THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS OF WOMEN HELPING WOMEN: PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Jennifer Rose Wies

The Graduate School
University of Kentucky
2006
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By

Jennifer Rose Wies
Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. John van Willigen, Professor of Anthropology
Lexington, Kentucky

2006

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This research explores the themes of participation and professionalization as they intersect with power in domestic violence advocacy by using a case study from one region in Kentucky. Throughout this dissertation, I investigate the ways political and economic pressures influence local domestic violence advocates and the ways these macro-level pressures influence 1) an advocate’s level of participation in the organization and 2) a transition in social service provision to a professional model of advocacy. The research illustrates that the nature of domestic violence service provision is changing in the United States as a result of the increasingly privatized nature of social service provision and subsequent shifts in domestic violence advocacy participation practices and professionalization trends.

Specifically, I explore the relationships between power and levels of participation in domestic violence advocacy by examining the relationship between power, the expectation for increased professionalization within social service agencies, and the local level negotiations of these expectations. Furthermore, I provide an ethnographic description of the daily activities of a domestic violence organization to illustrate why, how, and what aspects of the program are transformed in a new model of professionalized social service provision. Additionally, this research includes the voices of oral history participants in the domestic violence social movement in Kentucky. As services in Kentucky undergo a transformation aimed at further professionalizing domestic violence advocacy, the historic local knowledge of domestic violence advocacy and activism is useful for clarifying the foundations of contemporary advocacy service provision and activism by providing a longitudinal perspective.

The changing field of domestic violence advocacy is marked by the move towards unequal power relationships between the advocates and the women, the lack of victims’ and advocates’ participation in the creation and implementation of programming and services, and the professionalization of domestic violence organizations and workers. This local case study contextualizes the trends that are currently acting upon social service organizations in general, thereby illustrating the
complexity of human service provision by examining the multiple messages that
domestic violence advocates, and thus human service care workers in general,
negotiate.

KEYWORDS: Domestic Violence Social Movement, Power, Care Work,
Professionalization, Participation

Jennifer R. Wies

December 6, 2006
THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS OF WOMEN HELPING WOMEN: PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY

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Copyright © Jennifer Rose Wies 2006
This work is dedicated to the Mothers and Daughters of domestic violence advocates
Including the young, curious eyes of Jordyn Grace Collins;
The memory of a mother lost, Ms. G. J. Lane, who empowered her daughter to become the woman she is today and teaching her the invaluable lessons in life and death; and
My own mother Darlene Anne Wies.
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements........................................................................................................... iii

List of Figures.................................................................................................................... vii

### Chapter One: Overview

- Introduction................................................................................................................. 1
- Defining the Problem................................................................................................. 2
- Anthropological Contributions to the Study of Domestic Violence......................... 10
- Research Problems and Research Questions.......................................................... 11
- Significance.................................................................................................................. 14
- Chapter Summaries..................................................................................................... 15
- The Agency Will Take Care of You........................................................................... 17

### Chapter Two: The Power in Participation and Professionalization............................ 19

- Introduction................................................................................................................. 19
- Power.......................................................................................................................... 20
- Power, Participation, and Professionalization Intersections....................................... 26
- Summary..................................................................................................................... 28
- What Are the Aspirations?......................................................................................... 29

### Chapter Three: Methods and Context....................................................................... 32

- Introduction................................................................................................................. 32
- Methods...................................................................................................................... 32
- Empowerment Methods............................................................................................ 33
- Institutional Review Board Approval and Notes on Confidentiality....................... 42
- Data Analysis............................................................................................................. 44
- Status and Reflexivity............................................................................................... 44
- Reading Voices........................................................................................................... 46
- Fieldwork Phases....................................................................................................... 47
- The Political Economic Context of Social Service Organizations in America........... 48
- On Being An Advocate............................................................................................. 53

### Chapter Four: Field Site............................................................................................ 55

- Introduction................................................................................................................. 55
- The Past to the Present............................................................................................... 55
- The Coordinated Community..................................................................................... 67
- The Battered Women’s Program............................................................................. 70
- The Domestic Violence Center: “Home Sweet Home”........................................... 81
- Moving Day................................................................................................................. 85

### Chapter Five: Research Participants........................................................................ 87

- Introduction................................................................................................................. 87
- The Language of Domestic Violence Advocacy....................................................... 87
- Battered Women’s Shelter Advocates....................................................................... 87
Chapter Six: Power Inequalities and Domestic Violence Advocacy
  Introduction
  The Women
  Organizational Hierarchies as Pyramids of Power
  A Community of Power, Resources, and Services
  Domestic Violence, Power, and the Feminist Social Movement
  Summary
  24 Hours

Chapter Seven: Agreements and Disagreements Over Participation
  Introduction
  Participation Agreements and the Women
  Perceptions of Participation
  Participating in the Coordinated Community
  Participation and the Feminist Social Movement
  Summary
  Four Women

Chapter Eight: Separation and Unification in Professionalization
  Introduction
  Professionalization and Boundaries
  The Credentialing of Advocacy
  Professional Reputations and the Coordinated Community
  Feminist Social Movements and Professionalism: Influences and Contradictions
  Summary
  “I Don’t Want to Give Up My Youth”

Chapter Nine: Women Helping Women No More: The Future of Careworking in America
  Introduction
  Summary
  Power in the Neoliberal Age of Social Service Organizations
  Recommendations for Other Programs
  Women Helping Women No More: The Future of Careworking in America
  Six Months Later

Appendices
  Appendix A: Participation Request Letter (BWP)
  Appendix B: Participation Request Letter (DVC)
FIGURES

Figure 1.1: The Cycle of Violence Model
Figure 3.1: Semi-Structured Interview Questions (Domestic Violence Shelter Advocates)
Figure 3.2: Oral History Interview Questions
Figure 3.3: Focus Group Questions
Figure 4.1: Dissertation Fieldsite Timeline
Figure 4.2: Abbreviations
Figure 5.1: Domestic Violence Advocacy Key
Figure 5.2: Battered Women’s Program Shelter Advocates
Figure 5.3: Domestic Violence Center Shelter Advocates
Figure 5.4: Oral History Participants
CHAPTER ONE
OVERVIEW
Introduction

I walked into the local Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), a former ice rink turned gymnasium turned after school program, which was currently serving as the interviewing site for part-time Crisis Counselors for the Battered Women Program (BWP). The YWCA oversees the operations of the BWP, and the non-profit organization was hiring for evenings, nights, and weekends.

As I entered the interviewing room, two women sat on a tattered couch that sat so low to the ground their chins were nearly parallel to their knees. The back of the couch ran up against the walls of the room, which doubled windows from floor to ceiling. A folding chair stood in the near center of the room. I sat in the chair, and inspected the two women further. They were in their early twenties, notepads in hand, prepared to interview the next person in the hot seat.

However, they did not look like Women’s Advocacy Department supervisors to me. They looked uncomfortable in their surroundings, like a couple of pre-teens dressing up in their mother’s clothing only to look in the mirror and realize that things just do not quite fit. Their nice pants and button down shirts did not fool me into believing that this was their usual attire in the workplace.

Standard interviewing questions followed brief introductions. We talked about my education, my work experience, and my familiarity with the field of domestic violence. After interview questions, I was introduced to the language of domestic violence advocacy through their explanation of the job responsibilities.

The job title for which I was applying was Crisis Counselor. A Crisis Counselor works as a part time employee to answer the 24-hour domestic violence hotline during the evenings, on weekends, and on holidays. In addition to answering the hotline, Crisis Counselors manage the shelter during these times by overseeing the completion of house chores and addressing community living issues such as regulating the use of the one community telephone. Crisis Counselors also complete administrative tasks such as maintaining statistics of their services. The Crisis Counselors work out of the Crisis Office, the only employee office on the second floor of the shelter among the residents’ rooms.

Crisis Counselors supported the BWP staff, referred to as advocates. Advocates are people who act on behalf of another person. They told me that “to advocate” is to speak on behalf of someone. Domestic violence advocates do not speak for people or victims of domestic violence, we speak on their behalf when a situation does not allow them to speak. As a staff, their advocacy included acting on behalf of victims to seek financial resources, housing options, legal information, emotional support, health services, childcare subsidies, and any other need the woman identifies.

The advocates were working on behalf of “the women.” More specifically, the “residents” are women who are living in the shelter, who by the very fact that they are in shelter are clients of the BWP advocates. In addition to the residents, the advocates also maintained a non-residential caseload of “outreach clients.” Outreach clients are women who are domestic violence victims but chose not to seek emergency shelter for a number of reasons, including the availability of a family member’s house, the lack of available bed space in shelter, or the fact that they were still in a domestic violence relationship. The two advocates used these words, a new language to me, as if they had been speaking it since birth.
The interview moved along quickly, and ended with the option for me to ask questions of them. I said, “Well, I’ve done this before and I had no support. Maybe I was the only one staffing the shelter twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, answering the hotlines, and making breakfast. And I had no support and I’m not going work somewhere where I’m not going to have support.”

The two women stared at me, both with big brown eyes framed by brown hair. For a brief second they caught each other’s eyes, then looked at me and said, “Well, we’re going to be your supporters.”

**Defining the Problem**

This scene took place many years ago, well before the research I conducted for this dissertation. In an interview during my dissertation fieldwork, one of those Women’s Advocacy department supervisors and I recalled the story together. I present the story as an opening to the following dissertation for two reasons. First, the scene illustrates the paradoxes of contemporary domestic violence shelters and the advocacy that the workers provide to victims of domestic violence, namely attempts to present a professional image while participating in a movement and work that is underfunded. Second, it establishes my role within the dissertation research as both an investigator and an active domestic violence advocate.

This dissertation focuses on the themes of participation and professionalization as they intersect with power in domestic violence advocacy using a case study from one region in Kentucky. Violence in all forms persist in society:

> Violence is one of the most pressing and most intractable problems in the world today. Whether it be state-orchestrated warfare afflicted on a populace, conflicts between ethnic groups, or assaults within communities or families, the consequences of such violence are usually pervasive and highly damaging. (Desjarlais and Kleinman 1997: 1143)

I look specifically at the problem of domestic violence and how American society has responded to the crisis of domestic violence. Throughout this dissertation, I investigate the ways political and economic pressures influence local domestic violence advocates and the ways these macro-level pressures influence an advocate’s level of participation in the organization and shifts in social service provision to a professional model of advocacy. To introduce the culture of domestic violence advocacy, I begin by defining domestic violence and its forms. I then summarize anthropological contributions to domestic violence research, followed by a discussion of my research questions. This chapter concludes with a description of the subsequent chapters in this dissertation.

**Defining Domestic Violence**

The extent and nature of violence against women in the United States is widely documented. Recent data indicates that 7.7% of women report being raped by a current or former partner at some point in their lifetime, 22.1% of women experience a physical assault by a current or former partner throughout their lifetime, and 4.8% of women report being a victim of stalking by their current or former partner at one point in their life (Tjaden and

---

1 Throughout this dissertation, I use the phrase “victim” to indicate an individual who has experienced domestic violence in the past or is currently experiencing domestic violence. I will use the term “domestic violence” to indicate partner abuse towards women perpetrated by a spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, or live-in partner. I choose to use these terms because they are consistent with the dominant discourse among the advocates.
Thoennes 2000). Overall, 25.5% of women are victims of intimate partner violence in their lifetime (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Additionally, the extent of victimization among college women is greater than the overall population. Specifically, the rate of completed and attempted rapes per 1,000 female college students is cited as 27.7 in a recent study employing a nationally representative sample of college women (Fisher, et al. 2000).

Physical abuse is “experiencing any act of physical aggression, including minor acts such as slaps and severe acts such as assault with a deadly weapon” (Mahoney, et al. 2001: 149). Approximately 20-25% of adult women in the United States have been physically abused by a male intimate partner is their lifetime (Stark 1990). Fractures, bruises, and bullet holes are not the only physical manifestation of abuse. Physical health problems such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) are also related to domestic violence. Physical abuse is the common default image related to domestic violence, as public awareness campaigns and popular television shows focus on the “battered and bruised” image of domestic violence victims.

In addition to physical abuse, sexual assault and abuse are recognized as forms of domestic violence. Sexual abuse is “any sexual act that a woman submits to against her will due to force, threat of force, or coercion” (Mahoney, et al. 2001: 150). In a random sample of 8,000 women from the 50 United States and the District of Columbia, 7.7% of women reported rape by an intimate partner during their lives (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Research on rape has garnered increased attention over the last 30 years, and now:

Researchers have documented that rape is one of the most underreported crimes in the United States, that perpetrators of sexual violence are found with varying frequency at all points along the social scale, and that the majority of rapes and attempted rapes are committed by someone known to the victim (Bachar and Moss 2001: 117).

Sexual assault is difficult to define in order to measure, and is further complicated by the rate of underreporting of sexual abuse (Mahoney, et al. 2001).

Within the context of domestic violence, known-offender rape and sexual assault is the most common as the result of a lengthy history supporting a male’s right over his female partner’s body. Marital rape was legally sanctioned first in England in 1736, when the chief justice Sir Matthew Hale pronounced that husbands cannot be found guilty of rape against their wives due to the mutual consent and contract to marriage (Bennice and Resick 2003). The U.S. legal system upheld this assertion in 1857, and it was not until 1986 that the Federal Sexual Abuse Act criminalized marital rape on all United States federal lands. The general population tends to believe that victim and perpetrator prior relationships should be taken into account when evaluating a rape accusation (Bennice and Resick 2003). Marital rape or wife rape takes many forms, including pressures from cultural expectations or social coercion to actual physical coercion (Yllo 1999). Women may or may not experience physical battering and marital rape, and women who are victims of marital rape but not domestic violence are often lost in the social service provision network that provides services for either “domestic violence” or “rape and sexual assault” (Bergen 1996).

Additionally, psychological abuse is recognized as a form of domestic violence or intimate partner violence. However, there is no agreed upon conceptual framework for psychological abuse, thereby making measuring psychological abuse nearly impossible.

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2 This statistic is based on defining rape as forced vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

3 Media attention to the recent Kobe Bryant case further substantiates this literature and corresponds to decades of press coverage that blames and questions the victim.
(Follingstad and DeHart 2000). While many relationships that are physically abusive are also psychologically abusive, identifying relationships where psychological abuse exists where no physical abuse is present is difficult. One way to define psychological abuse is any behavior in a relationship that undermines or manipulates a person’s self-esteem, sense of control, or safety (Walker 1984). This definition has been expanded to include notions of destroying a person’s inner self, implying harm, and undermining a person’s competence (Follingstad and DeHart 2000). Research indicates that battered women may rate the affect of psychological abuse as worse than physical abuse, making this challenge particularly compelling to address (Mahoney, et al. 2001).

Thus, the mental health consequences of domestic violence are as great as the physical health consequences, if not greater. The primary issue presented to a primary health care provider by battered women in terms of mental health is depression (Campbell 1998). Battered women consistently are found to have more depressive symptoms than other women, with the prevalence of depression in abused women ranging from 10.2% to 31.9% (when including anxiety) (Campbell 1998). Predictors of depression among battered women include the frequency and severity of physical abuse and stress, while women’s ability to provide self-care is a protective factor against depression (Campbell 1998).

Another form of abuse includes stalking behavior. Stalking within a framework of domestic violence includes “surveillance activities (e.g., monitoring a woman’s phone calls, reading her mail, following her outside the home), vandalism (e.g., breaking into a woman’s home, stealing her belongings), and harassment (e.g., calling her repeatedly at home or work)” (Mahoney, et al. 2001: 153). Defining stalking often depends on the meaning embedded in activities, for instance a victim may have to demonstrate that a behavior produces a high level of fear. Approximately 1 million women living in the United States are stalked on an annual basis (Mahoney, et al. 2001).

Physical battering, sexual assault, psychological abuse, and stalking comprise the primary mechanisms for advocates to define domestic violence. Furthermore, a number of patterns emerge indicating that domestic violence is often present with a number of co-occurrences. The interaction between correlates and related patterns of domestic violence often magnify the effect of one or the other. For example, substance abuse is widely recognized as a co-occurrence with domestic violence (Fals-Stewart, et al. 2003; Jasinski 2001; Logan, et al. 2002). The relationship between substance abuse and domestic violence has contributed to the rise of multi-service facilities that provide both domestic violence and substance abuse services equally as well as the creation of “domestic violence coordinators” in substance abuse facilities and “substance abuse coordinators” in domestic violence facilities. Best practices research encourages domestic violence shelters to request victims to complete a short assessment to detect heavy alcohol and drug use to refer individuals to appropriate treatment facilities or services (Ogle and Baer 2003).

Additionally, domestic violence is increasingly recognized as a significant public health issue throughout the world (Berlinguer 1999; Heise, et al. 1994; Kornblit 1994). Domestic violence related health care costs are estimated to reach $4.1 billion per year in the United States, and the value of days lost from employment and household chores is estimated to amount to 858.6 million per year (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control 2003). In addition to the monetary costs, domestic violence is also an indicator of public health concerns. For instance, Healthy People 2010 identifies ten leading indicators of health, eight of which are associated with domestic violence (tobacco use, substance abuse, injury and violence,
Furthermore, a growing body of literature addresses the correlation between HIV prevalence and the violence one experiences over the life course. Many scholars, particularly behavioral scientists, have used qualitative and quantitative data instruments to demonstrate a positive relationship between violence and HIV prevalence (Braitsstein, et al. 2003; Fisher, et al. 1995; Gielen, et al. 2001; Jewkes, et al. 2003; Romero-Daza, et al.; Simoni and Ng 2002; Wingwood, et al. 2000). This research shows that all forms of violence, but child sexual abuse in particular, is predictive of HIV risk and other health risk behaviors. Authors associating violence with HIV infection advocate that there be increased screening for each within organizations that provide both services for violence or HIV+ women.

The Domestic Violence Social Movement

Domestic violence organizations in America, specifically domestic violence shelters, are a result of the process of organizing for social change to address the problem of domestic violence. The domestic violence social movement has influenced how the term “domestic violence” has come into the public’s eye and the ways we understand and characterize domestic violence today. Heavily influenced by feminist social movements, the domestic violence social movement is motivated by the ideology that cultural norms asserting gender inequality must be abolished. To understand the domestic violence social movement today and situate the activities of the domestic violence shelter program that is the focus of this study, an abbreviated overview of feminist social movements cultural background is useful (Escobar 1998).

Beginning in the 1920s and continuing through the 1960s, a number of demographic and social trends emerged that contributed to the transformation of life for American women. During this period, women increasingly participated in work outside the home, gradually increased attendance in higher education, experienced an era of sexual freedom, increased control over their bodies’ fertility, and won the right to vote (Ferree and Hess 1995, Rupp and Taylor 1987). However, these “advancements” did not alleviate gender inequality, as women worked in the public domain but still earned a lower wage, women participated in higher education but they were unable to pursue the same career goals as men, and female politicians were voted to office but struggled with influencing government. Women’s experiences during this era provided the framework and living examples of inequality and unfairness based on gender and opened the door to for a segment of feminist social movements actors to demand change and new opportunities. A broad ideology “that gives meaning and shape to these everyday experiences, and an agenda for action to bring about desired change and to mobilize a resource base of potential members, funds, access to media, and so forth” (Ferree and Hess 1995: 22).

Ferree and Hess (1995: 32-33) assert that there are “four feminist claims,” including 1) women are a special category of people that share common characteristics, 2) only women should define “feminine,” 3) recognition and dissatisfaction with male dominated world, and 4) a common goal to create radical change. These principles are found throughout the waves of

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4 While I refer to the “domestic violence social movement” and “feminist social movements,” I recognize that these movements are not homogenous or monolithic in nature. There is diversity found within the movements themselves, as well as women and men who do not identify as actors in these movements. However, the concept of movements is important to understand the influences of the actors in this dissertation, therefore, I use these phrases while recognizing that multiple perspectives exist.
feminist traditions, beginning in the mid-eighteenth century during the industrial revolution (Ferree and Hess 1995).

Thus, the domestic violence social movement is embedded in a larger structure of feminist social movements. Therefore, domestic violence social movement building must be understood within a framework of gender that takes into account structural inequalities and identity building. Feminist social movements have often followed different trajectories from other social movements. For example, while a non-gendered or male-centered model of struggle may be focused on “community organizing,” a women-centered model focuses on “organizing community” wherein coalition building begins in the private sphere and not the public sphere (Stall and Stoecker 1998: 733).

Additional characteristics of a gendered social movement include the struggle to define “feminist” social movement. As “with the category women, where there is not a common identity, there are dangers in treating race, nationality, class, and sexuality as if each category captures some perfectly shared common experience or identity” (McCann and Kim 2002: 148-149). Therefore, while I refer to “feminist social movements” and “feminist perspectives” throughout this dissertation, I do so with the recognition that there is diversity and sometimes dissent with regard to a general feminist ideology. This is particularly important with regards to race:

Traditionally, white upper-class women have struggled primarily against their dependence on white men, and therefore used an organizing paradigm emphasizing autonomy and individualism. In contrast, marginalized women have been defending themselves against numerous groups simultaneously- capitalists, white men, men of color, and sometimes even white women. (Poster 1995: 667)

Contesting and illuminating the hegemonic feminism (Sandoval 1991) of white women provides more a more accurate picture of multiple feminist struggles that have included analyses based on class and race (Thompson 2002). Hegemonic feminism neglects to include non-white women’s organizations and histories in the creation and maintenance of a monolithic “feminist social movement.” Furthermore, a hegemonic feminism does not adequately capture the heterogeneity of women’s experiences, white and non-white. In addition, framing black/Latina/Native American/Asian American/third world feminist organizing as a comparison to white feminist activism ignores the feminist activism the precedes and runs parallel to white feminist actions (Thompson 2002). A multiracial feminism recognizes the influence of the Black Power movement, the short-lived National Black Feminist Organization, and militant, anti-racist actions in women’s activism (Thompson 2002).

Furthermore, the women’s activist work transcends geopolitical boundaries and feminist activisms vary between and within countries (Mohanty 2003; Mohanty, et al. 1991; Reddy 2005; Rupp 1997). As Margolis (1993) mentions, “The various movements within and across countries may share concerns such as economic independence, labor equality, family, childbirth, and child care” (Margolis 1993: 379). However, these similarities are not to “diminish the importance of political, economic, and cultural differences” (Margolis 1993: 379-380). Therefore, feminism is not static transnationally, nor has the domestic violence social movement been the same throughout the “developed” and the “developing” world. During the beginning of third wave feminism in the late nineties, the framing of the domestic violence social movement broadened to include a diverse array of social practices that qualify as violence against women- from wife beating to female genital mutilation (Hemment 2004). It was during this time that the fight against violence against women was able to permeate
globally. Furthermore, the common goal to end violence against women between “first world” and “third world” feminists united women, feminist organizations, activists, and advocates within a global feminist framework. Much of the common ground found between the first and third world feminist positions was the notion that women’s rights (to safety, from abuse, from sexual assault, etc.) are human rights and that violence against women is a public health issue (Heise 1996). The international violence against women social movement was able to gain public support by relating domestic violence to these two other issues as well as accessing resources earmarked for health and human rights.

Notably, the violence against women fight in developing nations was originally funded by foundations and organizations in the first world. This pattern has led to a number of scholarly critiques that argue this practice contributes to the cooptation of third world feminism by first world feminists. First world feminists tend to focus on gender equality and ending gender discrimination, while third world feminists address issues of social justice and development between men and women (Hemment 2004). The fact that third world domestic violence social movement organizations were funded primarily by first world feminist agendas gives rise to further tensions between global feminists and so-called “western” feminist agendas. This forces frontline workers to broaden their perspective (or perhaps, first world feminists’ perspective) of violence against women and seek to empower/advocate for women within their social context and environment (a goal that is overlooked within the “break the cycle of violence” philosophy in developed nations).

