and games. They come and help get people to chapel, with bowling, put on programs, a spelling bee...exercise groups...music therapy...take them out on trips.... There are very few activities that volunteers aren't involved in.

Other women mentioned that volunteers at the retirement home are involved in feeding some of the residents, mail distribution, organ and piano playing, directing a resident kitchen band, and quilting. Jane explained that without the volunteers:

We wouldn't be able to offer many of the extra things that we do...like for instance the hair care volunteers. There wouldn't be a hair care program. It's certainly not part of anybody's job description. The people that don't have visitors wouldn't have visitors. Simple things like mending the residents' clothes, their families would have to do it obviously, or somebody would, because that's not on anybody's job description. It's the extra things that wouldn't get done for them.

When questioned about the possibility of paying people to attend to some of these tasks, she responded:

No, it couldn't possibly be, because it would be too expensive. The cost of living here would be so out of reach for anybody if you would fill all the needs that need to be met with paid help there wouldn't possibly be anybody who could afford to live here.

Perhaps most difficult to replace would be those who
volunteer to work in the one-on-one resident program that exists at the nursing home. Strong attachments are formed on both sides. A Parkville volunteer mentioned how important her weekly visits to an elderly female resident were to her own mental health. And Jane stressed the reciprocal nature of these relationships:

That's why when you're training a volunteer to work on one-to-one with somebody the first thing you stress is that if they say they're going to be back next Tuesday either be back next Tuesday or call because to them [the residents] they're going to just sit and wait until that person comes back again. A real relationship can develop. We had a younger gal that came to meet this lady every week religiously, never missed a week unless she was sick. A very, very great relationship started. She was not an easy woman to work with. She was not one of these that you just loved to go in and take out for dinner because this gal really needed somebody and was very frail and a more difficult person to work with. Now she just died last week and the volunteer said it was just like losing her mother again because she had a real close attachment to her.

The Parkville nursing home has its own volunteer organization (primarily female) with officers and a bank checking and savings account. Jane noted "If we need something we just holler." The larger body meets monthly, and the officers meet an additional time per month. A large contribution of the volunteer organization is its fundraising; it includes periodic rummage sales and a yearly bazaar which usually makes about $4,000 or $5,000. This bazaar, like the GFWC's event, provides a way to involve the
larger community. Jane described the organizing process of this event:

We work on a project all year that involves all the churches, sending out kits of scraps that we have here and patterns [i.e., needlepoint, quilts]. A volunteer helps put all this stuff together. It goes out to all the churches.... A letter then goes out encouraging them to get their kits in and if they didn't have a chance to get a kit, any or all craft goods and baked goods are welcome and needed. They just respond. They bring in things. Of course, people come and stop in the community.

Essential to the positive image of the nursing home in the Parkville community is Jane's public relations and outreach work. Besides visits to church circles, Jane speaks on the aging process to local high school students in classes, who are then matched with residents for home visits; a similar program was set up with younger students. Volunteers and staff help in spreading the word that "this isn't a jail or whatever" and "people come and see" for themselves. In addition, resident trips into the community for shopping and recreation and friendships maintained across institutional barriers help break down the physical and emotional separation between the nursing home and other Parkville residents.

Cultural Contributions

Through their traditional baking, stitchery, and quilting, women reproduce Parkville residents' Scandinavian
heritage, share it with other townspeople, and in some instances pass it on to succeeding generations. Bernard (1981) found that women within voluntary organizations frequently perform the community's cultural chores. In Parkville, both needlepoint art and intricate paint designs are still crafted with painstaking care by a few female artists. And quilting continues as both an art form and a social occasion in the Parkville churches. One former quilter volunteered:

I don't quilt anymore, but boy the quilters sure stay busy now. They get quilts from different states...to quilt. Someone has heard about their work. It isn't only our church, all the churches in town have a quilting club.

Within the context of a working group, quilters meet regularly (approximately three times per week) in churches in Parkville to produce artistic work. Irene, in her seventies, is the head of one such quilting group, a role she inherited from her aunt years ago. She explained what it means to be head quilter:

That's nothing as a figure head. You take in the quilts. You see that they get back. You have to keep track of where they are and who they are [from]. They all work so well together. They'll help with anything. If I go, they don't even know if I'm gone. I don't like it when they call me the boss because I'm not. In fact, when I took over I said, "If they won't call me the boss, I'll take it over." I wanted us to all work together, which we do.... Now if they disagree with me, which is all right, I just let them go ahead.

The importance of Irene's contributions as a leader
lies not in her individual control but in the fact that if she is gone the work and the group continues as productive and cohesive as when she is present. Through her enthusiasm, she exhibits the social power to ignite others, and her caring attitude toward the women is contagious.

Irene proudly recounted that there is no gossip permitted in their quilting group. Instead there is continual conversation and the sharing of local information—"usually newspaper stuff"—and community issues, which contributes to the group's cohesiveness. Irene shared:

You'd be surprised how much politics are talked about around a quilt. I don't know who I'm going to vote for [in the state election].... We have a lot of discussion. That is one of their best topics. We discuss the Bible sometimes. There's not much gossip. They used to say quilters gossip, but no, I can't say that about our group.

Her use of "our group" versus "my group" is symbolic of the social solidarity of the quilting group.

According to Irene, the quilting group varies in size, "At one time we were 28, now we're 10 or 12. The most we usually are is about eight. We're glad when we have an even number on each side because we can keep up that way." The 12 women who may participate in this particular group range in age from their sixties to their eighties. Moreover, within a quilting session is found both the production of a work of art and a bonding social occasion. Irene described
a session:

We make it a fun thing. We just say bring what you want. We always have way too much food. Mrs. Grayson comes and cooks the coffee everyday for us. There's no one who makes coffee as good as she does. They work so well together that it does so much. We're so close. It's a wonderful feeling with all of us. It does so much good.... It's just like a little party all the time, but we work hard, many hours. They're so dedicated.

For women in their seventies and eighties, quilting from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. (not including breaks) makes for a long day. Yet, quilting not only has cultural significance, but the quilting group contributes to both community integrity and feelings of individual significance. According to Irene:

Well, there were a few people in the church that decided we should give money from the heart instead of working for it, but you miss something. That's why I think we like this quilting group. We're working for something. We don't have many projects in church.... I've found that if old people keep busy they're much better off. They go home so tired. I know they're just dead tired when they're done quilting. I am too. But they'll lay down and take a little nap. It's good that they're tired that way.

While significant skill is required to produce a quilt, the quilts are not signed. It is a testimony to the cohesiveness of this group, and their ability to work together in this artistic and social context, that a finished quilt "looks like it's all been done by one lady." Irene explained why quilting is an art:

Not everybody can do it. You can be a good sewer but
can't quilt. It takes practice to do that. They do such nice work. Usually when there's other people you get different types. They come to our church because we do even quilting.

Female Organizational Support of Cultural Initiatives

At times Parkville's General Federated Women's Club provides a forum for promoting the appreciation of women's art forms through its divisional and general club meetings. In the early 1980s GFWC programs featured quilting and traditional stitchery. Also yearly bazaars sponsored by the GFWC, the church auxiliaries, and the nursing home offer a location to display these crafts while raising funds for local projects and institutional needs.

The most significant yearly cultural event in Parkville is the Fjord Festival. This festival was started initially in the 1960s as a highly instrumental proposition—"more or less as a trade promotion idea"—by the local Chamber of Commerce in order to provide an identity for the town that would make it unique from other surrounding towns. It gradually grew in size and scope replacing the annual Fourth-of-July celebration; it now includes parades (both adult and "kiddie"), craft and food booths, a small amusement carnival, and a beer garden. The cultural component is maintained by the preparation and serving of traditional ethnic foods, the wearing of costumes, and the
selling of Scandinavian crafts. As in nearly all community events and projects in Parkville the men appear to be in charge of both the planning and execution of the festival. On closer observation, the essential nature of female contributions is revealed. Several community activists commented on these contributions both in general and in more specific terms:

They've [the men] been chairmen of all the committees, but a lot of the committees are made up of women. They do all of the work really.

I know when we have the Fjord Festival in Parkville, the girls are behind that in every project.

This community is Scandinavian enough that they like to carry on a tradition.... All the Ladies Aides in each church have a bake sale...just to make this contribution of bringing the Scandinavian food I think makes quite a contribution to the Fjord Festival because people will come from miles around for a potato cake or something like that.

Moreover, at least one female community activist commented on the solidarity building character of this event:

I think it's a real important element in getting the community something to work together on.... I just think it's neat. That's because it's more people working together.

And if the measure of the value of a community event is concern for its potential loss, several Parkville women expressed dismay that increased female labor force participation may threaten this yearly tradition.
Reflecting this concern, one Parkville woman posed an interesting juxtaposition of instrumental and expressive values:

Well, I know a lot of the businessmen are feeling that it's terribly time-consuming for what they get out of it, businesswise. It doesn't bring much business into the stores.... I think the women have more of an interest in the cultural things than the men do-preservation of the old, and helping the youngsters growing up to respect the old heritage things.

Also with the distinct goal of "preserving the old," some Parkville women have formed two chapters of a national historical preservation organization. These chapters meet monthly for self-educational purposes but also are active in fundraising for local preservation projects.

Fundraising and Community Integration

In his study of Yankee City, Warner (1963:141) stressed the integrative role of fundraising in a community.

The exchange of services and money, usually in the pleasant context of entertainment, constitutes one of the great contributions of the associations to the social unity of the community, for it knits diverse groups tightly together.

Although male volunteer associations were involved in fundraising in Yankee City (as they are in Parkville), Warner (1963:143) found that the "Women's Organizations show much more ingenuity and diversity in their fundraising enterprises than do the men's groups, often disguising or
de-emphasizing the purpose." What is left unexamined by these observers is the work involved in constructing "the pleasant context of entertainment" in fundraising. Daniels (1985:363) has called this distinct form of invisible labor "sociability work." Through their fundraising, particular women volunteers create "a party-like ambience that encourages others to attend and participate in the activity...in the service of community welfare" (Daniels 1985:363).

A recreational resource that local community members in Parkville point to with pride is the public swimming pool (also serving the high school). Six years of hidden, sometimes tedious, work preceded the groundbreaking, and thousands of local dollars had to be raised in order to qualify for federal matching funds. The head of the fundraising committee for the pool was Phyllis, an energetic, middle-aged local businesswoman. She believed in the necessity of the pool because there wasn't "anything for the kids to do" in the town.

In describing the first fundraising effort, it is clear that she was aware that the purpose of fundraising was as much to ignite community enthusiasm and involvement as it was to raise money. The more people that were involved, the more successful the fundraiser was. Phyllis provided a
detailed account of one fundraising effort:

The first kick-off was the "Get in the Swim Night," and I made hundreds of posters, and we put them in store windows, and on posts and everything--"Get in the Swim." I talked to [the local restaurant] about using their big huge party room for this one night.... And they said, "Sure." They'd furnish cookies, lemonade, coffee, whatever; that would be their donation to it.... I bullied, talked and cajoled every merchant, and anybody I could think of, that would donate free stuff for prizes for this thing.... Everybody was neat.

And I got the pool committee in here one night, and we blew up balloons, and put numbers in them, and then numbered all the prizes. Then I went around and asked if anyone had checkers...and any kind of games we could use, and it was just kind of a family fun night. You pay a buck, and play games.... We had a clock and an alarm...when the alarm would go off everything would stop, and if you were playing bridge and had the Jack of Spades in your hand, you got to come up and get a balloon, and break the balloon and get whatever number it was. And if you were playing checkers and had three kings, you know. We were to think of dumb things so people could win prizes all the time, 'cuz we had thousands of them out there. Literally, we probably had more prizes than people.

(It sounds like an original idea, did you think of it?)

Yeah, tried to think of something that would get the people excited, where it wasn't going to cost them a lot.... [We] didn't make a heck of a lot of money, but it let everybody know that we were going to have a swimming pool, and this was the kick-off.... Oh, we had a lot of other fundraisers too.

Although at times she met with resistance, and while it was certainly more time consuming, Phyllis opposed those who would have preferred to purchase the prizes and food for fund-raising events. Here she described one such incident:

We got in quite a big argument here,...some of them got
mad at me, because I wanted everything free, I didn't want to spend a dime. Any money we raised was going to go to the pool, anything else was going to be free. We were not going to buy a darn thing for any fundraising; it was all voluntary.

Both Boulding (1981) and Warner (1963) speak of the significance of gift-giving to the basic integration of community. Warner (1963:142) points to the "latent feelings of solidarity; unity, and interdependence, that is evoked by gift-giving." In support of this Boulding (1981:4) argues that a gift (a grant made out of benevolence) "involves an identification on the part of the giver or donor who parts with the gift with the welfare of the recipient [community group] who gets it." Phyllis, in demanding that the goods and services be donated rather than purchased from the merchants or community members by the committee (whether consciously or unconsciously), was extracting an allegiance from community members that would not be possible if the more typical money/goods exchange took place.

There are several, nationally affiliated women's organizations in Parkville that perform both service (e.g., fundraising) and social functions in the community. Bers and Mezey (1981), in studying women's organizations, point out that fundraising and the distribution of an organization's funds affects the tenor of the community and may affect community services and priorities. A large
contributor towards community projects is the local women's sorority, Beta Sigma Phi. For the past six years this organization has held an annual community dinner. This event not only raises as much as $3,000 to $4,000 a year for local institutional needs (e.g., Parkville's hospital), but it is a well attended social event that brings diverse community people together for one night each fall.

The General Federated Women's Club has also played an important role in raising monies for local projects in Parkville. One club woman reflecting on the role the GFWC plays in Parkville remarked:

I think the Woman's Club perhaps at times might do things that would indicate what their wishes are in the town...like giving money to a fund for certain thing.... I think that's probably how they'd start. We've given to the hospital...and the hospital was certainly a thing that everybody worked at. All the organizations from time to time give money to it, seems to be quite an established thing now....

We usually make money, like we have a holiday bazaar every year now, they have crafts and such, and bake sales. And that money goes into the treasury.... Our club bought, a year ago I guess, some of those beds that you can raise and lower.... It was a good addition to the hospital.

What is not immediately apparent is the less visible, relational character of this fundraising work. A former clubwoman officer, Mildred, discussed one fundraising idea in which the event was as important as the money raised:

I guess if I had to name any one thing that I did when I was an officer, I remember we wanted to have a
fundraising project.... It was a thing where we got the whole community involved.

We had a drawing.... You start out small and you find out that it's bigger than you think.... I approached the business people, the owners of stores, and even insurance salesmen, and I think we had 120 different businesses that I contacted, and we told them we were going to show a movie [at the local theater]. All the people were of my age or nearly so they would remember all these old time actors, and we thought that would be something they would enjoy.

We told them if they would contribute $5.00 you'll get a free ticket to the movie and free advertising. If you contribute $10.00 or more, you'll get two tickets. We took in several hundred dollars because the response was 100%.... We had some that gave $25.00. We thought this was marvelous.

What we had was a drawing, and we gave so much money away.... Then we had lunch afterwards provided.... In other words the money came back to the community. It was nothing as far as service to the community other than something that everybody was involved in.

Daniels (1987:408), in her analysis of women's invisible work, noted that women who organize community benefits and parties "make the aura of sociability that not only encourages people to give generously to a cause but also develops the esprit to create and shape a sense of community." Creating this ambience to elicit sociability requires ingenuity, organizational skills, and persistent effort (Daniels 1985). But as evidenced by Mildred's concluding comments about her fundraising achievement, that "It was nothing as far as service to the community," this work is too often devalued, even by those who perform it.
Although men dominate formal positions and leadership roles within community organizations and institutions in Parkville, women build the social base of community necessary for the maintenance and viability of these local institutions and organizations (see Daniels 1987, Haney 1981, Stoneall 1983).

Women are the liaisons with community institutions such as the school and church, providing the mediating relationships between the family and the larger society (Hess and Handel 1959). Community issues are of central importance to women. The development of libraries, educational programs, and meals-on-wheels can be linked to their concern with the preservation and reproduction of family life within a particular locale (Wilson 1977).

Women's participation in the public life of their communities "in the varying transfamilial, formal, and informal organizations and institutions that link the actors within the territorially bounded unit" (Lofland 1975:152-153) is often overlooked or muted. When engaged in this work of "making community" (Daniels 1987), women have been viewed as agents of expressiveness (Parsons 1955:3-34), providing the backdrop for the instrumental activity of others (Daniels 1985). Not recognized is the work involved
in "maintaining the services and the sense of community required" to preserve and reproduce local institutions (Daniels 1987:412, see also Wadel 1979).

Important for students of community is an understanding of how the social fabric of community life is constructed (Bernard 1973). This includes the often invisible work of local volunteers to maintain local services and to organize to meet unmet needs. Also essential to the social fabric are the "warm and caring aspects of the construction and maintenance of interpersonal relationships (Daniels 1987:409)." Attention to these activities means focusing outside of the cash-nexus economy and instead exploring more closely the economy of love (Boulding 1969).
1. In Parkville, the GFWC was an expansion of the New Era Club, a literary study club. A founding member of the Parkville GFWC explains:

New Era always had in mind that if we could get a Federated Women's Club started they would disband and work in that, which we did.... There were several study clubs, you might call them. There was New Era and others. The others kept on going and New Era disbanded immediately and we took offices in the GFWC.

2. Early advocates of municipal housekeeping included Melusina Fay Pierce, noted for her work in cooperative housekeeping. In speaking in 1869 at a meeting in New York organized by Jane Cunningham Croly, who later founded the General Federated Women's Clubs, Pierce called for the formation of a Women's Parliament to deal with public issues (Hayden 1981).

Later, Caroline Hunt, a noted home economist who had lived at Chicago's Hull House, published a book, *Home Problems from a New Standpoint* (1908:175), in which she argued that women now had a mandate to deal with such issues as "factory legislation, welfare, and local government" since households "depended on town water and garbage systems, and required pure foods." Jane Addams (Kraditor 1965:54), writing in support of women's suffrage wrote, "May we not say that city housekeeping has failed partly because women, the traditional housekeepers, have not been consulted as to its multiform activities?"
CHAPTER IV.
WOMEN AND POLITICS IN PARKVILLE

Given the neglect of past studies to consider women's political participation at the community level (Stewart 1980), an examination of female political activism in one small town, Parkville, will enrich our understanding of grassroots political work and provide insight into those factors which prevent women from achieving positions of power in local government and politics. It is at the political system's base, in the local organization, that the majority of citizens' political careers are ignited (Almond and Verba 1963).