This overview illustrates that while women have been struggling for equality for decades, the mechanisms and goals have not been the same for all women (Lamphere 1997; Naples 1998). Women have engaged in feminist social movements differently according to racial identities (Goode 2001; Goode and Schneider 1994); based on middle class and working class socioeconomic statuses (Hall 2004; Nash 2001; Weinbaum 2001), and according to situational issues of importance, such as welfare rights and/or welfare reform (Naples 1998; Povinelli 1991), environmental rights (O’Neil, et al. 1998), and access to health care and health care rights (Anglin 1997; Kaufert 1998; Morgen 2002; Susser 2005). In addition, women’s struggles are unique for immigrant women (Nash 2001), Asian American women (Abraham 1995; Benson 1994), Latina women (Zavella 1991), and women of different sexualities (Jenness and Broad 1994; Taylor and Rupp 1998). Women have also engaged in struggles worldwide to control their reproduction (Ginsburg 1989; Glenn, et al. 1994; Inhorn 2003; Kanaan 2002; Lopez 1998; Luttrell 2003; Rapp 1999). The diversity of issues, women, and mechanisms for activism worldwide preclude the assumption that there exists a singular, dominant feminist social movement. This notion persists throughout this dissertation, as I now return to examining the emergence of the domestic violence portion of feminist social movements.

In the 1960s and 1970s, as feminist social movements continued to gain momentum in America and throughout the world, different organizations chose to focus on different aspects of inequality to eradicate. One path led to the domestic violence social movement. However, on this path divergences existed, as some activists looked to institutions and systems for change to stop violence against women. Radical feminists, on the other hand, sought to reform battering by changing the political and social structures to create a space for women’s economic and political independence (Tice 1990). For the purposes of this dissertation, we follow the path to the domestic violence social movement, recognizing that feminist social movements gave birth to
the domestic violence social movement and influenced the movement’s direction and supported its endeavors:

Had it not been for women’s activism, there would be no recognition of violence against women as a social problem, no domestic violence legislation, no police assistance, few judges and lawyers willing to hear women’s complaints or to offer even token remedies. Had it not been for this activism, there would be no made-for-TV movies about male violence against women, no reports on the nightly news about men who batter, no recognition that private violence is anything other than a personal problem. (Wittner 1998: 81)

Feminist social movement ideologies influenced the missions, activism and organizational structure of domestic violence programs and organizations (Martin 1990; Weldon 2002). Activism in the domestic violence social movement was rooted in the notion that women’s equality is essential to preserve independence, activities such as Take Back the Night rallies demonstrate the need for women’s voices and concerns to be recognized and respected into the public eye (Tice 1990). In terms of organizational structure, the feminist ideology stressed the democratic, participatory, and inter-actional forces of a collective group working to achieve a common goal (Riger 1984).

By the 1970s, feminist organizations were seeking new ways to posit their agenda and their scope broadened to include violence against women. Feminist organizations argued that the American legal system did not provide adequate support for women who were victims of rape or sexual assault (Caputi 1992), and they responded to this deficiency by lobbying for changes in the law and engaging in anti-rape direct action (Ferree and Hess 1995; Justice 1975). This action took two forms, one through self-defense training, and the other through hotlines and medical advocacy to offer support to victim survivors. Amidst these actions, the anti-violence movement also had to redefine rape as a “social problem” that warranted the public’s attention (Chasteen 2001). In later years, sexual assault organizations expanded their scope to include advocacy services for victim survivors (Clemans 2004: 147; Taylor and Rupp 1998).

On the heels of the appearance of rape crisis centers and hotlines came organizations for domestic violence victims. Early in the domestic violence social movement, emergency shelters engaged in consciousness raising about the systemic roots of male violence and oftentimes victim survivors worked as advocates (Ferree and Hess 1995; Schmitt and Martin 1999; Tierney 1982). The first shelter opened in England in 1971 as an “advice center” for women about their marriages and soon the center focused the issue of spouse abuse (Berk, et al. 1986). This first center, and the over 2,000 thereafter, found roots in feminist social movements:

The women’s movement of the 1970s defined violence against children and wives (and partners in unmarried unions) as battering, a form of illegitimate and illegal abuse, and provided alternatives such as shelters for women attempting to flee such attacks. Prior to that point, domestic violence had been largely veiled by the curtain of privacy drawn around the nuclear family. Breaking through this shield of secrecy was a difficult task, and it is still far from complete. (Ferree and Hess 1995: 169)

In 1973, Women’s Advocates in St. Paul, Minnesota opened a battered women shelter that grew out of a consciousness raising groups focused on violence and abuse against women and girls (Schechter 1982). This first shelter was an apartment that doubled as the women’s advocates’ office. However, by 1974, enough money was raised to open a five bedroom
Also in 1974, a Latina-run organization in Boston, Massachusetts called Casa Myma Vaquez opened to provide battered Latina women with advocacy services. Shelters provide safety and refuge for women while the organization provide basic needs such as housing and food. In addition, shelters provide a venue for feminist advocates to teach women about the “cycle of violence,” a circular wheel of abuse that can theoretically continue to spin in perpetuity.

Originating in Lenore Walker’s books that describe the psychological trap battered women live within, the cycle of violence model continues to appeal to a variety of professionals, advocates, and others interested in understanding the dynamics of domestic violence. Walker (Walker 1984) explains that abused women do not stay with their abusive partners by choice, rather they are caught in a “cycle of violence” which they are unable to break free from because there is a lack of material and social resources for women. According to the model, abused women rely on their partners for financial, emotional, and social resources and therefore leaving may not be an option because the woman’s independent future is too uncertain. The cycle of violence posits that abused women have “learned helplessness,” and therefore public intervention is necessary to end violence against women (Rothenberg 2003). Abused women fit the typology (and the pathology) of the “battered woman syndrome” that explains why they continue to stay in abusive relationships despite repeated victimization, because there is a lack of available alternatives. This model not only assumes that the abused woman feels helpless and powerless, but that domestic violence advocates and activists must perceive abused women as helpless victims. Viewing abused women as “helpless victims” provides the justification for the intervention- at the individual and the structural level (Rothenberg 2003).

In order to “break the cycle of violence,” feminist advocates encouraged women learn how to assert themselves and enhance their self-esteem to empower themselves to break the cycle (Busch and Valentine 2000; Krane and Davies 2002). The message of self-determination and independence aligned with many feminist social movement ideologies asserting the same message using a different topic. While providing services, early domestic violence shelters spent an equal amount of time seeking to change the sociopolitical conditions that contributed to male violence (Tice 1990). Recently, the move towards professionalization of social service agencies has led to increased accountability to sponsors and funders as well as the transformation to a more business-oriented model of domestic violence shelter services and advocacy (Eisikovits, et al. 1996; Hemment 2004; Markowitz and Tice 2002). It is at this point in the domestic violence social movement that this dissertation intersects.

While feminist social movements and the domestic violence social movement as a whole influenced the creation of the domestic violence shelter program under scrutiny in this research, it is not the central focus of this work. The organizing and activist work of the research participants is important to understanding the sources of their inspiration and motivation, but this analysis focuses on alternative themes in their advocacy work.
Anthropological Contributions to the Study of Domestic Violence

In the discipline of anthropology, research addressing spouse abuse, domestic violence, and/or intimate partner violence has been slow to emerge (Erchak 1984). However, the last two decades have witnessed increasing attention to the issue of domestic violence in anthropology. The bulk of the anthropology of domestic violence literature provides examinations of domestic violence as a cross-cultural comparison (Counts, et al. 1992; Counts, et al. 1999; Counts 1990; Gelles and Pedrick-Cornell 1983; Harvey and Gow 1994; Levinson 1989; Sev'er 1997; van Willigen and Channa 1991).

Through these thick descriptions, the authors explain the cultural sanctions for or against domestic violence and the relationship between domestic violence and other cultural characteristics to inform explanatory models of domestic violence. For instance, a number of cross-cultural examinations of domestic violence associate the positive relationship between

Anthropological investigations of and commentaries about domestic violence have repeatedly placed domestic violence, as a local level form of violence, in the framework of gender inequalities that subject women to high rates of interpersonal violence due to their marginalized positions in patriarchal societies (Joseph 1994) and subsequent high levels of economic and social dependence (Schuler, et al. 1996). Interview data collected from South African women strongly correlates domestic violence with unequal status in a society between men and women. The positive relationship between domestic violence and women’s lack of education, violence during childhood, and lack of economic opportunity provides evidence supporting that violence is closely related to how power is exercised between genders in a society (Jewkes, et al. 2002).

Cross cultural narratives of women who are victim survivors of domestic violence indicate that we can analyze the phenomena of intimate partner violence as influenced by the “cultural mores used to justify and perpetuate the threat to women’s lives and welfare” (Fischbach and Herbert 1997: 1164). Higher rates of violence are reported by women who are sterile, have been sterilized, and/or bore few children (particularly males) in pronatal, patriarchal societies, such as India (Rao 1997). Women who subvert the traditional role of domestic wife experience higher rates of abuse than women who embrace traditional cultural norms of wives, indicating a relationship between domestic violence and women who challenge the gender hierarchy (DeWalt 2004). This research is particularly interesting because it clearly demonstrates that violence against women is associated with cultural expectations, in this case reproductive success. Cross-cultural studies of violence against women also broaden the scope of defining violence. For instance, in the United States we identify physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological violence as forms of violence against women, but cross culturally violence comes in many other forms such as sati, dowry death, and honor murder (Fischbach and Herbert 1997; van Willigen and Channa 1991).

There is also a burgeoning anthropological literature focusing on victim survivors and their unique social situations. McClusky’s (2001) ethnography of domestic violence in a Mopan Maya community in Belize presents an ethnographic description of the daily experiences of victim survivors and their struggles to make a living, raise their children in a safe environment, and locate a social support network for women to leave abusive relationships. Her contribution to the anthropology of domestic violence is substantial, as her full length ethnography begins with a focus on domestic violence and address victim survivors as a research population in their own right.

**Research Problems and Research Questions**

The literature indicates that domestic violence in all forms is a significant problem in the United States and internationally. Domestic violence organizations seek to redress the problem of domestic violence by providing emergency shelters, counseling services, and casework services to victims and their families. However, the nature of domestic violence service provision is changing in the United States as a result of the increasing privatized nature of social service provision and subsequent shifts in domestic violence advocacy participation practices and professionalization trends.

Thus, while the “problem” of domestic violence continues today, it is exacerbated by contemporary problems that are causing domestic violence organizations to shift their practices. On the surface, the public discourse emphasizes the problem of domestic violence
and focuses on the interpersonal dynamics between a victim and abuser. Focusing on the micro-level problem of domestic violence allows society to question the victim about her patterns of behavior, including interrogating a victim’s reasons for staying in an abusive relationship, questioning a victim’s parenting styles, interrogating victim’s to determine possible drug and alcohol use patterns, and blaming victims as those who “like violence” or “ask for it.” Perhaps a focus on the micro-level problem is easier for U.S. culture to sustain, as the alternative is to recognize the macro-level realities of providing services to victims of domestic violence. Essentially, the public’s fascination with domestic violence veils the human service provision problem, including the pressures that social service organizations currently sustain. Therefore, rather than focusing on the phenomena of domestic violence at the interpersonal level, I focus on the structures designed to alleviate domestic violence and provide assistance to victims of domestic violence.

Many investigations have explored the culture of domestic violence advocates and domestic violence organizations through the experiences of domestic violence victims (McClusky 2001). While not ignoring the relationships between domestic violence advocates and the victims they provide services to, I focus explicitly on the culture of domestic violence through advocates (Fried 1994). My goal is to look at the world through the eyes of domestic violence advocates to examine the relationships they negotiate in their everyday lives and themes that emerge therein.

Research Questions

This dissertation research has three primary goals. First, I explore the themes of participation and professionalization as they intersect with power in domestic violence advocacy. Second, I provide ethnographic description of a domestic violence crisis shelter undergoing a tumultuous transition. Third, this dissertation includes the voices of oral history participants in the domestic violence social movement in Kentucky in historic perspective.

Through ethnography and oral history, I examine the themes of participation and professionalization in domestic violence advocacy amidst a changing social service political economy.

To achieve the first goal, I focus on the relationships between power and real or perceived levels of participation in domestic violence advocacy. In addition, I examine the relationship between power, the expectation for increased professionalization within social service agencies, and the local level negotiations of these expectations. I ask two related sets of questions:

1. How do domestic violence advocates conceptualize participation in daily practice? How has an individual’s level of participation changed over time? What is the relationship between domestic violence advocacy and/or activism and larger feminist social movements? How do domestic violence advocates participate in a larger community of service providers? What is the relationship between an advocate’s training and participation in the organization? How does the organizational structure shape participation? How does the use of space facilitate or prohibit advocate participation?

2. How is the movement towards non-profit organization professionalization manifested in this local level organization? What are the daily processes that are influenced by increasing professionalization? How has professionalization changed daily practices and advocacy? How is professionalization demonstrated or negotiated in the language used in the organization? How does education level and educational specialization
affect organizational professionalization? How is the construction and negotiation of internal rules and guidelines influenced by external pressures to professionalize social service provision? Who is pressuring domestic violence advocates to increase their professional images? What are the benefits and drawbacks of increased professionalization?

In order to address these questions, I look at the relationships between domestic violence advocates and feminist social movements, the community in which they work, the domestic violence organization, and the domestic violence victims.

The second goal is to provide an ethnographic description of the daily activities of a domestic violence organization as it undergoes a transformation from an “umbrella agency” under the YWCA to an independent agency operating directly under the state domestic violence coalition, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association. This transition was precipitated by the located United Way chapter’s and state domestic violence coalition’s withdrawal of funding to the YWCA to operate a domestic violence shelter after the organization was found to be repeatedly non-compliant with state mandated victim service standards. The ethnographic description I present of the new shelter organization illustrates why, how, and what aspects of the program are transformed in a new model of professionalized social service provision. This goal influences the third set of research questions:

3. What is the daily routine of domestic violence advocates? Whom do advocates interact with on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis? What are the struggles and successes of domestic violence advocacy within this crisis shelter? How is the organization structured administratively? How have these activities and structures changed historically?

To answer these questions, I include numerous thick, multi-layered descriptions filled with local meanings (Geertz 1983) of the domestic violence advocacy culture.

The third research goal is to contribute historic information about the domestic violence social movement in Kentucky by pursuing an oral history with long-term participants in the regional domestic violence social movement. As services in central Kentucky undergo a transformation aimed at further professionalizing domestic violence advocacy, the historic local knowledge of domestic violence advocacy and activism is useful for clarifying the foundations of the contemporary advocacy service provision and activism as well as the possible roots of the restructuring of domestic violence services in the area. The oral history component of this dissertation research allowed me to explore how domestic violence advocacy in central Kentucky was originally conceived and conducted, how those ideologies shaped an advocate’s work, the local history of professionalization of services, and the historical interactions between domestic violence organizations and funding agencies. These issues are tied to the larger societal ideology about changing social issues and subsequent changes in the structure of social services towards a more professionalized model of service provision. Providing an oral history of domestic violence in central Kentucky influences the fourth set of research questions:

4. In the past, who participated in domestic violence activism and advocacy in the region? Who, and in what capacity, is participating in domestic violence services today that contributed in the past? What was the structure of activism and advocacy services in the past? How do the advocacy and activism successes and failures of the past
influence the contemporary domestic violence service structure in Kentucky? Are oral history participants still involved in the domestic violence social movement?

To answer these questions, I include the voices from oral history participants throughout this dissertation.

**Significance**

This dissertation seeks to link domestic violence research and advocacy, deepen an understanding of domestic violence social service provision in a changing political economic environment, and provide information to the research community that may be useful to program development.

Research findings tend to remove people from their social contexts and focus on the individual rather than the political, social, and personal worlds which that individual experiences in life (Fine 1989). To address this issue, the proposed research pursues collaboration between advocates and the researcher (Riger, et al. 2002). As one social scientist who conducted feminist research within a battered women’s shelter attests, “Trying to pick up the pieces of a race, class, and gender-stratified society, in which housing and health care are inadequate, in which options to violence homes are few, the staff of shelters are beleaguered and frustrated” (Fine 1989: 554). The proposed research will provide advocates with information that may contribute to translating research into practice and including information about daily advocacy practice into research.

In addition, this dissertation broadens the body of knowledge of the culture of social service provider organizations. The increasing professionalization of social service provision, together with increased accountability to sponsors of social service organizations, contributes to the timeliness of understanding how domestic violence organizations are adapting and changing to the political economic structures of an increasingly professional service sector (Dalrymple 2004; Hemment 2004; Markowitz and Tice 2002). The changing political economy forces organizations to assess their priorities and conform to or resist outside pressures, opening a space for a fundamental shift in domestic violence service provision from one of social action to social work (Schechter 1982). This dissertation focuses on the local level actors within changing macrolevel power structures. Furthermore, this dissertation questions literature citing overall resistance to professionalization, which indicates that domestic violence advocates both resist and embrace a movement towards professionalization. As social services provision for domestic violence victims changes, it is important to document organizations as they undergo local level transitions in response to larger political economic patterns.

This case study is particularly significant because the research was conducted during the formative period of a new domestic violence organization, rather than examining the transformation of services and the power relationships found at the intersections of participation and professionalization retrospectively. This ethnographic example is useful to other domestic violence organizations and social service agencies because it documents the process of institutional change that is increasingly witnessed in non-profit organizations. The case study described here is an example of a shift towards the professionalization of domestic violence advocacy, oftentimes in contradictory ways as advocates negotiate the demands of professionalized social service provision and struggle to locate their participation options in their work. This case study will be useful to other organizations in the United States and

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5 In addition to using the oral history interviews for this project, I have explored the possibility of pursuing a larger oral history of the Kentucky domestic violence social movement with the communities with whom I worked.
abroad that are undergoing similar transformations that may be interested in practices and ideas that were successful or unsuccessful for this program. By providing useful data and information to the organization, this research is placed within the process of social change that is occurring within social service agencies.

**Chapter Summaries**

To answer the abovementioned questions, this dissertation is organized into the following chapters.

In Chapter Two, I examine the concept of power and expose power inequalities in domestic violence advocacy by focusing on the themes of participation and professionalization. To achieve these goals, I look to the theoretical perspective of political economy, and more specifically feminist anthropology. By engaging a feminist political economy, I am able to analyze power inequalities at both the macrostructural and micro levels.

Chapter Three presents the technical information about the data collection as well as the successes and failures of operationalizing these methods among domestic violence advocates and activists. These methods are employed at the local level amidst a larger political economic context of neoliberal policies and welfare reform, which influence the structure and function of today’s social service organizations.

The dissertation field site is described in Chapter Four. The field site is much broader than describing only the domestic violence shelters which served as the central focus. I incorporate contextual information from national level domestic violence activism and advocacy, as well as a brief history of the domestic violence work conducted throughout the state of Kentucky and a history of the local domestic violence shelter program. In addition, I also describe the idea of a coordinated community against domestic violence and introduce the purpose and functions of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association. In addition, I outline the nature of the domestic violence shelter’s transition between facilities and leadership over the course of 18 months.

In Chapter Five, I introduce the research participants included in this dissertation, which includes the Battered Women’s Program shelter advocates, the Domestic Violence Center shelter advocates, and Kentucky domestic violence social movement oral history participants. After I initially gained access to the research participants, I began learning the language of domestic violence advocacy and worked to establish and maintain trust with the domestic violence advocates and activists in the region. I provide details information about the Domestic Violence Center shelter advocates, as their voices comprise the bulk of the data concerning participation and professionalization.

Chapter Six examines power inequalities in domestic violence advocacy. Power is woven in the relationships that domestic violence advocates negotiate on a daily basis. Domestic violence advocates sometimes exercise power, as in their relationship with the women that is marked by a deepening divide in power between the advocates and “the women,” as advocates today tend not to come to advocacy work through their own experiences of victimization. In addition, today’s domestic violence advocates are educated women who enjoy a higher socioeconomic class status than the shelter’s residents. However, domestic violence advocates struggles for power within the DVC organization as expectations are unmet and burn out runs rampant. In addition, in a coordinated community or service providers, agencies attempt to maximize the use of a limited quantity of resources, and those organizations that hold the most resources also often possess the most power in the community. Finally, the domestic violence advocates embody a language of power that they
learn from feminist social movements, which easily translates into the rhetoric of domestic violence advocacy.

Participation is examined in Chapter Seven. The language of “participation” recurs often in my fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and focus group texts as something that advocates are “fighting for,” questioning other entities’ participation, or disagreeing with the rules of participation. For example, the women who come to shelter often do not have a choice but to participate in domestic violence shelter life, while the advocates are required to participate in a process of service provision that they often do not have a voice in creating. The tensions in defining program participation are visible in the DVC shelter program’s “participation agreements” that residents are required to sign. Furthermore, domestic violence advocates struggle to participate in the program’s development, oftentimes without success. Similarly, the domestic violence advocates fight to participate as equals in the community of service providers. While these relationships are sites of contestation and participation, domestic violence advocates identify a close relationship with a “feminist social movement” and they identify their advocacy work as a mechanism to participate in feminist social movements.

In Chapter Eight, I explore the debate concerning the benefits and dangers of professionalizing domestic violence advocates that continues to rage in the United States and abroad. While the academic literature and activist literature rage against trends to professionalize, at the local level tensions arise as the domestic violence advocates and activists process multiple, paradoxical messages about their increasing professionalism. For instance, the introduction of the rhetoric of “boundaries” allowed the advocates to justify separating their personal lives from their professional advocacy, but those boundaries often frustrate both the victims and the advocates because it created a division between the two groups of women. Additionally, there is an unequal distribution of power between the advocates and the victims, visible in the language of “professional boundaries.” However, the organization acted to promote a message of professionalization to the advocates through an emphasis on credentials and previous work experience in a domestic violence shelter. Additionally, the domestic violence shelter advocates received a strong message in favor of professionalizing their work from the community of service providers.

Chapter Nine serves as a conclusion for this dissertation. I return to the intersections of power, participation, and professionalization in domestic violence service organizations. The literature examining the changing field of domestic violence advocacy questions the move towards unequal power relationships between the advocates and the women, the lack of victims’ involvement in the creation and implementation of programming and services, and the dangers of professionalizing domestic violence organizations and workers. Amidst this literature, I found that the advocates are receiving multiple messages about these issues, sometimes intensely paradoxically, every day. This local case study contextualizes this debate and these trends that are currently acting upon social service organizations in general, thereby illustrating the complexity of human service provision by examining the multiple messages that domestic violence advocates, and thus human service workers in general, negotiate. In addition, this chapter posits recommendations for other domestic violence programs.

To conclude each chapter, I insert an ethnographic moment from my fieldwork. These accounts may be from a conversation with an advocate during an interview, a particularly prominent story from the domestic violence shelter program, pages from a focus group transcript that summarizes my data analysis. In these narratives I am present as both an
advocate and a researcher, and I use them to illustrate the struggles, tensions, and pressures of and in the culture of domestic violence advocacy.

**The Agency Will Take Care of You**

As I will further discuss in Chapter Three, I originally sought to work with domestic violence advocates to evaluate services and programs from their perspective. This plan was subverted by the onset of significant changes to the domestic violence services in the region. I therefore set out to document those changes and the significant issues related to recreating a domestic violence shelter program. It was not until I completed an initial predissertation research phase that I realized this project would follow a different direction than I originally anticipated. My vision of presenting a detailed evaluation of the organization’s strategic plan for rebuilding and documenting levels of participation in that process was quite dissimilar to the final product. After evaluating the data from this research phase, I found that the domestic violence advocates were most concerned with the three research themes I introduced above: power, participation, and professionalization.

It was not uncommon for me to ask the domestic violence advocates directly about their opinions about shifting power relations, levels of participation, and pressures towards professionalization in domestic violence advocacy culture. The following words from a domestic violence shelter advocate summarize the advocates’ recognition that these issues are at the forefront of their everyday work, they become entangled in their direct service provision and permeate their views of their own domestic violence advocacy work. Furthermore, she illuminates the struggles the advocates face when different views are imposed upon them. Despite the multiple messages and the advocates’ efforts to tease apart their place in a changing domestic violence advocacy culture, they always return to the women, the victims of domestic violence.