Despite the consensus that local political activism is critical, especially for women (see Flammang 1984, Stewart 1980, Stuart and Van Es 1978), most community researchers and social scientists have ignored the contributions that women make to the local political process (for exceptions see Bokemier and Tait 1980; Bookman and Morgen 1988; Colfer and Colfer 1978; Fink 1986; Johnson and Stanwick 1979; Karnig and Walter 1976; Lee 1977; Margolis 1979; McCourt 1977; Moyer, et al. 1976; Naples 1988; Stoneall 1983; Stuart and Van Es 1978). For the most part, the literature about women and politics since the late 1960s has focused on the few women who achieve state or nationally elected positions,
ignoring the many women who are active in local political organizations, but rarely advance further (Diamond 1977; Githens and Prestage 1977; Kirkpatrick 1974, 1976; Jacquette 1974; Jennings and Thomas 1968; Tolchin 1974). Stewart (1980:5) found that although researchers examine the more distant national and state arenas, the local level remains relatively unexplored.

In this chapter the contributions and potential contributions of Parkville women to the local political process will be explored. Political activity will refer to elected and appointed public offices, local political parties, and nonpartisan local issue organizations and groups, excluding those groups which operate on an ad hoc basis (adapted from Lee 1977). In addition, both the literature and Parkville data will be examined to determine what combination of factors preclude women—in spite of their significant social and economic contributions—from running for political office in Parkville. Descriptive analyses of several local female candidates and elected office holders will provide information about what is necessary to encourage traditional political involvement of women at the local levels. Finally, both the importance and limitations of this involvement will be examined.
The Limits of Traditional Definitions of Politics

Classic community power studies (Dahl, 1963, Hunter, 1951, Presthus 1964) and studies of politics (Lane 1959, Milbrath 1965), have tended to underline the insignificance of female participation if they mention women at all. Traditional community power studies assume male dominance—that "men will occupy dominant political roles and control political decisions" (Bourque and Grossholtz 1974:227). Both the elitist (Hunter 1953, Vidich and Bensman 1958)) and the pluralist (Dahl 1961, Presthus 1964) analyses of power tend to focus on the prominent public actors. Although Hunter refers to the understructure of leadership and to a black subcommunity in Regional City and Dahl mentions "sub-leaders" and the community's apolitical members (homo civicus), their definitions of power and politics preclude an examination of the off-stage or back stage players (Goffman 1959). Not surprisingly, a great number of these supporting community actors are women.

A few women have been identified as "social leaders" within the elitist community power structure model (Stuart and van Es 1978). Even when women are identified however, they are virtually ignored. Although Hunter (1953) identified six women among his forty leaders, he described only one of these female leaders and only briefly referred
to the activities of one other (Bourque and Grossholtz 1974:252).

Some pluralist community power structure researchers have reported a "small proportion of female officeholders" (Stuart and Van Es 1978:44). "However, in the pluralist model, which assumes widely dispersed leadership, it is especially striking that women are so overwhelmingly absent from power positions" (Stuart and Van Es 1978:44).

Moreover, Sapiro (1979:263), in examining Dahl's study, found that he dismissed his discovery that one-third of the community's sub-leaders were women (ninety-eight leaders) by noting that "...in a society where public is still widely thought to be a man's world, and where men rather than women are generally expected to occupy the positions of responsibility, it is not surprising that two-third's of the sub-leaders are men."

Political science studies have traditionally pointed to lower and less influential female participation in electoral politics when referring to female political participation (Almond and Verba 1965, Duverger 1955, Eldersveld 1964, Gruberg 1968, Lane 1959, Lee 1977). Until recently women's political attitudes and behaviors have been conceptualized in terms of the political behaviors and characteristics of men. Thus "women have been depicted as politically
inadequate, unmotivated, naive, dependent upon the knowledge of men, and rightfully invisible" (Baxter and Lansing 1983:6). After reviewing the political science literature on women, Constantini and Craik (1972:218) noted, "To one degree or another, women have tended to defer to the political judgement of men, in this country and elsewhere; sex roles have been so defined that politics is primarily the business of men." As an example of the traditional portrayal of women in political science, Duverger (1955:129) commented in his work on the political roles that "Women...have the mentality of minors in many fields, and, particularly in politics, they usually accept paternalism on the part of men. The man-husband, fiance, lover, or myth—is the mediator between them and the political world."

With the impact of the increased education and employment of women and of the women's movement, both the pattern of women's political participation (Andersen 1975) and the way that female political activities are conceptualized appear to be changing (Bookman and Morgen 1988, Shanley and Schuck 1975). More recent studies have uncovered increased female political participation at national (Poole and Ziegler 1985), at state (National Women's Political Caucus 1983, Lynn 1975), and local levels (Bokemier and Tait 1980, Center for the American Woman and

There has been an increase of female participation in elected and appointed offices at the local level, especially in school boards (Bers 1978, Johnson and Stanwick 1979) and city councils (Karnig and Walter 1976). Between 1971 and 1983, female mayors increased from 1 percent to 8.7 percent (National Women's Political Caucus 1983), and female municipal officials increased threefold from 4 percent to 13 percent (Center for the American Woman and Politics 1981). In the five-year period between 1975 and 1980 alone, the number of women elected at the township and the municipal level more than tripled (Center for the American Woman and Politics 1981). In the mid-1970s the proportion of women on school boards was estimated to be between 18 to 22 percent (Johnson and Stanwick 1979). This is an increase from the 12 percent figure reported by the School Board Association (1974), a figure which had been stable for the last half-century (as reported in Bers 1978).

Moreover, in an investigation comparing urban and rural women Bescher-Donnelly and Smith (1981:177) reported that "rural women are more successful than urban women in being elected to local offices" (see also the Center for the American Woman and Politics 1976, Diamond 1977). Recent studies of small towns have also reported an increase in
rural women's political participation. Bescher-Donnelly and Donnelly (1976), in their ethnography of a small Michigan community, found an increase in the number of women running for the library board positions, the school board, and the village council. And Fink (1986) discovered that women were elected to local offices in her study of two Iowa small towns. In 1982, the presidents of both school boards were women, and women were on the town councils and on the hospital board.

In their restudy of the community actor pools of two rural towns, Prairie City and Center Town, Bokemier and Tait (1980) found a significant increase in the proportion of women among the pool of power actors from the 1960s (16.2%) to the 1970s (26.7%). According to the authors, the reasons for this increase varied by town. In Prairie City, the women identified as power actors utilized their traditional roles and interests as mothers and the "good-companion female role model" (see Parsons 1942) to become more visibly involved in community welfare issues. In Center Town, the majority of female community power actors were employed in careers that allowed "access to additional communication and information networks" and additionally reported "slightly more memberships in voluntary associations than other power actors" (Bokemier and Tait 1980:250).
Stoneall (1983:23), in her study of Zenda, noted that the "least public, but still indispensable, community contributions of women are their 'behind the scenes' political activities." Both Lee (1977) and Margolis (1979), in investigating gender differences in local political participation, discovered in the communities they studied that women spent more time in local political activities than men. In fact, Margolis (1979), in her study of the gender division of labor in the day-to-day workings of two political organizations in a small New England town, "Fairtown," found that women worked more than twice as many hours on political activities as did the men. Furthermore, women spent "a far greater percentage of their time in hidden or limited-visibility activity" (Margolis 1979:316); this work included telephoning, fundraisers and mailings, and pickups and deliveries (see also Conway 1979). Thus the "thereness" of women in local politics is beginning to be documented.

Women and Party Politics in Parkville

In Parkville in 1982, there were no female elected public officials either on the city council or on the school board; however, women were active in local politics. In Parkville, as well as in the locales investigated by
Margolis (1979) and Stoneall (1983), women's political activities most often take place in roles without title or acknowledgement in settings invisible to the wider community. As one local Parkville political activist explained:

...as far as politics...I feel that women do a lot of the behind things. A lot of the coffees of candidates, a lot of the things like this are managed by women. A lot of the telephoning, a lot of the mailings and this kind of thing.

Despite the fact that such supportive activities have been characterized as drudgery tasks (Margolis 1979), "lickin' and stickin'" (Karnig and Walter 1976:612), or evidence of "traditional female passivity" (Lynn and Flora 1977), both interviews and observations confirmed the importance of Parkville women's volunteer (or minimally paid) labor—the "behind things"—to the viability of the local political structure.

One of the most politically active woman in Parkville is Phyllis, a vital woman in her 50s. A local political party leader for decades, her political work has both leadership and organizing components (Sacks 1987). Phyllis explained:

I'm responsible for our party's politics in Parkville.... [I] make sure the Republicans are registered, so...I register anybody and everybody who's new in town when they reach eighteen, and get the party vote out.
Phyllis' position is not the norm in rural partisan politics. In her review of the empirical research on women as voluntary political activists Conway (1979:293-294), found that women were "least likely to serve as party leaders in rural areas, in central city machine controlled organizations, or in districts populated largely by more recent immigrant groups, where cultural norms have not been supportive of a political leadership role for women."

As an organizer, Phyllis assumes much of the burden of the routine work of getting out the vote and raising money, such as making the arrangements for fundraisers, preparing food, cleaning up afterwards, and making arrangements for mailings. Although this work involves many interactions, it is work that is often done alone. As Phyllis described some of her behind the scenes political work, it was evident that her attention to detail and non-aversion to menial tasks was what enabled local people to feel connected to national and state-level party politics in Parkville. Also involved in her political activities are the "skills required in making decisions and judgments, sizing up prospects, and knowing how to influence and persuade" (Daniels 1987:408). Phyllis explained:

[I] have headquarters...oh, and parades and candidates, and you know, all that kind of stuff.... Generally I'll arrange coffees in town here for candidates, or a chili deal, [an] after football game coffee, or something
when it's an election year.

Phyllis described the extensive time she puts into her political work. When asked how many hours on the average, she said:

Oh, [long silence], I have no idea. I really don't know. It'd probably scare me if I really sat down to figure it all out. Cuz...you're working into the evening, and a lot of phone calling to people to help you phone call, and then checking up to see if they're really following through on things. I, Lord, I have no idea! In an election year I'm kind of working on things all year, from our caucus on. Usually about six weeks before the election is when I really kind of concentrate then, and it really is full time then.... As far as hours, oh good God, days!

Women, more than men, tend to become involved in intra-organizational activities; this is true for both local non-partisan politics (Lee 1977) and political party organizations (Constantini and Craik 1972). Within her party, Phyllis plays an intraparty role that is essential to her political leadership position. Because she is employed in town and is active in numerous women's organizations, Phyllis is able to act as an intermediary within her own party, relaying information and communications at the local level. In addition, her activism in party politics at the local, county, and state levels affords her access to people and information less readily available to the average citizen. These contacts became especially useful when Phyllis, serving on Parkville's Recreation Committee,
utilized her party contacts to secure support for a local sports facility for Parkville's youth.

Phyllis commented on the meager support (with the exception of the presiding committee man) she's received from former committee men in Parkville:

I would do all the organizing, and I could always call on the committee man to help if I needed extra chairs or needed decorations. You know, he would help that way, but...when it came time to call for different... workers... and get the phone calls and get everybody organized...they were too busy or they had a meeting that night.... I've had a lot of committee men through the years.... I've never had a really, really good one. I've never had a really gung-ho one. I really don't have any good committee men to be honest.

At a local political caucus meeting in Parkville that was led by Phyllis and her newest committee man, George Lane, a prominent member of the local community power structure, Phyllis served as secretary, while George served as chair, yet he often turned to her for points of information, and Phyllis actively continued registering voters and recruiting volunteers throughout the local caucus meeting. In a follow-up interview Phyllis was asked why George had chaired the meeting. She recalled:

George is the first one that has really been a help. When I asked him to conduct the caucus, great, no problem, he would do it. I've always done it in the past.... I haven't had a committee man who would do it. A lot of times they wouldn't even come [to the caucus meeting].

Phyllis, even in her secondary role as secretary, was
integral to the smooth functioning of the caucus, this was later supported by a Parkville woman who had participated in the caucus. She described Phyllis this way:

She's a strong woman. She says it like she thinks it is, whether others agree or not. I guess I respect that.... I don't know Mr. Lane, but I feel Phyllis is a lot stronger.... I just feel like she knew what she was doing [at the caucus], and she was going to do it. Sometimes I found him maybe even leaning a little on Phyllis whether he knew it or not.

Moreover, the importance of women in visible political roles was underlined by Beth, a former local committee woman in an opposing political party:

As far as I've watched the politics, now we have committee persons [versus committee men], and there are two women in our party. The other party still has a man and a woman.... The women did all the work; they might as well be there and get equal credit.

The Parkville political process also depends on women's work on the election board. Beth, who has been active in local partisan politics for many years, and who has also served on the election board, describes what the job entails:

It's a matter of running the election. I served as chairman the last election. That's the first time I've done that. I've been on it for ten years, probably. It's just at every election setting up the machines, and being responsible for the count, and that type of thing.

Jeanette, another woman active in the community who has served on the election board for over a decade, explained that she likes to serve on the election board for both
political and social reasons:

I think it's interesting.... I like to do it because it is a political type of thing.... We are appointed by the county auditor, and we are the officers of the election to see that the election is run fairly and that everything is done according to the law.... [Another thing] that I think is interesting about it is that it's a good way to get acquainted with a lot of the people in town because when they come into vote they have to give you their name and where they live and so forth...and I like meeting people and seeing people.

Jeanette believes that the reason that the five member election board is all female is because the women involved do not work outside the home and thus have the time. Yet, both she and Beth Hodges work outside the home, and in addition are active in other community activities. Moyer et al. (1976), in their study of women's community activism in two Wisconsin counties, found that women who are politically active were more involved in their communities through paid work and other organizational activities, than their nonactive sisters.

There was a tendency on the part of the Parkville respondents to downplay the time and effort involved in their political activities and to underestimate the extent of their political involvement. Nearly all of the women interviewed admitted to voting regularly in local, state, and national elections. In addition, many respondents participated in such political activities as voter
registration and canvassing, attending and serving as committee women in local Republican or Democratic political caucuses, and serving on the election board. In spite of this political activism, the majority of the women queried did not see themselves as political. Furthermore, even when a woman described herself as political, qualifiers would often minimize her contribution. For example, the following response was typical for the Parkville respondents:

(Do you consider yourself a political person?)
Kind of.
(What does the term political mean to you?)
Well, I am not very well read on politics. I believe in voting for the person, not necessarily the party. I have enjoyed working [for a political party locally]; I have done some canvassing and telephoning and that type of stuff.... I did get to work at the primary elections; I worked in production [vote tabulation]. That was the first time and I enjoyed that.
(Who got you involved?)
Beth, she's been involved a long time. I went to a few conventions and rallies with her a couple of times. I'm not a deep enough reader and I don't always know what the issues are. I suppose I should concentrate on things like that more.

Few Parkville women, no matter how intense their level of political involvement, felt qualified and/or motivated to seek local office. Ernestine typifies this attitude:
(Do you consider yourself a political person?)
Oh, I've had to do enough work for it.
(In what way?)

Well, years ago I was the our party's committee chairman for the town, and I was on the central committee and attended the meetings for about ten years. Then when my mother got worse, I didn't do it any more. But I still do help out on surveys and things like that.... I belong to the party's Women's Club, [and] the party's Central Committee...

(Have you ever thought of running for office?)

I've got enough [local women's organizational] offices as it is. [Laughs] Oh, no, I wouldn't be bright enough for anything like that...

Sacks (1988a:121), in her study of workplace struggles at a university hospital, was told that, "Women don't lead...but they do lead!" And through her participant observation study Sacks (1988a:119) discovered that although women and men both exercised leadership, "they did so in different ways." Men played the traditional leadership/spokesperson roles, while women engaged in organizing activities and acted as "centerwomen"---centers and sustainers of essential social ties and networks. Yet, centerwomen, while they had a great deal of responsibility, had little public authority.

In a related way, Margolis (1979), in her study of Fairtown's Republican and Democratic Town Committees, found that men, although far less active than women, occupied both the party chairperson positions and were engaged in highly noticeable political activities such as speechmaking. The
women played such informal roles in their political work as "the Drudge"—attending to the routine work of getting out the vote and fundraising; "the Communicator-in-Chief"—carrying information between the two Town Committees and from one Town Committee to other local groups and organizations; and the "Majority Whip"—organizing meetings, fielding candidates, and filling in when a male did not follow through on an assignment. Margolis (1979:323) concluded that women are playing their appropriate gender roles when they "take care of the maintenance of institutions and fill in the gaps." The work that women performed in Fairtown, although essential to the reproduction of politics, was not recognized when ranking positions had to be filled. According to Margolis (1979:323), "it is the men—ever conspicuous and desirous of titles—who usually get the nod" (see also Boneparth 1977). Likewise in Parkville, although women don't lead in formal elected positions, their political activities as campaign and caucus organizers, committee women, and election board volunteers are essential to the reproduction of partisan politics at the local level. The majority of female respondents, although they are active voters and many are engaged in political volunteerism, do not recognize their political or civic work as adequate preparation for more
formal political elected and/or appointed roles. Nor are female political activists recruited by others to run for local offices except in a few rare occasions. Thus, for the most part, the work women do in Parkville has not translated into a recognizable political presence in the town.

Barriers to the Election of Women in Local Politics

Researchers interested in women's political participation at the local level have pointed to both the advantages and barriers that exist for women at this grassroots level. On the one hand, researchers have argued that women seek local political office, and are more successful at the local levels, because they are more involved and closer to traditional local concerns (Constantini and Craik 1972, Gruberg 1968). Moreover, local political offices show the most significant gains for women (Stewart 1980) because they are the most accessible. Local offices require less role dispensability (Kirkpatrick 1974), less monetary expenditure (Bers 1978), and less need for travel (Karnig and Walter 1976) than offices at the state and national levels. Also, local offices are the least selective, for "male occupants of local political positions have amply demonstrated that local political offices may be occupied by persons of vastly different qualifications"
Perhaps not surprisingly, the Parkville respondents believed that the most appropriate office-holding position for local women was on the school board. In support of this response, Bers (1978:382) stated that, "One of the few traditional legitimate arenas in which a woman could participate was that of education." Johnson and Stanwick (1979:66), in their analysis of women on New Jersey's school boards, argued:

If women were to be adequately represented in any public sphere, one would predict substantial participation on bodies making educational policy. Teaching is an accepted feminine occupation; the active membership of the PTA is largely female; traditionally, mothers are more immediately concerned than fathers with the education of their children. Unlike other public offices in which female occupants typically have no minor children, school board members of both sexes are overwhelmingly parents of school-aged children. Moreover, the local, part-time, largely unsalaried nature of school board membership suggests a high degree of correspondence with the traditional voluntary and community service activities of women (see also Constantini and Craik 1972, Durverger 1954, Jennings and Thomas 1968).