In a conversation about her vision for the future of domestic violence advocacy, a domestic violence advocate, Mindy, who worked in the shelter locations throughout my fieldwork responded, “I guess you know we- domestic violence advocates- weren't considered professionals when this work started. They were a bunch of women that got together and did the Underground Railroad kind of thing. And established safe houses and did all kinds of things that were probably against the law. It was because of the system. It used to work because...domestic violence wasn't a crime, it wasn't within the existing framework. So we were outlaws, you know. The domestic violence advocates were not seen as professionals. There wasn't trainings and certifications and you didn't form partnerships with the police and so on because we couldn't work within that system. I think part of professionalization, as far as my understanding of it, is it is necessary because times have changed.

We've become more established. There are more networks. There's state funding, there's federal funding. There's state agencies that coordinate shelters, there've been protocols established or training programs established, and so on throughout the country. And laws have changed. There has been enough progress with that now. We can work within certain systems even for system change because we're within an established real system. I think there have probably been changes in the university so that a lot more people are graduating with MSW's and Women's Studies degrees and things like that. So we're more recognized as educated people with training. I think professionalization is that that we're more recognized and there are more expectations. We have to work within established systems now. And we're recognized more as professionals. And there are more expectations as far as ethical guidelines and certifications and things like that.
I think we keep trying to hold on to that system, about “women helping women” thing. But it’s hard when you have to also worry about how the agency's being represented and making partnerships with other agencies. We're not out there on our own anymore. We need to be respected within the community and we need to work with other agencies. So I think sometimes that does come in. Sometimes that conflicts because it may overall help services, help the agency get funding and get services to women, but as far as the actual direct service piece of it and how we relate to the women, it changes it.

I think we’re more aware of ethics and boundaries and things like that. We can't just say, "Do you need a place to stay? I've got a friend who's got action research room." Of course I wasn’t doing the work in the seventies but I think that’s how it was done. I just think that it places a distance. It also creates a hierarchy, we're seen as professionals. We come in wearing heels. We dress differently than the women we serve. We're expected to be professionals. We're not expected to be women helping women. So I think that creates a hierarchy and it creates a distance between us and the women we serve. They see us as people who get paid to be here, the people who can afford to wear nice clothes. People who can afford to drive them around. People who can afford to put groceries on their own credit cards. And that creates a distance. And we are seen as the keepers of the knowledge. We are seen as the keepers of the resources. That creates a distance I guess. I think the women don't trust as much as they would if I were here and said, "I've got an extra shirt for you" or, "Do you need a place to stay the night?" or, "Here's five bucks out of my own pocket."

...I've been taught that if you're willing to do it for one women you've got to be willing to do it for all of them, and I can't afford to do that for all of the women. And what I prefer to do in a situation like that is let them know that we have grocery money. I'll run to the store. Let me know what you need and I'll run to the store and get you the food. The agency will provide that for you.”
CHAPTER TWO
THE POWER IN PARTICIPATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION:
LITERATURE INFLUENCES

"Like all the different classes I took, it [domestic violence] was mentioned if not discussed at least a whole day in the class. So it was something I was familiar with and I'm glad I'm now able to apply it and not just feel good about myself because I learned about it. It's very different from what the textbooks tell you in real life- in the shelter."
-Leslie, Domestic Violence Center Advocate

Introduction

For this dissertation, I examine the concept of power and expose power inequalities in domestic violence advocacy by focusing on the themes of participation and professionalization. To achieve these goals, I look to the theoretical perspective of political economy, and more specifically feminist anthropology. By engaging a feminist political economy, I am able to analyze power inequalities at both the macrostructural and micro levels. Power then intersects with participation and professionalization in domestic violence advocacy at multiple levels.

Political Economy

Political economy is a theoretical perspective that emphasizes both economics and politics and the ways social actors culturally construct these factors (Roseberry 1989). Within anthropology and other fields, political economy has gained increased prominence because it creates the space for understanding how macrostructural political and economic forces affects local level power relations (Roseberry 1998). For this research, political economy allows me to illuminate the trends in social service provision in the United States that contribute to an overall crisis in human services to marginalized populations. In order to understand the forces that led to the closing of the YWCA Battered Women’s Program and the creation of the new Domestic Violence Center, I consider the larger political economic system that is affecting social service agencies as well as influencing the provision of domestic violence services on the local level.

Within anthropology and other fields, political economy creates the space for examining the ways external political and economic forces affect local level power relations (Roseberry 1998). In this dissertation, I use political economy to illuminate the structural powers that covertly and overtly influence the domestic violence advocates. In order to understand the forces that influence the culture of domestic violence advocacy under investigation, I seek to understand the larger political economic system that is affecting social service agencies as a whole as well as influencing the provision of domestic violence services on the local level. Throughout this dissertation, the structural processes at work in the political economic system affect the micro-population, in this case, the domestic violence advocates activists I worked with. Political economy provides the theoretical lens to study the macrostructural policies, while feminist anthropology provides a lens to study interpersonal relations. An in-depth discussion of the political economy of social service organizations is presented in Chapter 3.

Feminist Anthropology

As a theoretical perspective, political economy provides the macro-level lens to examine inequalities and power. I specifically engage feminist anthropological theory to analyze power inequalities that emerge at the microlevel. It is through feminist anthropology that I am able to examine the interpersonal inequalities that emerge in domestic violence advocacy and activism.
Early feminist anthropological theorists sought to deepen our understandings about economic, political, and social inequalities according to sex/gender distinctions (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974). In the 1970s, feminist anthropologists expanded their scope of gender investigation by examining gender through both “exogenous- popular cultural- and endogenous- professional- lenses” (di Leonardo 1991a: 6) to apply their understandings of the fluidity of cultural gender roles to the everyday cultural situation and professional work that did not call gender into question. Feminist anthropologists utilized the theories of Marx, Weber, Freud, and Levi-Strauss to create and reconstruct theoretical understandings using a gendered lens. For example, Rosaldo (1974) focused on the inequality in power between men and women by looking to the different tasks assigned to the domestic (female) and public (male) spheres and concludes that cross culturally, men are more powerful and influential than women because women “lack generally recognized and culturally valued authority” (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974: 17).

By the 1980s, feminist anthropology began to incorporate a cultural historical approach, supported by texts such as Wolf’s Europe and the People Without History (1982). Furthermore, the term “gender” began to replace or substitute the term “women” to describe studies of social relations between females and males (Doyal 2000). “Gender” is less connected to biological characteristics than “woman” and therefore lends itself to the argument that people construct genders differently cross culturally. Moreover, by including gender in analyses, feminist anthropologists began to focus on the differences among women (di Leonardo 1991: 30). The introduction of gender studies also opened the door for investigations of the effects of class, race, ethnicity, age, sexual preference, etc. within the female gender. Additionally, an emerging focus was identity. Doyal (2000: 931) points out:

In recent years, there has been a shift away from talking about ‘women’ to talking about ‘gender’. Instead of focusing on women as an underprivileged group, the emphasis is now on the social construction of gender identities and on the nature of the relationships between women and men.

The focus on “gender” shifts the focus from studies of women to studies of women in their cultural spheres, including their relationships with women who are different from each other existing in the same cultural realm.

Recent works continue to utilize a feminist perspective while incorporating a political economic lens to question inequalities by expanding the scope of inquiry to scrutinize the multiple layers of context shaped by race, class, ethnicity, geography, and sexuality among the social actors in the research community (di Leonardo 1991b; McClaurin 2001b; Smith 2000). As a theory of political economy, feminist anthropology provides the framework to analyze the diversity of experience and inequalities among the domestic violence advocates and activists represented in this dissertation. For this research, feminist anthropology allows me to “understand gender as not the endpoint of analysis but rather as an entry point into complex systems of meaning and power” (Visweswaran 1997: 616).

**Power**

Through these theoretical perspectives, I trace the unequal power distribution between and among domestic violence advocates working within the domestic violence organization and the nature and extent of power acting upon the domestic violence advocates.

At the macrolevel, I examine power using a political economic framework. After Michel Foucault (1980), I define power as the ability to exercise influence over others who accept or resist that influence, thereby placing both parties in a power relationship. Power is a
covert force that works through people and social relationships in a persistent web. Lacking concrete forms, power works upon individuals in a society as well as upon them, “…Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society” (Foucault 1978 (1990): 93). Foucault’s analyses of institutions such as the asylum, hospital, and prison as sites of social reproduction and influence upon larger society provide a venue for understanding the ways residential institutions act as a field of power to view certain mechanisms of society (Foucault 1973; Foucault 1975; Foucault 1980). Furthermore, among the analysis of unequal power distribution are examples of resistance to power, as Foucault states, “Where there is power there is resistance” (Foucault 1978 (1990): 95). Therefore, to study power at any level is to seek relationships where power is exercised, as well as where power is resisted and negotiated.

In the The Archaeology of Knowledge (1969), Foucault explores a methodology to examine power through statements, which he identifies as the basic units of discourse. Discourse, and the statements which comprise discourse, establishes a set of rules of what is appropriate and meaningful at a given time. The Birth of the Clinic (1975) employs this methodology:

In order to determine the moment at which the mutation in discourse took place, we must look beyond its thematic content or its logical modalities to the region where ‘things’ and ‘words’ have not yet been separated, and where- at the most fundamental level of language- seeing and saying are still one (Foucault 1975: xi).

This moment before separation provides a portal to understand the creation of power structures. In that work, Foucault places particular emphasis on the historicity of the birth of the clinic by examining the history of the hospital and medical training to examine and present “a systematic history of discourses” (Foucault 1975: xvii).

In The Birth of the Clinic, the individual is both the subject and object of his own knowledge. Foucault is able to at once study the individual’s place in medicine while simultaneously looking at the construction of the individual in medicine to de-construct both the subject and the object while using each other to aid in that deconstruction. This idea of simultaneous deconstruction and construction of individuals is useful to this study as we see the domestic violence advocates as both the result of larger patterns in the domestic violence social movement (professionalization, for example) and actively reproducing those ideas. The concept is also easily translatable to the organizational level in this case, where a domestic violence shelter is simultaneously closing and rebuilding.

Rhodes (1991) uses a Foucaultian framework of power to understand a residential facility serving psychiatric patients. She specifically identifies how power flows through relationships and structures the daily process of people living and working in the residential facility. However, these power relationships are the foundation of actions and are not always at the fore of daily life. Rhodes (Rhodes 1991: 6) summarizes the web of power in this way:

Power, as Foucault shows, does not reside in the hands of individuals or groups; rather it is fluid and diffuse, operating in a net-like grid of relationships. This analogy to a net or web corresponds to my observation of the way the unit worked. The staff did not employ a single kind of power (as, for example, the power to label patients as mentally ill, or, conversely, the power to make them well), nor did they use their powers in a clear, unidirectional way. Moreover, the patients were not passive in the face of power.
Rather, administrators, staff, and patients were engaged in a situation of shifting, reciprocal, and multidirectional power relations. In this discussion, external forces (such as government funding sources) exert power over the entire unit as funding for social services and indigent hospital care decreases, thereby stressing the capacity of the unit and mandating no more than a ten-day stay. Furthermore, power rests within the staff and residents, who negotiate and utilize power according to the situation. The actors do not use power consistently; they manipulate it to achieve an end when an issue necessitates its exertion.

However, some actors are in higher positions of power in a residential facility because. Shelter workers, whether they are nurses, clinicians, corrections officers, or domestic violence advocates are at an advantage, and the advantage is over the residents. Workers are employed, are often educated, and are familiar with the system they are working within. Workers have more access to resources, whether they are material or social, than residents of shelter organizations. To neglect this fact would not accurately capture the complexity of the power relations in residential facilities. Yet, the workers are also often in a lower position of power when compared to the facility directors/leaders, the members of the boards of directors, or supervisors. The advocates are therefore helping women while exerting power over them, a dynamic the advocates recognize in their daily work.

Similarly, when looking at the culture of the domestic violence advocates, power is experienced as a pressure from external power sources but also actively reproduced and enforced among the domestic violence advocates. However, in addition to the flow of power between the microlevel and the macrolevel, I found power inequalities in relationships among domestic violence advocates, between advocates and victims, and between advocates and people in the community. It is at this microlevel that feminist anthropology provides a useful lens to critically examine intersections of power as well as problematize the diversity of experiences among the domestic violence advocates and activists. I examine the unequal power relationships that advocates negotiate with the overall feminist movement, the community in which they work, and the domestic violence organization itself. In addition, I explore the inequalities between advocates and the domestic violence victims, and the ways that advocates negotiate those differences on an unequal playing field. Furthermore, by examining the advocacy profession, feminist anthropology allows me to examine the changing shape of a predominantly female occupation.

By engaging feminist anthropology, I am able to further interrogate power inequalities beyond Foucault’s models and address the shortcomings in his theoretical concepts. For example, feminist anthropological studies of power also explicitly interrogate the “question of woman” (Martin 1987:13) that is neglected in Foucault’s framework (Cockburn 1994; Deveaux 1994; di Leonardo 1991b; Hartsock 1990; Martin 1982). Including analyses of power at the microlevel through feminist anthropology provides a framework for understanding inequalities between and among individuals, such as between the advocates and the women or the advocates and the administrators. For the purposes of this dissertation, power and power inequalities are traced through two sets of mechanisms, namely participation and professionalization.

However, Foucault’s notion of power as a persistent web acting upon individuals in a society does not allow for me to explore the possibility of different types of power. Therefore, I turn also to Eric Wolf’s (1999) four modes of power to better understand the heterogeneity of power. They are as follows:
- Individual potency
- Power to impose upon another person
- Power which is at the organizational level that establishes controls for interaction among people
- Power at the structural level that operates within society while also directing the flow of resources

As I will demonstrate throughout this dissertation, the domestic violence advocates I worked with regularly recognized the first three types of power. However, they are much less likely to identify the ways that structural power influences their lives. The model of structural power allows us to examine the “ways in which relations that command the economy and polity and those that shape ideation interact to render the world understandable and manageable” (Wolf 1999: 5-6). For Wolf, introducing different modes or types of power allows for one to examine how power is experienced and reproduced differently at multiple levels, such as that of the family, community, or regional level.

By establishing Wolf’s types of power as influential to this dissertation in conjunction with Foucault’s notions of power, I am proposing the possibility that not only are there different power inequalities within the various relationships between domestic violence advocates and other, but that the types of power that manifest in those relationships are different. In other words, the actual modes of power that emerge are different in those relationships, and in fact, the modes of power may also shift according to the situation and through time.

Participation

“Participation” in social science research is not a new phenomenon (Rylko-Bauer, et al. 1989), though it certainly has experienced a steady increase in attention. Defining participation is a key component for the incorporation of stakeholders in research processes and contributes to which contributes to the research investigating levels of participation among the research population. The term stakeholder refers to “individuals or groups with a vested interest, or a stake, in the research process and findings” (Rylko-Bauer, et al. 1989: 10). This dissertation research primarily addresses the latter notion of participation; however, I utilize the body of knowledge that focuses on participatory methods to better understand levels of participation among the research population.

Participation may be conceptualized as who participates in a process (and to what level) and why it is important for the person or group to participate in the process. Participation is often spoken of as something that a group or individual may be “prevented from,” for example, the domestic violence advocates in this dissertation repeatedly state that they were “not included” in the decision making process of securing a new building for the domestic violence program.

In addition to participation prevention in some processes, people also shoulder too much participation in a process. In this dissertation research, a prominent example of hyper-participation in the domestic violence advocacy process is the level at which the domestic violence advocates were asked to provide services to victims. Essentially, their job responsibilities required them to never stop participating in service provision. In addition to working well over 40 hours a week without the luxury of overtime wages or health benefits, the domestic violence advocates repeatedly voiced that they were called at home during all hours of the day and night to problem solve shelter issues. The notion of hyper-participation coexists alongside a shortage in participation levels in other processes.
I look to the literature to understand the usefulness and positive effects of participatory methods in research processes to better understand the dynamics of participation among the domestic violence advocates. As Whyte (1991) found when working with the Xerox Corporation, employees viewed participation in company decision-making as a positive investment. In addition, participatory research has been shown to fuel social change (Freidenberg 1991; Stull and Schensul 1987) and as a way of engaging the local level in research designed to improve the communities under anthropological study (van Willigen 1993).

What is especially useful to this dissertation project is the idea that “participation” must thoughtfully and carefully attend to who participates and its potential effects. In research processes, it has been found that participation is useful because it provides an insider’s perspective, may empower participants by investing responsibility in the research process (Uphoff 1991), furthers the pursuit of knowledge by investing the capacity to gain and analyze data with the stakeholders (Fetterman 2000), promotes communication between the researcher and the stakeholders (Whyte 1991), and increases the likelihood that the research will be utilized in the future (Rylko-Bauer, et al. 1989). I extrapolate the results of utilizing participation in research processes to the participation of a research population. The domestic violence advocates constantly engage in a dialogue about their level of “input” and “participation” in their work, and they become frustrated when they feel that they are underutilized or overutilized in processes.

Researchers and practitioners often articulate participation as “collaboration,” another key word which domestic violence advocates invoked to discuss their levels of participation. Collaboration in research:

…Refers to a process in which university-trained researchers bring their skills and interests to bear on a community or institutional problem. The initial problem is often, though not always, identified by members of the institution or community. Once identified, it is negotiated and translated into researchable terms. Community or institutional participants then work with researchers through operationalization of concepts, research design, collection and analysis of data. Utilization of the information is planned and carried out jointly, often leading to “next steps” in the action research process. (Schensul, et al. 1987: 9)

Collaborative research entails a dialogue between the researcher and the community (however defined). The community participates in the identification of the research “problem” and work with researchers in creating the research design and implementing it. Participation is useful in collaborative research to 1) identify research issues that are important to the community, 2) include research populations’ participation in the research process, and 3) utilize the information in a way that is important to the participants. As demonstrated throughout this dissertation, my commitment to collaborative, participation-based research persists throughout the fieldwork and analysis.

Once more, I frame the idea of studying participation among domestic violence advocates using the research methodology literature. Collaborative, participatory research methods have proven beneficial to the researcher and the research community. The process respects the knowledge of each and engages in a process of feedback throughout the research project. I integrate the benefits and key components of a participatory process to better understand the situations of domestic violence advocates who often feel “left out” of the process of the development and provision of domestic violence advocacy.
Professionalization

In the 1970s, domestic violence organizations started turning to outside sponsors for support of services and programs after historically providing support through individuals. Government and sponsor expectations of professional service provision and the demands of ensuring sustainability forced many organizations to shift their structure. The result was that “to remain in operation, many formerly free-standing centers affiliated with or were absorbed by agencies such as the YWCAs, community mental health centers, hospitals, and district attorney’s offices” (Campbell and Martin 2001: 229). As the shelters moved out of the private homes of individuals, they joined with local chapters of national organizations (such as YWCAs) and larger institutions (Riger, et al. 2002; Sullivan and Gillum 2001; Weed 1995). This caused domestic violence organizations to change or adapt their missions and ideologies to merge with “mother agencies” in a way that may have departed from the original vision of early domestic violence social movement activists. The departure from a social action-oriented, feminist ideology domestic violence social movement is a focus of debate in the literature (Eisikovits, et al. 1996; Heise 1996; Kendrick 1998; Markowitz and Tice 2002; O'Sullivan and Carlton 2001; Schmitt and Martin 1999; Sullivan and Gillum 2001; Tierney 1982) and has instigated accusation that feminist organizations embracing the tenets of professional service organizations have led to the cooptation of the larger feminist social movement (Ahrens 1980; Schechter 1982).

Many feminist scholars associate the collision of domestic violence organizations and “mother agencies” with the demand for increased professionalization and accountability to donors. Increased professionalization and accountability may also move the domestic violence social movement away from the original feminist intent for “social change” and move towards “social work” (Schechter 1982). On one hand, scholars argue that this move is negative. For example:

…During the past two decades, opportunities for women’s social movement organizations in both the North and South to expand their scope of engagement have often been accompanied in both zones by greater vulnerability to donor discipline and scrutiny. Efforts by activists to accommodate demands for accountability and, more generally, to gain mainstream legitimacy and institutional sustainability by professionalizing their organizations have, on one hand, been instrumental in enabling once marginal feminist voices to be heard in established centers of political power. On the other hand, such efforts have frequently contributed to the persistence or creation of social hierarchies within and between women’s organizations, as well as a subversion-or more generously- a reorientation of social change agendas and strategies. (Markowitz and Tice 2002: 954)

The perception that the move towards professionalization is negative is widely held, and that the “increasingly institutional and professional nature” of violence against women services “may lessen rather than expand social change efforts” (Collins and Whalen 1989: 62). It has also been argued that, “While the claim to an expert status is necessary and powerful for the movement, it has some unforeseen and problematic consequences for feminist political analyses and actions around the abuse of women” (Kendrick 1998: 155).

On the other hand, scholars argue that domestic violence organizations must recognize the systems that they are now responsible for reporting to or financially supported by because it ensures that services provision to victims will continue:
Intervention with survivors and perpetrators of intimate violence is becoming increasingly professionalized. This is a part of a process of growing recognition that the phenomenon is a serious social problem that needs to be given visibility and skilled attention. Some people believe this will enhance the quality of intervention but others feel it will tear its soul out. Whatever the outcome, professionalizing the intervention should be seen as part of a political struggle to define who “owns” the problem. (Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1996: 186)

The professionalization debate in the feminist and activist scholarship intersects with the voices from the domestic violence advocates I worked with during my dissertation research, as I will explain throughout these pages.

In summary, key factors in the move towards professionalization include: de-emphasizing the role of former victims in providing services to other victims, increased emphasis on educated and trained service providers, more rigorous and standardized paperwork documenting the activities of clients, documenting and measuring program outcomes according to funding agency standards, organizational hierarchies, and greater boundaries between victims and advocates.

Given these indicators of professionalization specific to domestic violence advocacy, it is also important to note that there is no singular, unifying opinion from feminist social movements with regards to the idea of professionalization. There are multiple perspectives on the professionalization of domestic violence advocacy, and those perspectives are often in competition. As will become apparent in this dissertation, the variety of viewpoints within feminist social movements towards professionalization lacks a single, definitive stance. At times, the messages the domestic violence advocates receive from larger feminist social movements support the movement towards professionalization and at other times it seems the advocates are persuaded to resist professionalization measures. These tensions arise as the domestic violence advocates negotiate their relationships.

The ethnographic investigation undertaken in this dissertation seeks to present the daily operations of a domestic violence shelter and the unique history of domestic violence activism and advocacy in the region with respect to the theme of increasing professionalization of domestic violence services. Furthermore, I provide a much-needed case example of the rhetoric of professionalization from the advocates. For instance, the literature suggests that domestic violence organization advocates are philosophically opposed to the move towards professionalization because it opposes a feminist foundation. However, the domestic violence advocates and activists I worked with during this dissertation fieldwork argue that they want to be “professionals” and it was the mother agency that prevented them from fulfilling this need. Rather than demanding professionalism in the staff, the respondents felt the YWCA, as the mother agency, discouraged advocates from acting in a business like, professional manner to provide services to victims of domestic violence. Feminist scholars and activists will therefore find this dissertation of interest because it provides a local level case study from the perspective of domestic violence advocates.

**Power, Participation, and Professionalization Intersections**

The themes of participation, and professionalization overlap and intersect with power throughout this dissertation. In this section, I detail some of the intersections found in the remaining pages, paying special attention to the inequalities found at those intersections. I found examples of unequal power relationships in participation in terms of domestic violence advocate training, organizational structure, and the use of institutional and community space.
Professionalization is also a venue for analyzing unequal power relationships, specifically found in professional language use, the level and specialization in education, and the creation and enforcement of domestic violence shelter rules and guidelines.

Domestic violence advocacy training includes pursuing the State Coalition’s Certification in domestic violence counseling and advocacy, participating in “special population” (that is, battered immigrant women, battered Asian women, battered lesbian women, etc.) workshops for people working with domestic violence victims, national workshops in advocacy, and other training opportunities. In addition, training includes an advocate’s level of responsibility in the organization and the types of services (e.g. crisis counseling, therapy, etc.) an advocate is qualified to provide to victims and other advocates. Levels of training, types of training, and qualifications acquired through training are intersections of societal power exercised upon the domestic violence organization, as well as locations where domestic violence advocates unequally exercise power according to who has more or less domestic violence training. Similar to Fleisher’s (1989) study of becoming a correctional officer for the federal penitentiary system, analyzing the domestic violence training regime illustrates the external and internal pressures advocates experience while “becoming” a service provider.

The structure of the domestic violence organization is also a site to investigate power inequalities found among domestic violence advocates. Historically, domestic violence organizations have ascribed to an inclusive, democratic model of service provision that stressed the equal importance of each advocate’s contribution to domestic violence advocacy and de-emphasized a model of service that placed individuals in oversight positions (Acker 1990). This democratic model is rooted in feminist social movements’ equality ideology (Riger 1984). However, recent transitions to hierarchize domestic violence advocates illustrates a shift in the operation of non-profit social service providers as well as unequal participation among domestic violence advocates working for the organization (Mann 2002). The BWP hierarchizes advocates according to employment position within the organization (e.g. different positions exist such as advocate supervisor, advocate coordinator, domestic violence advocate, etc.) as well as an advocate’s employment commitment to work full time or part time. These distinctions indicate different power allocations for the domestic violence advocates, as advocates who hold full time, supervisor responsibilities often embody the power to make corrections or program decisions while part time employees hold less responsibility- and therefore power- in the day to day operations of the shelter. Hierarchizing employees is a movement away from a democratic model of service provision that stresses an equal place for advocates within the organizational structure.

The use and regulation of space within the organization is another intersection to view power relationships. Similar to studies of institutional space in a nursing home (Gubrium 1975) and an acute psychiatric unit (Rhodes 1991), the proposed research focuses on the use and restrictions of space and who uses different spaces in the domestic violence shelter. For example, the “Crisis Office” is a space where advocates address victims’ needs and work towards accomplishing organizational and residential resource goals. Resident use of the advocate office is restricted to business and counseling. However, the advocate office is also an area of refuge for residents escaping the inevitable pressures of community living, creating a tension between meeting local level needs and maintaining a professional space designated for advocate work. When advocates and residents create, uphold, and resist spatial boundaries, they exercise power.
Another area of intersection is power and professionalization. The language used in the organization’s professional correspondence and record keeping is one area that illustrates this intersection. At the domestic violence shelter organizations under investigation in this dissertation, advocates have witnessed an increased demand for record keeping and an increased distribution of daily effort in writing in client files and reporting client cases. The Kentucky Domestic Violence Association (the entity that oversees the 17 domestic violence shelter programs in the state) expects record keeping using standards of specific language to convey a resident or client’s daily situations and record daily communication between the victim survivor and the organization. For example, advocates use a list of phrases to indicate the type of service that has been provided to a person and are expected to describe that service without providing information that may be incriminating or detrimental to the victim survivor. Operating grants distributed by the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association are contingent upon meeting these standards.

Professionalization is also visible in the education level and education specialization of the domestic violence advocates. Education includes level of secondary or post-secondary formal schooling an individual has completed, as well as the educational specialization the domestic violence advocate pursued. Contrary to the early domestic violence social service agencies that stressed practical experience, domestic violence organizations are increasingly staffed with advocates who hold a college degree or higher. For example, one advocate cited frustration over her inability to positively influence the structure of service provision because the directorship and board of directors did not take her suggestions seriously due to her position as “just a crisis counselor” rather than a licensed counselor or master of social work. The struggle over professionalization manifests itself both as something to resist and embrace depending upon circumstances, creating a paradox of professionalism. Local level advocates are working within a transition moment in domestic violence social service that is both ushering in and resisting a move towards professionalism through education level.

Another intersection of power and professionalization is the creation and enforcement of rules and guidelines. Advocates and victims create and negotiate rules and guidelines on a daily basis to discipline the actors working within a web of power relations. The domestic violence organization creates rules and guidelines that discipline the residents and those rules are variously enforced or ignored. Often, the organization creates rules and guidelines to address external pressures that regulate the provision of social services for victims of domestic violence. Advocates explain resident guidelines during the shelter intake process, and residents sign a form indicating that they understand the guidelines and agree to abide by them. The organization expects the advocates to enforce those guidelines consistently. However, both advocates and residents often successfully and unsuccessfully negotiate rules and guidelines. One example of a guideline is the spatial restriction on food consumption. Advocates explain to incoming residents that they are to eat food only in the kitchen area. Advocates enforce this guideline by asking residents with food outside of the kitchen to return to the kitchen with the food, a reminder heard on a daily basis. However, residents often successfully negotiate food consumption in the community room during weekly “movie night.” This exception indicates the contestability of the guidelines and causes a tension between when, where, and for whom rules are enforced or disregarded.

Summary
A feminist political economic perspective allows me to trace and analyze inequalities at multiple levels using the domestic violence advocates as central point. Inequalities can
transpire as unequal access to resources (education, finances) services (support, training), or power (the right to exercise authority or influence over others, participation in creating policy). Inequalities may arise because of numerous factors, including education level, socioeconomic status, race, length of experience in the field of domestic violence advocacy, job placement in an organization, and gender. As a foundation, the political economic lens recognizes social and political inequalities and the historic construction of culture (such as the culture of domestic violence advocacy) within a global process of uneven resource distribution that influences cultures and the individuals within them.

This case study contributes to both theoretical literature in political economy and feminist anthropology. By explicitly seeking the affects of a changing political economy that relies on neoliberal policies and removes the state’s responsibility to provide social services, this dissertation provides an example of the local level results and struggles of frontline workers. Similarly, as feminist scholars and activists debate trends in the domestic violence social movement, this dissertation provides a much needed in-depth, local illustration of the tensions among the individuals providing domestic violence services in America.

What Are the Aspirations?

The following story illustrates a morning at the local level of domestic violence advocacy. While this dissertation uses at its starting point a local level case study, the issues and themes that emerge are those that human service organizations across the United States are experiencing. In this ethnographic vignette, we gain a sense of the frustrations of the domestic violence advocates. However, while these frustrations are often attributed to situations at the local level, we note that structural level power is invisible to these frontline workers. Recognizing the veiled nature of structural power is a starting point for unraveling the intricacies of trends and patterns in power, participation, and professionalization in domestic violence advocacy- and human service in general.

At 8:00 am on Sunday morning, I let myself into the DVC using my key and found my coworker fuming from her night. Her third shift was a disaster, and she was frustrated, angry, and definitely overtired. All of the advocates had the experiences of working a third shift that turns into a waking nightmare and not a peaceful night’s sleep on the community room couch, and she definitely experienced the former. The phone was ringing off the hook, two women arrived to shelter in the middle of the night, and the residents were up throughout the evening experiencing difficulties. We had previously discussed conducting her interview this morning.

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6 By examining inequalities in the relationships of the domestic violence advocates, I am also placing their experiences within a larger body of literature analyzing inequalities of various forms in residential facilities. For example, anthropologists have explored racial inequalities in residential facilities. In prisons, the numbers of minority inmates continues to increase in the United States. The racial disparities are exacerbated by socioeconomic status; for example, as “line officers in prisons receive higher wages, the number of minority, male prisoners continues to increase” (Wacquant 2002). Additionally, in homeless shelters, one will also find a disproportionate amount of minority men, especially black men (Hopper 2003). These studies intersect with this dissertation in that the majority of the domestic violence advocates working in the shelter program are White, while the number of victims and clients receiving services both residually and non-residually are Black. Connolly (2000) similarly employs a Foucaultian model of power to analyze the power relations found within a women’s homeless shelter. Specifically, Connolly focuses on the ways homeless mothers and their shelter advocates exercise and resist power through the shelter’s rules and regulations disciplining homeless mothers as well as the societal norms and guidelines influencing the creation and negotiation of the institution’s structure (Connolly 2000). These texts influence this dissertation because they examine the power inequalities among workers and residents in shelter facilities.
and I gave her the option of postponing her interview until a later date. She said, “No, we might as well do it now while I remember why I am so frustrated.”

Sunday mornings are a shift because the residents tend to sleep in, the children wake slowly, and it gives advocates time to just have informal conversations with the women over coffee. Sometimes the advocates would pick up donuts to share with the residents or bring in a special flavored creamer to spruce up the morning coffee. To me, Sunday morning was the time when our facility felt most like a home, with women and children staying in their pajamas until lunchtime and the hopes and dreams for the upcoming week spilling out faster than the sugar into coffee cups.

On this Sunday, we made coffee and fixed ourselves some breakfast. We closed the door to the crisis office and sat down for our interview. Our conversation flowed through her history of becoming an advocate and her role in providing services to victim survivor clients of the DVC. We moved to discussing the future of our program and her vision, which is the point when she no longer held back her frustrations.

I asked her the standard semi-structured interview question, “What have we mapped out in terms of the retreat and staff meetings and everything, what have we mapped out now for the future? When we move to a new building, what have we mapped out, what are we going to provide then?”

“Well, I know that we're going to start out at 36 or 32 residents, and…” her cellular phone rang and interrupted her. She pulled it out of her bag, turned the ringer off, and put it on the desk. “Jennifer, we're going to continue to do the shit that we're doing now, and I'm telling you, it might change in about five years.” She ended this statement with a sigh.

I urged her to go on, “What are the aspirations? What do you think we're setting our…”

She interrupted me, saying, “We're setting our hopes to be the best domestic violence program the state or the nation ever saw.”

“And what do we have to do to be that?”

“Well, we keep saying we're going to be a program, not just a shelter.”

I kept pushing her to explain things to me, “What does that mean?”

“We're going to do individual work with the women and we're going to do the domestic violence work and work with the whole woman.” She began to laugh.

This time I interrupted her to ask, “Why are you laughing?”

She responded, still laughing, “I don't know, I'm probably getting delirious now. Because I'm just burned out. Burned out! Because you know what, and it's a whole other piece of this, Jennifer, it's like, there are no outcome measures here. What are we looking at here? Are we looking at the research on what should be and what do women need?” She sighed and looked me straight in the eye to say, “It's just what feels right. What sounds good. Why are we doing it? What do we succeed in, what do we fail in? What are we good at, where do we need improvement? We don't know any of that, Jennifer. We have no idea where these women go when they leave.

We're going to move to the new building, and we're going to do what feels right. We're going to fly by the seat of the pants like I did 2 years ago when I didn't know better. And I think the Executive Director comes with a lot of experience, which will be great. But I just don't know, I don't know.”

I pushed her further “So, looking at outcome measures is one of the things that you think we really need to include that's not currently under consideration. What else? We've got
what we do now, what we don't do now, and what we've set out for the future, right? And then
what else are we missing that we're not even thinking about for the future and for now?"

She responded, “Well, I think what's good is we're going to do the transitional housing,
which is definitely hugely needed. So I just don't know what we need to do to change, to
actually meet the needs of the women that we're serving currently... It’s just, it’s there are
questions that just prompt more questions, like, what are we going to do? What is it going to
look like? We have a beautiful new building, what are we going to do in it? Do you know
where your office is going to be in the new building yet? Do you know what the crisis
counselors are going to do in the new building yet? Do you know the role of the assistant
director? Do you know the difference between, what the difference between full time family
advocates and part time family advocates is going to be in terms of responsibilities and duties?

It is hard and we've been talking about this move and this transition as if come moving
day being in a new building is going to mean something other than being in the new building.
This transition is going to take no less than 5 years. We still haven't started using new
documentation. We don't have the staff, we're not at staffing capacity as far as I remember. We're supposed to be hiring new people
and we never did.”

We continued to talk about the future, drinking coffee and answering the phone. Near
the end of our interview, she told me she had her resignation letter written and would be
handing it over to the administration in two weeks. She left mid morning to go home and get
some sleep. I left the house full of sleepy women and children, and pot after pot of coffee to
pour on our lazy Sunday morning.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODS AND CONTEXT

“And then all the workers, they are the employees that are selfless souls. You know they are just pouring everything out for all the clients and are pawns and pieces in this struggle and feud between two companies, who have completely and totally lost focus about what is important and they are the ones that are really, really- for the lack of a better word- going to get screwed.”
-Aurora, Oral History Participant and Former Battered Women’s Program Advocate

Introduction

This chapter presents the technical information about the data collection as well as the successes and failures of operationalizing these methods among domestic violence advocates and activists. In addition, this chapter discusses the unique relationship between the researcher and the advocates. These methods are employed at the local level amidst a larger political economic context of neoliberal policies and welfare reform, which influence the structure and function of today’s social service organizations.

Methods

Methodologically, this dissertation presents data collected through participant observation, interviews, focus groups, and archival research from fieldwork that I conducted in Kentucky during a period of intense transition for one domestic violence shelter program. The transformation of the regional domestic violence program (described in Chapter 4) from the Battered Women’s Program (BWP) to the Domestic Violence Center (DVC) became the backdrop for my dissertation research. During this time, advocates considered continuing their careers in domestic violence advocacy and their position on the restructuring itself. It is amidst these changes that I spoke with advocates in the domestic violence programs as well as people in the regional community who self identified as advocates and/or activists in the domestic violence movement. Throughout this dissertation, I have elected to retain many participant voices in lengthened form. The impact of their words is paired with my interpretations of the research data, rather than presenting my analysis as the authoritative voice of domestic violence advocate culture.

Residential Facilities

The primary field site for this research is the region’s domestic violence shelter facility. Shelters are an excellent research location, as battered women refuges stand “at the heart of the battered-women’s movement” because they both provide a physical place to escape violence and a site of organization for the domestic violence social movement (Dobash and Dobash 1992: 60). Domestic violence shelters are also sites to examine participation in larger feminist social movements, having the “potential to be quintessential feminist organizations” (Davis and Srinivasan 1994: 349).

Anthropologists have conducted numerous explorations into residential facilities, and the methods employed in these studies influenced my approach to the shelter programs. When studying populations living or working in residential facilities, several methods persist throughout. First, authors argue whether participant observation is the best way to capture the daily triumphs and struggles in a residential facility. For instance, in prisons, participant observation is an added form of surveillance, and is therefore inappropriate to use when studying a population such as inmates (Rhodes 2001). In addition, the movement in anthropology to attempt to understand the emic viewpoint of social situations is nearly

7 Pseudonyms are used for the domestic violence shelters to maintain the research participants’ confidentiality.
impossible when studying the residents of facilities, as the move to become the “other” may be a dangerous achievement as pointed out by Rhodes (2001: 76):

Fundamentally, however, no outsider/observer can “participate” in the situation of the prisoner… To forget one’s position as an outsider is to be in danger, not only from interpersonal trouble of various kinds but, more endurably, from alarming emotional and intellectual identifications. Here is the ethnographic desire for (perhaps fantasized but nonetheless compelling) alignment with one’s subject(s) must be relinquished or at least bracketed.

Crossing this line can be dangerous to a researcher, the residents, and the research. In Fleishman’s ethnography text Warehousing Violence, the author’s own “socialization and subsequent witnessing of extreme violence toward inmates suggests both the difficulty of entering this world and the ethical hazards encountered once in it” (Rhodes 2001: 72). Being on the “inside,” therefore also raises ethical issues if the insiders are engaging in inappropriate behaviors.

Another method used in the anthropology of residential facilities is oral history. When obtaining a longitudinal understanding of a population’s social situation through medical records or archives is impossible or perhaps when seeking to compare the “official” records with the lived experiences, oral histories contextualize the lives of residents. Furthermore, oral history provides a valuable venue to “describe how larger structures of authority and domination are both expressed in and resisted by political action at the level of the body” (Rhodes 2001: 73).

Similarly, researchers use interview methodologies extensively in residential organization ethnography to gain an understanding of the lives of the workers and the residents. The voices of people displaced in shelters often evoke charged and sometimes emotional responses that illuminate the ways that themes of power, inequality, and agency manifest themselves in social situations.

With any methodology, gaining access and entrée are challenging, though perhaps doubly so with residential facilities. Concerns with coercion and unethical practices have created increased human subject board scrutiny on ethnographic studies of residential organizations. This scrutiny is necessary to protect a research participant’s freely given, informed consent to participate in a research project. Unfortunately, the increased level of protocol evaluation has nearly closed off residential facilities such as prisons:

The result of the closing of the penitentiary to social researchers made redundant by the jettisoning of rehabilitation and the latter’s growing disregard for a mode of punishment deemed coarse and passé is that observational studies depicting the everyday world of inmates all but vanished just as the United States was settling into mass incarceration and other advanced countries were gingerly clearing their own road towards the penal state. The ethnography of the prison thus went into eclipse at the very moment when it was most urgently needed on both scientific and political grounds. (Wacquant 2002: 385)

The ethnography of the “other world,” therefore is becoming less visible as the investigation of prisons and other residential facilities and the social relationships found therein is especially important.

Empowerment Methods

As an applied-oriented anthropologist, I developed my research methods in conjunction with the research population. During the 40-day closing period at the BWP, I collected interviews with the shelter advocates, which I analyzed to discover the themes or power,
participation, and professionalization. I did not impose themes; rather the advocates voiced these themes, as repeatedly demonstrated throughout these pages. In addition, throughout the interviews the shelter advocates implored me, directly and passively, to elevate their voices to a level where they might be heard and cautioned me not to undermine their experiences. In speaking about the lack of decision-making power among the Family Advocates, a shelter advocate argued:

How can people who write grants, and people who keep track of statistics and people who take care of children outings or people who collect funds or people who go out and fill a prescriptions actually have a whole lot of insight or hands-on experience with the day-to-day running of the shelter. How can they say, “Well this would really work better” if they don't actually physically try it. And how can they say that that's the best way or this is the way that it should go, if they aren't even there to see how it works and happens. People who are doing it should have some kind of space or something.

In response to the “lack of say so” sentiment, I incorporated a philosophy of what I refer to as “empowerment evaluation” into the research methodology to ensure that the domestic violence advocates and activists would feel invested in the research project and the final dissertation project (Fetterman 2000). My goal was to empower the domestic violence advocates to be as active in the research process as they wished and promote an atmosphere of community reflection. As I discuss here, I pair these application-based or evaluation methodologies with traditional anthropological research methods. Anthropologists use ethnography to address contemporary social problems as defined by the research community and to address practical problems.

I connected this concept the fundamental concepts the advocates themselves use in their advocacy work. As advocates, they believe women’s accounts of domestic violence and accept their lived experiences without question or skepticism. As a researcher, I subjected myself to the same demands to believe the advocates’ accounts of their lives and their lived experiences without questioning their authenticity. This feminist methodology not only allowed women to come forward with their stories of abuse throughout the violence against women movement, it also served to create trust between myself and the advocates so they might share their stories (Bart, et al. 1989; Smith 1987).

I then developed the remainder of the research project around these themes, taking into account the voices I heard and recorded during the BWP closure. Several advocates and the Interim Director, each of which provided valuable feedback and insight in the project’s development, scrutinized my final proposal. I remember my surprise when the Interim Director met with me on the picnic table outside of the DVC, my proposal under her arm with an alarming amount of red ink spilled throughout. She indicated to me that she appreciated the invitation to provide feedback and she found the subject matter appropriate and stimulating. Her comments were instrumental during the initial phases of this dissertation research.

Throughout the development and implementation of the research project, I worked to include the domestic violence advocates and activists in the region. I provided updates to key informants almost daily over the telephone and via e-mail. In staff meetings and in the shelter’s crisis office, it was common for an advocate to walk in the door for her shift, ask me how I was, and then ask, “How’s the dissertation research going?”

In addition, I provided interview transcripts to the research participants and solicited their feedback after they had the opportunity to “proofread” their own interview. Feedback was returned to me via the transcript hard copies themselves, over the phone, or via e-mail.
Corrections, additions, and notes from participants are integrated throughout the dissertation and noted as such. Furthermore, Chapter Eight discusses the themes that emerged in the participant feedback.

**Gaining Entrée**

As introduced in Chapter 1, I was working as a part time crisis counselor for the BWP when news of the pending restructuring emerged. At that point, I had been working at the BWP for over 2 years while completing my coursework for a doctorate degree in anthropology. The Former Director of the BWP and my immediate supervisors indicated they would support my research efforts, and I had already proposed dissertation fieldwork at the BWP to better understand services related to women’s health. The morning the YWCA Board of Directors informed the advocates that the program would close, I quickly began revising my dissertation research plans. It did not take me long to rewrite my predissertation proposal to focus on the documentation of the closing of the BWP. I requested expedition of my protocol to the Institutional Review Board and began conducting interviews with the BWP employees shortly after.

In the final days of the BWP, I naively thought that I could conduct my dissertation research with the new DVC and not work as an advocate. In fact, I did not even send in my resume to the state coalition because my plan was to be just a researcher and not simultaneously as an advocate. This did not work for a number of reasons. First, the new leadership did not know me well enough to grant the access to the advocates that I would require for the dissertation research. The second barrier to my participation as solely a researcher was practical. The new DVC desperately needed trained advocates, and it would be incredibly unrealistic for me to expect the Interim Director to let me “hang out” at the shelter and not work. I needed to prove myself to the new leadership and the advocates, and the best way to do was to “do the work.”

My decision to take the role on of an active advocate provided invaluable, as my own advocacy became a mechanism for gaining the trust of the advocates around me and legitimized my research to the oral history participants. My advocacy provided me access to those who have also “done the work” and they came to respect me as a colleague. Shortly after the DVC opened, the Interim Director provided me with valuable and detailed comments and suggestions regarding my dissertation proposal and promised to support me through the research process. She noted in that conversation that she was not worried about me doing any research because she felt I had proven myself through the work I did for the shelter. Later, the permanent DVC Executive Director provided the same support for this dissertation research.

**Life in the Domestic Violence Advocacy Culture**

Participant observation is a methodology utilized in social science research that enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the relationships between a study population, the power structures that may impact a study population, and the daily behaviors of a study population (Babbie 2001; Bernard 1994; Emerson, et al. 1995). By employing participant observation the researcher is able to describe a study population through daily interaction with a culture, recording the activities that appear both exotic and mundane, explicit and tacit, to the researcher (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002; Fetterman 1998). By participating in the everyday activities of a population in their geographic and cultural space, the researcher essentially becomes a part of that population, allowing for the observation and collection of data that may not be visible to the casual observer (Burawoy 1991). In addition, the method of
participant observation lends itself to informal conversations with the research population in the course of normal, everyday activities. Participant observation data provided me with the full breadth of the services and daily activities the domestic violence advocates provide every day, thereby contextualizing interview and focus group data.

As a researcher and advocate, I enjoyed free access to the advocates and the DVC because of my dual roles as both a working advocate and a researcher. My intersecting roles as both participant observer and active advocate became so intermingled I constantly had to consciously remember my own identity. I was deeply entrenched in providing services to clients, interactions between advocates, relationships between the advocates and the various supervisors and directors we worked under, and working with a community with a rich history of domestic violence advocacy and activism. As a participant observing advocate, I arrived to my shifts on time and left well after my shifts were over. I attended trainings with the other advocates and I went on an overnight retreat.

My participant observation domain of focus centered on advocate interactions with the women, the organization’s administration, and community members. As I have noted, this focus spanned throughout all of the advocate shifts—weekdays and weekends, daytimes and nights. In my participation observation data collection, I was seeking to gain an understanding of the everyday behaviors which embodied the tensions I outlined in my research questions. How did advocates respond when they were in a situation of enforcing the shelter rules and guidelines? When a general announcement was made regarding program development meeting, who was able to participate? Were advocates conforming to written or informal dress code?