On the other hand, researchers have discovered that female candidates must be exceptional if they are to be taken seriously by the electorate (King 1977). Furthermore, Karnig and Walter (1976:608), in their study of local city council elections, found that:

[The most significant problems for women]...are associated with becoming candidates rather than gaining election after female candidates are on the ballot....
The absence of women candidates precluded any possible female representation in nearly 80 percent of the council positions, while women candidates lost comparatively few seats to men, about 12 percent of the posts up for election.

Women must be highly motivated to overcome traditional role constraints (Bers 1978), which include their responsibilities as wives and mothers (Jacquette 1974) and their underrepresentation in their paid work roles in the "eligible pool [for political offices]: the business and professional occupations from which most officials are recruited" (Welch 1978:373). It is also important to note that women may be more politically successful at the local levels because there is less power and prestige involved in these nonpartisan political positions (Krauss 1974). Yet, the gains that women have made at the local levels have not translated into positions at the state or national levels (Bescher-Donnelly and Smith 1981). Lynn and Flora (1977:142), in their study of female delegates to the 1972 Republican and Democratic national conventions, reported lower female political representation from rural versus urban communities. They credited this difference to the lack of childcare facilities in rural areas, "coupled with more traditional views of maternal obligations."

With only a few exceptions Parkville women expressed enthusiastic support for increasing the numbers of women
elected at the national, state, and local levels. A woman who is a visible member of the local political elite serves as a role model for other women and may augment the public acceptance of women in local political roles (MacManus 1981). Elizabeth, elected to the school board several decades ago, was encouraged to run for office by the first woman to serve on the Parkville school board. Elizabeth stated:

I suppose that would help if you had some strong leaders among the women. It does help to have somebody that's already there.

The support for augmenting the numbers of local female candidates is also underscored by comments such as the following by three Parkville women:

I would like to see some of them [women]...on the school board and some of those things instead of all men.... I don't know if there have been any women on school board now for awhile.

I'd like to see it [woman be elected to city council]. I think it will take awhile. We've had several that have run, but didn't make it.

I'm always glad when a woman has the guts to get up and run for something. Right now I feel there are many that are qualified that hold back. Maybe they fear they won't be accepted.

Local elected offices in Parkville are nonpartisan and include the city council and mayoral offices, the school board, and the hospital board. School boards are often omitted from the study of politics, yet they make up 20
percent of all the local governing boards in the United States (Johnson and Stanwick 1979). And while researchers have found that school politics and partisan politics attract different actors (Bers 1978, Iannaccone and Lutz 1970, Ziegler and Jennings 1974), school boards are actively involved in local community governance (Johnson and Stanwick 1979). Also important are council appointments to the town's park board and library board, as well as elected church offices such as deacon and members of the board of trustees. Apart from the library board, which has nearly always had all female members, the local political gains for women reported in the literature for the most part have not been felt in Parkville. No woman has ever run for mayor of Parkville, and the two women who have run for the Parkville City Council, one in the 1960s and the second in the 1970s, were defeated. Of the six women who ran for the Parkville School Board in the last 50 years, only three have been elected. On the Parkville Hospital Board, the first elected woman had just completed her six year term. Two women have served on the Parkville Park Board, with the most recent appointment in the 1980s. Within the churches only one woman has served as deacon in the Lutheran churches, and likewise only one woman has served as president of the congregation in the Methodist Church.
What are the reasons for this poor representation of women in local elected and appointed positions of prominence in Parkville? In running for local offices, rural women face both social-structural and internalized barriers to their success (Bescher-Donnelly and Smith 1981). Bokemeier and Tait (1980:240) found that, "Where women might feel a sense of civic duty to become active in rural community endeavors, they generally lack the confidence, commitment, cultural support, and socialization to seek political office." Interviews with Parkville women demonstrate the complicated and interrelated nature of the barriers that severely limit the numbers of local female candidates and elected officials (also see, Jaquette 1974, Mezey 1980, Stewart 1980, Welch 1978).

Two-thirds of the respondents queried did not believe that a woman would have an equal chance of being elected to office in Parkville. Interestingly, the one-third who disagreed concurred with the vast majority of the respondents that there were gender-related reasons that would directly or indirectly discourage women from seeking local offices in Parkville.

Eighty percent of the women provided two or more reasons to explain the lack of female elected officials in Parkville. These often interrelated explanations included
the traditional socio-cultural environment; male control or domination of public decision-making; female socialization; fear of defeat; conflicts among familial, paid, and volunteer work roles; and female disinterest in the local political agenda.

The Separation of Spheres

The lack of female success in attaining elected office in Parkville was explained by three-fourths of the respondents by referring to traditional belief systems that support an ideology of separate spheres for males and females and/or a "town father" orientation to local elected leadership positions. Adherence to a more traditional sex-role ideology is stronger in rural versus urban areas (Flora and Johnson 1978). While women are highly visible in paid employment and as employers on Parkville's main street, selected men remain the primary spokespersons in mixed public settings and in elected, appointed, and ad hoc positions. As one Parkville woman explained:

I feel that it's just the image, especially in this community, that the male image is that they should be the ones that speak out.

In her study of Zenda, Stoneall (1983:23-24) found that the most common "behind the scenes" political roles for women were helping "with some or all of the duties of the
political offices held by their husbands." Likewise in Parkville, while women mentioned avenues of influence such as women's clubs, attending the council meetings, and participating in the Chamber of Commerce, the majority of the women felt that women were most active through their husbands—"they do a lot of talking at home"—and/or through the town's male leadership. In response to a question on the ways local women participate in public decision-making because they were not in elected offices in Parkville, the following comments from three Parkville women reflected the majority of the statements made by other Parkville women:

Probably through their husbands would be about the only way they could. I'm sure some men do listen to their wife's view, although they wouldn't admit it. They would indicate that it was their view. I wouldn't know of any other way.

I think they [women] have a big influence on decision-making, but like influencing their husbands. Their husbands are in the public eye, but they will vote on certain things. For example my husband is a church officer and goes to board meetings twice a month and he'll ask me what I'll think and I'll tell him. And if I have a better understanding of a certain area than he does he'll pretty much support my opinion and use that as he votes. A lot of times women's positions aren't in the public eye, but if they feel strongly about something then there's an undercurrent out of the public eye. Their opinions mean something, someone will listen.

I think they tell their husbands. Women aren't afraid to give their opinions to councilmen. If we want something done we pretty much pull the strings and get it done.... I think the women are there and they're voicing their opinions but yet they're not in the limelight. I think they have a lot of say and a lot of
pull on what goes on in the community, especially when it's a religious thing.

For a few respondents the separation of spheres, which they view as complementary (separate but equal), does not pose a problem. One such respondent, Mary, explained the separate sphere ideology this way:

I think it's just our heritage. I think we've been brought up as women [to believe that] our places are in the home, in the church, and the ladies aide, and the library.... They in a sense have a great influence on the town because they are good organizations. I don't think that while they are doing this...they have a desire to get out there and take these jobs away from the men. I don't think the men are doing it with the purpose in mind of taking it away from the women. I think that they feel that it's an obligation or a duty of theirs. We don't have that type of feeling here....

Maybe we women in Parkville don't have a desire to get on the town council. It's just an extra burden.... Now I have no desire to run for city council because I think we have men there that are really interested in the town. I think they are doing a good job and it requires a night a week for them to keep things going the way they should. I think women are just happy the men are doing it. I haven't heard any women specifically wanting to run.... I think we're pretty selective as to what men and what family that they come from.... I think we've had good men on the school board. I think we've been satisfied with what they've been doing. They have ladies on the Library Board...because we feel that they maybe have more time to read. It just seems more of a refined job.

Other women, although they did not concur with these beliefs, also mentioned Parkville's cultural heritage and traditions to explain the scarcity of female candidates for city council:
It's going to take Parkville a little longer to accept a woman. They're pretty set and perhaps narrow-minded. It will come but it's going to be awhile.

They [the townspeople] have never had [a woman]. It would be hard to think of them starting it I would imagine.

It's a small town; that ethnic background is still so strong. There are a lot of older people that I just don't think they're [ready for women in the city council]. She'd have to have a lot of qualifications. Maybe if she were somebody that had been in the community a long time...[she] could pull it off, but I think she'd have a tough time.... I look at my husband's grandfather and he's very opinionated and very stubborn and the old way is the way to do things. That's still there in those older people and the majority of the community. I think there's still enough of that in the community that I think it would be tough for somebody trying to break through.... I just don't think they'd think she'd have enough on the ball.

Respondents agreed that women's primary influence still lay not in the paid workforce or in politics but in the home. A mother of two in her 30s, who described women's overall community position in Parkville as unequal, explained why:

Women are still expected to stay home and raise children. It's still believed that a woman's place is in the home.... I think the general feeling is that women aren't capable because the only thing they know how to do is sit at home.

And a woman in her 80s concurred with her explanation:

Well, I think they thought women were too dumb, and they just didn't know enough.... I just think it was the sentiment of the people that didn't think women should take part in that. It's just been that way.

One-third of the respondents clearly underlined the
fact that Parkville is a "man-oriented town." The following comments reflect that position:

The community is looking for a man.

Well, we haven't been enlightened enough yet. The men kind of are the rulers in town. We haven't had anybody [woman] on our city council. We just haven't gotten used to that yet.

I think it's that feeling that men should do it.... I think women could carry on, if they were chosen. I'm sure they would.

A few women were more pointed in their equation of men with paternalism, a paternalism that both demeans women and blocks female political opportunities.

It's a die-hard paternalism on the part of the men in town. They always tell us "girls" to come down in front [at public meetings] and sit with the men. They don't take women seriously.

I feel a lot of the women do a lot of the work and there still are some male chauvinists in town that can be very patronizing.... There are some men in town in the churches and the business places that are maybe insecure. There are no women on the council. There are no women on the school board.... Some of the men that are in there now, if they can possibly keep women out and keep things down underneath and keep the lid on so to speak they are going to. I would say that these are men with very narrow minds, but we do have some of those men that are in our council and in a position to run our town; and as long as we have that I don't think women will have a chance.... It makes you wonder almost if the town doesn't fear what a woman might add.

In her study of two rural Iowa towns, Fink (1986:220-221) discovered that males "constituted the most significant public," for when they spoke at meetings they both commanded attention and would define the parameters of an issue. And
"while these men probably formulated their positions through discussions with their wives, they, and not their wives, governed public opinion." Fink (1986:209) pointedly argued that the fact that "some men dominated unselfishly, gently, and lovingly did not negate the reality of domination, and it was not something that most women could escape." Gentle domination did not address women's need for emotional, economic and social choices in their lives." As it exists in Parkville, paternalism is more insidious than blatant domination and, thus, harder to confront and overcome.

The Women Do Not Push Hard Enough

Over one-fourth of the respondents believe that the women in Parkville "do not push hard enough" and that more "qualified" women needed to seek office in order to be elected. When probed further these women would often reveal that female resistance to office was perhaps understandable given the tradition of male domination and/or time constraints. A local school teacher, who felt that women were "somewhat unequal" in Parkville, explained why there were not more women in public offices in Parkville.

[T]here's not the push for it.... I think it boils down to the limits of what one puts on oneself.... You're always going to have people watching. I think there's probably more talk if a woman does something, they judge them harder.
From a General Federated Women's Club officer who is considering a possible run for the school board:

I don't feel that we've really had a good candidate [for school board]. When I say "we," I mean females. The... candidates we have had...[were] not the kind of persons the voter would back.... I think they [women] recognize that it is a very difficult thing to be elected. The ones that maybe have a better chance of winning are not willing to put their whatever on the line.... We still have a lot of stereotypes.

And from the sole woman member of one local board:

[I]s it because we women haven't pushed to hold some of these positions as much as the men have?... Is it because we are involved? If you have a job and then come home and take care of your home, are you going to take on another responsibility? I think you just run out of time and energy.

Fear, feelings of inadequacy, and lack of time were the dominant reasons provided by Parkville respondents to explain why more women did not seek local offices. Fear was explicitly mentioned by several respondents:

I do think there are lots of women who are equal to step out and help in politics and running the cities or towns that are just holding back because they are afraid they won't be welcomed or encouraged.... But if new ideas were welcomed they might just surprise us with what they would come up with.

I think they just take it for granted that they're not going to win. It just seems to be the norm.

A community activist expressed her thoughts about the level of local resistance that a female candidate for school board might expect in Parkville:

As far as the power structure, we still don't have any women.... I think it would be dreadfully difficult to
get a woman on the school board now.... I think that a lot of the women feel that it is useless to try to gain... an office on the school board. Our school board has been the same for years, and years and years. And we have a good school system, but it's almost like a dynasty.... To try to break through that power structure, I just don't have any idea what it would take.... You would have to be willing to put up with lots of criticism because I think the power structure is such that if you would try to break into that, then your whole life would be scrutinized, and there would be a lot of negative comments.... For a community that looks like it's very, very open, it's very, very closed. And boy I tell you, for a woman who tried to break into that, whew [sighs], she'd have to have a lot more guts than I've got.... I just can't imagine what it would take.

One of the explanations commonly offered by political scientists to explain the absence of female candidates is to point to women's lower sense of political efficacy compared to their male counterparts. As Campbell et al. (1964:490) described:

Men are more likely than women to feel that they can cope with the complexities of politics and to believe that their participation carries some weight in the political process.... What has been less adequately transmitted to the woman is a sense of some personal competence vis a vis the political world.

In attempting to explain this discrepancy, feminist social scientists have asked if women's reticence to run for office might not be "a perceptive assessment of the political process" (Bourque and Grossholtz 1974:23). Women's lowered sense of political efficacy may be a realistic response to real structural and social psychological constraints, which both restrict access to political resources and promote
traditional gender-typing thus resulting in a measurable difference in political effectiveness (Ackelsberg 1988).

In Parkville, several of the women who are active in the community did not consider themselves adequately prepared to run for city council. A mother in her late 20s felt that most of the Parkville women had been "brought up that we're not qualified," while a successful businesswoman explained:

> Many women have not felt qualified to run for the council. They don't want the position of spending the tax money. We need someone who would understand the workings. I can run my business and get up in front of groups, but I do not feel qualified to serve on the city council and make those decisions.

A woman in her 30s, who was newly active in local partisan politics, shared how she felt both unprepared and generally inadequate to hold any political office. She said:

> I said to my husband I'd like to run [for the city council] but...he works for the city. I thought about the school board, but I'm chicken. I just feel like I have nothing, I don't know anything about it. I don't know anything about the financial part of the school. I know nothing about this, know nothing about that. My mother was on the school board for years [in another town]. She loved it. I would like to do something like that but I'm afraid to.... Somebody told me, and I think it's true, it's who you know in Parkville.... People don't know me. They know my husband, but they don't know me.

Because women who work outside of the home are primarily responsible for home duties and in addition are often involved in local volunteer activities, this double
day prevents many of the most qualified women from seeking local offices.

A working mother in her 20s explained:

There really aren't a whole lot of outspoken women and the ones that are so involved in everything else. Plus I think a lot of women it's so new that they're working that they are so involved in getting ahead and dealing with family and everything that would just be something more.

And from a highly respected main street businesswoman:

It's been suggested that I run [for city council].... There are many women who just are not interested. They want to be just women and stay at home, even if they work with a business of their own. Mainly, it's because even if she owns a business, she still has more responsibilities in the home than the man.... She has a fulltime job at home. It keeps you thinking all the time.... [For example] for night meetings, men don't need to worry if all the kids are fed, the kitchen is clean. Not many men have to do that. They can just go.... I don't think women want to get involved, they're too busy.

Thus, even when they feel competent to do so, time constraints seem to be a real barrier to women who might consider local political office.

The Limits of the Local Political Agenda

Only recently have researchers noted that when "politics" is defined as a male domain, issues become very narrowly defined and weighted toward traditional masculine concerns (Bourque and Grossholtz 1974; McCormack 1975). Evidence of this was noted in the comments of a few of the
respondents. While supportive of increasing the political participation of women and while active in both paid and volunteer work roles in Parkville, these women were not interested in city council business. They explained:

Some of those jobs I wouldn't want to have either. Some of the decisions they [council members] have to make I don't think I would want to be involved in either.

I don't like politics; if I don't really want it there is no reason to run. The city council does not concern women, they don't do anything particularly germane to women's issues. Ninety percent of what they do is banal, humdrum running of the city. You get five crusty farts, all thinking the same, and they come up with the same crusty ideas.

With something like that you would have to be very interested in knowing the facts. That would be dull to me to have to think about street assessment.... That's basically what your city council does. There'd be a lot of things like that. What would be interesting about zoning and all of those things? Maybe we're just all thinking that that's more of a man's world. I can't think of any woman that might be interested in that.

I would think the school board would have more. At least the things they would be discussing would be a little more interesting, and where a woman would get involved.

If what matters most to these women is not considered appropriate subject matter for "politics" or for the city council, they will not run for local council positions (Ackelsberg 1988).

Although it is true that Parkville women rarely run for elected positions, the reasons for this resistance can only
be fully understood by recognizing the existence of a visible male community power structure and the traditional support of male governance which exists in Parkville; this results in a lack of female role models in public office and only sporadic support for female candidates. Furthermore, those women who are politically active and qualified for offices in Parkville restrict their political ambitions because of a realistic recognition of their likely defeat; lack of time when paid, volunteer, and home duties are completed; and/or a disinterest in politics (e.g., city council) and issues as they have been traditionally framed by male elected officials.

Since women do not ordinarily seek local elected positions in Parkville, an examination of several women's efforts to seek these positions will provide needed information, increasing our understanding of factors that facilitate local female political participation.

Tracing the Paths to Local Political Positions

Although there have been multiple studies of women political mavericks at the state and national levels, women pathbreakers at the local political levels are seldom examined. From where do these women garner their skills before they enter the official political fray? How are they
recruited? From where do they derive the courage and support to run for political office?

Some political researchers have argued that adult experience in both public and private voluntary organizations is significant in shaping the resources one needs to participate in politics (see Almond and Verba 1965, Baxter and Lansing 1983, Erbe 1964, Lynn and Flora 1977, Merritt 1980, Pateman 1970, Sapiro 1983). Almond and Verba (1965:256) characterized volunteer organizations as "small political systems" that perform a mediating function between the individual and the state, enabling the individual to effectively and meaningfully relate to the political system. Baxter and Lansing (1983:115-116) noted:

If the term "political" is taken to mean efforts to keep current on and perhaps influence public policy, then some of the ordinary activity in community groups, such as parent-teacher organizations, church groups, and business associations, is political. By raising the possibility that local voluntary associations which are not explicitly linked with political parties are in fact political organizations, we have opened up an entirely new avenue for exploring issues of political participation.

Although the extent of the politicization of religious, civic-political, and fraternal or sororial organizations varies, even membership in a nonpolitical organization will increase an individual's potential for political involvement, competence, and activity. This is due to the "experience with social interaction within the organization,
the opportunity to participate in the decisions of the organization...and the general broadening of perspectives that occurs in any sort of social activity" (Almond and Verba 1965:249-250).