My immersion itself became a mechanism of data collection. My own exhaustion forced me to confront the “dailiness of domestic violence advocacy,” as Emma, an oral history participant called it. I engaged my own experiences in the pursuit of an ethnographic description, because:

Ethnography of course means many things. Minimally, however, it has always meant the attempt to understand another life world using the self—as much of it as possible—as the instrument of knowing (Ortner 1995: 173). I became aggravated and upset when a client’s court case would go awry. I got tired when I had to work a third shift followed by a second shift the next day. I was frustrated by the constant scheduling problems our advocate team encountered as a result of the high demand and low staff levels. When the stomach flu infected each advocate one by one, I spent two days on my couch at home feebly attempting to eat Popsicles and drink fluids.

The combination of active participation and research observation yielded field notes rich in descriptions, short stories, and reflections on my own role as an “advocate.” I became a “field note,” as my presence became a part of my observations. However, my journeys through participant observation and ethnographic fieldwork are not unique to my situation. In Black Corona (Gregory 1998), the researcher had to maneuver an urban community to understand the complex interactions of “race,” gender, class and politics. Furthermore, Yang (Yang 1994) provides a compelling discussion of her participant-observer role in her country of origin, China. She was able to gain access in some areas due to her similar physical appearance, yet she was still a foreigner and therefore unable to access vital areas necessary to gain a comprehensive picture of the practice of guanxi (Yang 1994).

As a participant observer, I worked the daily shelter shifts alongside the advocate team and attended community meetings with the advocates and activists working in domestic
violence outside the shelter. The ethnographic data chronicling the daily activities of the shelter advocates provides a picture of the “real-life situations” the advocates encounter (Pottier 1993). I heard repeatedly from the domestic violence advocates and activists that people who “don’t do the work” simply “don’t understand.” The ethnographic description I provide serves as a stepping stone for others to understand the culture of domestic violence advocacy, with the hope that the ethnographic accounts influence future policies and practices. As such, I seek to not only contribute to larger bodies of anthropological knowledge, but also influence decisions in the social service provision fields.

My involved “participant” role as a domestic violence advocate at the DVC disengaged me from certain aspects of the organization and the community of domestic violence advocates and activists. Since I was actively involved in the daily operations of the shelter, including providing advocacy services to victims, there are areas of service provision and shelter management to which I am less familiar. For example, I did not have any outreach clients nor did I make community presentations. While these are services I learned about, I did not become as intimately involved with them as my participant observation focused the daily shelter advocacy.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the research populations. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews mimic a long conversation, aided by an interview schedule that focuses on a sequence of themes and/or topics (Babbie 2001). This type of interview allowed me to be receptive to the interests and experiences of the participant, as well as incorporate additional techniques to aid the interview, such as free listing.

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Information describing the recruitment process and research participants is found in Chapter 5.
Figure 3.1
Semi-Structured Interview Questions (Domestic Violence Shelter Advocates)

1. How did you come to domestic violence advocacy?
2. Did you attend school for this position?
3. Who has mentored you during your domestic violence advocacy?
4. Why did you want to work for the [DVC]?
5. Describe a day at work and what it is like for you.
6. What services you provide as an advocate to residents?
7. What other services do you provide (nonresidential, community education)?
8. How is your current role at the [DVC] different from your previous role at the [BWP]?
9. What is the hardest part of advocacy for you? What is the easiest part of advocacy for you?
10. What are the qualities that a “good” advocate possesses?
11. In what way do you contribute to the overall structure of the organization?
12. In what ways do you want to contribute to the overall structure?
13. If we could back in time, what should we have done differently when we moved?
14. What services are currently offered through the [DVC]? What services are not offered?
15. What services/activities/goals have been mapped out for the future of the [DVC]?
16. What do you think should be included that is currently not under consideration?
17. What is your role in the development of domestic violence services?
18. What does “professionalization” mean to you in terms of domestic violence advocacy?
19. Do you think our current organization is more or less professional than the [BWP]?
20. Would you like the stage of transition to be more or less professional than we are now?

I developed interview questions that reflect my interests in the relationships between
power and domestic violence organization participation and professionalization. All sets of
interview schedules were broad enough so that I could follow up with specific questions and
probes. Figure 3.1 outlines the broad basic questions included in all semi-structured interviews
with the domestic violence shelter advocates. Oral history questions were similar in nature
(see Figure 3.2) and were also conceived broadly to maximize follow up questions.
### Oral History Interview Questions

1. How did you come to domestic violence advocacy?
2. Did you attend school for this position?
3. Who has mentored you during your domestic violence advocacy?
4. With what organization are you/were you involved with domestic violence advocacy/activism?
5. Describe a day at work and what it is like for you in terms of your role in domestic violence.
6. What services do you provide, if any?
7. How is your current role different from roles you may have held in the past?
8. What is the hardest part of advocacy/activism for you?
9. What is the easiest part of advocacy/activism for you?
10. What types of domestic violence advocacy/activism have you wanted to be a part of? What may have prevented you from participating in those activities?
11. If you are no longer an advocate/activist involved in the domestic violence movement, why not?
12. Have you followed the recent transformation of services?
13. What is your opinion of the current restructuring of services in central Kentucky?
14. What would you like to see for the future of domestic violence activism/advocacy in central Kentucky?
15. Do you have any suggestions for additional people I should interview for this oral history project?

I approached shelter advocates in person with a participation request letter in hand to request an interview. All but a couple shelter advocates agreed to participate in the research process. We set up a time to conduct the interview, often at the beginning or ending of an advocate’s shelter shift. I asked participants to provide consent for the interviews to be audiotape recorded (further explained later in this chapter). Interviews lasted anywhere from 60 to 180 minutes. All of the domestic violence shelter advocates requested their interviews to take place at the shelter. This often led to interruptions throughout the interview, however, interruptions were commonplace during most meetings at the shelter locations. I was able to complete all interview questions with an individual in the same day, but the voice recorder was turned off during to accommodate interruptions, errands, and in one case, an emergency requiring a call to the paramedics.

### Focus Groups

I also conducted four semi-structured focus groups during the data collection period with the DVC advocates. Focus groups gather several individuals together in a setting to engage in a guided conversation of a topic (Babbie 2001). The focus group technique was particularly useful for the shelter advocates because they recognize group communication as their primary mode of passing information along. When an issue or problem arose in shelter, the advocates consulted with as many members of the advocate team as possible.

The focus groups topics mirrored the goals set forth for semi-structured interviews, however, addressing the information in focus groups will 1) capture as much interactive
information as possible about the DVC and its transitional phase and 2) address a time component by asking advocates to participate in four focus groups over a twelve month period (see Figure 3.3). The significance of focus groups in the proposed research design is threefold. First, respondents may be more likely to discuss the concepts and share information once they are aware that they are not alone in their experiences, therefore contributing additional information due to a shared community setting (Krueger 1994; Madriz 2000; Pollack 2003). Second, the focus groups will be conducted in a flexible, informal format so I will be free to explore new topics and direct the conversation to areas that may not have been anticipated as relevant (Bryant and Bailey 1991). The third significant feature of focus groups for this research is the opportunity to observe the interactions between advocates as they share their feelings and opinions regarding the concepts, allowing me the chance to observe the advocates in a more familiar social setting- as part of a team (Bryant and Bailey 1991). Focus groups were also audio recorded.

| Figure 3.3 |
| Focus Group Questions |
| 1. What is currently going on at work in terms of the services offered? |
| 2. What is currently going on in terms of the overall organizational structure? |
| 3. What has been especially difficult in terms of your advocacy recently? |
| 4. What has been especially easy in terms of your advocacy recently? |
| 5. If we could go back in time, what should we have done differently when we moved? |
| 6. What services are currently offered through the [DVC]? |
| 7. What services are not offered? |
| 8. What services/activities/goals have been mapped out for the future of the [DVC]? |
| 9. What do you think should be included that is currently not under consideration? |

Nearly the entire advocate team attended the first focus group I held. Advocates were in and out of the focus group room, which was the kitchen/play room at the DVC’s transitional location. We decided to have the focus groups on site since at least one person would have to be there to answer the phones. The chosen time for the focus groups was near shift change, which allowed for the maximum number of advocates to “already be there” to volunteer their time to the focus group. They opted out of the offer of pizza and instead decided that I should bring Starbucks to them, a request I did not find surprising and I happily obliged. I walked into the community room for our focus group with 8 mochas and lattes balanced in both hands. We discussed the questions I developed for over two hours. The shelter advocates pushed each other to think through their answers, and they closed the conversation by discussing the potential uses of the data I was collecting.

The advocates attended the second focus group in equally as impressive numbers as the first focus group. A very similar energy was in the air during the second focus group, the advocates were hopeful for the future yet they openly discussed their frustrations with the organization and their roles. In addition, the advocates further explored the application of my dissertation research. I facilitated the second focus group at the DVC’s transitional location a couple months before the move to their permanent home.

I held the third focus group the day after the lease for permanent location was signed. Four advocates participated. We sat in the crisis office instead of the kitchen/play room since
there were only a few of us and we would have to answer the telephone and doorbell. This smaller group was different from the previous two focus groups because the dynamic was different with such a small number of people. In addition, the third focus group participants spoke freely about the issues among the advocates team that emerged throughout the stressful transition period. For example, the absence of a number of other team members allowed this small group to openly discuss issues with scheduling, possible gaps in service provision.

I held the fourth focus group on the Sunday after the DVC’s Grand Opening celebration at their permanent location, was a small focus group that included me and two other advocates. By this time, the advocates self-identified as “incredibly burned out” and treasured every moment that they were not required to be at the shelter. Individually, the advocates apologized to me for not attending this final focus group, providing reasons for their absence such as “needing time for myself,” “I have been here all week and it was my only day off,” and “sheer exhaustion.” I was not upset nor surprised at the sparse attendance. We were tired, many advocates had been working for more than 10 days consecutively, and everyone needed to take some “self-care time.” The problem I encountered at this point was that I could see no alternative date that I could have offered for the fourth focus group, plus I had advertised for this focus group beginning several weeks ahead of time. There was no reprieve in sight for the advocate team, no “better time” to ask them to volunteer 2 hours of their life, no amount of Starbucks coffee or biscotti that would tempt them back to the shelter when they did not have to be there. It would not have been fair to cancel it, since the two advocates present had driven the distance to participate and I did not want to disrespect their time. We engaged in a thought provoking discussion about shelter life and advocate culture at the new permanent location, where we had been residing for about a month. I treasure this focus group for the advocates’ straightforwardness when describing the move and the barriers the advocates encountered as they moved 2 dozen women and children to a new facility.

Oral History Interviews

In addition to the domestic violence shelter advocates, I pursued interviews with individuals who self-defined as oral history participants in the domestic violence social movement in the past. I learned about the history of the domestic violence social movement in Kentucky through the words of advocates who worked in the region’s first domestic violence shelter, assisted in creating the statewide coalition uniting domestic violence advocates- the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association, and struggled for domestic violence legislation.

Furthermore, I was able to expand the research populations to include advocates and activists working to prevent domestic violence and/or provide intervention services to victims of domestic violence in the region via multiple mechanisms. For example, I interviewed individuals providing casework services through local government offices to populations in need that very often included domestic violence victims, but not exclusively. This essentially expanded the scope of my ethnographic inquiry to include a time component, allowing me to compare the present day situation with past experiences and connect with the rich history of advocacy and activism in the region (di Leonardo 1987). However, the original goals of the research project were not met in that a comprehensive, statewide oral history was not gathered. The nature of the oral history component of this research is further explained in Chapter Five when discussing the Participant Populations.

9 Recruitment methods and a description of the research participants are described in detail in Chapter Five.
Archival and Popular Media Data

In a medium sized community, the closing of the BWP was a persistent story covered in the local newspapers. The newspaper reporters started covering the closing almost immediately and chronicled the transition throughout. These newspaper articles were valuable to understand the influences over the community’s perceptions of the domestic violence organization, the advocates, and the phenomena of domestic violence.

A variety of additional archival information is included in this dissertation. The director of the state domestic violence coalition sent me audiotapes of oral histories that an intern had conducted 10 years prior to my fieldwork. As a way to thank her for allowing me to be the first person to access these tapes, I transcribed the interviews for the state coalition’s future use.

In addition, several participants bestowed documents to me during my fieldwork. One participant conducted a thorough cleaning of her office and produced armloads of regional reports and information from the past 2 decades to assist me in my endeavors. I supplemented these documents with a number of reports and documents that the advocates found as they were cleaning out the building that housed the BWP. Advocates unearthed old newspaper articles mentioning the BWP and made copies to assist me in understanding the history of the domestic violence program. This information proved a valuable resource for identifying potential oral history participants as well as background for the BWP and domestic violence services in the region.

Finally, amidst change and transition, I collected examples of paperwork used within the shelter at different times. All told, my fieldwork covered 4 distinct eras of internal paperwork: the BWP, the DVC under the leadership of the Interim Director, and the DVC under the leadership of the Executive Director. These documents provide insight into the various levels and forms of administrative mandates governing the advocates and the residents, as well as remind me of the changes to shelter rules and guidelines throughout the fieldwork period.

Institutional Review Board Approval and Notes on Confidentiality

I sought formal approval for all research activities through the University of Kentucky’s Non-Medical Institutional Review Board (IRB). To apply for IRB approval, I submitted a description of the proposed research project and the research objectives. In addition, I described the study design, noting that control and experiment groups would not be utilized and no deception would be involved in the study. I also described the research populations, including the domestic violence shelter advocate population and the oral history population. In the IRB application, I noted the following about the research populations: all people were assumed to be of normal health status, no populations of special class or vulnerabilities were included in the dissertation project, neither women or minorities were excluded, and minors were excluded because existing employment requirements for the shelter program included a bachelor’s degree which indicated age maturity past 18 years of age.

Participant Recruitment

I recruited participants to this research design with attention to informed and voluntary consent. At each stage of data collection, domestic violence advocates at both the BWP and DVC received a letter of introduction describing the research project and soliciting their participation in an interview (see Appendix A and B). I also presented the research project at an advocate meeting to describe the research protocol and address any questions. I requested

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10 A more detailed discussion of the participant populations and recruitment methods is found in Chapter 5.
advocates to contact me through my mailbox at the shelter, via telephone, or via e-mail if they were interested in participating in the research project.

Additionally, I identified long-term participants in the Kentucky domestic violence social movement through newspaper documents publicizing the shelter’s transition and through word of mouth referrals. These participants are referred to as “oral history participants” and are included in the general population I refer to as “domestic violence advocates and activists.” I mailed over 200 individuals oral history participant recruitment letters similar to that of the domestic violence advocates (see Appendix C). These letters were sent to domestic violence advocates and activists via the U.S. postal service and through electronic mail (e-mail). In addition, I introduced myself to potential stakeholder organizations, such as the local United Way chapter and local government agencies (including the CDVB). After making key contacts within these organizations, I obtained permission from several of the agency’s supervisors to distribute participate recruitment letters to their staff.

Informed Consent Process

After distributing the introduction letters, individuals who voluntarily chose to contact me were asked to indicate a time and place convenient for the researcher to administer the Consent Form for the semi-structured interviews and oral history interviews (see Appendix D). In addition, Consent Forms were administered for all four focus groups (see Appendix E). I read aloud the Consent Form as the individual followed along with a copy, and then I asked the individual if he or she had any questions or concerns so we could address them. At that time, I gave the individual the opportunity to accept or decline participation in the research project. No individuals opted to decline. Individuals then signed the Consent Form and I provided a copy of the Consent Form to each individual.

There were no anticipated physical, psychological, social, or legal risks. If an individual felt that they were at risk, the alternative was to not participate in the project (as outlined in the Consent Form). There was no direct benefit or compensation to the participant by partaking in the research. Additionally, no costs were accrued by the participants as a consequence of partaking in the research.

Off-Site Research

This research was conducted at a facility other than one owned and operated by the University of Kentucky. Therefore, I had to procure a letter of support from the operators of the research locations. I obtained a letter from both Battered Women’s Program former Director (see Appendix F) and the Domestic Violence Center’s Executive Director (see Appendix G).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the practice in social research wherein the researcher promises not to reveal a given respondent’s answers publicly, although the researcher is able to identify responses with participants (Babbie 2001). I have manipulated the data presented in this dissertation to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. I use pseudonyms for the names of the programs and the participants. Archival citations that would reveal the domestic violence program described in this dissertation are absent.

In addition, I have censored out information that may be detrimental to the program’s provision of services or hurtful to people involved. On occasion, participants would reveal information about other advocates or activists (or themselves) that might potentially put a person’s employment in jeopardy or would influence relationships today. The minor
censorship is a decision that I have made to maintain a positive tone amidst a very tumultuous time for many domestic violence advocates and activists.

I had hoped that I might be able to collect oral histories in a non-confidential manner to identify the key figures in the region’s historic domestic violence shelter movement. While a few oral history participants were amenable to the idea, the majority was not. They felt that the topic of domestic violence services in the region was still too hostile, still potentially volatile, and may render them vulnerable in an uncertain time. Advocates requested that I not to mention participant names and I have honored these wishes.

Data Analysis

I transcribed audiotapes into a Word processing format and analyzed the text transcripts from the interviews, focus groups, and participant observation data to identify common themes and key words in qualitative data (Bernard 1994). Throughout data collection, I transcribed semi-structured interviews and focus group audio files into Microsoft Word. In addition to interview and focus group transcription, I analyzed fieldnotes collected over the 18 month period. Embedded in the fieldnotes are the shelter documents I collected, inserted in chronological order according to the documents’ first utilization date. I also included newspaper articles from local and national outlets that mentioned the YWCA Battered Women’s Program or the Domestic Violence Center and inserted them in the fieldnotes according to date. By placing the associated shelter documents and newspaper articles within the fieldnotes, I was able to keep them organized according to date (which established chronology) and facilitated my analysis.

The primary research variables, power, participation, and professionalization were coded throughout the data through the use of key words. The research variables became the data analysis themes, within which I identified emerging key words which serve as the supporting data throughout this dissertation.

I analyzed these two primary sets of files (transcriptions and fieldnotes) using software designed for examining qualitative data. I used QSR International’s NUD*IST version 6 (N6). This software provides an interface for code-based or key word searching by exploring the documents imported into the program. The results of these searches can then be organized in “trees,” or linked organizational units to assist a researcher in categorizing the data according to themes and key words. For example, if I searched for the them “professionalization” using the word “professional,” I can organize associated key word search results (such as “degree” or “heals”) as branches to the “professional” limb.

Using the software, I was able to search the dissertation data and organize results according to theme and key words. In addition, I could combine threads to examine results simultaneously to better understand the interplay of the dissertation themes. Pages with the search results were imported into Microsoft Word for text polishing, where I deleted repetitious phrases and reworked text for clarity. At this point, I chose the most salient examples of patterns that emerged within the themes to present in this dissertation.

Status and Reflexivity

In my role as a researcher and advocate, my enmeshment with the advocates provided a level of freedom that flowed throughout the other methods I used. For example, since the shelter advocates considered me an insider, they did not have to edit their comments about residents, because they trusted me to edit identifying information out of interview transcripts. In addition, I was able to interrogate the advocates about their answers to questions because I obtained an intimate understanding of the advocacy culture. However, my intimate, insider
knowledge and understanding may have prevented advocates from initially describing an issue in depth by saying, “Oh, you know, you were there.” I often prefaced a question or inquiry by saying, “Pretend I have never been here before” or “How would you explain this to someone who does not work in shelter.” It was sometimes difficult for me to remember that as a researcher, my task is to guide the advocates to explain things themselves. Nevertheless, my role as a participant observer provided me with information to develop a fuller understanding of domestic violence advocacy and activism.

Yet, I was not “just like all the other advocates,” my role as a researcher and a woman with privilege forced me to also self-identify as an outsider. To allow the advocates’ voices to be heard, I focus on the context which they describe and their lives as they describe them. As a feminist anthropologist, I recognize that my outsider status precludes me from fully representing domestic violence advocates (di Leonardo 1991a; Lamphere 1997; Rapp 1999; Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974). My narration of domestic violence advocates is therefore only partial, as I recognize that my privilege separated me from the advocates. My political economic situation, my ability to consider other futures for myself and my family, and my access to resources reminded me and the advocates of my visitor status.

In other words, I understand that I cannot completely and accurately portray the lives of the domestic violence advocates, as my own life is situated differently (di Leonardo 1991a; Lamphere 1997). I am privileged because my choices are not constrained by the same inequalities as the domestic violence advocates. This privilege and outsider status allows me to question the culture of domestic violence advocacy and seek to understand the contemporary pressures on domestic violence advocates from multiple levels.

However, I was involved in the advocate culture to a great extent. I helped out when an advocate needed someone to watch her son, I contributed to birthday cards, and I engaged in daily discussions with the advocates about casework-related items. I was involved in daily operations, and I did not pretend to be unaffected by my surroundings. My active engagement in the shelter advocate culture is similar to that of other anthropologists’ approaches, particularly those anthropologists who work with marginalized populations (Connolly 2000; Hopper 2003; Luttrell 2003; Sharff 1998).

This integrated and enmeshed approach to research is difficult to negotiate at times, as one wonders how actions might affect data outcomes and how much might be “too much.” While I share these struggles throughout the dissertation, they also prompt questions regarding self-reflexive data.

To understand my approach to self-reflexivity in anthropological data collection, I turn to feminist anthropologists’ discussions of self-reflection and research with marginalized and/or underrepresented populations. There is a rich literature that addresses the issue of how underrepresented populations and individuals struggle for a place where their voice can be heard. For instance, *La Frontera/The Borderlands: The New Mestiza* (Anzaldua 1991) uses a literary figure to reconcile Chicana womens’ voices absence from history. In a critique of Anzaldua’s work, the struggle to represent marginalized voices, raise consciousness, and recover hidden histories:

The struggle for representation is not an inversion per se; rather, the struggle to heal through rewriting and retextualization yields a borrowing of signifiers from diverse monological discourses, as Anzaldua does, in an effort to push toward the production of another signifying system that not only heals through re-membering the paradigmatic
narratives that recover memory and history, but also rewrites the heterogeneity of the present. (Alarcon 1996: 52-53)

While Anzaldúa uses symbols to represent Chicana women’s histories, Mullings (1997) explores avenues and politics of allowing the oppressed to speak in the contemporary world by focusing on African American women. She notes that the underrepresented populations must “project alternative assumptions about community, family, and identity, and redefine notions of class, race, and gender” to create a transformative space of voices and receivers of those voices (Mullings 1997: 107). Indeed, feminist anthropologists have benefited from third world and black feminists about the issues of voice and representation of marginalized populations (McClaurin 2001a; Mohanty, et al. 1991), in part as a result of third world and black feminists’ own struggles for voice and recognition in the academy (Bolles 2001).

It was through these readings and women’s words that I began to understand the relationship between my status as an outside researcher and my goal to provide an ethnographic picture of domestic violence advocacy culture. Even though I worked alongside the advocates as an advocate and despite my participation in community meetings and events with oral history participants, I was still afforded different opportunities than those individuals. As a researcher, I had to force myself to question the seemingly routine, normal practices that I myself performed. As such, I was not only interrogating the advocacy culture but my own behaviors. Through this self-reflection, I came to better understand the arguments for or against practices that the advocates shared with me—because I was forced to justify them for myself. My intimacy with my research questions (why did I struggle over what to wear to shelter or whether or question whether or not to depart a resident for non-compliance with shelter guidelines?) follows a tradition of anthropological wherein a close, working relationship with the research populations intensifies their voices.

While I argue that enmeshment and participation in a research culture allows for greater depth of ethnographic data, it also generates questions about the validity of the data collected. Whose story is it, theirs or mine? In this dissertation, I carefully focus on the voices of advocates, while combining my own self-reflections as they pertain to the issues the research population highlights. By doing this, I demonstrate that the story is that of the domestic violence advocates and oral historians. However, by inserting my own self-reflection, I remind the reader of the presence of a narrator who is embedded in the culture—though never pretends to be a complete insider.