In her study of women school board members, Bers (1978) found that involvement in local organizations means interaction with a more extensive peer network that might encourage board membership. Gruberg (1968) reported that all-women voluntary organizations provide many women with the opportunity to develop organizational and leadership skills that might not have been cultivated in mixed-sex organizational settings.

The GFWC as a Path to Political Leadership

Since it first organized legislative committees in 1904, the General Federation of Women's Club has worked for (Gruberg 1968:112-113):

...child protection and against child labor, for pure-food laws, for libraries, and for other legislation. More recent campaigns have been for conservation of natural resources, for equal pay for equal work...for assistance to the American Indian, against roadside billboards, for highway construction, for international trade, for mental health, for more nurses, against drug addiction, against juvenile delinquency, against crime "comic" books, against overcrowded jails, for the United Nations, and against communism.... A Community Improvement Program was started in 1955 to encourage the 15,000 clubs in the GFWC to work to better their localities. Prizes and national publicity are given to winning clubs and communities.
Although the separation of spheres rather than equality between the sexes has been and remains dominant in GFWC ideology, club life has provided a place for women to meet and to learn speaking and organizing skills that they can then apply to civic reforms. Thus, women are moved "out of traditional roles and into decision-making positions, both for the advantage of the women and for society at large" (Blair 1980:104). For some women in Parkville the local General Federated Women's Club has served as a path to local elected and appointed positions. A current GFWC officer, who was recently appointed to a Parkville board, explained:

No matter if you serve as chairman of one of the divisions of the women's club, or if you serve as general chairman of woman's club...it's a matter of leadership for something who knows where further up.

Several General Federated Women's Club (GFWC) members recounted with pride that they had been instrumental in the election of one of their own women's club leaders, Rose, to the Parkville School Board. One local GFWC member recalled:

[W]e felt she was well qualified, we felt a woman needed to be on the board, and with her background she certainly could handle it. We were encouraged as a group to support her. I know I would say most women made the effort to do so.

Rose, a club member since the early 1950s, also was active in the scouts, had served on the local adult education board for a few years, and was employed on main street. She explained that she was president of the
Parkville GFWC and active in its Child and Youth division at the time of her election to the Parkville School Board a few decades ago. According to Rose, she joined the Child and Youth division because:

[W]e all had little children then, all my friends, and people my age, so I joined that one. . . . [To this day] I just enjoy talking to the young mothers and hearing about their problems.

One of three females to ever be elected to the Parkville School Board, Rose Twoomey had been asked to run by a friend of hers in the Women's Club. Rose explained:

[W]e've been friends ever since we were school girls in the country school.... The Women's Club was really behind me.... They got everybody out there working, and so I did win.

Rose served one three-year term but was defeated by a prominent man in the next election. The school reorganization and subsequent consolidation was begun during her term, and she expressed disappointment that she wasn't reelected:

...because I really did enjoy it, and I never, never felt that any of the time I gave to it, I never begrudged it.

Parkville is not unique in the fact that when women have been elected they serve as lone females on the board. In 1974, a national survey conducted by the National School Boards Association found that 39 percent of the male respondents reported that there were no women on their
boards, while 35 percent of the males were on boards with only one female member (Johnson and Stanwick 1979). Also, in her study of board of education members for elementary and secondary school districts in suburban Cook County, Illinois, Bers (1978:383) found that, "Men served nearly a whole term longer than women, a finding reflected in both the number of terms served as well as the number of years they had been on the board (men served an average of 2.8 terms, women 1.8)."

Church Work as a Path to Political Leadership

Although there had been no female school board member since Rose's election, Martha ran as a school board candidate in the most recent decade. When interviewed before the election, she noted both her doubts and her determination concerning her candidacy. She said:

I fully do not expect to be elected at all.... I think a lot of it is just open out prejudice. They don't think that's the position that a woman should be doing.... I feel like I've served a purpose even getting people to think that you can have change, and it is possible for a woman to serve on the Board of Education.

A Parkville respondent, also interviewed before the election, agreed with Martha's remarks, and commented:

I think she is very well qualified, but I don't think she will have an equal chance. I think that the town is pretty much oriented to male governing. I would be surprised if she is elected. I'm glad she's running
because I think maybe they will scrutinize more carefully some of the things that they are doing [on the school board].

In Parkville, the first clear challenge to the traditional male structure occurred not in Martha's candidacy for the school board but within her church when she was elected as the first woman on its board. Although Martha has been active in the local Girl Scouts and served on planning committees for Parkville's yearly Fjord Festival, her primary community involvement has been through the church. While nearly all the women interviewed were actively involved in church activities, in almost all cases this involvement was limited by a strict sexual division of labor. Despite the numerous female contributions essential for the reproduction of this institution, in none of the local churches of one denomination has a woman ever served as a minister, on the board of trustees, nor, until Martha's election in the 1970s, on the church board. Three women had run for president of the congregation in one of the churches and all had been defeated. Concerning these elections two church activists commented:

[T]hey had a woman up for election last year.... They have never come to the conclusion that a woman should be at the head of the church.... Martha now on the board.... So far that's as high as they've let any of us women yet. If a woman didn't make the election, it was just accepted. The men were running it.

When interviewed in 1982, Martha was again serving on
the church board, appointed to complete the term of a man who had resigned. Aware of her unique status as the first and so far the only woman on the board of deacons, the remembrance of some "strong nonacceptance" in her first term were fresh in her mind. Besides second-hand comments she had heard, Martha recalls:

I remember specifically one communion service where we were asked to assist and I think it was a Good Friday service even. It was during the day.... It was the older people. I just felt open hostility at that point.

Martha had initially been asked to run for the board by a woman on the church's nomination committee. For Martha, serving on the board is a political act. In fact, she is unique among the respondents in extending the definition of political beyond electoral politics stating that "leadership is political." Accompanying her strong commitment to working within the church for the purposes of community unification, she noted that church service can have a training and leadership function. Martha explained:

Just being able to handle criticism for one thing. Being in any type of a leadership position I think that's one of the major things that one learns. Being able to stand up for your own convictions and being able to accept criticism.... I think if you can go through that and come out, that you grow and become stronger.

Not unrelated to her proven competence in the church and in community positions, Martha was asked in the late 1970s to run for the Parkville School Board. Martha
recognized the significance of her gender, but her decision to serve was also motivated by her desire to expand participation in a community board. Martha stated:

I said "yes" mainly because I felt that that's an organization that hasn't changed enough. I have a very strong philosophy that all boards need to change. And up to this point every board I've served on I've not run for re-election because I've felt that the more people that are involved, and the more new blood so to speak...the better off the community is.... You get more new ideas and people understand the functions after they've served much better.

Martha was defeated by the male incumbent, but several respondents, interviewed after the election, said that she had "made such a good showing" that they were encouraged by her campaign. In assessing the position of women in Parkville a clubwoman in her 80s referred to Martha's election:

I think the idea [that women don't belong in office] is weakening due to the fact that we had a woman running for the school board.... Every time they're defeated overwhelmingly. It wasn't that bad this time.... I think that Martha should run again another time. It seems as though when a woman loses or a candidate loses the first time it's kind of hard to make a comeback for a second trial.

A second community-wide board is one of the most prestigious boards in Parkville due to both the size of its budget and the fact that it serves as a reminder of local community initiative. Patricia's election to this board was described by one Parkville activist as "a big milestone...a big stride forward." Another Parkville woman also remarked
on the importance of Patricia's accomplishment:

[W]e really like her. I was so tickled that she was going to run. We really worked hard, really talked to people to get her elected.... I took her up a little gift, a little lady...[I said], "You made it, the first woman!"

In addition to her roles as a mother and a employee on main street, Patricia has been very active in her church as a Sunday school teacher, in the church women's group, and as the first female president of her congregation. Patricia describes these involvements:

I have been a Sunday school teacher for years. It started with some of my daughters coming home and saying, "Mom, we can't find a Sunday school teacher for our group." So I taught junior high and high school students for years until I began to jokingly say, "The kids will consider me a permanent fixture." Now I teach an adult class. In the [church] women's group I've held offices and I've been on the church board...as chairman of the board.... I think I may be the only woman who has done that. I didn't even think anything about doing it at the time. I was asked to do it and it didn't bother me or I didn't even give a thought about doing it.

In discussing her community-wide board position Patricia explained:

[S]omeone suggested to the board about getting a woman on, and I was approached [by the administrator] about whether I would consider running. At first I said "no," and then I said, "I would try it," never dreaming that I would actually get on the board at the time.

When asked about women's support for her position, she commented that:

Yes, different ones made the comment, "I was glad to see you running. I think you'll be capable." It was
encouraging.

Patricia considered her board experience to be an "eye-opener," stating:

It makes you very appreciative of board members of schools, hospitals, and other organizations.... It's an education as to how the organization runs, the responsibilities of things, regulations that have to be met through your insurances, state regulations that have to be met,...who is going to staff this and...decisions that involved the future strongly -- like the...the finances, the rebuilding.... [We were] meeting a budget, how much salary raise do you give to these people... improvements--pieces of equipment are getting worn and when do we replace them.

While Patricia found her six-year term on the board invigorating, there were also frustrations, largely stemming either directly or indirectly from the restrictions of her female role.

I think that...one of the things that was frustrating between my work and my family was there was not as much free time to do extra things...to promote things like...[the letter writing campaign to save the organization] with the other responsibilities that I had, and I had my regular [paid work] hours.... [In reference to personnel hiring] some of the board members were freer to take off during the daytime then I was [to do] some interviewing.

Patricia also noted that she did not have the financial means, that other board members possessed, to take people out to dinner in connection with her board position.

Patricia did not seek a second six year term because "I think I'm needing to recharge my batteries.... I think maybe I had reached a point where I was sort of burned out
energy-wise." The Parkville activist, who earlier had described Patricia's election as a "big stride forward," commented on her decision:

I really hated to see Patricia not run again because I think everyone was satisfied with the job that she had done. And, of course, her job was taken by a man, so that's kind of a step backwards.

Patricia also expressed some misgivings that she was replaced by a man and also that at the time of her leavetaking she had not pushed to have a woman:

I sort of wish I would have [pushed harder], but I didn't at the time.... I sort of liked the idea that there was a woman representing.

It is significant that Patricia, when asked to name the community involvement she was most proud of, did not rank her community board position first but equal in importance to her Sunday school teaching. Patricia said:

As I sat here I was trying to think which I would put first, it's a hard decision.... I would imagine my involvement with the church work and with the board.... I think I enjoyed my church work of teaching the younger students and felt a real good closeness to them. I've also appreciated being allowed to work on this board and the decisions I hope will carry on in the future.

Traditionally in sociology, women's volunteer organizational membership and/or work in traditional institutions, such as the church, have been seen as evidence of women's expressive community roles (Babchuk et al 1960, Booth 1972, Gordon and Babchuk 1959). Admittedly women
derive social support and friendships from these memberships and extend their family roles into work that maintains and reproduces the community (Stoneall 1983). Missing from this analysis is any indication of the possible political implications of these traditional involvements (Bokemier and Tait 1980).

For Rose, Martha, and Patricia, their local volunteer work provides social attachments but much more. Each of these women, gained leadership skills in their elected and volunteer roles in traditional settings, the experience of dealing with organizational issues and conflicts, and the opportunity to demonstrate these abilities to a larger public body. These women were recruited to run for important elected political positions in Parkville because they were visibly competent within their own community, thus they were able to make inroads in an opportunity structure that had largely excluded women (Kanter 1975, 1977).

The possible significance of more women attaining visible, elected positions will be explored in the next section.

Political Issues Expanded and/or Redefined

There have been numerous debates among political scientists about the significance of increased female
political participation, such as women organizing, educating their communities, lobbying, pressuring office holders, and running for office (Bers 1978, Merritt 1980, Mezey 1980). Some authors have registered their skepticism that the increased participation of women will result in significant changes in these political activities (e.g. Dye 1981), while other authors discuss the possibility of a women's perspective that might be inserted if women were to be more visibly politically active and in more than token numbers. For example, Hedlund (1988:100) suggested:

....the existence of a relatively high proportion of women politicians seems to promote different strategies of activity and different views about women's interests that contribute to the development of a new relation to the political culture influenced by the fact that women no longer are tokens in the political system.

Flammang (1984:80) noted that the existence of a difference in women's and men's politics would more likely surface at the local and state levels where women are more numerically concentrated and can more easily mobilize their numbers to affect local politics (see also Colfer and Colfer 1978).

In Parkville, several women felt that women in elected positions are or would be more accessible to their female constituents. Laurie, a woman in her 20s, explained why she felt it was important to have a woman elected to the city council:

They [women] are more comfortable with them [women].
If we had a woman on city council maybe women who have an opinion, who don't particularly want to talk to a man, or feel intimidated talking to a man, would call her and say, "This is how I feel about it."...It's an opportunity they don't have now.

In support of Laurie's comment, another woman explained why she had contacted the only woman, Jeanette, on a community-wide board when she recently had a problem:

Now in Jeanette's case, she mixes with the public; she's with these people. She speaks up. She listens. Men in those positions are more apt to go to their job, that's their people. I think women really mix more; they gossip at coffees, bridge clubs. I think women get a little more of the feelings of people than men do.

Additionally, a number of women registered their belief that women, through their increased participation in electoral politics, would alter local community politics. This would occur through the descriptive representation of women--female elected officials better standing and acting for their female constituents--and the different viewpoint that would then be better understood and supported (Pitkin 1967). The concept of descriptive representation, as introduced by Pitkin (1967), assumes that an elected official who is like the people she or he represents (i.e., defining likeness by ethnic origin, race, color, or sex) is believed to represent or stand for that particular group and to act for the benefit and welfare of that group's interests.
One Parkville respondent explained the importance of the descriptive representation (Pitkin 1967) of women for the community viability of Parkville as follows:

I think any time that you involve both women and men it's going to end up with a better balance. If the women in the community feel they are represented they are more likely to become more interested and involved because there is a woman there. Men I think respect a woman that's giving a good honest opinion. Well, just like in a marriage, it takes a good blend of both the husband and wife for success, and I feel in our communities it takes also a good blend of both women and men for a total good picture.

Other comments by Parkville women reflected their beliefs in a different viewpoint if women were more fairly represented:

I wouldn't mind seeing a woman on city council or a woman on the school board.... Because of the different viewpoint you'd probably get.... The fact that she's raised children or given birth to children even. I don't know. I'd say those things would definitely play a part in it.... There may be more women that would talk to this person than men. Is the women's group of Parkville talking to anyone [since the council and school board are all male]? That type of thing.

I think there are a lot of women who recognize the importance of many, many things, perhaps more than a man does.

I think that they have a lot to offer to society as well as a man has to [offer], and sometimes a woman's view brings out something that a man does not see.... So many times a woman is maybe more involved with the family or the social aspect of things, and the man involved--in the past anyway--was more involved with the business and financial end. Although this is beginning to equal out as the years go by.

These three women reflect what Fowlkes (1984) defined as a "woman-centered analysis" of the political.
research demonstrated that female activists (including service-oriented grassroots volunteers) linked their conceptions of the political to their familial roles. She argued that although this conception of the political is rooted in "the stereotypical feminine private domain," this should not restrict their concerns to the "nonpolitical 'eternal feminine'" (Fowlkes 1984:85, see also Mezey 1980:188-189).

Few Parkville women were able to articulate specific issues that women in office might address. The exception was the elevator issue. As one woman explained:

I think if a few women were on the city council, we might be having an elevator [for the town hall]. I think they're a little more sympathetic with the older people, the needs for that. We have a nice group of city council people, but...I wish we had some [women] so we'd balance a little bit.

While there are women's issues in Parkville, they are not the issues that might appear on a more standard women's movement agenda. An issue, such as the elevator, which as one clubwoman leader assured me, "is very much on the pan as far as the majority of women are concerned," evolved out of the work women do within their traditional organizations. As a founder of the GFWC explained:

There are all kinds of women's organizations who use the town hall. The men use it perhaps once a month.... [For] the women, it's difficult to carry their food and so forth up those stairs.... The women's club has their fall fairs and so forth where the public come.
The handicapped people cannot get up there.

And another active women's club member states:

The women's club wants an elevator for the community hall. We have a nice community hall up there and it's place where people can't go [elderly and people with disabilities] because of the long steps. Women's club voted to petition the city council to do something about it and they turned us down so flat.... They wouldn't even listen to us.... The women didn't have enough impact for this elevator... They threw out a figure of what it would cost and we knew it wouldn't cost that much. They refused to talk about it...; they just thought it wasn't necessary. They're not catering to senior citizens.

Yet the elevator and issues like it that are born from traditional female activities are political. Moreover, they have the potential to ignite Parkville women, move them further into the public arena, and possibly challenge and/or transform the agenda of the male city council members. At the time of her interview at least one Parkville clubwoman did not appear discouraged:

It's [the elevator issue is] kind of rumbling again. We think another time we may get a petition and go after it a little better.... We'd get other people besides the women's club.... I think that will be coming up.

Summary

Women cannot achieve political equality until they attain powerful decision-making positions in numbers that approximate their percentage of the total population (Freeman 1975). Moreover, the local level is a fundamental
link in the political development of women, for unless women first establish a significant presence at the community level, they will not become integrated throughout the political system (Stuart and Van Es 1978).

In Parkville in 1982, while there were no women in elected positions on the city council, school board, or on the hospital board, women were politically active in voter registration and canvassing, serving on the election board, and in attending local political caucuses. They exercised political leadership through their roles as local party activists—committee women and campaign organizers—and by serving on the library and park boards. Despite their political activities and leadership roles, the majority of the respondents did not view themselves as political persons however. Nor did their informal and/or formal activist roles translate into elected political positions in the town.

The political gains that have accrued to women at the local level (Flammang 1984, Stewart 1980), for the most part, have not been felt in Parkville. This is primarily due to a traditional sex-role ideology which supports men's domination of the public sphere. Thus, although women are increasingly visible in paid employment roles, men continue to be the primary public spokespersons in Parkville. The
absence of women in local elected political positions, and the absence of an organized challenge to a male dominated politics, contributes to women's lowered sense of political efficacy. Furthermore, the perpetuation of the public/male-private/female split limits the "help" that employed women can both expect and demand from their male counterparts, and the double-day (Hochschild 1989) discourages qualified women from seeking local elected positions.

In Parkville, despite the cultural, socio-political, and social-psychological barriers that exist, women have served on the Parkville school board, and hospital board, and continue to sporadically run for local offices. Parkville women who have the courage to run for local offices or board positions and/or who have been successful in their candidacies raise questions about the significance of alternative organizational voluntary activism versus party affiliated activities for launching female political careers (Stewart 1980). Organizational leadership positions in the Parkville General Federated Women's Club or in church related work provide women opportunities to develop organizational and leadership skills, extend their community networks, and increase their potential for political involvement.