Reading Voices

Throughout this dissertation, I focus heavily on the voices of the domestic violence advocates and the oral history participants I worked with. Their voices are denoted by quotation marks or indentations in the text signifying a voice other than mine. All advocate words are attributed directly to the person who spoke them. Whenever possible, I use the voices of advocates to explain a concept. The topics I explore in this dissertation emerged as items of high importance to the research population and originated in the predissertation research phase I describe throughout this chapter. Their voices are the authoritative source of the topics I discuss and my conclusions are drawn from the data collected from the research population.

As I have outlined in this chapter, the qualitative data I collected followed a systematic structure. Interviews and focus groups followed a procedure, one that consistently solicited voluntary participation, the completion of necessary Institutional Review Board paperwork,
and a schedule of questions. By describing the research procedures, I hope the reader understands them to be legitimate data collected in the course of a scientific research process.

**Fieldwork Phases**

I divided the fieldwork conducted for this dissertation project into four phases. I describe these phases and the times they encompass, as well as the primary methods utilized during each phase. Throughout the dissertation period, my focuses and attention shifted to provide as complete a picture as possible of the culture of domestic violence advocacy.

*Phase I: 40 Days*

During the 6-week closing period, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the advocates employed by the BWP. In addition, I familiarized myself with the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association’s archive and familiarized myself with the contemporary and historic information about domestic violence organizations in the region and the domestic violence newspaper archive. I spent time fostering relationships with advocates working in other domestic violence programs and human service agencies throughout Kentucky, which provided me the opportunity to access information to incorporate into the dissertation.

In addition, I visited and toured several domestic violence programs in the state. Spending time at domestic violence organizations contextualized the statewide network that the fieldsite is situated. The domestic violence organizations in the state often make referrals to other services in state, and therefore the organizations cooperate and collaborate on a daily basis. In addition, these visits allowed me to make contacts with advocates and researchers throughout Kentucky, which became useful as I encountered historical or contemporary information that required contextualization.

It was during this period that the research themes discussed in this dissertation emerged. During interview transcription analysis and fieldnote reflection, I identified three dominant themes. The first theme is that employees felt excluded from the decision-making processes that led to the closing of the BWP and the decisions made during 40-day closing period. This led me to explore the notion of power in the dissertation research project. The second theme is that employees felt that their unique domestic violence advocacy skill set would be better used in an organization that united their unique skills with a service-oriented organizational mission. The notion of participation emerged from this theme. Finally, I found that employees felt that they were not treated as professionals within the BWP organization despite their advanced credentials to provide domestic violence advocacy.

*Phase II: The Transitional DVC*

Phase II of this fieldwork encompassed the 5 months that the Interim Director oversaw the DVC. During this time, the primary method I utilized was participant observation. This period of intense participant observation was useful to frame the interview questions that I later conducted with the shelter advocates, as well as the oral history interviews I conducted. My participation in shelter life was constant, I was either at the shelter or I was on the phone with the advocates at the shelter 7 days a week, nearly all hours of the day and night. During this phase, I conducted participant observation on first, second, and third shifts. I learned the paperwork and documentation practices imposed upon the advocates to comply with the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association’s service standards. In addition, this period of participant observation concretized my position as a researcher among the advocates. I increased my level of rapport with the advocates team, as well as the leaders in the DVC program.
Phase III: DVC at the Homeless Assistance Program (HAP)

In the third phase of this fieldwork, the permanent Executive Director came to operate the DVC while housed at the HAP location. This phase lasted approximately 8 months. Shortly after the beginning of her appointment with the DVC, I began conducting semi-structured interviews with the DVC advocates, collecting oral history interviews from stakeholders, and held the first three focus groups. In addition, I continued participant observation and the collection of field notes. My daily observations were patterned around second shifts and weekends. In retrospect, this phase was the busiest in terms of juggling multiple data collection techniques in multiple locations.

Phase IV: DVC at The Farm

The fourth and final phase of this fieldwork begins with the DVC move to The Farm and ends with the statewide violence against women conference, a period of about 5 months. Throughout this final phase, I conducted participant observation less and less and eventually formally withdrew my activities at the DVC. I completed interviews with the shelter advocates and the oral history stakeholders as well. After I withdrew from participant observation and the interviews were complete, I worked to tie up loose ends with the fieldwork and submit interview transcripts to the participants for comments and review. I also joined the shelter advocates at meetings and events in the region to maintain a relationship with the domestic violence program.

The Political Economic Context of Social Service Organizations in America

I implemented these methods within a larger political economic context that routinely affects social service organizations. The political economic context of social service organizations is interwoven in recent reforms to the American welfare system, as influenced by neoliberal economic theory. Therefore, in order to understand the current social service organization context, it is necessary to understand the economic philosophies that inform welfare reform and subsequently human service organizations. Analyses of the global and national economic environments provide the context for examining the local level repercussions of welfare reform and the restructuring of social service organizations, including domestic violence shelters. Specifically, by tracing the emergence of neoliberal economics and how the neoliberal philosophy contributed to welfare reform, we are better able to grasp the radiating impact on social service organizations.

The Neoliberal Political Economy

Neoliberal development policies emerged in the 1970s and became widely used in the 1990s to better understand the age of development. Scholars have defined neoliberalism as a view that “asserts that economic growth is by definition good for everyone and that economic performance is optimized when governments refrain from interfering with markets” (Millen, et al. 2000: 7), “trickle down economics,” and “the assertion that those who exchange society’s resources through market interactions are making the best possible use of those resources” (Shakow and Irwin 2000: 52).

The neoliberal philosophy can be summarized into three simple words: liberalization, privatization, and deregulation. Neoliberalism is a reaction against the economic work of John Maynard Keynes, who posited that the “unregulated capitalist economy was susceptible to severe depressions, as illustrated by the Great Depression of the 1930s” (Shakow and Irwin 2000: 53). Keynesian economic theory blames economic depressions (such as the Great Depression) on inadequate spending and argues that governments should spend their budgets in order to compensate for a lack of private spending. Furthermore, Keynesians advocate for
social spending, which would place more money in the hands of the poor and therefore a “trickle-up” or “bubble-up” economics would develop- because poor people would become active members in the market.

Neoliberal economics was easily adopted into the American mainstream economic policy as a reaction against previous economic policies (Onis 1995). Ronald Reagan’s White House was the first to fully apply neoliberal principles under the advisory of Milton Friedman. Under this White House, the United States experienced tax cuts, social service cutbacks, and the transference of responsibility for poor countries’ debts from developed countries to international financial institutions. In the 1990s, neoliberalism continued through the development of policies and projects under the Clinton administration.

It is in this space of the influence of neoliberalism on welfare policy that we can understand the current state of social service organizations in the United States. Neoliberal attitudes towards welfare policy can be summarized into two points: 1) wealth and poverty can be understood in terms of individual choice, because a free and rational agent is the unit of economic and social existence and 2) faith in a free market that will allow the free, rational agents to make choices and pursue interests without boundaries. This will in turn lead to the most productive distribution of resources. Therefore, in a free market that regulates the society as a whole, the place of the poor is unfortunate- but unavoidable- due to the intricate processes of economic transformation that must run its natural course.

Furthermore, the national investment in social service organizations designed to assist marginalized populations diminishes because the state is no longer responsible for populations’ seemingly irrational economic behavior. This justifies the privatization of social service organizations to civil society and further contributes to an inconsistency in state-level policies towards the poor and marginalized due to deregulation policies. Thus, neoliberalism does not reject social service organizations or the provision of social services, but instead places the burden of responsibility onto the private sector. The burden absorbed by the private sector is demonstrated in this case study.

Neoliberal Policies, Welfare Reform, and Social Service Organizations

From 1935 to 1996, the United States government provided cash assistance to families with children who met federally imposed criteria with the goal of “equal opportunity by improving access to services that help people lead healthy, productive lives” (Davis and Schoen 1978: vii). The program was called Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and the goal was to support the nation’s poorest in order for that population to fully engage in the economy. AFDC was complemented by the Medicaid program, an amendment to the Social Security Act in 1965. Medicaid was designed to provide health insurance to the poor who met income criteria set forth by the government.

A number of “welfare reforms” have been enacted since President Johnson declared a “War on Poverty” in 1964. President Johnson’s strategy was to devote resources to the elimination of poverty, without a public jobs program or an increase in cash welfare (Danziger 1999). Even though the welfare caseload at this time (mid-1960s) was about 4 million people, it was recognized that poverty could be eradicated if the poor gained necessary skills to work. Therefore, employment and training programs were created and specifically targeted young people.

Several changes have been proposed, but not implemented to replace welfare. President Nixon proposed the Family Assistance Plan to replace AFDC in 1969. This plan included a minimum welfare benefit and a work requirement. Furthermore, assistance was
emphasized as benefiting two-parent families and separating the need for cash assistance and social services. By the mid-1970s, recipients of AFDC increased to 11 million and the number of food stamp recipients increased from 1 million to 19 million (Danziger 1999). In 1977, President Carter also proposed a welfare reform named the Program for Better Jobs and Income, which would have guaranteed a job for all welfare recipients through the creation of 1.4 million minimum-wage public service jobs. Exemptions from work were granted for mothers with young children. Furthermore, under this plan, sanctions on people who refuse the work component would lose only half of their cash benefits.

The rise of neoliberal economics caused recent United States’ administrations to further reconsider social welfare policies. Particularly beginning with President Reagan, welfare reforms very much echoed the neoliberal agenda and philosophy. No longer was the issue based on the reduction of poverty, controlling welfare costs, or the lack of work incentives. The focus became reducing welfare caseloads, reducing welfare spending, and implementing work requirements. The Reagan administration viewed the monumental increase in welfare roles as so liberal and generous that people who were not “truly needy” were receiving benefits (Danziger 1999).

In 1988, the Family Support Act was enacted and expanded AFDC program to include two-parent families, child care, and Medicaid assistance for people leaving welfare for work. However, it also allocated funds to states to create more programs to move welfare recipients to work. This funding created JOBS- Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program, which was the foundation for the future welfare to work model. JOBS raised work expectations and increased sanctions for non-working recipients. The Family Support Act made it clear to America’s poor that benefits were “no longer seen as an entitlement of citizenship but as an exchange for labor” (Goode and Maskovsky 2001: 5).

The number of welfare recipients continued to increase in the early 1990s. The economic growth of the 1980s and 1990s in the United States did not lead to a decline in poverty (Blank 1997). This fact, combined with a neoliberal philosophy stressing individual responsibility and decreased government oversight, created an arena for welfare reform to enter into the spotlight in a never before seen way. The greatest change in the administration of social welfare to America’s impoverished populations was the passage of the 1996 federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Restructuring Act, which is commonly referred to Temporary Assistance to Need Families (TANF). This program shifted the emphasis of social welfare as a public entitlement to a short-term benefit (a cumulative lifetime maximum of 60 months) that is highly dependent upon the head of the household participating in work-related activities (Schneider 2001). TANF differs from AFDC in three primary ways (Schneider 2001: 706-707):

- Federal eligibility criteria have been replaced with state determined requirements that fit within limited federal guidelines.
- The nature of the aid system has shifted from a case-work driven system to one focused on income eligibility.
- Government services are increasingly being handed over to private (non-profit and for-profit) providers, in other words, the provision of social welfare is being transferred to civil society.

While I recognize the pervasiveness of neoliberal political economic policies worldwide, for the purposes of this piece I have elected to focus on the national scale.
These shifts reflect a neoliberal agenda in several ways. First, the responsibility to become an active, economic member of society has been shifted to individuals. It is the individual’s responsibility to choose to engage in welfare to work strategies and become employed prior to the termination of social welfare benefits. This hyper-attention to “personal responsibility” emerged from the call to reform welfare because the previous system “promoted parasitic behavior, thereby discouraging development of the capacities requisite to proper personhood and citizenship, namely, independence, autonomy, and self-sufficiency” (Kingfisher and Goldsmith 2001: 714). Under TANF, individuals are able to collect social welfare assistance if they agree to participate in a “welfare to work” program, sometimes called “workfare.” The model assumes that workfare will be the first stepping stone for an individual to gain full time employment, and therefore no longer need welfare assistance. For example, mothers with infants and young children are not exempt from workfare requirements.

The effect of neoliberal political economic policies has been criticized for stressing work in a dismal job market (Blank 1997; Piven 2001; Scheer 1994; Vilas 1996), misconceptions of the free market model of economic development (Gayarre 1994; United Nations 1992), promoting an ahistorical philosophy of the political economic landscape (Portes 1997), the negative social impacts on women (Bolles 2002; Gunewardena 2002; Henrici 2002; Rakowski 2000), decreasing political empowerment among already marginalized populations (Goode and Maskovsky 2001), and negative health impacts (Leppo 1997; Millen, et al. 2000; Navarro 2002; Stillwaggon 1998; Szreter 1997). However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I look to the effects of neoliberal political economic policies on human service provision in the United States. This provides the political economic context for the local level dissertation fieldwork.

Privatization and Human Services

Today’s political economic cultural environment has led to the creation and implementation of neoliberal development policies that are impacting human populations at multiple levels of their everyday lives. As a result of the neoliberal political economic policies, the state has decreased support for poor and marginalized populations through the implementation of welfare reforms described above. Furthermore, the state has privatized the provision of social services by providing block grants to states to outsource human services to for-profit firms or non-profit, non-governmental organizations who are not required to provide the same consistency of services between states (Jones, et al. 1992). This is consistent to neoliberal policies in that it displaces federal responsible to private providers and places the responsibility of regulating social services to the state level oversight units.

In terms of social service organizations and specifically domestic violence agencies, advocates and activists are struggling to understand the effects and merits of the changing

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12 This signals an end to the previous perceived maternalist, nurturing social policy.

13 Take for example the negative impacts of welfare reform under neoliberal economics in terms of the privatization of health care. The shift to a private, non-state intervention health care business model has stressed Medicaid users. Medicaid pays physicians below the rates of commercial insurers, which causes physicians to limit the amount of Medicaid patients seen at a clinic. Many medical institutions have attempted to “cost shift” a portion of the Medicaid patients’ care to commercial insurers’ services. This has had a two-fold affect. First, middle class populations with insurance are increasingly seeing a cut to their Medicaid services because the commercial insurers are paying so much for the limited services that are granted. Second, the medical institutions themselves are suffering, because it is impossible to cost shift Medicaid shortcomings to commercial insurers in very poor neighborhoods (Abraham 1993: 5). The decreasing benefits offered through Medicaid are affecting an entire nation of individuals, wealthy to poor, that operates a private health care system.
political economic landscape. Specifically, the globalization of a neoliberal economic framework removes the provision of social service from government responsibility and privatizes it within communities. In the case of 1990s Russia, one anthropologist noted:

The rise of NGOs and the success of the campaigns took place at a time when a neoliberal vision of development has achieved hegemony...Support for NGOs is provided within this new rubric and comes with strings attached; NGOs that accept donor support are required to take on the responsibilities of the retreating state, picking up the slack for the radical free market. What is more, the sudden influx of grants and funding brings about dramatic changes in organizing. Ironically, “NGO-ization” has demobilized social movements. It has contributed to the formulation of new hierarchies and allowed former elites to flourish. In many cases it also signals the triumph of Washington- or Geneva-based agendas over local concerns. (Hemment 2004: 820-821)

In the U.S., the influx of outside sponsors (such as the Ford Foundation in Russia) is not witness in a similar way to Hemment’s Russian example. However, the surge of oversight of domestic violence services is an issue domestic violence shelters in the U.S. are now addressing.

The political economic effects of neoliberalism have therefore changed the nature and pressures affecting domestic violence organizations. In essence, because of the transnational political economic environment, “the advocacy agenda has been sidelined as women’s organizations must now work to provide services that were once part of the welfare state” (George 2005: 1). As a result, social service agencies such as domestic violence shelters must now meet the minimum criteria and eligibility of non-governmental sponsors and funders. The grassroots organizations now must conform with the larger political economic initiatives that abandoned them as a result of neoliberal agendas (Naples and Desai 2002).

For feminist social movements, the changing regional, national, and global political economic landscape that favors a neoliberal agenda has contributed to a growing demand for “specialized, policy-relevant, expert knowledge about women and gender- expertise increasingly supplied by more technically skilled, professionalized feminist organizations” (Alvarez 1998). This has opened the possibility of advocating for feminism from the “top down,” as feminist actors now occupy roles that influence policy at the macro level. While feminist social movements’ agenda are now recognized in the macro level political spheres, by placing feminist actors in those spheres there is a greater distance between the feminist leaders and the women for whom they are fighting for.

The Local Level Neoliberal Political Economy

It is within this political economic context that this dissertation is placed. In America, as the federal government displaces the provision of social services to local level providers through privatization, regulation of those services (and funds) is also distributed to the state and local levels. As a result of these neoliberal actions, organizations at the local level have formed to respond to increased social service responsibilities. For example, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association emerged to coordinate shelter activities and provide training support to the frontline advocacy workers. However, this organization eventually absorbed the responsibility to distribute the state block grant from the state’s Cabinet for Health and Family Services. This placed the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association in both a regulatory and financial management position over domestic violence shelters in the state. Prior to absorbing these responsibilities, domestic violence shelters created their own regulations. In addition to the creation of state coalitions (in Kentucky and throughout the United States) to respond to
increased civil responsibility for social services provision, the coordinated community also emerged to compensate for decreasing funds and support for such services.

The state and community level responses to neoliberal economic policies are differently negotiated among local level domestic violence shelters. Today, domestic violence shelters turn to external sponsors for support, which includes both government sponsors (such as the National Institutes of Justice) and private sponsors (such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation). In addition, domestic violence shelters must now spend time and people-power to conform to training and certification requirements set forth by the state coalitions. As we see with the BWP and DVC, organizations that are unable to garner external funds or meet the state service requirements are unable to thrive in this political economic environment.

**On Being an Advocate**

As a domestic violence advocate and a researcher, the strains of the daily work veiled the larger political economic context in which this work is performed. This is consistent with Wolf’s notion that structural level power is often invisible to local level actors (Wolf 1999). To conclude this chapter describing my dissertation research methods and the larger political economic environment in which these methods are situated, I present fieldwork reflections from one evening of working at the domestic violence shelter. As the center of this story, I experience my surroundings and the practices of domestic violence advocacy:

One cannot “be” a cell or molecule- or a woman, colonized person, laborer, and so on- if one intends to see and see from these positions critically. “Being” is much more problematic and contingent. Also, one cannot relocate in any possible vantage point without being accountable for that movement. Vision is always a question of the power to see- and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices. (Haraway 1988: 585)

This reflection situates my experiences and the perspectives from which I positioned myself.

I am sitting in car in the parking lot on The Farm. It is 10:00 p.m. on a Friday night and I will be working until the sun rises again. This morning was the Grand Opening, and the third shift advocate ended up working her shift last evening and then staying for the remainder of the day to assist with the events of the day. Around noon she pretty much had a breakdown and wondered how she would be able to work her shift tonight if she could not go home and get some sleep. Another advocate offered to work, but she was already scheduled to work first shift tomorrow, so that would not work. As we sat in the crisis office and problem solved this scheduling issue, the third shift advocate was on the verge of tears. People from the community were milling around for a shelter tour, and we all knew that if one of us started crying the rest of us would break down from sheer exhaustion. Too much stress and too little sleep. With no alternative in sight, I offered to work the shift. Another advocate interjected, admonishing me by saying that there was no way I could work it because I would not be able to get any sleep today. I looked at her and said, “Like you could?” So now here I sit, drawing on every piece of motivation I have left to get out of the car and walk up the sidewalk to the front door.

I gathered my pillow, blanket, and backpack out of the car and walked to the front door. I could make out the residents on the front porch, sitting in rocking chairs and smoking. They called out, “Is that you Jennifer?” and “What are you doing back here so soon?” and “We better be on our best behavior tonight, Jennifer is working!” I got up to the porch and talked with them about the day, what they thought about the Grand Opening, and their plans.
for the weekend. They were in high spirits and seemed hopeful for the future of the program and themselves.

I made my way inside and walked into the crisis office. There was only one advocate there and she was not even scheduled to work this evening. She told me that she came in and she sent the other two advocates home a short while earlier since they had arrived to shelter at 8:00 a.m. this morning. She was also here this morning, but she got to “take a break” by going to her other full time job for the afternoon. After she left her other job, she went and picked up her 4-year-old daughter, got dinner from a drive-thru, and then came back to the shelter. I told her that she was crazy, and she looked at me and said, “Somebody’s got to do it.” Yes, I thought, don’t I know it. I sent her home, reminding her that she had to be back the next morning at 8:00 a.m. and she needed to get some sleep. I watched her walk down the sidewalk to her car with her sleeping daughter in her arms.

The night passed quickly enough and was uneventful; I even managed to catch some sleep in the chair in the crisis office. Not much though, because I was bothered by the abundance of flies that were let into the house during the day when the doors were propped open from the Grand Opening. I caught up on paperwork and straightened up the office. Before I knew it, I was watching the sunrise through the crisis office window over the freshly mowed grass. I made coffee in the industrial grade coffee maker. At 6:00 a.m., one of the residents was already up cleaning the kitchen for another full day of cooking.

At 8:00 a.m., my coworker joined me once again. She had stopped by McDonald’s on the way in and picked up breakfast and coffee for the both of us. We sat in the office, eating Egg McMuffins, talking about the day before. I left a couple hours later to go garage sale shopping for car seats, which we were desperately lacking at the DVC. There was no use in attempting to go home and get sleep myself, I have learned that my body will not go to sleep when I am coming off of third shift and it is better to just keep going and head to bed early the next night. I did not have to return to the shelter until Sunday morning at 8:00 a.m., so I had the luxury of planning an early bedtime.

I remember the sterile and “objective” way I presented the collection of participant observation data in my dissertation proposal. Rereading it today seems ironic, as if I was trying to convince myself that I will just be participating in the daily activities of the advocate culture while recording my observations and reflections as field notes in neatly organized notebooks. As if this process would not consume every moment of my day. As if you could just go back to who you were before you were an advocate in a domestic violence shelter. As if you could ever see the world again in the same way.

My role as an active advocate with the BWP and DVC positioned me as an intimate insider to the culture of domestic violence advocacy. I was there with the advocates as they went through divorce, childbirth, marriage, death, career changes, and graduations. I heard their voices when they expressed joys, frustrations, and deep sorrows about their lives and their work as domestic violence advocates.
CHAPTER FOUR
FIELD SITE

“The world doesn't see what goes on on the inside of somebody's house. And they certainly don't see what is going on on the inside this shelter. I think they are so incredibly misguided.”

-Kate, Former Battered Women’s Program Advocate

Introduction

This chapter describes the dissertation field site. The field site is much broader than the domestic violence shelters which served as the central focus. I also describe the idea of a coordinated community against domestic violence and introduce the purpose and functions of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association. In addition, I outline the nature of the domestic violence shelter’s transition between facilities and leadership over the course of 18 months.

I conducted this research in a medium sized metropolitan area in the state of Kentucky. In Kentucky, an estimated 36.6% of female residents report intimate partner violence as an adult (Fritsch, et al. 2005). Of women reporting intimate partner violence, 7.1% have experienced the violence over the past 12 months (Fritsch, et al. 2005). These statistics indicate that the prevalence of violence against adult Kentucky women exceeds national statistics by over 10% (36.6% in Kentucky v. 25.5% nationally). Furthermore, 73.5% of women reporting recent intimate partner violence described their communities as small towns or rural areas, while only 54.5% of Kentucky residents live in rural areas (Fritsch, et al. 2005). The majority of the women in Kentucky who experienced intimate partner violence in the last 12 months reported multiple episodes of violence.

The self-reported health effects women experience as a result of violence are numerous, as outlined in Chapter 1. In Kentucky, of women who experienced intimate partner violence, 76.7% also reported experiencing psychological stress, 74.1% experienced physical injuries, and approximately one out of three women who were injured sought medical treatment or counseling.

The now closed YWCA BWP employed 28 full time and 15 part time employees during their final fiscal year. The former facility housed 28 bed spaces for domestic violence victims in need of emergency shelter, amounting to a total of 273 women and 209 children sheltered during the most recent fiscal year (Kentucky Domestic Violence Association 2004). In the year prior to the BWP’s closure, the total number of individuals sheltered in the Kentucky network amounted to 2361 women, 13 men, and 2145 children. For either shelter residents or non-resident outreach clients, BWP employees offered victim survivors of domestic violence counseling, legal advocacy and access to a lawyer, support groups, casework services, and referral options.