It is uncertain whether increased female political
activism in Parkville will alter the agendas of local political actors. A few respondents expressed their disgruntlement with the narrow focus of the city council, while a number of Parkville respondents, subscribing to the concept of "descriptive representation," believed that women would bring a different viewpoint to their elected position. The elevator issue provides a hint of what this distinct perspective might look like in Parkville. While women's concern with an elevator for the town hall could be broadly construed as a social welfare issue (i.e., addressing the needs of the elderly and disabled), this locally defined concern offers a glimpse of what a political agenda might look like if women's personal concerns (i.e., attendance at GFWC events) were effectively debated as public issues.
CHAPTER FIVE.
COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT AND THE STRUGGLE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN PARKVILLE

The majority of the studies of equal rights activism have focused on feminists or anti-feminists (Arrington and Kyle 1976, Brady and Tedin 1976, Eisenstein 1984, Harding 1981). Yet, in Parkville, only two women would be captured by this limited labeling process, both of whom identified themselves as feminists. The vast majority of the respondents support equality for women, but both their determination of the seriousness of this problem (both locally and nationally) and their everyday actions to support female equality vary.

Traditional conceptualizations of feminism have limited our understanding of the roots of social resistance and innovation in women's everyday worlds. Portrayals of feminism often are limiting and inadequate because they do not take into account the complexity of women's experience within community, and thus reinforce and call for political activities that are similarly limiting. Moreover, both the political strategizing of the women's movement leadership and the popular accounts of women's liberation have largely neglected a critical segment of the population—women who are active in traditional, all-female or gender-mixed ad hoc
groups, community organizations, and institutions. When researchers have examined the activities of community-based women they have found that, while these women may not formally support feminism, they are often engaged in actions that are challenging inequities and forcing expanded social, economic, and political gender opportunities at the local levels and beyond (Bookman and Morgen 1988, Garland 1988, McCourt 1977, Naples 1988, Seifer 1976).

In this chapter traditional feminist frameworks will be analyzed for both their contributions and limits to our understanding of the beliefs and actions of community-based women. Next, the complex and seemingly contradictory attitudes of the Parkville respondents towards female equality and the women's movement will be examined. Finally, a description of local efforts to challenge male hegemony will reveal that the Parkville women are not against gender equality, but rather they are against a feminist politics that does not include community.

Feminism Revisited

One major theme in feminist arguments about politics is an emphasis on economic and political equality for women (Andersen 1983, Freeman 1975). These proponents of a gender-neutral abstract individualism (Pateman 1986) share a common
belief in the viability of equal opportunity in the public sphere. National political issues such as the Equal Rights Amendment, affirmative action, and reproductive rights reflect this emphasis on an abstract right of national significance. This national focus requires public sphere activities such as lobbying Congress, pressuring the federal courts, and organizing within political parties. An equal opportunity politics stresses the common rights of national citizenship and in effect says that "[w]omen who are like men should be treated equally with men" (see Elshtain 1981, Evans 1983). The problem is that most women are not attracted to participate in political activities that require them to adhere to an abstract, rational norm of citizenship or single interest issues of national scope.

Another theme in feminist arguments bases political activity on women's resistance to gender oppression. Male supremacy is often presumed to be a universal condition for women not only in the United States but throughout the world. Analyzing social life in the past and the present, feminist theorists have revealed the extent of male domination through physical coercion (e.g., Brownmiller 1975, Russell 1982), reproductive policies (e.g., Gordon 1977, Petchesky 1980), heterosexuality as an institution (e.g., MacKinnon 1979, Rich 1980), economic exploitation
(e.g., Eisenstein 1979, MacKinnon 1979), and ideology (e.g., Rapp 1982, Rowbotham 1973). This emphasis on oppression focuses attention on a shared condition and is essential for understanding the dynamics of gender arrangements. However, this same emphasis oversimplifies those particular aspects of such factors as culture, class, or race, for example, that shape the actual experience of this oppression (Elshtain 1981, Evans 1983). Hence, the call for sisters to unite against male supremacy may go unheeded because it does not address the meaning of oppression as these women experience it in their everyday lives. Furthermore, a too quick acceptance of one dimensional male hegemony may simply encourage a sense of impotence in the face of an apparently overwhelming and monolithic condition of oppression. The rational integrity of these feminist arguments that base women's politics on resistance to male supremacy may actually miss what they hope to encourage—the ways in which women resist oppression in their everyday lives. These arguments focus on the actions of men toward women rather than on the actions of women. One danger of this focus is that it translates into a politics of victimization and/or a politics of rage. Within a politics of victimization, because "they" appear so strong and "we" so weak, fears of cooptation accompanied by a tendency to purism and
separatism are not uncommon. Such fears of contamination makes suspect "anyone whose rage is not at the same pitch, who desires to work in the same organizations as men, or who makes other issues a priority, [and]...necessarily means losing touch with the lives of most women which are not and never intended to be 'pure'" (Evans 1983:7-8).

Research findings on Parkville suggest that an equal opportunity politics or a politics of victimization did not mobilize the women of this community (see Bunch 1974), because neither of these frameworks address the complex concerns women faced in their efforts to protect and reproduce not only the household but the meaning and culture of the local community. Perhaps the importance of expanding the reach of feminism is best argued by Marcia, a Parkville respondent. Women, like Marcia, do not reject equality, but they reject a feminist politics that addresses female equality (or inequality) without family and community. Marcia, a mother, daycare provider, and community volunteer, replied as follows to a question concerning the state Equal Rights Amendment:

I'm not real strong about it. I guess I've never thought about it.... I don't know if they [feminists] represent the housewife that much.... I think there has to be some understanding before you can get anywhere.

Housewives, people like me.... We don't own a business, we don't have power. I don't know how you
get power. Maybe you have a mother's power or something. I've often thought of it, organizing something, but I don't know where to start.... I sit here and think, golly, I've got something to offer, and I'm not a lawyer. I'm a babysitter. But still there's a lot of babysitters in town, and there's a lot of secretaries in town. There's a lot of mothers in town.... I think most of the women are like me.

Views on the Women's Movement Agenda, Tactics, and Impact

Recent studies of the struggle for female equality or of feminist consciousness have generally focused on either members of equal rights groups—self-identified feminist organizations, or members of anti-feminist groups. A tendency of this research "is to understand feminist consciousness as an either/or phenomenon—either you have it or you do not" (Gerson and Peiss 1985:324); thus the varieties and complexities of feminist consciousness are not explored.

Important to an understanding of the complexity of traditional female support of or resistance to women's movement mobilization efforts is a study conducted by Bers and Mezey (1981). Surveying women holding offices in local, predominantly female, civic and community organizations in three suburban communities, they found strong support for feminist goals among these female leaders (i.e., rejection of the propriety of male leadership, support for programs
for rape victims, support for equal employment and financial rights for women). For the most part, however, this support did not translate into feminist self-identification nor into sympathy towards the women's liberation movement. After a factor analysis of their data to determine whether relationships existed among the women's attitudes, four issue clusters emerged: children and the family, government policy, husband and family structure, and abortion. Further analysis revealed a strong correlation between both the respondents' perceptions of the women's movement and their feminist identification and their attitudes regarding husband and family structure. From this finding the researchers concluded that "[w]omen fully supportive of equal rights and opportunities may still regard the label 'feminism' with trepidation if they view it as a threat to the family status quo in which they feel comfortable" (Bers and Mezey 1981:746).

Ginsberg (1983, 1989), who studied anti-abortion and pro-choice activists within one upper midwest community found that the abortion debate was more complicated than previously portrayed when women's attachments to familial values were taken into account. Interestingly, support for women's economic and political power was no predictor of support for women's reproductive freedom in that town.
Instead, Ginsberg (1983:182) found that the opposition of most anti-abortion activists to abortion was linked "to fears of increasing selfishness and materialism," the triumph of self-interest over the pleasures and responsibilities of mothering, and the sanctity of family life.

Interviews and observational research in Parkville, as in Bers and Mezey (1981) and Ginsberg (1983, 1989), uncovered a complex picture of how respondents understand and respond to gender equality and the women's movement. In Parkville, for the most part the women interviewed have developed attitudes and political concerns that lie within the repertoire of feminism. For instance, three-fourths of those queried acknowledged that women are discriminated against in our society, and almost all of them understood and supported equal rights for women (e.g., equal pay for equal work). But they did not talk or think about their female experiences in terms of what they understand as abstract concepts of equal opportunity or sexual exploitation. Their experiences of these indignities incorporated relationships that included other values, commitments, and attachments that shaped the meaning of their lives.

The degree of support for the women's movement goals,
tactics, and impact that existed among the respondents was explored in Parkville. More particularly, the relationship between the level of participant support for the women's movement and the level of their community attachment was examined. Given the literature describing the conservatism of rural women (Bescher-Donnelly and Smith 1981, Flora and Johnson 1978, Hixson 1978), one might logically surmise that attachment to community would lower one's support for women's equality and the efforts of the women's movement.

The degree of community attachment was assessed by examining such questions as the number of years in Parkville (taking into account the age of the respondent), the level of organizational involvement (e.g., number of volunteer organizations and leadership roles within them), service on local boards, running for local office, and working in town (see Appendix, Interview Schedule Questions 1, 27, 28, 29).

Support for the women's movement was more difficult to assess. For example, support for a women's movement goal such as equal pay for equal work or the recognition that women are discriminated against (even personal experiences of gender discrimination) did not necessarily translate into sympathy for the tactics of the women's movement. Nor did failure to support the goal of the passage of the state Equal Rights Amendment mean that a woman was anti-feminist
or nonsupportive of the impact of efforts to change women's status. Furthermore, even though respondents might be strong supporters of the goals and impact of the women's movement did not mean that they had a clear understanding of what feminism was. Multiple questions and probes were used to capture the complexity of the respondents' attitudes towards the women's movement. Only 44 of the 54 Parkville respondents had the depth of interview data necessary to be included in this particular analysis.

Thirteen of the forty-four women (30%) were strongly supportive of the women's movement and twenty-two (50%) of the women were moderately supportive. Thus thirty-five women (80%) were either moderately or strongly supportive of the women's movement. Nine of the women (20%) demonstrated little or no support of the women's movement. Seven of these nine women did not believe that women are discriminated against in our society, while none of them supported the state Equal Rights Amendment. Yet, while these nine women were conservative in their beliefs about the position of women, they did not express hostility towards the women's movement and were not anti-feminist activists.

There was no conflict found between support for the women's movement and community attachment. Twenty-two women
had strong community attachment, and nineteen of them were moderately or strongly supportive of the women's movement. Sixteen women had moderate community attachment, twelve of whom were moderately or strongly supportive of the women's movement. Six women had low community attachment, and four were moderately or strongly supportive of the women's movement. Therefore, at least among the Parkville respondents, community attachment does not conflict with support for the goals, tactics, and impact of the women's movement. Women can have both strong community attachment and be moderately or highly supportive of efforts to improve the position of women.

Community Attached Supporters of the Women's Movement

In this section the researcher will analyze the support and expressed opposition to the women's movement among the Parkville women who are both attached to the community and registered support for the women's movement.

Thirty-one women were both attached to the community (moderately or strongly) and were moderate or strong supporters of the women's movement. In registering their support for the women's movement agenda, these 31 women were nearly unanimous in their recognition that women are discriminated against in our society, and a majority of
those queried supported the state Equal Rights Amendment.

In discussing the impact of the women's movement, a number of these supporters described how the movement had positively effected their lives. These responses included such statements as the following from a single mother and pink-collar worker in her 50s:

This may be far out, but yes, I suppose so just to prove that I can do things. Because I have greater confidence in myself now and I don't know if I would have if there hadn't been a lot more women in higher positions.

A locally employed mother in her 20s with two preschoolers said:

Yeah, I think so because men are more aware of it. I think it would have been a lot harder to try to work. We're really limited as far as what we're thought capable of doing, plus women themselves can give you a bad time about it [working outside the home].... I think more and more the women are a little bit easier on each other than they would have been.

A main street businesswoman in her 60s reported that the women's movement was significant to her:

...in terms of being accepted even as a businessperson that knows what she is doing. I suppose over the years this has changed probably everyone's life to some degree. Not that I didn't feel secure in being a woman in the first place, but perhaps it has done some things for me. I don't go along with the whole program, but I think probably it has done something for most women.

Moreover, two-thirds of the community attached supporters who were queried also believed that the women's movement had had an impact in Parkville, most prominently in the fact
that more women were visible on main street and in the paid work force.

In a related way, these 31 respondents' comments concerning their understanding of the women's movement were for the most part clearly supportive. For example, one long time community activist described the women's movement in this way:

I think it means an improvement for women. I feel it's important. Even that women will have a better image of themself. I feel good about it. I feel this is going to be a good thing for whatever they're trying to do to raise the status of women, and have women feel important and feel good about themself and develop their potential.

And another activist in her 70s stated:

I think that women are going to have a very important role in the future. I think they're going to be on equal status of men sometime, and they will not have this idea that women are inferior to men in the same position. I think the time will come where they will have the same pay as the man if they have the same kind of position, and I think...more women will be paid for what they're doing.

This positive support did not extend to feminists who she felt were "extremely pushy," "extremely working for ERA, just radical," while she supports "a happy medium."

The majority of these 31 respondents were supportive of both the women's movement goals and impact, but they questioned the need for tactics that they considered unnecessarily provocative, particularly in Parkville. A typical account is the following given by a Parkville woman
in her 70s who has served as an officer and been deeply involved in the Parkville GFWC for several decades. She supported the text of the Equal Rights Amendment, recognized the existence of discrimination against women, and expressed support for the need for women to come together and sympathy for the women's movement. But she was disturbed by the presence of a "few radicals" in the movement, people "who go too far." And in response to the question, "What does the term feminist mean to you?" she explained:

Feminist is sort of a term tagged to someone that's involved in the ERA I guess, or has leanings towards women versus men. I think it's a term meaning you've taken sides rather than being concerned with equality, you've already decided you're for a woman's point of view...she's out for women to get all they can get.

A second Parkville woman who has served as an officer in the Parkville General Federated Women's Club and who has been active in other traditional community organizations, politically supported the state Equal Rights Amendment and other changes in female status, but expressed this concern about the concept of feminist:

That gives me a little squealy feeling.... I don't want to be a woman that gets up and screams and carries on, "Want my rights."

A third Parkville woman, employed locally and the mother of small children, positively recognized the impact of the women's movement both personally and at the community level. This respondent, who is in her 20s, is sympathetic
towards the women's movement which for her means:

Just women trying to get more established and better treated so they get what they deserve.... I deserve the same pay as the guy who works next to me if I'm qualified, or if I'm more qualified I deserve more.... Be accepted as yourself and not all these stereotypes and titles put on you. So you have a choice in what you want to do and not be expected to do something just because you're a woman you should do this or you shouldn't do that...have the equal pay and treatment.

But what sounds like clear support of an equal opportunity politics breaks down when she discusses her views towards feminism and women organizing. In response to "What does the term feminist mean to you?" she stated:

Sounds radical to me. I guess it always conjures up those stereotypes that I hate of the radical women standing up there demanding all their rights that they deserve just because they're women. I guess I wouldn't want to be called a feminist.

Furthermore, in response to the statement "Women need to come together in order to alter their secondary position in society" she replied:

I don't think it's worked has it? I think they're [men are] more afraid of us then, banding together. It's like hitting them over the head. I think they're more against us then and more threatened when we get together and try to do something, than if everybody kind of gradually [does it].

The Parkville women grasp the meaning of equality not as a universal or abstract right, nor as a contested principle, but as a practical reciprocity in the context of the network of relationships that make up the social world of community. When urged to adopt a public position that
gives the principle of female equality a privileged position or which posits women against men, these women respond defensively, not against equality but against a gender politics that does not respect the practical social relationships that make up the meaning of their everyday life. This position is exemplified by one of the most active women in Parkville, a qualified supporter of equal rights mobilization, who summed up her feelings about female equality and feminism in this way:

I'm for equal rights...equal pay for equal jobs, and I'm not for women being put down and not being allowed to vote, not to say what they want in public, and you know, the fact that the women always have to be the secretary, and women are raising the children and fixing the meals. I'm not for all of this [traditional female roles], but I don't want to go overboard either.... I am not a woman's libber; I don't feel that women should rule the world, I don't feel that women should rule the town. I feel that women have a place hand in hand, you might say, with men, or side by side with men, but not over and above.

The great majority of the Parkville respondents share a concern for women's equality but also for community cohesiveness. Both qualified and strong supporters of the women's movement question the need for extreme tactics in their town, for their experience has taught them that negotiated change is strategically the most effective in Parkville. Thus tactics of the women's movement which call for confrontation or public debate are rejected. Comments from a native Parkville resident in her 20s concerning the
state ERA, which she supported, are instructive in this regard:

(Might they have a debate on the state ERA, or a talk at one of the organizations in town?)

They'd never have a debate. A speaker they might have, they're very open to having people come in and speak. You start having an issue where you have two sides, and it just gets out of hand. People line up on both sides, and a letter to the editor every week, and it gets a little crazy. And it's something for husbands and wives to argue against each other.

In conclusion, the public pursuit of sexual equality is for these women a promising but dangerous alternative which raises anxieties as much as it inspires hope. They are not unwilling to pursue equality, but are afraid that such a pursuit, in terms of the only understanding of community they possess would mean the loss of something just as important, or perhaps more important than equality—the social bonds of community. These family and community relationships involve a complex interplay between private and public spheres of life on a local level that are traditionally segregated at a national level. Furthermore, women's embeddedness in community shapes not only their attitudes toward feminism but the types of resistance they select to participate in.
Community-Based Struggles for Equality

In Parkville, although women are increasingly employed outside of the home, men are still dominant in the public sphere. They hold the visible positions of power as the primary owners and managers of the larger local (and translocal) economic enterprises and as elected politicians and the visible public decision-makers. Though men dominate in Parkville, this domination is determined by dynamic, reciprocal, and interdependent relationships and negotiations between women and men (Gerson and Peiss 1985). Gerson and Peiss (1985) have suggested the importance of understanding negotiation in order to explain the shifting patterns of gender relations. Negotiation suggests human agency, social interactions between groups and individuals which "establish, maintain, and potentially subvert boundaries" (Gerson and Peiss 1985:321; see also Margolis 1985). Therefore, if domination is socially constructed by individuals, and is mediated by local groups, organizations, and institutions, so are shifts in these power arrangements.