The Past to the Present

The events that led to the BWP closure were rooted in a decades’ long history of domestic violence shelter program struggles and successes at the national, state, and local levels. In Kentucky, many programs have served as national models, such as the court monitoring program in Fayette County (described below). Though not without obstacles, such as the lack of political support for anti-violence legislation and withdrawal of economic funding over the past two decades, the Kentucky domestic violence social movement has witnessed several successes. Furthermore, interview data indicates that advocates and activists

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14 Intimate partner violence includes psychological violence that co-exists with actual or threatened physical or sexual abuse, physical or sexual abuse, threats, or stalking by an intimate partner that caused the woman to be frightened for herself or significant others.
working in the Kentucky movement draw strength from their successes to continue to fight for legislation, policies, and funds to support their work. As one oral history participant said, “I think that the strength of what Kentucky has done over time is that none of us have ever been in the position to have to do it alone. I don’t feel like I’ve ever had to make a decision alone.”

To place the local case study which this dissertation focuses on, the following section provides contextual information from the national and Kentucky state level about significant accomplishments in the domestic violence social movement. Furthermore, data from newspaper articles and oral history interviews illustrates the political economy of domestic violence advocacy by citing funding shortages, budget cuts, and even requests for only very basic items from the community. By examining over 30 years of newspaper coverage, it is clear that financial support from all sponsor sources has decreased over time. I have also included oral history interview data to give voice to the local level actors and their work within the larger story. While the anti-violence movement in the United States and worldwide has a long history, I begin in the 1970’s to situate this research.

The Seventies

As discussed in Chapter One, domestic violence organizations began to create formal, shelter facilities in the 1970s in the United States. In 1973, Women’s Advocates in St. Paul, Minnesota opened a battered women shelter that grew out of a consciousness raising groups focused on violence and abuse against women and girls (Schechter 1982). This first shelter was an apartment that doubled as the women’s advocates’ office. However, by 1974, enough money was raised to open a five bedroom shelter. Also in 1974, a Latina-run organization in Boston, Massachusetts called Casa Myma Vasquez opened to provide battered Latina women with advocacy services (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence 1998).

In 1976, Nebraska abolished the marital rape exemption, a statute which precluded married women from charging their husbands with marital rape. Soon after, women working in Boston, Massachusetts area shelters advocates for a counseling program for abusive/battering men. Emerge, as the program was called, was the first counseling program for perpetrators of violence.

1977 was a landmark year for the Kentucky domestic violence social movement. It was in 1977 that the first domestic violence shelter program opened in Louisville. This shelter program opened under the YWCA with the help of a federal employment grant to complement the already established women’s resource center and Rape Crisis Center. The first director of the Louisville shelter program, Carol Morse, recalls how she became involved:

I moved to Louisville to get married and started looking around for a job. One day I opened up the Courier Journal and it said that the YWCA had just got a CETA grant [the Comprehensive Employment Training Act] to open up a shelter for battered women. I don’t know why, but I looked at that, and I wanted to run that. I knew nothing about the subject, or very little, but it was 1977, and not many people knew about it. I was getting into the era of feminism and feeling strongly about women’s rights, and I was rather horrified that women were battered.

As the first domestic violence shelter program director in the state, Morse identified a shelter program in Philadelphia as a potential model for the Louisville domestic violence shelter. She visited the program and returned to set up the shelter program:

15 Oral history data from Carol Morse was generously provided by the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association archives.
I went back to Louisville and had to develop everything from scratch: the staffing levels, the job descriptions, policies and procedures, guidelines. I got ideas from the Philadelphia shelter, and the YWCA already had the rape relief center, so they had good policies set up even though it wasn’t a full-time facility… I had to be open 24 hours and have a hotline. I had a month to interview people and get a staff up and running and outfit this shelter. It was in the old YWCA building… [they] had a real comprehensive program, and women could rent rooms to stay there. I was given the top floor, the eighth floor, to use as the shelter.

After establishing operating procedures and organizing the physical space for the shelter program, Morse and her team began publicizing the shelter program and the advocacy services:

We got the word out. What I remember about the beginning is we got some newspaper stories done on us. Then it was a matter of getting linked in with the social service network in the area. They were desperate for something like this, so it was just getting the word out to other networks that we were there. Before us, battered women had no place to go. This was the first shelter in Kentucky. There may have been homeless shelters that took battered women, but I really don’t know. All I know is this was desperately needed, and people said, “Finally, there’s a place.” In the very beginning, we could handle about 25 women and children. That was really the maximum… The first day, the three of us sat in the office waiting for the phones to ring. I guess it was that afternoon when somebody did call and needed shelter.

As the flagship shelter for the state of Kentucky, the Louisville YWCA’s program broke the ground for future shelters in the state. Merle Van Houten, another founding member of the Kentucky domestic violence shelter movement, also remembers the early days of the Louisville program:

The shelter was founded November 15, 1977. It was started by the YWCA, it was originally started by a group of women discussing and dealing with feminist types of issues, and had identified that domestic violence was a real problem. It was begun with CETA… and United Way funding. There were seven staff, no volunteers, very small program…

The Louisville shelter program grew to become the largest shelter in the state of Kentucky, despite the later withdrawal of CETA funds and the economic pressures that followed. This struggle, generally in terms of funding and specifically in terms of CETA funds, is common in domestic violence shelter program histories (Schechter 1982).

At the national level, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) formed in 1978. Over 100 women from throughout the United States attended the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights sponsored meeting entitled, “Consultation on Battered Women: Issues of Public Policy.” This group of women formed the NCADV and established one of their primary objectives as holding a national conference. The national organization was the culmination of many years of work by women all over the country. That same year, the NCADV established its first task force, the Lesbian Task Force, to make domestic violence programs and shelters safe for lesbian workers and victims and provide a lesbian voice in the battered women’s movement.

Elsewhere in the United States, advocates were working to change or establish legislation pertaining to domestic violence victims and perpetrators of abuse. In 1978,

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16 Oral history data from Merle van Houten was generously provided by the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association archives
Minnesota became the first state allowing probable cause arrests in cases of domestic violence, allowing police officers to make an arrest without a warrant of an existing protection order. In addition, in Salem, Oregon, marital rape laws were on trial in Rideout Trial. Greta Rideout charged her then husband, John Rideout, with marital rape. While women’s movement activists hoped for a guilty verdict, the jury acquitted John Rideout. He later publicly apologized for his behaviors.

By 1979, over 250 shelters existed in the United States and 6 shelter programs had opened throughout the state of Kentucky, each with a different story. In 1979, Schulman published *A Survey of Spousal Violence Against Women in Kentucky*. Based on a random telephone survey of 1700 Kentucky women, Schulman used the Conflict Tactics Scale to understand the nature and extent of spouse abuse in Kentucky.

In Kentucky, shelter programs continued to open in response to increasing requests for advocacy services from women and children. In 1979, the Women’s Crisis Center in Northern Kentucky expanded their Rape Crisis Center (opened in 1976) to provide services for victims of domestic violence and their children. Phyllis Kinerman, an early leader at the Women’s Crisis Center, recalls the formative years of this dual sexual assault/domestic violence program:

> The bottom line is, this organization and others like it were started by the sheer determination of the women involved and the hard work and the commitment. And not looking at paychecks and salaries, not looking at forty hours a week, not looking at any of that. It was a commitment to a very serious cause, and it helped the well-being of our sisters… We’re a movement that evolved out of the lack of service and the lack of understanding of the issues surrounding domestic violence… In the 70’s, the movement came along regarding domestic violence and battering; the whole women’s movement evolved. We are a piece of that movement locally. We as an organization, while we started as a rape crisis center in 1976, three years later, in looking at the calls, the calls for domestic violence were exceeding rape… So what happened is the agency changed the name from the Rape Crisis Center to the Women’s Crisis Center. We have always had a strong public education program, and we have always had volunteers who were responding to rape victims. We broadened the training that the volunteers are required to take to include domestic violence. They would also receive training to respond to domestic violence calls. In order to provide a place for the women to go, we established a network of safe homes. People voluntarily opened their homes to women and children to come stay in their homes, and I was one. I opened a house, and people would come stay with you. Usually, it was two or three days. It was a safe haven; it was a respite. They were not supposed to reveal the locations, etcetera. That was a very interesting experience because sometimes in the middle of the night you would get a call, and they would tell you about the police having this family.

In 1981, the Women’s Crisis Center secured funding to open the first residential shelter program for domestic violence victims. This was followed by the establishment of a walk-in center in 1983, and additional expansions into neighboring areas throughout the 1980s.

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17 Oral history data from Phyllis Kinerman was generously provided by the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association archives.
Elsewhere in Kentucky, more shelters were opening. In Beattyville, Sister Mary Kay Druin\textsuperscript{18} was a leader in establishing Resurrection Home Inc.:

We began our shelter here in May of 1979. We started to get together, all of us, as a network of support because all of us involved in it needed to reach out to each other. We were basically a blank sheet of paper, so we came together. One of us from each shelter started meeting together as a support network. I think we were all so dumb because we didn’t understand how radical this was. My shelter started out small. I found a little five room house, and I cleaned it out and got it ready. Then I started taking in families. When I first started, I would go talk to these women in their homes, and I went and picked up the women and the children from their homes to come to the shelter. God must be protecting me. All kinds of women came. Some would stay for a couple days, some a week, some overnight, some a month. We really were a tight knit group of women just really believing all women had the right to be treated with dignity and worth. We had to support one another because everyone else thought we were off our rockers.

Serving Lee and Owsley counties today, the Resurrection Home, Inc. was one of the first shelters in Kentucky.

The women who set about establishing the first domestic violence shelter programs in Kentucky encountered numerous struggles. Carol Morse describes the cultural attitudes at the time she was opening the Louisville domestic violence shelter program:

I do remember at one point he did do an editorial when we were being attacked by some real right-wing organization that said the shelter was there to break up marriages and turn women into lesbians… I can remember being in Frankfort and testifying, and there was some legislator there who leaned back in his chair, and he said, “Honey, a man’s home is his castle. He can do whatever he wants there.” I was just blown away. Statements like that would just galvanize me more. They just made me angry and more determined.

In addition to struggling against gender stereotypes, the early domestic violence advocates were combating legal and judicial barriers for domestic violence victims. Phyllis Kinerman described her early encounters with the legal and judicial systems:

People don’t come to you just because they got hit. You have to remember that’s what we were dealing with back in those early days. It was physical violence; we weren’t dealing with the emotional and the verbal. That came in time, but if you want to do anything about that, you had to have physical evidence in a courtroom. The law was such that that’s a whole other ball game… You went to a county attorney’s office whose secretary saw you and issued the orders to you as to what you can and cannot do. You could not go back with the victim when she was talking to this person who just further abused them and pushed them out of the court system. It was like pulling teeth to get the court to recognize intimate violence. A stranger going down the street was one thing; but, intimate violence, you know, a man’s home is his castle.

As will be described later in this dissertation, these same struggles are echoed in the words of contemporary domestic violence advocates.

\textsuperscript{18} Oral history data from Sister Mary Kay Druin was generously provided by the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association archives.
The women and men in Kentucky were also addressing specific issues to their regions. As recalled by Carol Morse, one advertisement demanded action by domestic violence workers in Kentucky:

… there was a big billboard up that said, “Beat your wife. Go bowling.” It was sponsored by the Louisville Bowling Association, and I practically started screaming. So, I went into work on Monday, and I called up the Bowling Association. I told them I was sure they didn’t realize it was a big deal, but I was running a shelter for battered women, and that really wasn’t funny. They just said, “What’s the matter with you, lady? You don’t have a sense of humor. You feminists are all alike.” I then pursued it with the company that sold the billboards, and I was obviously getting nowhere. I called up… the Human Rights Coalition. She said to get a memo out to everyone in the community and tell them to write letters of protest, so I did. People wrote letters, the newspaper picked it up, and then the AP wire service picked it up. It started running around the country, and I got interviewed on CBS radio. Momentum was building, and one day we went and picketed one of the bowling alleys. Those signs came down, and it was really exciting…

The Bowling Association billboard is an example of the local successes witnessed by the domestic violence advocates as shelters began emerging across the state. This local example became a motivational symbol, a symbol of the potential successes of the Kentucky domestic violence social movement.

Another struggle across the state was providing services to both urban and rural areas. From the beginning, it was important to women organizing shelters in rural areas that advocacy services be provided to women residing in those areas. However, this sometimes meant that women from outside those rural areas would establish shelter programs and advocacy services. In Northern Kentucky, the Women’s Crisis Center expanded their services to include the region to their east, which was predominantly considered rural. Phyllis Kinerman remembers the obstacles she encountered as an outsider:

I was always reminded, “You are NOT from there, and they will treat you different.” So the acceptance level of me coming from “the city” really transferred a lot of that concept… I was conscious of that, and I chose to play a more low-key role and encouraging and talking with the worker there and asking her opinion on how we do this and what is acceptable. The first week we were there, we went out and we met people and we told people about our existence… we got several different responses. One would be, when we went to the Chamber of Commerce, “Well, now how long you girls going to be in town? Just for the summer? You’ll be gone by August, won’t you?” And I thought, “Oh boy. We’ve got our work cut out for us.” [The local worker] said, “Oh no, no, we’re staying.” But she was a local. We would go up and see people at different sites, and particularly people she knew, and we would be talking and she would share what her new job was and what she’d be doing. They would come back constantly with, “Well, don’t you think that’s the big city’s problem? We don’t have that problem down here. Do you really think we have that problem here?” And she would respond that, yes, she did think that…

The domestic violence shelter program in Maysville eventually opened to provide domestic violence shelter services to domestic violence victims east of the Northern Kentucky region.

*The Eighties*
In 1980, the NCADV organized their first conference, which was attended by 600 women from 49 states. At this conference, the Third World caucus was formed to respond to racism within the battered women’s movement (later renamed the Women of Color Task Force). In addition, the Rural Task Force formed to represent advocates working in rural areas and battered rural women’s needs. In 1981, nearly 500 battered women’s shelters are operating in the United States. In California, Everywomen’s Shelter was opened by a Filipina domestic violence survivor, establishing the first shelter for Asian women in the United States.

At the state level, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association formed in 1981. At the time, 6 shelters existed in the state of Kentucky to comprise the members of the association. The founding group of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association hired a woman from outside their network with a familiarity of Kentucky, though not domestic violence specifically. Sherry Currens19, the first Kentucky Domestic Violence Association Executive Director, recalled her experience:

Looking back on it, I don’t think they had a clear idea of what they were looking for. I think when they hired me, they were looking for a lobbyist. That was my sense of what I would do. Then we talked about technical assistance. In my background, I’ve done a lot of research, a lot of community education, a lot of clearinghouse. I guess what I envisioned was lobbying and providing technical assistance in terms of reading and looking at resources and finding out what they needed and sending it out to them.

Forming a coalition or an association of domestic violence programs was important to the founding to coordinate efforts across the state. As Carol Jordan20 states:

I think it was a way to begin to strengthen the programs across the different parts of Kentucky so that no agency was out there on its own trying to do this; it was a way to strengthen that movement.

However necessary, early efforts were sparsely funded, as illustrated in the following example from Sherry Currens:

At that point, we couldn't have afforded both the computer and the secretary. Luckily, I chose the computer. When we started out, I had to find a location in Frankfort, and I started out in an attic. By 3:00 in the summer months, it was so hot, so I had to work really early and then leave because I couldn’t stand it… I think it took a little while for people to understand that I was there, and we pretty quickly starting writing some grants and had some pretty big projects fairly soon. The first grant we wrote was to pay my salary, and that was to the Chicago Resource Center… We got $10,000, and we were so excited. We were at a board meeting at one of the state parks… We were so excited, I remember yelling into the room when we got the money.

Again, contemporary domestic violence advocates working in Kentucky also mention funding shortages and space complications decades later, as described in this dissertation. In an oral history interview for this research project with Currens, she explained to me her conceptualization of the organization’s goals and how their role has changed:

…The primary purpose of this office would be three-fold. One is to provide technical assistance and support to the shelters. The second is to lobby on behalf of battered women and children, and the third would be… to provide public awareness. Those

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19 Oral history data from Sherry Currens was generously provided by the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association archives.

20 Oral history data from Carol Jordan was generously provided by the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association archives.
were the original purposes. In the intervening years, we have taken over the contract [to administer block grants]... So after a lot of soul searching, we ended up taking the contract, and that was a big change for the relationship between KDVA staff and KDVA as a whole.

Administering the state and federal funding that is distributed as a block grant to the 15 domestic violence shelters in the state created a new role for the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association and altered the relationship between the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association and the domestic violence shelters. The block grant is a federal grant providing financial assistance to state domestic violence and sexual assault programs under the Violence Against Women Act. Domestic violence shelters now depended upon the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association not solely for training and support, but for financial sponsorship as well. This transition is consistent within a political economy that privatizes the sponsorship and provision of human social services.

Domestic violence shelters now had to negotiate the fact that the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association provided training and conducted shelter evaluations that were linked to funding, whereas in the past the state Cabinet for Health and Families administered the grants. This created a contradictory role for the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association because they provided support to the domestic violence shelters and also enforce standards upon those shelters as a result of their role as grant administrators. This tension is especially visible in the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association role in withdrawing support from the YWCA Battered Women’s Program.

Today, the mission statement of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association is as follows:

The KDVA works to provide a strong, statewide voice on behalf of the domestic violence victims and their children by administering state and federal funds to fifteen of Kentucky's domestic violence programs serving Primary Service Providers in the Area Development Districts, promoting public awareness, operating a Certification Program for domestic violence staff, and among other things, advocating for state legislative initiatives to increase protection to domestic violence victims and their dependent children.

In addition to administering block grant funding to the domestic violence shelters, the coalition provides opportunities for domestic violence shelter advocates and offers expertise with cases, as stated on their website, “The KDVA provides networking opportunities for those helping fight domestic violence, provides legal assistance to domestic violence programs and attorneys representing domestic violence victims, and helps promote public awareness of domestic violence.”

The Kentucky Domestic Violence Association Board of Directors is comprised of the Executive Directors of the 15 domestic violence shelters that operate as Kentucky Domestic Violence Association shelters.

The Kentucky Domestic Violence Association also provides assistance to the state’s domestic violence shelters by creating and printing educational material about domestic violence, training and technical assistance (including the Level I Certification discussed throughout this dissertation), and guidelines for shelter operations. As a new decade emerged,

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21 There are domestic violence shelters in the state which do not operate as Kentucky Domestic Violence Association shelters. For example, a church organization might open a domestic violence shelter and not receive assistance from the block grants through Kentucky Domestic Violence Association.
Kentucky was one of many states with a coalition to coordinate the state’s domestic violence shelter programs.\(^22\)

Throughout the early 1980s, organizing and advocacy for victims of domestic violence continued to surge. The NCADV held its second national conference in 1982, where the Battered/Formerly Battered Women’s Task Force and the Child Advocacy Task Force were established. By 1983, over 700 domestic violence shelter programs were operating in the United States, reporting that 91,000 women and 131,000 children receive services each year. Mounting national attention to the issue of domestic violence and the quantity of services supported lobbyists’ efforts to rally for national legislation to support funding for domestic violence programs.

In Kentucky, domestic violence shelter programs were receiving press coverage for their work with perpetrating males. The YWCA Spouse Abuse Center, situated in the central Kentucky region of Fayette County, was running a men’s program as part of their shelter services. In addition, domestic violence advocates were speaking out about the typology of battering men, stating “it’s impossible to stereotype men who beat their wives” (Lexington Herald-Leader 1983). Providing programming and rehabilitation services for male batterers soon fell outside the scope of the domestic violence shelter programs in Kentucky, but early work with batterers substantiated that “spouse abuse in Kentucky cuts across all economic and educational lines” (Lexington Herald-Leader 1983).

In 1984, the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) aired a made-for-television movie title “The Burning Bed.” Starring Farrah Fawcett, the movie portrayed the daily terror of domestic violence from a victim’s point of view. Following the film, crisis lines throughout the state received increase call volumes. Domestic violence advocates provided interviews to local newspapers about the increase in crisis calls and requests for advocacy assistance from Kentucky domestic violence shelter program (Lexington Herald-Leader 1984).

In 1984, Congress passes the Family Violence Prevention Services Act to provide funds designated for programs serving domestic violence victims and their children. Increases in service provision nationwide continues to increase, with over 310,000 women and children receiving advocacy services in 1986.

At the state level, the health services branch divided Kentucky into 15 Area Development Districts, or ADDs. Each ADD can range from 4 counties to 17 counties. In 1985, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association reached its goal for establishing shelter services in all 15 ADD districts throughout the state of Kentucky. Furthermore, domestic violence shelter programs were expanding their advocacy services to meet the varying needs of domestic violence victims. The YWCA Spouse Abuse Center in Fayette county established a Hospital Advocacy Program comprised of 14 volunteers. The volunteers were on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to “respond to the need of domestic violence victims by providing crisis counseling information, as well as community referrals” (Lexington Herald-Leader 1985).

The Hospital Advocacy Program was later supported by the Lexington Fayette County Police Department. Beginning in 1989, the Lexington police began “working with hospitals and emergency care centers… in an effort to find unreported cases of domestic violence” (Lexington Herald-Leader 1989b). Police officers visited the local hospitals several times a

\(^{22}\) In addition to the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association, the Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs exists to coordinate services among member rape crisis centers. Today, several states have dual coalitions while Kentucky maintains two separate coalitions.
week during the second shift to provide information and services to women who needed law enforcement assistance after visiting the hospital for injuries related to domestic violence.

Building upon the momentum, 1987 was a landmark year for violence against women advocacy and activism. In October, the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was recognized. Ellen Pence published the visual representation of the “Power and Control Wheel” out of Duluth, Minnesota. In addition, the first nationwide, toll-free domestic violence hotline was established. This hotline was later forced to disconnect services as a result of funding problems.

Over 1,200 battered women’s programs were open in the United States by 1989, providing shelter services and advocacy to over 300,000 women and children each year. That same year, the Jewish Women’s Task Force established a place on the NCADV Steering Committee to confront the problem of anti-Semitism in the domestic violence movement and address domestic violence in Jewish communities. Public awareness of violence against women continued to increase as the U.S. Surgeon General announced that violence was the primary public health risk for adult women. In Kentucky, more and more county officials supported the creation of domestic violence courts to provide judicial services to dilemmas that fall outside divorce and criminal proceedings (Lexington Herald-Leader 1989a).

The Nineties

Throughout the 1990s, women’s advocates and activists continued to raise public awareness about the issue of domestic violence. The first Clotheslines Project began in 1990 in Hannis, Massachusetts, organized by the Cape Cod Women’s Agenda. This program uses color-coded shirts to expose different forms of violence against women. The shirts are created by individuals to commemorate the stories of survivors and those murdered by abuse. The Clothesline Project was a popular program choice for many advocates at the BWP and the DVC. Using a different visual representation in 1991, women in St. Paul, Minnesota marched on the state capitol with 27 red silhouettes of women to stand as Silent Witnesses to the 26 women who died the previous year as a result of domestic violence (the 27th figure represented the uncounted women).