Morgen and Bookman (1988:4), define empowerment as "a process aimed at consolidating, maintaining or changing the nature and distribution of power in a particular cultural context." Empowerment activities, which lie outside
politics as it has been convetually conceptualized, are carried on in the daily lives of ordinary women and men and are embedded in the work they do to produce and reproduce the local organizations and institutions of their communities. A focus on these actions contradicts the limited view of the sites of political action.

The Parkville Boosters

In 1982 a state chapter of the National Organization for Women filed a brief in an action before the U.S. Court of Appeals charging that the U.S. Jaycees discriminated against women in their membership policies. Before the NOW chapter's brief filing, the Parkville Jaycees had disbanded and formed a new organization, because, among other concerns, as one past Jaycee president explained, "They [the national office] said we could have women in the club, but they could not be officers." The newly formed organization, the Parkville Boosters, engages in the same type of community projects as the former Jaycees, but women are now allowed in as "full and equal members" (Parkville Post 1981:5). Yet, this challenge to a national organization, rather than the result of a gender confrontation, was the negotiated response of local women and men to a community need.
Before the formation of the Parkville Boosters, there were originally two organizations. Sheila, an active Parkville Booster member explains:

We were Jaycees before and that's a man's organization mostly. It's state and national. There were Jaycees and Jayceetes before I was a member, and then they were such small groups and mostly the couples that belonged decided that they could do more for the community if they were together. So they started having their meetings together and we started doing things together as the one group. When I joined it was one group but we still sent in our separate dues, and as far as on the state level we were separate organizations.

(Did you each have your own officers?)

We did, but only on paper. They just kind of overlooked us until the Jaycees were starting to get real sticky about it and taking people to court about it.... I don't remember what the dues were, but they were getting ridiculous...and then we had to have so many male members in order to keep our incorporation up, so we were having trouble with that because we would have enough members as far a male and female, but you couldn't count your female members. So we decided instead of sending all the money out of town that really we didn't use it anyway because we didn't participate in anything that was state or national, so we felt it was kind of silly to charge--it was like $20.00 a member. We just took a vote on it and decided to drop our Jaycees charter and start up a community organization. There wasn't anything for the young couple to be involved in, and most of us were about the same age. We all have kids that are about the same age.

In a separate interview, Rachel, another active member of the Parkville Boosters, concurred with Sheila's account of the Jaycees' decision to disband:

I think the women wanted it, and then the men agreed and voted on it and passed it. We felt that the town was too small to have two very successful separate
organizations [Jaycees and Jayceetes], when there's so many other organizations...rather than have two mediocre small organizations, it didn't make sense why we just couldn't all get together and work on the same projects. And it was all just for real practical logical reasons, it wasn't very much the discrimination side of it or anything like that.

The Parkville Boosters exists as a viable community organization made up of younger community members (under 35). Women now serve as official officers (as secretary and treasurer) of the Parkville Boosters, and all of the money made in local fundraisers comes directly back to the community. Thus women were able to achieve equality and at the same time enhance the conditions for organizational community building activities in Parkville.

Interconnections Between the Private and the Public Spheres

In the following case studies of three Parkville women's community-based struggles, each of these women negotiated change and altered male domination in a particular setting and manner. An analysis of these women's attempts to attain greater equality will reveal that empowerment activities that challenge traditional power arrangements can range from personal resistance in the home to more public community mobilizations. Furthermore, these actions challenge the traditional public-private sphere conceptualization by demonstrating the importance of the
interconnections between these two spheres (Ackelsberg 1988, Petchesky 1979).

In this first account, a Parkville woman, through direct community support and indirect support of the women's movement, was able to simultaneously challenge patriarchal authority in her home and to move more visibly into the public sphere. Rather than separate territories, this case study reveals how family (private sphere) and work (public sphere) are actually "related modes that reverberate upon one another..." (Petchesky 1979:376).

Jeannie, although a relative newcomer to Parkville, quickly became rooted in the community. In her thirties, until quite recently she worked locally in a pink collar position. Also, in order to "meet some of the new people" in town, she had joined a local sports organization.

A year ago Jeannie opened a business in Parkville. Although this is hardly a radical act, her decision became particularly significant when she revealed that she had opened the store in conflict with her husband's wishes. As she explains:

My husband was very much against this whole idea...I don't know, I think he wants a housewife...his attitude was that if his wife had to work that meant he couldn't support [us] or something, that people would look down on him for not being able to support [us]. I can't see that attitude.

Her husband's resistance to her business was countered by
community support:

[The people in this town have been really super...All the people at the newspaper have been real helpful and supportive.... Everybody has been. I can't think of anybody who's said a discouraging word about it. Just encouragement, especially the business people. Their wives have been good customers and that helps, and have been telling a lot of their friends and other people about the business, and encouraging people to shop here.

It's been really good.... When I went to the bank to borrow money they never asked me if I was married, or what my husband did or anything. They lent me the money on my own name and my own wages.

While her relationships with specific people in the community provided her with material and moral support, the women's movement gave her a broadened sense of possibility. According to Jeannie:

[The movement for women's rights has] made me more aware of my options. Twenty years ago most women got married. That was what was mostly accepted by women or you could be a nurse or a teacher or a secretary, and that was about it. There were a few brave ones maybe.

I never would have undertaken something like this, especially against my husband's wishes, if it hadn't been for the women's revolution here. I never would have realized that just because I'm a woman doesn't mean I'm incapable of doing anything like that.

Yet Jeannie, like nearly all women interviewed in Parkville, distances herself from an equal opportunity politics and feminists whom she describes as:

...the ones who are trying to be totally equal, and to me that kind of takes away the femininity. It's like...they would rather be a man, and I don't...that's a general impression I get of a feminist.
Jeannie's consciousness of "femininity" is threatened by a feminist consciousness that she believes denies the importance of women's unique contributions to the home and the community. Although she has moved more visibly into public sphere activities, Jeannie continues to value her private sphere relationships. She mentioned the support and admiration she has received from her daughters. Important to her also is the reluctant support she is beginning to garner from her husband. As Jeannie described this change:

He's getting used to the idea. It's taken me almost twenty years to convince him—I'm not very domestic. I don't like to clean.

While Jeannie clearly recognizes the importance of the women's movement and is grateful to the female pathbreakers who have fought for expanded career opportunities for women, it is her community relationships that have provided the practical social support necessary for her to not simply resist her husband's opposition but to turn this resistance into a useful public enterprise. As in the case of the former Jaycettes, community for Jeannie has been the foundation for greater equality.

Free Spaces

The next case study of another Parkville resident, Linda, demonstrates that struggles to increase sexual
equality can exist within traditionally male-dominated institutions, such as the church, which lies between the interstices of the public and private spheres—"free spaces."

According to Evans and Boyte (1986:17-18) free spaces are settings or public places that are located in the community where "ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence, and vision." They are voluntary associations that exist between individual private lives and large scale institutions and can include "religious organizations, clubs, self-help and mutual aid societies, reform groups, neighborhood, civic,...and a host of other associations grounded in the fabric of community life." Since they are embedded in community, they are subject to the gender, race, and class biases of the groups that maintain them. Thus although they may provide the potential for assertive actions, these attempts may be countered by the resistance of organizational leadership and/or members.

Linda, in her twenties and the mother of young children, works with her husband in a local business. Linda assumed leadership roles in several youth activities in Parkville. Yet, reflecting the judgments of an instrumental, rational conception of public life, she describes herself as "not skilled at anything really."
I first met Linda at a city council meeting where the future of a city employee's position was being debated. Linda stood out in this unusually well attended meeting because she was one of the few women who spoke. Later, Linda described herself as someone who is "known for speaking up" particularly in her church. Throughout the interview she expressed strong opinions on a variety of issues including the sex-role stereotyping in the local kindergarten, which she had brought to the attention of the principal, and her fear that her daughters were adhering to much too traditional feminine roles.

Linda supported the state ERA and strongly agreed both with the statements that women are discriminated against in our society and that the movement for women's rights had personally helped her. Yet when I asked her if she favored efforts to change women's status in society, she qualified her support:

[F]or the most part I would have to say I agree [with efforts to alter women's position]. I think there's a lot of [it], I don't know if it's unnecessary...or it gets out of hand.... I just think sometimes they get so concerned with women, women, women, they aren't realizing that it's people, and there are men capable, and there are women capable. And that all the women aren't capable, just as all the men aren't capable.... I really don't think there should be such a distinction.

The "they" she mentions above are feminists, whom she describes as:
More concerned with women's rights than people....
It's more me, me, me and women, in my mind.

Yet in a way not disruptive to community, Linda has
utilized her position as a church insider to increase gender
equality. Her protests began when she was younger:

I fought in our church when I was in eighth grade to
allow girls to be candlelighters, and just two or three
years ago they finally let them. And we wanted more
than anything to light candles.... We argued, and we
tried every logic and reasoning in the book. And our
pastor said, "That is a man's job."

More recently, Linda was able to challenge a
traditional sexual division of labor and a male authority
figure in her role organizing a meal. She explains:

The supper was [to be] Sunday night, and everyone said,
"Get the mothers to help."...And first I told the
pastor, "No, why should I call the mothers. Either
call fathers, or call the parents." And he said, "Oh,
the fathers won't be any help in the kitchen, just call
the mothers." I said, "No, I'll take care of it." So
I started calling. We needed like six couples down
there, and I said, "We'd like you to come help in the
kitchen." And most people said, "I think I can do
that." And I said, "It's you and your husband." "Well,
he won't be any help." And I said, "I know Don [her
husband] is just as handy in the kitchen as I am, and
it's silly to have six women down there when we can
have you and your husband; it's their kids at the
[youth] banquet."

It's amazing how I had to talk to these ladies.
"You want my husband?" And the men thoroughly enjoyed
it, they really did. Boy, they were down there really
working, and having fun. And I think the women enjoyed
having some men in the kitchen; I know I did.

Later she added:

I've really learned a lot getting these suppers ready,
and I feel more confident.
In their attention to community activism, Evans and Boyte (1981, 1986) have offered historical evidence that rootedness in communal settings and participation in communal structures can furnish critical experiences in democratic sociability. These structures are places that ordinary people can own in important ways. They are institutions that people can shape and reshape. Particularly for women, communal institutions can serve as free spaces, for they are grounded in the fabric of daily life with a public dimension. Although traditionally premised on female domesticity, these spaces can extend and subvert women's roles simultaneously, offering arenas outside of the family where women can develop a burgeoning sense that they have "the right to work--first in behalf of others, then in behalf of themselves (Evans and Boyte 1981:61)." Linda's motivation to act was not derived from an abstract conception of equality (i.e., her support of the Equal Rights Amendment), but rather from her experience and position within her church and the complex attachments she has formed there. In fact, in a contradictory way her volunteer role within a traditional local church and her working relationship with the pastor and other couples in the congregation were essential in order to challenge the pastor's authority and an entrenched sexual division of
labor. Once again the community provided the practical support necessary for obtaining greater female equality.

Community Empowerment - The Importance of Centerpersons

An analysis of one community organizing effort in Parkville reveals how the roots of resistance lie in people's everyday struggles and networks and underlines the importance of the role of centerpersons in mobilizing and sustaining these networks (Sacks 1988a).

Grace, a woman in her forties, has lived in Parkville for most of her adult life. She is a mother of school-aged children and is married to a self-employed skilled worker. She was involved in volunteer work for several years with senior citizens before she was hired to serve her community. Eventually, through skills garnered through both her volunteer and paid work roles in the community, Grace acted as a centerperson. She was instrumental in obtaining expanded local services for seniors and in challenging the all-male city council to secure a site for a local senior citizen center.

Being a centerperson first involves the ability to connect people who have similar concerns, to heighten consciousness of shared issues, and to understand and utilize existing networks (Sacks 1988a). Within her paid
employment, Grace was assigned to assess the needs of low-income people in Parkville; she discovered that in most cases low-income meant senior citizens, yet sensitivity towards this issue was essential. She described this discovery process:

I find that if you talked about low-income among older people, they wouldn't talk to you. But if you talked just about what are the concerns of older people, and even stay away from "me" [the personal]--talk about the meal program, and the Meals on Wheels, and isolation, and being together, and keeping in contact with one another.

Grace also realized that the majority of the local, low-income seniors were women (see Sidel 1987), yet she did not approach this as a woman's issue, but as a community issue.

According to Grace, the idea for the center grew slowly. The strength of her leadership lay in igniting numerous community dialogues. She explains:

It was just kind of a thing that evolved, just through talking to people.... I went and talked to quilter's groups. We had community meetings. We'd just get three or four people together and say, "Let's talk about some of the things that you see as concerns of older people."... Anyhow, in developing the senior citizens' meals, that's sort of how it evolved. We saw the need and heard people talking.... We just talked to anybody. We talked to women's organizations. We talked to men's organizations.... Did a lot of that before we made any decisions on what do we want to do. Therefore people were very much aware.

Grace consciously did not serve as a traditional leader or spokesperson for the group but instead demonstrated a group-centered leadership style (Payne 1989):
It wasn't somebody from the outside coming in and saying, "This is what you ought to do." It was a lot of people that were saying, "This is what we want to do. This is what we'd like to see happen in our community."

This was a co-active endeavor, and Grace was quick to point out that she had some excellent co-workers:

[T]he administrator of the Parkville hospital...was very, very concerned with the needs of older people and serving the community, and he did a lot of work in getting the program underway. Also, our pastor's wife...was very interested in the needs of the community.

The first part of the program was the establishment of a congregate meals program, but the need for an actual senior citizen center soon became evident. Once the decision was reached to have a center in town, an unexpected battle ensued with the all-male city council over the proposed building site (a city owned building). Grace described this struggle:

[A]t first they gave us a verbal, "yes," and then when we got going on it they thought, "Well, maybe they couldn't afford to give this building away."... They were saying how they were going to store the city trucks in there, and this kind of garbage.... It had been sitting there for five years filled with junk until we wanted it!

For Grace, acquiring the site for the center was an important goal, but the way the building was obtained, the process, was equally as important. With painstaking care, Grace described how community relationships and institutional attachments were now mobilized in order to
extend services in Parkville to seniors:

I used not just myself...[we] did everything in the books...from using the churches...had it in church news-letters. We distributed a survey through all of the churches. The churches were very, very cooperative. Had it in the church bulletins. Had a survey of the needs of the community, would they support a senior citizen center? Got good response...things like that didn't necessarily mean going and standing before the city council, although we did that....

We had a community meeting where we had the Boy Scouts deliver flyers to every house in town.... We had a large group of older people as well as younger people who favored this go to the city council and petition the City Council for the use of the [building for] the senior citizen center. Again, it wasn't me that was the spokesperson, but somebody else.

In her efforts to obtain the center, Grace, utilizing her connections within traditional community organizations, primarily directed her energies outside of the traditional political channels. In doing this she managed to bring a formerly domestic issue (care of the elderly) into the public arena, and in the process involved many who had formerly been politically inactive in Parkville. Community networks provided the infrastructure and shared understandings that resulted in both cooperation and resistance.

When the city council finally did relent and granted the use of the building for the center, organizing efforts were again mobilized to renovate the building. This effort also involved a broad spectrum of the community. Grace
explains:

There were lots of volunteers.... We didn't pay any labor.... It was a real, real community project.... One of the things that we said at the time was that it was going to be a senior citizen's center, but we wanted other organizations to use it so that we could continue to get community support, because we felt that was so important.

Due to the efforts of Grace and others, the senior citizen center now operates as a vital, integrative part of the Parkville community. In her analysis of what makes for an effective community organizing effort, Grace underlines the importance of creating involvement and connectedness with others. In addition, leadership is revealed as a "collective and dynamic process, a complex set of relationships and negotiations rather than a mobilization of parallel but individual actors" (Sacks 1988b:77). In Grace's words:

I think that when it comes to community organization, you have to do it with people. Anytime anybody says they're going to do it by themself, they're kidding themself. I don't necessarily use powerful people. I hesitate to use the word "use" because I don't consider it using them, but involving. You need to involve powerful people, but you need to just involve people, because anytime you're coming on and saying, "This is my idea," well, big deal, it's my idea; that isn't how you do community organization. You have to start with the people.... That's the way you get a program to go. It isn't "me" it's "we".

Yet, since Grace's role as a centerperson was dependent on her ability to bridge age, gender, and economic divisions, it is perhaps not surprising that, although a
supporter of the state ERA and improvements in women's status, Grace revealed an ambivalence about the women's movement's tactics and priorities. This was most clearly demonstrated in her response to the idea of "women organizing" in order to improve their position in society:

I don't know [about] this issue of organizing, anytime you polarize people, whether you polarize...old and young or male and female, you don't get as desirable a result as when you can work on a thing together.

Grace also indirectly disclosed her concern and disagreement with the narrow goals of a gender-neutral abstract individualism, while simultaneously underlining her own support for an "ethic of care":

I see that not only in childrearing, but in many, many areas of life the caring kinds of things are not valued. And if we don't have the caring kinds of relationships than all of the other is meaningless.... You can be president of an organization, you can be director, you can be whoever you want to be, but if we don't have caring relationships in our life, we aren't caring for other people, we've got nothing, just nothing.

The effectiveness of the community organizing effort to obtain a senior citizen center was dependent on skills Grace learned in her family and community roles, but these skills (such as caring, negotiation and mediation) translated into effective group-centered political leadership (Payne 1989, Sacks 1988a). Moreover, Grace came to understand and challenge male domination as she organized around an issue that was not solely a woman's issue (see Morgen and Bookman
Although ambivalent about feminism, Grace, like Jeannie and Linda, is not opposed to gender equality, but to an equality which does not incorporate the values which she considers essential to create and reproduce family and community.

Summary

The leadership of the women's movement presumed that the major obstacle to women's liberation was the practical realization of greater political equality. The belief or presumption of the leadership was that a substantial number of U.S. women did not understand the significance of equality (De Hart-Mathews and Mathews 1985). Therefore, consciousness raising and the political mobilization and work towards the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment would, it was believed, provide increased enlightenment to motivate women to participate in public actions they previously did not engage in because they did not believe they possessed the right to do so.

If we utilize popularized feminist accounts that emphasize abstract and universal (simple) conceptions of equality as the basis for meaningful political activity for women, we may be oversimplifying our understanding of the roots of social resistance and innovation in the everyday
experience of women. A feminist politics that begins from the standpoint of women (Smith 1979) promises to avoid the dangers of abstraction and simplicity by starting from the diverse forms of social change women already make to subvert the inequality of gender discrimination and exploitation—forms of social change that emphasize a different political agenda than popularized feminist arguments allow.

For women such as Jeannie, Linda, and Grace, family and community relations are not burdensome ties that bind them to a female world of contained domesticity. Although these ties are based on a tradition that values domestic life, this tradition also includes much more. It is ties within free spaces like community organizations, the churches, the hospital, and other local institutions that enable women to go beyond their domestic role without rejecting it. If these women's struggles seem incremental in the eyes of those observing from outside the community, this does not mean their struggles are insignificant. These women obtained greater equality using community ties without sacrificing or losing relationships. In fact these relationships changed as others accommodated to the greater freedom these women now enjoyed.
1. Among respondents, support for the women's movement goals was assessed by examining their support for the following:
   1) Women are discriminated against in our society.
   2) Men and women are should be paid the same money if they do the same work.
   3) Women should be encouraged to seek elective and appointive posts.
   4) Did you support the state Equal Rights Amendment?

Support for the women's movement tactics was assessed by examining respondent support for the following:
   1) Women need to come together in order to alter their secondary position in society.
   2) Do you favor or oppose most of the efforts to strengthen and change women's status in society today?
   3) Are you basically sympathetic or unsympathetic to the women's movement?
   4) Would you describe yourself as a feminist? What does that term mean to you?

And support for the impact of the women's movement was assessed by examining respondent support for these statements:
   1) The women's movement has helped me personally.
   2) The women's movement has had an impact in Parkville.

2. Gerson and Peiss (1985) also note that negotiation and domination are interdependent processes because there is often a fundamental asymmetry in the negotiation process. Thus, while women do enter into negotiations with men, since they have less structural power, "women have fewer resources with which to negotiate, experience fewer situations in which they can set up negotiations, and derive fewer advantages from their negotiations" (Gerson and Peiss 1985:323).
CHAPTER VI.
CONCLUSIONS

The work that women do in preserving and transforming small town communities is largely invisible. The essential nature of this work has been undervalued in sociology's community studies and, until recently, has been virtually ignored in political science and even in feminist accounts. This work of women in community has a multidimensional character. It not only creates, maintains, and transforms community organizations and institutions, but it also builds, preserves, and reshapes the social ties and relationships so essential to the everyday reproduction of community.

In this chapter, major themes will be summarized, and what they reveal about the significance of the work women do in community will be considered. Next, the theoretical contributions and the limitations of this study for an expanded understanding of community, politics, and feminism will be discussed, and recommendations for political organizing will be presented. Finally, the implications of recognizing the linkages between community ties and social change will be explored.
Summary of the Findings

Women's work and their attachments to the community are significant for the creation and reproduction of local relationships and voluntary institutions, the maintenance and reproduction of local politics, and efforts to challenge the status quo at the grassroots level. Yet, women's contributions to the creation, maintenance and viability of the community have been devalued or overlooked in traditional community studies. Three factors contribute to this devaluation: using restrictive theoretical frameworks, focusing on the public sphere, and ignoring the significance of gender. Traditionally, community studies have failed to address the complex concerns women face in their efforts to protect and reproduce not only the household but the meaning and culture of the larger community. Restrictive theoretical frameworks (e.g., the structural functionalist and Marxist) have emphasized and/or valued the instrumental/public over the expressive/private. Focusing on the settings where women have traditionally been underrepresented or absent has contributed to the "thereness" of women (Lofland 1975) in community studies. In addition, ignoring the significance of the gender of the researcher, and the significance of gender in paid work or volunteer settings have furthered
women's invisibility and/or devaluation in community studies.

Bringing women into community studies necessitates exploring community from the standpoint of women. It means expanding our conceptual and theoretical lens to focus on persons, actions, and settings formerly overlooked or devalued in traditional examinations of community. The findings of this study of Parkville women indicate that much of the community volunteer work that women do takes place in the interstices between the public-private spheres (Bookman and Morgen 1988, Fink 1986, Lofland 1975, McCourt 1978, Naples 1988, Stoneall 1983). Furthermore, women's emotional attachments to their families affect their everyday community commitments and their priorities about what are appropriate targets for local social change efforts (Colfer and Colfer 1978, Genovese 1980, Stoneall 1981).

This study demonstrated how the community work women do and the social relationships established through their clubs, auxiliaries, and civic work build the social base of community necessary for the maintenance and viability of local institutions and organizations. The essence of female contributions to "making community" is described by one long-time Parkville resident:

It seems like any fundraising things, whether it's new uniforms, or...charity drives, or any family in need or
anything. It's always the women that are doing it, the women that are thinking of it, or getting involved in it. The men may sit there at their tables and make the rules and regulations, but the women are involved in their own way too.... I think a lot of the real backbone work here is probably done by the women.

The work women do to make community requires technical, leadership, and social skills along with attention to the creation of organized relationship structures (Wadel 1979). It is work that is built on the efforts of numerous locally based volunteers who create and maintain services and institutions, as well as the intricate web of relationships that is essential to sustain the community.

In Parkville women have been responsible for establishing early social service work, the town's library, the school's kindergarten and art program, the meals-on-wheels program, and the swimming pool. In addition, women's invisible work in fundraising and the volunteer hours spent in sustaining local churches, the town's hospital, retirement home, recreational facilities, and cultural arts and traditions have knit a social fabric that defies traditional social scientific analyses. A close examination of women's community volunteer work challenges dualistic distinctions such as public and private or instrumental and expressive, which hide the significance of women's work in local organizations. An active member in a chapter of the local adult women sorority, an organization responsible for
a well-attended and fiscally successful yearly community fundraising event, explained the less visible relational character of her group's purposes:

I would say in our particular chapter this year our biggest service is to help in any way that we can with Joan [a chapter member] because of her illness—so anything we can do there is considered a service. We bend our rules to fit our situation.... Some of us have been together for 12 years, and we have become very close friends.... In fact, I wonder sometimes if we're not closer than if we were sisters.... The beautiful thing about the group is when you need something they're there... when my husband died they were here. No one has to ask, and they don't have to do anything. All they did was come in and just be there.

As Parkville women create and sustain this work of making community and as both women and men participate in these women-initiated activities, they experience a sense of solidarity and significance (Clark 1973). Moreover, for many of the respondents all-female voluntary organizations provide them with the opportunity to develop organizational and leadership skills that might not have been cultivated in mixed-sex organizational and political settings. As officers in women's organizations, women gain leadership skills, the experience of dealing with organizational issues and conflicts, and the opportunity to demonstrate these abilities to a larger public body.

Women are the backbone of important local organizations and institutions in their community, but this does not
translate into prominent positions in the local political structure. In Parkville, women's organizational work is essential to reproduce local politics, yet women are nearly completely excluded from official elected and appointed positions in the town. Parkville women are active in the reproduction of traditional local partisan politics through their work in "a lot of the behind things." Although it is not immediately apparent, most of these volunteer activities involve interactional and sociability work that links individuals and households with the larger political structures. At the core of these activities are coordination (e.g., making the arrangements for fundraisers and mailings, organizing caucuses) and connecting work (e.g., phone calling, voter registration, having coffees for candidates). This responsibility for local politics does not result in public authority for the women of Parkville.

In Parkville women reproduce local politics within a social structure shaped by a weakened but intact ideology of separate spheres framed by a public paternalism that devalues female accomplishments. Although the town requires women's work, it is placed in an inferior position in local public life.

Women's sense of political efficacy is challenged by Parkville's "town father" orientation, women's traditional
gender socialization and role constraints, and a realistic sense that local political positions and agendas are designed for and by males. Not surprisingly then, Parkville women are not found in elected positions. Yet, through their work to reproduce the household and the community, many women have developed a distinct type of leadership in their roles as centerwomen—the centers and sustainers of essential social ties and networks (Sacks 1988a).

Centerwomen are essential in community-building activities—activities that increase the social cohesiveness of unrelated persons or enhance their opportunities (Reinharz 1984). As centerwomen Parkville women do the work of keeping people together, providing emotional supportiveness, and setting up social groups and activities. In this study we have seen how centerwomen were integral in such diverse local accomplishments as reproducing social relationships and a cultural artifact in quiltmaking, intraorganizational networking to help secure support for a youth sports facility, and developing a senior citizen center in Parkville. In each of these community-building efforts centerwomen "created the detail, made people feel part of it, and did the menial work..." upon which these efforts depended (Sacks 1988a:120).

As Parkville women participated in sociability and
organizing work, "the chickenwire that underlies the whole community," they knit a social fabric which is essential for community integration (see Boucher 1981). Less apparent is the fact that these women are in turn nurtured through this work. They experience a "sense of closeness" (Naples 1988:294) and form important friendships through these community-building activities (see Cott 1977). Thus while Parkville women expressed concern about their exclusion from the local political structure and community appointments, they continued to primarily direct their energies towards the activities of their women's clubs, church groups, auxiliaries, and less formal social groupings, rather than toward female inclusion in the traditional community power structure.

An essential finding of this study was that through their roles in these less visible organizations and networks, Parkville women did, at times, initiate changes that challenged traditional gender relations. Yet, rural women are consistently found to be more conservative on gender equality issues than their urban counterparts. These latter findings become more comprehensible when we understand the attachments of community-based women that inform both their attitudes and their actions. An examination of the Parkville respondents' attitudes towards
female equality and the women's movement revealed that the women of Parkville did not reject equality, but they did reject feminist strategies of political equality that do not recognize the importance of family and community. The Parkville women revealed their purposes, which are not to promote abstract, gender-based principles of justice, but to participate in changes that reproduce and preserve the principles of community with attention to organized relationship structures.

Theory-Building

In order to expand our understanding of community, politics, and feminism, it is necessary to view community from the standpoint of women. This standpoint recognizes the significance and the interconnections among certain key concepts: the ethic of care, centerwomen and co-active power, and modest struggles. Moreover, making visible women's contributions to community transformation necessitates the development of a distinct theoretical perspective, a "politics of relationship" (Ackelsberg 1988:308).
The Ethic of Care

In Parkville, women develop and learn to judge themselves in terms of their ability to care (Gilligan 1982). The study's finding that the Parkville women reject gender equality without community is consistent with the arguments of feminist theorists who have challenged conceptions of justice that are based on "the primacy and universality of individual rights" (Gilligan 1979:444). Rather than a morality of rights separate from the individual, women learn a morality of responsibility that is connected to relationships. Therefore, their conception of justice is built on a "contextual relativism" that recognizes "the central importance in adult life of the connection between self and other, the universality of the need for compassion and care" (Gilligan 1977:509).

For Parkville women, the ability to sustain their connection between self and other is dependent upon the predictability of the environment. They perceive challenges to communal solidarity as a threat. This conservatism is not necessarily of a political nature, but it reflects a commitment to preserve their attachment to particular predictable and meaningful activities, people, and purposes necessary for the reproduction of the community. Therefore, conceptions of gender justice that result in increased
individual rights for women or abstract principles of gender equality, while they are in most cases nominally supported by the women of Parkville, do not connect with their more complex sense of justice. This sense of justice is grounded in relationships and responsibilities and tied to an ethic of care (Gilligan 1982).

Centerwomen and Co-Active Power

Essential to a relationally-based politics is a distinct type of leadership and power. These leaders or centerwomen (Sacks 1988a) are group-centered (Payne 1989) and are closely linked to those with whom they work and organize. Centerwomen are necessary in both social network formation and in consciousness-shaping.

Centerwomen in Parkville have developed social groups and activities that create a sense of familial/community consciousness. In her role as "head quilter," Irene created a social atmosphere that promoted familial values through rituals such as meal sharing, while at the same time the painstaking, detailed work of quiltmaking was accomplished. In addition, centerwomen have the ability to connect people who have mutual concerns. Phyllis, in her volunteer position on the recreation committee, was able to build on her friendships developed through years of women's club work
and local political party organizing to mobilize social, political, and financial support for a local youth sports facility. In local fundraising efforts to secure this recreational facility, Phyllis shared power with a local bank president and personally consulted with a national legislator. She was able to temporarily invert the traditional hierarchy of decision-making and broaden the participatory base in Parkville (Sacks 1988a).

At times centerwomen can transform social networks into a political force, thereby directly politicizing these networks. Grace's work as a centerperson within the community effort to obtain a senior citizen's center demonstrated how the particular skills that women learn in their families and communities (e.g., interpersonal skills, planning and coordination, conflict mediation) can be translated into effective political leadership. In the process of securing the senior citizen center, existing traditional community networks were mobilized and together acted as an effective opposition to confront recalcitrant city council members. Moreover, in utilizing this community network Grace exhibited what Follett (1940:101) called "co-active power."

Co-active power is a process based on human interdependence (Hartsock 1974); "it belongs to a group and
remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together" (Arendt 1969:44). Contrary to the power examined in community power studies (Dahl 1963, Hunter 1951, Presthus 1964), which is built on relations of domination or on community inequality and social divisions, this power form is based on the development of all within the community as people grow in collaboration (Follett 1940). Co-active power is "not an emanation given off by those who stand at the pinnacle of command but one aspect of ongoing interactions among human beings of all stations" (Janeway 1980:84).

A focus on centerwomen broadens the definition of community leadership and power beyond a traditional power structure orientation and deepens our understanding of how a community is sustained, reproduced, and/or altered. Furthermore, the development and continued existence of community is highly dependent on the organizing work and co-active power of centerwomen.

Modest Struggles

Finally, integral to our understanding of a politics of relationship are modest struggles—"small, fragmented, and sometimes contradictory efforts by people to change their lives" (Krauss 1983:54). An extension of the traditional
parameters of political activity is necessary in order to capture the full spectrum of civic and community involvements (Baxter and Lansing 1983, Evans and Boyte 1986) and to include the varied community-based struggles to alter entrenched power relations that exist in our society (see also Ackelsberg 1988, Bourque and Grossholtz 1974, Delamont 1980, Morgen and Bookman 1988, Naples 1988, Shanley and Schuck 1975).

Modest struggles are small but significant. They are modest not because they require self-effacement, but because they derive their strength from and are built on community ties. Attention to these struggles is necessary in order to understand the more elusive process of resistance that is taking place beneath the surface and outside of what has normally been defined as political (Krauss 1983). These short-lived protests of daily life (e.g., challenging spousal resistance and opening a business, altering the traditional gender responsibility for a church supper, securing a senior citizen center) often occur in the interstices between the private and public spheres and challenge the bi-polarity of these spheres. Modest struggles illustrate the possibilities for significant change from below and offer a challenge to a top-down view of politics that has ignored or trivialized them.
Engagement in modest resistance allows women to alter community and gain a sense of control over their lives (Rappaport 1986). Through their efforts women gain skills and some success.

The Politics of Relationship

In women's community struggles we can find the basis for women's empowerment. In negotiating with and battling against male-dominated organizations and institutions, women challenge gender inequities and potentially develop new conceptions of self. But their leadership and ability to act is an outgrowth of their female relationships and activities, and their new self-concept is still wedded to the values of affiliation and nurturance (Luttrell 1988).

It is significant that issues such as securing a senior citizen center or obtaining an elevator for the town hall, while they were initiated by and will primarily serve women, lie outside of what has been popularly portrayed as feminist or traditionally defined as politics. These are locally defined issues that have mobilized the women and men of Parkville, however, and they assert "a direct relationship between politics and everyday life, and between the individual's everyday needs and social change" (Morgen and Bookman 1988:8). These issues do not emanate from an
assertion of individual rights or entitlement, but from an ethic of care—from relationships and connections established through years of local volunteer work in associations embedded in community.

Centerwomen understand and utilize existing social networks in local social change efforts. Although they are not publicly recognized as leaders, centerwomen play important leadership roles in local community actions and in the process broaden our understanding of power. Centerwomen, embedded in an intricate structure of social relationships (Janeway 1980), demonstrate co-active power, the power to stimulate activity in others and to heighten vitality, will power, or morale (Emmet 1971). Recognizing that power as energy, strength, and effective interaction need not require the domination of others, and in fact relies on their collective motivation and participation, is an essential part of the process of the redefinition of power and politics (Hartsock 1974, 1979).

In the early days of the contemporary women's movement, feminists broadened the conception of politics with the slogan that "the personal is political." Unfortunately, feminist political practice too often was informed by the personal experiences of white, middle class, urban women (Morgen and Bookman 1988; Naples 1988; Rowbothan 1981).
These women formed political organizations and alliances that were not representative of all women and resulted in a narrow definition of politics. Current feminist and populist theoretical reconstructions of what is political argue that "networks of relationships, and the activism that they support, can be important sources of empowerment" (Ackelsberg 1988:307, see also Boyte and Riessman 1986). Free spaces, that lie between the public and the private spheres, such as women's clubs, religious organizations, and mutual help groups, can serve as essential contexts for politicization (Evans and Boyte 1986). When the importance of modest struggles, struggles that are motivated through local attachments and are initiated by centerpeople within these free spaces, are recognized, the politics of relationship begins to be clarified.

Recommendations for Researchers

The theoretical development of a politics of relationship and the concepts that inform it are essential for sociology, political science, community studies, and women's studies.

Several feminist sociologists would concur with Grace, a Parkville respondent, that "the caring kind of things are not valued" in our society, nor, they would add, have these
caring acts been valued in sociology (see Bernard 1981, Smith 1979). A focus on the "ethic of care" and on the relationships and attachments that motivate women's community-based activities, expands the definitions of work to include emotional work (Hochschild 1979) and sociability work (Daniels 1985). Also, community sociologists need to explore the meaning that community work has for women and to examine the way that gender relationships may alter the experience of community (Naples 1988, Stoneall 1983).

Political science, political sociology, and specifically studies of community power have been limited by narrow conceptualizations of leadership, power, and politics. The expansion of the focus of political science and political sociology to include centerwomen and co-active power will mean that actors formerly excluded from studies of leadership and politics might now be given centerstage. Furthermore, a focus on this distinct type of leadership and power "demonstrates how the particular skills women learn in their families and communities are translated into effective political leadership" (Morgen and Bookman 1988:10).

In a related way, the social movement literature might be positively informed by studying locale-based modest struggles. By focusing on struggles that grow out of efforts to reproduce the home and family (Feldman and Stall
1990, Stoecker 1989), social movement theorists might better understand both the roots of larger social movements and how the broader goals of social movements, such as feminism, are acted upon at the grassroots and community levels.

Finally, feminist scholars have cautioned that researchers not just "add women and stir" to the social sciences, but rather that women's experiences be utilized first to inform, and potentially challenge traditional concepts, theories, and paradigms. Bringing women into community studies (Stoneall 1981) has the potential to destroy the "thereness" of women (Lofland 1975) as knowledge is gained of women's contributions to the preservation and the transformation of the community. But, more importantly, a close examination of women's actions to reproduce their families and communities challenges traditional conceptualizations of power, politics, and feminism. The theoretical development of a politics of relationship is dependent on researchers and theorists who recognize several important points. First, the development and preservation of community is dependent upon relationships and connections with others versus domination over others. Second, unless the "conception of politics, and of who can and does participate in it, is broadened much of the radical potential of actions that are already taking place will be
lost—even to those who participate in them" (Ackelsberg 1988:309). Third, the limitations of abstract rights-based, or oppression-based views of justice or equality need to be recognized. For women, the very conditions that foster their oppression—their multiple responsibilities as wives, mothers, and paid and volunteer workers—are also conditions that enable them to be more effective as leaders (Luttrell 1988).

Recommendations for Political Organizing

Women in small towns may not be sufficiently motivated, nor feel qualified to seek elected and appointed political positions in their communities. Women who are successful in the local political arena often gain their leadership skills and their initial support through their work in traditional women's organizations. If women want increased official leadership, local women's organizations (e.g., General Federated Women's Clubs, sororities, auxiliaries) need to become consciously engaged in pushing their members towards more active community leadership roles. These organizations need to sponsor leadership forums, skills training sessions, and participate in informal candidate support of their members (e.g., recommending women for community appointments, phone-calling, having coffees for women
candidates). Some women do not see local politics as a place where women and/or women's concerns really matter. Again, local women's organizations or ad hoc groups need to take leadership in expanding the traditional parameters of local political concerns. The city council, for example, could expand its traditional agenda (e.g., streets and sanitation, zoning, and parking lots) to include "human service" issues such as day care, and the concerns of seniors and persons with disabilities for public building access.

Community organizations, such as the Civic Club and the Chamber of Commerce, although they now have women participants, have not significantly altered their agendas to reflect female participation. Specifically in Parkville, some respondents complained that the programs of the Civic Club were "male oriented." Women officers and/or board members will neither be able to nor see the need to alter traditional organizational agendas unless they are supported by larger numbers of women. Women must decide if they have specific agenda and program ideas, and be willing to organize to obtain female and male support in order to get these issues recognized in the appropriate public forums.

Feminists need to recognize that while a few women in small towns are self-defined feminists, the majority of
these women are non-feminists rather than anti-feminists. These non-feminist women recognize the necessity for women's equality, but do not necessarily support the women's movement agenda (e.g., Equal Rights Amendment) or what they perceive to be confrontational tactics. Thus they pursue equality in less visible but not less important ways.

Traditional women's organizations and auxiliaries are an untapped but important resource to present and discuss women's movement agenda items. For example, discussions of the state Equal Rights Amendment took place at the state and national levels of the General Federated Women's Club but not at the local level in Parkville except through Parkville's GFWC newsletter. State ERA organizers, for the most part, did not work through traditional women's organizations in small towns, but instead depended on traveling speaker caravans to deliver their message. Therefore, women who were confused or undecided about the state ERA amendment were exposed only to outsiders; this served to underline their beliefs that feminists weren't like them. A more effective strategy would have been organizing community-based question-answer workshops featuring local women who were ERA supporters. These "forums" could be non-threatening for both the presenters and for those who attended if they were held during GFWC
division or sorority chapter meetings that take place in women's homes. In a related manner, GFWC and/or sorority general meetings and chapter and division meetings would be appropriate settings for other women's issues, such as comparable worth, social security reform, and national health care.

Small town women are not aware of the nuances of feminism. The media's stereotypical portrayals of feminism have too often shaped their images of feminists and/or women's movement activists. It is the responsibility of women and men who are concerned with expanding support for women's equality to personally model and provide expanded and more inclusive portrayals of feminism and to raise feminist concerns within traditional settings. As an example of this type of effort, feminist women in a tradition-bound and religiously conservative rural West Virginia community shared their success in working with local non-feminist women to organize a yearly "Women's Festival" (Wilson and Gregg 1983). This festival featured workshops and exhibits for women of all ages, ranging from "Women and the Christian Religion: Freedom to Be 'All We're Meant To Be'" to sexuality (e.g., "Women's Sexuality: Our Changing Sense of Self") to work-related concerns (e.g., "Working Women: Everywoman's Guide to Employment"). Such
social spaces as the GFWC's Christmas bazaar or other
cultural events would be a logical starting point to begin
plans for such a festival.

Finally, broadening the base of political participation
and expanding the women's movement agenda means
understanding the importance of a relationally-based
politics. Agents of social change (e.g., community
development specialists, extension workers, vista workers,
community organizers), who are interested in expanding
opportunities for women, must broaden their definitions of
power and politics to include the politics of relationship.
Women activists understand and are sensitive to the needs of
their communities; their concerns are often an extension of
their work to reproduce their families and their
communities. Women are organizers, yet this organizing is
often not visible unless you are grounded in community
relationships and active in local organizations. Women are
involved in social change, not in elected or appointed
positions, but as centerwomen—initiators and sustainers of
local social networks. Their struggles may be "modest" but
they are significant.

Agents of social change who are supportive of
empowerment must establish relationships in order to be
effective in small towns. They must participate in some
local organizations and support community functions. A primary role for these agents "should be to identify and support the development of indigenous leadership" (Naples 1988:343). Those social change activists who are interested in the development of co-active power must recognize and work with local centerwomen, and understand and support the issues that flow from community-based concerns. They must recognize that "[e]mpowerment is not something that can be given; it must be taken" (Rappaport 1986:72).

Limitations

The findings of this qualitative case study are based on one small town, in one relatively rural state, in one relatively rural region of one country. This study focused on women activists in a three year period (1980-1982). This focus, while it allowed an in-depth examination of the attitudes and public actions of these women, had numerous limitations. These limitations included problems of the representativeness of the respondents and the generalizability of the findings to other actors in other settings in other time periods.

The 55 Parkville women were selected through purposive sampling, rather than random sampling, because they best met the purposes of this study (Bailey 1978)--to focus on women
activists in Parkville. While these women were similar to other women activists in Parkville, they are not representative of all women in Parkville, nor are they representative of the rural women in other small midwestern towns. Although a review of the existing literature on similar small town women activists revealed that the Parkville women were similar to these women in many respects (e.g., see Fink 1986), a comparative study would have to be done to clearly determine if this study's findings are generalizable to similar settings in the midwest and to other regions of this country.

With one exception, the 55 women activists interviewed in Parkville were white; they were also predominantly middle class. Thus it is questionable if this study's findings are generalizable to rural, low income white women or women of color or to urban, working class and/or low-income activist women (white or women of color) activists. Yet, studies of urban neighborhood-based white working class women (McCourt 1976), and low-income women of color (Gilkes 1979, Naples 1988, Feldman and Stall 1990) have found a similar pattern of women's community-building activity. Moreover, several of these studies have found that, as in Parkville, women's community attachments and their efforts, to reproduce the family and the community shape both women's attitudes
towards feminism and/or the women's movement and the ways that they initiate or participate in local social change efforts (e.g., see Luttrell 1984, 1988; Naples 1988). Additional research is needed that would systematically compare the community-building work of women in a rural, small town with women's community-building work in an urban, neighborhood. If conducted, these comparative studies could attempt to control for race and class variables.

Although it was essential to focus on women and women's activism in order to broaden our understanding of this community from the standpoint of women, there were limitations with this gender concentration. A concurrent, comparable study of Parkville men, done by a male co-researcher, would have allowed for statements about gender differences (e.g., in family and community attachments). Also, an examination of men's recognition, concern, and explanations about women's invisibility in local elected and appointed positions would have perhaps supported—or challenged—the male/female world argument.

This study was done in the early 1980s. During this period, the national Equal Rights Amendment and several state ERA amendments were on the voting agenda, and rural and urban women were exposed to on-going "feminist debates" surrounding this politicking. Feminism was still in the
forefront in state and national politics and in the media. The same is not true for the latter 1980s and early 1990s. It has been argued by some experts that we are in the era of post-feminism. Although "women's issues" still are discussed (e.g., feminization of poverty, family leave policies, reproductive rights) and feminists continue to work at the local, state, and national levels, their work is less visible to the general public. The last ten years of a conservative political administration have moved the women's movement from a pro-active to a defensive posture. Thus, a restudy of women activists in Parkville in 1991 might find that local women activists have altered their support of the women's movement as a result of the conservative political atmosphere of the last decade.

Conclusions

This study has offered evidence that rootedness in community settings and participation in community structures "can serve as the arenas where people can distinguish themselves from elite definitions of who they are, [and] gain the skills and mutual regard necessary to act as a force for change" (Evans and Boyte 1981:56). This focus on the positive potential of community ties offers a hopeful reinterpretation of the social basis for a feminist politics
and provides both a lesson and a promise. The lesson is that the principle of equality (or female justice) outside the context of specific relationships or attachments means little to the women of a small town; therefore, it is an incomplete strategy to pursue equal rights. The promise is that community ties when linked to the ethic of care have the potential to transform the public sphere, resulting in increased female participation and a new mode of public discourse. These examples of women's lived experience in community and their modest struggles to expand opportunities for women justify reconsidering in a more careful and detailed way the community roots of women's political activity.

Finally, a focus on formerly invisible local actors and an extension of the concept of politics became increasingly important in the 1980s, and continues into the 1990s. Political realities such as the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment, the election of conservative presidents, and the cutbacks in national, state, and local monies for human service needs underline the increased significance of women's community-building actions and local social change initiatives.


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APPENDIX: PARKVILLE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(Personal History)
1. How long have you lived in Parkville?

2. (If not from Parkville) where are you from? What was the population of that town?

3. How large was your family? Where did you fall in the family?

4. What did you mother do? Did your mother work outside of the home?

5. What did your father do? Did he have anyone working for him?

6. How much education did each of your parents have?

7. Who were some of the important influences in your childhood (possible role models)? What about during your teenage years, as you were growing up? Were there any female role models?

8. Were there some organizational influences that you feel were important to you as you were growing up (e.g., clubs, church activities, etc.)? Why were they important?

9. What was your last year of schooling completed, and when was it completed? Have you attended any classes since you officially left school? Have you thought about going back to school? Do you think you ever will? Why or why not?

10. Are you married, or have you been married? (If married) how long have you been married? Is this your first marriage? How old were you when you first married? (If married more than once get details).

11. (If not married) is being a single woman an acceptable lifestyle in this town? Why or why not? (Also get work histories of single, never married women).

12. Did you work outside of the home before you married? What did you do?
13. Did you continue working outside of the home after you married? In the same work? If not, why not?

14. Do you have any children? How many? What are their ages?

(If working outside of the home)
15. Did you interrupt your paid work when you had your child or children? How old was your youngest child when you returned to work on a regular basis? How long have you been employed at this job? What type of childcare arrangements have you made?

16. What does your work entail (i.e., job description, number of employees, exact duties)? What are the pleasures and pains of the job? Do you work because you choose to, or have to for financial reasons, or both? Do you consider yourself a career woman? Why or why not? What does that mean to you?

17. Has working affected your position in the home (e.g., decision-making power)? Has your paid work affected your relationship with your husband and/or children? If so for the better or the worse?

18. (If in a joint business with husband) is this business a legal partnership? How much time a week do each of you spend involved in your business? What are each of your specific duties? How many employees? Think of the last few decisions that were made in your business, describe the decision-making process to me. (Find out who is the primary decision-maker, or is it shared?) Could you run this business on your own if you had to? Could your husband?

19. (If not working outside of the home) what was your last paid job outside of the home; how long were you employed at that job? Do you expect to work outside of the home again? (If yes) when? Do you expect to work full-time or part-time? (If not) why not?

20. What does your husband do, or what did he do (if dead or divorced)?

21. How old are you, or which age category describes your age? 18-20, 21-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 years or older
22. I'd like you to fantasize for a minute. If you could choose any lifestyle you wanted, what would you choose? Include marital status, career or non-career, children or childfree. Why?

23. How capable do you feel you would be to handle each of the following situations? As I read each situation, tell me whether you feel you are: (3) Very capable, (2) Somewhat capable, or (1) Non capable, in each particular instance:
   - Manage the family's finances?
   - Financially support myself and any dependents I now have?
   - Raise children by myself?
   - Manage my personal life?
   - Buy a car on my own?
   - Buy a home on my own?

24. Can you recall at one point having to make a life changing decision, a decision which required you to take a stand, and/or increased your feelings of independence or enhanced your self-concept? If so can you talk about the situation?

25. I'd like you to fantasize for a minute about how your life would have been different if you had been born male? Do you think your opportunities would have been different? Can you think of any decisions that you might have made differently? Would your life style choice have been the same?

(Public Activities)
26. (If working outside of the home) do you feel that working has increased your public awareness? If yes, how or in what way? If not, why not? Has working caused you to increase your community involvement? Why or why not?

27. Do you belong (or have you belonged) to any organizations in Parkville? Which ones? How would you classify the purpose of the organizations to which you now belong, or have belonged (e.g., business, governmental, educational, religious, political, social, cultural, professional, social service). Why did you volunteer/participate?

28. In which organizations have you been the most active? Have you held an office in any of these organizations? Have you served on any boards in Parkville?

30. Does your membership in any of the above organizations serve as a female support group for you? If so, how?

31. Which of the organizations to which you belong has the most involvement with the community? Explain.

32. Can you think of times when a women's organization brought an issue to the community? Have community decisions been altered or outcomes been changed because of your organizational involvement?

33. Do you believe that your community participation in any of these organizations has had an impact on the town of Parkville? If so in what way? If not, why not? (Emphasize that this impact may not be immediately noticeable).

34. Do you consider yourself a political person? What does the term "political" mean to you?

35. What issues that are currently being discussed in Parkville today are of particular interest or importance to you (e.g., new city hall, new school auditorium)? Could you discuss your feelings about why this particular issue is important to you?

36. In the past when you cared about a particular issue have you:
   - Tried to influence a relative or personal friend about this issue?
   - Written a letter to the editor or to a political official?
   - Attended a public meeting about the issue?
   - Spoken out at a public meeting?
   - Been part of a committee to deal with the issue?
   - Organized a committee to deal with the issue?

37. Are you registered to vote in the place in which you live?
   - Do you usually vote?
   - Did you vote in the primary election last June?
   - Did you vote in the last local election?
   - Did you vote in the 1980 presidential election?
   - Do you plan to vote in this year's congressional and state elections?
38. (If married or have been married) are there any political issues with which you disagree with your husband? If any, which ones? Have you ever voted differently than your husband that you can recall? If so, why? Do you discuss political decisions with him? Who do you think influences whom in these discussions?

(Attitudes on Female Participation in the Public Sphere and Sexual Equality)

39. I am going to read you some statements people have made about the life of women today. As I read each one would you tell me whether you (4) Strongly Agree, (3) Agree, (2) Disagree, or (1) Strongly Disagree with the statement.

A. Women who work outside the home for pay are more interesting people than women who are homemakers.
B. The United States and individual states should not deny any person his or her rights on account of the person's sex.
C. Men and women should be paid the same money if they do the same work.
D. Women are discriminated against in our society.
E. Women who succeed in politics have to sacrifice their femininity to get there.
F. Affirmative action for women is a form of discrimination against qualified males.
G. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.
H. In groups with both male and female members, it is appropriate that top leadership positions be held by males.
I. A woman can live a full and happy life without marrying.
J. Women should be encouraged to seek elective and appointed posts
   at the local level.
   at the state level.
   at the federal level.
K. The movement for women's rights has helped me personally.
L. The movement for women's rights has impacted the women in Parkville.
M. Men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning, and so forth.
N. It is wrong for women to work in typically male jobs such as a prison guard, coal miner, or construction worker.
O. Women need to come together in order to alter their secondary position in society.

40. What does the concept of "women's movement" mean to you? Are you basically sympathetic or unsympathetic to this movement?

41. There has been much talk recently about changing women's status in society today. On the whole, do you favor or oppose most of the efforts to strengthen and change women's status in society today? Why or why not?

42. Did you read, view, or hear anything about the now defeated Equal Rights Amendment or ERA? Did you support the state amendment? Why or why not? What about the federal amendment? Did you feel that you had enough information about the ERA to have an informed opinion?

43. (If appropriate) would you describe yourself as a feminist? What does the term mean to you?

(Women's Position in Parkville)
44. Are you satisfied with the position of women in Parkville (in comparison to men) in the home (private sphere)? In the work world and in public office (public sphere)? Why or why not?

45. In which areas do you think women have the most power and influence in Parkville?
   in the home.
   in the business area.
   in the political area.
Why? Provide an example.

46. What changes in Parkville (e.g., in family relationships or in the work world) if any, would be necessary before women would more frequently run for office?

47. If a woman ran for an office today in Parkville, a qualified woman, do you think she'd have an equal chance of being elected? Why or why not? If not, what changes in Parkville would be necessary in order for a woman to be equally electable?
48. Are there any unspoken or informal rules or beliefs or values which might limit female participation in public roles, or their political involvement? If so, can you think of any situations in which they have been challenged (e.g., women smoking in public)?

49. Are there any specific constraints, more formalized rules or procedures, which would prevent women from entering fully into public life or political involvement in greater numbers, and in taking leadership positions in Parkville (e.g., the former restrictive rules in the Jaycees). Can you think of any situations in which they have been challenged?

50. (If they don't believe there are any constraints) women are equal participants in businesses in Parkville, but there are no female city council members, or school board members. Why do you think this is so? Why haven't more women run for the city council in Parkville? Qualified women have run for the school board and have been defeated, why?

51. Since women are not currently in elected offices in Parkville, in what ways do women in Parkville participate in public decision-making? (Find out if they participate directly or must pursue indirect strategies.)

52. Imagine that you wanted to be elected to an office in Parkville, let's say the city council, what would you need to do? Would your involvement in volunteer organizations (particularly women's organizations) be important? What assets do you have that you could bring to this office? What would be your liabilities? Would there be any prejudices you might need to confront? Would you like to serve on the city council or any board? Why or why not?

53. Would you describe the overall community position of women in Parkville (in comparison to the position of men) as: (4) Unequal, (3) Somewhat unequal, (2) Somewhat equal, (1) Equal. Please explain your answer. (If answer is not (1), ask for any specific examples of sexual discrimination in Parkville, and how they think women's status will change in Parkville?)

54. What specific things that you can think of have women accomplished in this town? In what community efforts are women most active? With what issues are they most concerned? (If relevant, in giving participation examples try to find out why "backstage involvement"?)
55. What will happen in Parkville to volunteer work as more and more women go into the paid workforce?

56. Think of some women in town who would make good leaders but who aren't currently serving in a leadership position. Are there any particular strengths or insights which these women might bring to the public arena which aren't being utilized, or issues that might be addressed which currently aren't? If women held the majority of elected and appointed positions in Parkville today, do you think community priorities might change? Would anything be different in Parkville?

57. Do you believe that you as a woman in Parkville have utilized your complete potential strength and leadership capability in this town? Why or why not? An example?

58. As a woman in Parkville what gives you the greatest satisfaction about living in this town? What would you like to see altered or changed? What are your greatest hopes for the community? Your greatest fears?

59. Since you have lived in Parkville, how have you seen the role of women change?

60. Could you give me some names of women who have made any type of contribution organizationally (e.g., socially, politically, culturally, etc.) in Parkville, women you consider to be particularly strong and/or important to Parkville in any way?

Thank you!