The Kentucky Supreme Court ruled in 1990 that non-medical professionals could testify on behalf of “abused spouses to prove in court that they were suffering from battered-spouse syndrome” (Lexington Herald-Leader 1990). In local Kentucky news, people living in Lexington were confronted with the daily fears that women face even after leaving a domestic violence relationship when the domestic violence shelter residents were threatened. A man “charged with abducting and assaulting his wife pleaded not guilty yesterday in Lexington, where police are still concerned with the safety of battered women at the spouse abuse center they say he threatened to blow up” (Lexington Herald-Leader 1991a). Advocacy services to victims of domestic violence continued to grow in Kentucky. Cellular One provided voice mail services to homeless people, including domestic violence victims, through a program called “Opportunity Calls” (Lexington Herald-Leader 1992a). Of significance was the move in Fayette County to provide emergency protection orders to domestic violence victims 24 hours

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23 The hotline program, called Shelter Aid, was originally sponsored by Johnson & Johnson Personal Products Company. The NCADV later returned funding to Johnson & Johnson as a result of political differences over the issue of apartheid in South Africa. After transferring the hotline to the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic Violence, insufficient funding forced the state coalition to disconnect it from their group. The NCADV main office received phone calls for a short while, but soon accepted that the set-up was not able to properly address crisis calls and the hotline was completely disconnected.
a day and not only during weekday business hours (Lexington Herald-Leader 1991b). A year later, 24 hour access to protective orders became a state law that required “every judicial district in the state to have written procedures and guidelines for 24-hour access to domestic violence protective orders” (Lexington Herald-Leader 1993). Other legislation included the passage of a “stalking bill” that created a “law against stalking someone with the intent to do harm” (Lexington Herald-Leader 1992c) and a bill that extended the spouse abuse law so that “members of unmarried couples living together would be afforded the same legal protection given to people who are married or who have children” (Lexington Herald-Leader 1992b).

In 1994, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) as part of the federal Crime Bill. VAWA was the result of more than a thousand organizations lobbying for four years (Meyer-Emerick 2001). VAWA addresses several areas of physical and sexual safety of women:

- In public through Safe Streets for Women
- In home through Safe Homes for Women
- In court through Equal Justice for Women in the Courts Act
- In law and statistical reporting through Violence Against Women Act Improvements
- Against stalking through National Stalker and Domestic violence Reduction
- In terrorization of immigrant women through Protection for Battered Immigrant Women and Children

Thus, VAWA funds services for domestic violence and rape victims and for training police and court officials about domestic violence. In addition, it gives victim the federal right to sue the perpetrator of gender-based violence. Finally, VAWA mandates that states and American Indian nations provide full faith and credit for restraining orders. The law attempts to move away from victim blaming to gaining the support and sympathy of the public for survivors of domestic violence (Brandwein 1999). In addition, protection orders are granted full faith and credit to all other states, territories, and tribes (Valente, et al. 2001). Finally, funding provided under Violence Against Women Act allowed President Bill Clinton to announce a new national, 24-hour toll-free hotline in 1996. While this major piece of legislation was passed at the national level, local level domestic violence shelter programs requested basic support from the communities in the form of every day item donations, such as diapers, deodorant, dishcloths, soap, shampoo, and more (Lexington Herald-Leader 1994).

The 1995 O.J. Simpson case captured America’s attention. The acquittal of the alleged perpetrator triggered numerous reactions among anti-violence advocates and activists, as well as domestic violence victims. As one newspaper article stated:

Just minutes after a captivated nation learned yesterday that O.J. Simpson had been acquitted, the first call came in to the YWCA Spouse Abuse Center in Lexington. The former victim of domestic violence told center volunteers that she had to talk to someone. She need to share her anger. “She thought the trial was pretty much a mockery,” said Melissa Kemp, director of the Center. (Lexington Herald-Leader 1995)

Similar to the increase in call volume after NBC’s airing of “The Burning Bed,” the O.J. Simpson trial publicized the problems of domestic violence in America.

In 1996, Congress passed the Offender Gun Ban that federally prohibits criminals, including people convicted of domestic violence misdemeanor crimes and child abuse crimes, from possessing firearms. In 1997, over 1,800 domestic violence shelters and programs were listed in the NCADV’s National Directory. In the state of Kentucky, more than 5,400 women and children received shelter services in 1999 (Lexington Herald-Leader 2002c).
Kentucky launched a court monitoring program in Fayette County in 1996 that has served as a national model. The Fayette County Sheriff’s office, the Fayette County Attorney’s office, and the Fayette County Domestic Violence Prevention Board joined together to “ensure that batterers obey court order in domestic violence, a responsibility usually left to the victim” (The Kentucky Post 1996). The program was funded through a grant program available through the Violence Against Women Act and provides for personnel positions to monitor whether batterers follow court orders, and if not, work with appropriate law enforcement personnel to take action when necessary (Lexington Herald-Leader 1996). The court monitoring program, launched in 1996, was complemented by private companies’ donations allowing the Fayette county government to provide panic buttons and 911 cellular telephones to victims who have protective orders (Lexington Herald-Leader 1998).

The New Millennium

The Kentucky Domestic Violence Association successfully secured funding for the domestic violence shelter programs by lobbying lawmakers to increase marriage license fees throughout the state (Lexington Herald-Leader 2000).

In 2003, a Kentucky-based video and resource booklet was distributed to teachers throughout the state to help them “identify sexual abuse or how to report it” (Lexington Herald-Leader 2003b). Other services emerging services in Kentucky included a supervised visitation program for children of domestic violence victims. A Fayette county group successfully obtained funds available through the Violence Against Women Act to “better protect victims of domestic violence, child abuse, stalking, and sexual assault in Lexington…[and] to improve the quality of supervised visitation and other services to victims” (Lexington Herald-Leader 2003a).

However, threats and realities of budget cuts to social service programs continued to plague Kentucky’s domestic violence shelter programs in the new millennium. At the national level, funding shortages were threatened via a cut to the Victims of Crime Act allocations, which provides monetary support to advocacy programs for victims of all crimes, including violence against women. The result was that “battered women, rape victims and children who’ve been sexually abused will get fewer services…unless Congress lifts a cap on money sent to states to help crime victims” (The Courier-Journal 2003a). Local victim advocacy groups joined together to rally members of Congress to raise the cap (Daily News 2003; Lexington Herald-Leader 2003c).

Federal level funding cuts were compounded by state level budget cuts to social service agencies, including community mental health agencies and domestic violence shelter programs (The Courier-Journal 2003b; The Courier-Journal 2004). The budget cuts meant “fewer victims will have court advocates to assist them when they decide to press charges against their abusers” (The Kentucky Post 2003). In addition, budget cuts would force many programs to decrease or eliminate some services (Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer 2003).

An additional tension arose when some judges in the state of Kentucky fined domestic violence victims who “continued to have contact with their abusers after obtaining “no contact” emergency protective orders” (Lexington Herald-Leader 2002a). Judge Megan Lake Thornton of Fayette District Court, who ordered the fines, garnered national attention and stirred national discussions when she stated: “I have found that there has been a number of petitioners who have chosen to come and get an order and then ignore the order, you can’t have it both ways” (Associated Press Archive 2002; Houston Chronicle 2002; National Public Radio 2002). Victim advocates publicly criticized the judge’s measures, arguing that the complexity
and seriousness of domestic violence cannot always be understood through a rigid framework of “no contact.” For example, victim advocates spoke out about child custody struggles and visitation after filing for a no contact order. A couple years later, a woman was arrested for visiting her abuser after filing an emergency protection order against him, representing a “judicial backlash against whose who seek the court’s protection from domestic violence” (Lexington Herald-Leader 2002b).

The types of services for domestic violence victims continued to expand in Kentucky to meet the changing needs of women and children. A $1.5 million grant through the Department of Housing and Urban Development was granted to the Owensboro Area Shelter and Information Services (O.A.S.I.S.) for their efforts to unite a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation center with a domestic violence shelter (Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer 2001). Services for Hispanic women continued to increase, even to rural counties. In Bowling Green, the Centro La Esperanza opened to provide outreach programs for Hispanic women (Daily News 2004). Housing vouchers became available through a $20 million allocation to domestic violence victims and the mentally ill without homes (Knight-Ridder 2005; The Courier-Journal 2005). Specifically, 500 vouchers were made available for “individuals or families who are homeless because of domestic violence” (Lexington Herald-Leader 2005b). Free tax-preparation was also made available to domestic violence victims in several counties throughout Kentucky via a program called the Kentucky Asset Success Initiative (Lexington Herald-Leader 2004; Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer 2005). One of the goals of the program was to assist “low-income working people to take advantage of a federal tax credit- and keep all their refund” (Lexington Herald-Leader 2005a). Financial literacy programs became popular to “prepare people for life after they leave shelter” and to “address housing difficulties, like credit problems, faced by women who leave the shelter” (Daily News 2006). Through a grant from the Allstate Foundation, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association administered a project that “helps domestic violence survivors become economically self-sufficient” by encouraging them to open an “Individual Development Account or restricted savings account” and have “their savings matched 2-1” (Lexington Herald-Leader 2006). In addition, the issue of human trafficking, “the forcing of a person into labor or prostitution, either by force, threat or psychological control,” also gained attention from domestic violence advocates (Knight-Ridder 2006).

The Coordinated Community

As this historical background indicates, the domestic violence shelter that serves as the central focus of this dissertation existed as part of a larger community of social service organizations through the nation, state, and region. “We start with the assumption that community should be viewed as a process involving social structure and cultural behavior...With this focus we seek those regularities in the relationships among individuals that are revealed in their activities with each other and with the physical items of their environment” (Arensberg and Kimball 1965: 2-3). Communities exist because individuals identify themselves as being part of a community and acting in relation to a community (Gregory 1998: 11). Furthermore, “community is not just a place, although place is very important, but a series of day-to-day, ongoing, often invisible practices. These practices are connected but not confined to place...” (Halperin 1998: 5). Community is something individuals practice, and is therefore constantly changing.

Crehan (1997: 226) suggests that applying the term “community” to collectives warrants merit because “it calls into question this deceptively straightforward term, and
focus(es) attention on the problem of exactly what is it that makes a community a community.”
She further points out that “communities, or at least those with an explicit imagined identity,
are sites where conflictual and supportive relationships are inextricably entwined” (Crehan
1997: 227). Crehan’s definition allows for overlapping communities, imagined communities,
and/or bounded or unbounded communities. Furthermore, individuals can associate with a
community in either a social or geographic sense. By employing a loose definition of
community, she is able to apply it to almost any collective while recognizing the mutability of
the actual community and the definition itself.

To conceptualize the contested nature of a community, I also utilize Gregory’s (1998)
definition of “community.” He states that “community describes not a static, place-based
social collective but a power-laden field of social relations whose meanings, structures, and
frontiers are continually produced, contested, and reworked in relation to a complex range of
sociopolitical attachments and antagonisms” (Gregory 1998: 11). For Gregory, a community
can take on any number of collectives in a variety of societal spheres and operates as a mutable
entity. However, he further adds a sociopolitical component that allows for the incorporation
of both micro and macro level political forces.

For the purposes of my analysis, Gregory’s and Crehan’s definitions are useful because
they recognize that communities can overlap and transform themselves to negotiate social
situations. In other words, communities are not static; rather, they are capable of changing. A
community can also imply a sense of shared identity, such as a shared motivation to provide
services for victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, a community can refer to a global
network of activists working to address domestic violence. This dissertation engages the
concept of community as it applies to a group of organizations, agencies, and other units
providing services to victims of domestic violence. These entities may provide services only
to victims of domestic violence, or they may be providing services to other vulnerable
populations that include domestic violence victims. This “community of service providers”
connect through their domestic violence practices as a collective grouping of organizations.

In the field of domestic violence, the phrase “coordinated community” is a commonly
heard phrase. The foundational ideology of the coordinated community rests on the notion that
the response to domestic violence must come from all sectors in a community because
domestic violence affects everyone in a community. The leader of Florida’s statewide
domestic violence task force summarizes this idea when he stated, “Domestic violence cannot
be successfully addressed unless a community of individuals act- no one group can do it alone”
(Hassler 1995: 199). The sense that domestic violence must be solved through a “community”
effort and community agencies should actively participate in breaking the cycle of violence at
every possible step is “increasingly being emphasized as necessary for a comprehensive
systemic approach to addressing domestic violence” (Shepard, et al. 1999: 551).

Advocates and researchers in Duluth, Minnesota have led the effort to “coordinate the
community response” to domestic violence over the past two decades. Basic building blocks
of a coordinated community include policies such as pro-arrest or mandatory arrest policies,
follow-up services for victims, aggressive and prompt prosecution, monitoring offender
compliance with probation conditions, court mandated participation in batterer intervention
programs, strong civil remedies, and monitoring the system-wide response to domestic
violence cases (Shepard, et al. 1999). These policies create the infrastructure for a coordinated
community to function. The coordinated community response:
Such a response includes changing the legal (and police) system to protect women and children from violence; changing the practice of all professionals to prioritize the safety of women and children; and mandating batterers into treatment. This response is both revolutionary (envisaging equal gender relationships) and practical (creating a means to end men’s violence towards women and children). It has become a standard for all policy initiatives within the field and has been revised outside the USA. (Rivett and Rees 2004: 146-147)

While the Duluth model focused on the coordination of the criminal justice system, the coordinated community notion has been expanded to include all aspects of a community wide response to domestic violence that is broader than focusing solely on the criminal justice system (Adler 2002).

At multiple levels, the coordinated community exists to increase the quality of services of victims of domestic violence and increase awareness of the violence against women problem to ultimately prevent it.

For this case study from Kentucky, the community of service providers where I worked created a local level coordinated community in several ways. The County Domestic Violence Board (CDVB) is comprised of representatives from each of the community organizations involved in domestic violence service provision. The CDVB meets 4 times a year, and the many committees that are subgroups of the CDVB hold meetings about once a month. These meetings are times when service providers can discuss issues or concerns, plan workshops and training events, and provide updates to keep everyone on the Board informed of agency happenings. The CDVB is the primary public stage for creating a coordinated community where I conducted this fieldwork. There is also a number of separate e-mail discussion groups dedicated to continuing a daily dialogue about the needs of victims of domestic violence to complement the CDVB meetings. In addition, service providers foster their own partnerships in the coordinated community through their personal relationships with each other. One group of advocates met every week for a “non-business dinner,” though their discussions usually revolved around their advocacy work. Within this community of partnerships and negotiations exists a domestic violence shelter program that has undergone dramatic changes.

The following timeline (Figure 4.1) serves to provide a roadmap for field site descriptions. In addition, Figure 4.2 provides a key for commonly used abbreviations

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24 The coordinated community approach has led to the development and implementation of policies that are currently debated. For example, mandatory arrest policies led to a dramatic increase in arrests and prosecutions, they also take power, decision, and control out an abused woman’s hands and place it back into exactly what the feminist social movement was trying to fight- the patriarchal structure. Mandatory interventions and feminism is a fruitful intersection for debate. Feminist activists argued successfully that proactive arrest, prosecution, and reporting policies change the patriarchal structure of gender violence into a more equitable system that protects women’s rights (Mills 1999). At the same time, the policies take power and control out of a woman’s realm and into the patriarchal structure, disempowering women from making decisions for themselves about their (and their children’s) lives. As Mills (1999: 568) states: “Feminist political practice- even in the name of gender warfare- should not mimic patriarchy through either the use of threat tactics or the inattention to individual desire.” With mandatory arrest and no-drop policies, a woman who may decide not to prosecute may be told that she does not have a choice or that she is not the one prosecuting, the “people” are (Epstein 1999). In addition, the movement to create mandatory arrest and no-drop policies did not foresee the negative impact the policies would have on women’s lives, as evidence shows there is an increased rate of abuser retaliation when an arrest is made or a case is investigated or prosecuted (Epstein 1999). Nor was it possible to foresee the rise of the “dual arrest” phenomena, whereby the police arrest both parties in the absence of a clear perpetrator/victim distinction.
throughout this dissertation. Through an analysis of my fieldnotes and interview transcripts, I now present detailed descriptions of the domestic violence shelter programs that served as the primary point of analysis for this dissertation research, beginning with a brief history.

**Figure 4.1**
Dissertation Fieldsite Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Rape Crisis Center opens in fieldwork region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>YWCA Battered Women’s Program opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Kentucky Domestic Violence Association is established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1st National Toll-Free Domestic Violence Hotline is established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs is established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Fieldwork Begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>YWCA Battered Women’s Program closes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Kentucky Domestic Violence Association opens the Domestic Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Center under an Interim Director at the Homeless Assistance Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(HAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Kentucky Domestic Violence Association hires a permanent Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director of the Domestic Violence Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Domestic Violence Center successfully acquires 501(c)3 non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Domestic Violence Center hires an Assistant Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Domestic Violence Center relocates to The Farm from the HAP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.2**
Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BWP</td>
<td>Battered Women’s Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDVB</td>
<td>County Domestic Violence Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVC</td>
<td>Domestic Violence Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAP</td>
<td>Homeless Assistance Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDVA</td>
<td>Kentucky Domestic Violence Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWCA</td>
<td>Young Women’s Christian Association</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**The Battered Women’s Program**

The focus of this fieldwork is a domestic violence shelter program that opened in 1979 in the state of Kentucky. Since it’s inception, the Battered Women’s Program (BWP) existed as an agency within the local YWCA (Young Women’s Christian Association) organization. At the time that the BWP opened, the county already boasted a non-residential Rape Crisis Center and an organization specializing as a referral service for women, called Women’s Choices 25.

In the beginning, the BWP’s location within the YWCA organization followed other shelter organization models in other cities. Domestic violence shelters were opening throughout the country under the auspices of YWCA’s, which provided the financial stability and infrastructure needed to begin securing external funding from federal, state, and non-profit funding sponsors (Campbell and Martin 2001; Riger, et al. 2002; Sullivan and Gillum 2001;

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25 This is a pseudonym used to protect the confidentiality of the exact fieldwork location.
Weed 1995). However, as discussed in Chapter Two, domestic violence shelters were confronted with possible tensions in negotiating their role versus the role of their “mother organizations.” In the case of the BWP, domestic violence advocates had to reconcile their personal identities with the faith-based identity of the YWCA. While it did not appear that the advocates I worked with experienced a conflict between their identity and the Christian identity of the YWCA, I do recall an advocate remembering that she called to speak with an advocate prior to applying for a position at the BWP to inquire further about the relationship between the domestic violence shelter and the YWCA. She was assured by the advocate that the BWP employees were not bound or governed by the faith-based identity of the YWCA.

The early days of the BWP were similar to the experiences of the Louisville domestic violence shelter advocates described earlier in this chapter. Similar to other domestic violence advocates throughout the state, the first BWP advocates came to their domestic violence work without a background in working with battered women. Susan, an oral history participant, remembers how she came to work at the BWP shortly after it opened:

A part-time job became open at the shelter. I think the shelter had maybe been open… a few months. So I was one of the first people that was hired to work at the shelter. I worked part time while I went to school. Then, I think I worked until I finished my degree, then they hired me full time and I worked at the shelter for six years… I knew nothing about domestic violence. I had no history of domestic violence. I just became interested in it when I worked there that summer. The reporting law was interesting to me. I also investigated elder abuse, so I got to see that side, also… I met some of the people at the shelter, and just kind of got interested that way. It was a great part-time job and it just grew. My interest grew and I really didn’t know what I was going to do with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. I guess I was just trusting I’d figure out something.

The “something” Susan found was a position as an advocate and therapist for victims of domestic violence, and eventually a role as the assistant director of the BWP.

In describing the early days of the BWP, Susan remembered vividly the first physical location of the BWP shelter:

It was an older home that had been remodeled… I think the building is still there, so it could probably be seen if you actually want to go look at it. But it was an older remodeled house that many of the belongings in there were donated. We didn’t have a lot of new stuff… there were toys that were donated… the kitchen stuff, pretty much everything. It was always hard to keep it clean. We had lots of people in and out of there. None of that bothered me. I mean, that was just the way it was. You know? We were a small non-profit organization when we started and basically we just made the best of it.

I asked Susan to describe what the shelter would have looked like to a visitor walking in the door:

… When you came in, there was an entry. Off of that, there was a large room that we used for the desk, and an office, there was like a communal area for the women to watch TV. Then if you kept going back, I think there were laundry facilities. If you went upstairs, the kitchen was upstairs. I think that most of the bedrooms were upstairs. I don’t know if I can even remember how many beds we had, something like five or six. They were bunk beds and you tried to have as many beds as you could in there because the more beds you had the more women that we could take care of. We
tried to give most people personal space so that they weren’t all crammed in there together.

The issue of creating a welcoming space that would keep up with the demand for shelter services is a recurring theme as advocates, past and present, describe their shelter facilities.

The BWP was staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by paid employees and volunteers. The staff provided a variety of services, as Susan mentions:

We had counseling services and casework services for women that were trying to find a job or trying to finish a degree or the GED and things like that. We were always trying to get resources for them. We had volunteers that came in to assist the women with different kind of skills. I think we had volunteers who came in to play with the kids... I think we had assistants to try to help women get food stamps, and to try to put their lives somehow back together again. We did community education programs. We tried to educate the community and we had fundraising efforts of course, all of that was going on back then.

I inquired further about the fundraising efforts and financial pursuits the BWP accessed in the early 1980’s, and Susan responded, “I think we were a United Way Agency. We were always out trying to get money.”

In reviewing the newspaper articles from the region, it appears that throughout the first decade of its existence, the BWP secured a number of regional sources of funding. The local media outlets confirmed Susan’s recollection that the BWP received money from the United Way. In fact, the United Way provided a substantial amount of funding for the BWP via the YWCA throughout the entire history of the BWP. In addition to United Way funding, the BWP received financial assistance from federal grants funneled via oversight agencies such as the YWCA or the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association, the local government, and from fundraisers such as themed dinner dances at local hotels. Later, the local Junior League chapter began providing funds to the BWP shelter by sponsoring fundraisers on their behalf.

The BWP remained in their first location for ten years with rent subsidized by the local government. Aurora, an oral history participant who remained with the BWP for 15 years as an administrator, recalled her early experiences with the BWP and the second physical shelter facility:

Well, we just moved here and it was in the paper. And I came, I was a former victim. I was a victim before they had shelters, but I was very fortunate because I had a wonderful family and very supportive family, which as you know, many of these women do not have... I first came to the shelter in ‘89, I was the shelter manager. And the first thing we did was move into this shelter. So I did the House Meetings and did the working with the residents everyday and helping them with the chore list and... shopping and everything... I had a part-time person helping me, but basically I did a lot of the shopping by myself and everything. We were in a very dilapidated building, so if there was ever any power outage, everybody had to go in the one common room. Or if there were extremely cold conditions, we had space heaters that were extremely dangerous. But it's all we had. Yeah, it was in 1989. It was an old building that was just very dilapidated and owned by the city. We paid a dollar a year for it.

However, in 1989 the local government decided it could no longer subsidize the shelter facility, and therefore the program would have to relocate. Aurora remembered the move:

They were telling us we had to get a new one [facility]. The director at the time... was charged with finding a new place for the shelter because the city was ready for us to
move out of there, and I guess they were going to sell it, which they did after we moved
out. So, in November we moved into this place. November of ‘89, I believe, we moved
into this place…

At the time of this oral history interview, the BWP was located in the same facility they moved
to in 1989, though they would not remain there much longer.

As this chapter will describe further, the BWP not only changed facilities throughout its
existence, but also changed their scope and mission. The BWP went through many phases of
creating and adjusting their programs and services. Susan, who remained actively engaged
with the BWP after seeking employment elsewhere, describes some of these phases:

… In the beginning, it felt like a very open organization to me. It felt like that there
was a great deal of interaction with the community. It was a dynamic place to work.
There were always new ideas floating around. You could try something. It was a lot of
experimentation. Lots of students. Lots of producing materials. Just an energy. Then
it went through a period where I felt like it was very, very closed. You didn’t hear
about it, you didn’t see anything. It didn’t seem like there were any fundraisers. Even
when I left there, if I worked in the other organizations, I would still try to do
fundraising kinds of things with them. But it seemed like it went through this
construction time to me, and it felt like it was back in that again. It had opened up
again and then it had reconstructed again, like it was fearful of trying new things. Then
I saw it go more towards court and having more court advocates.

I asked Susan if the mission of the BWP changed throughout these phases to understand if
these different emphases were codified within the organization:

Well, I felt like that in the beginning, the mission was really broad, “We’re going to do
education. We’re going to do advocacy. We’re going to do counseling. We’re going
to start new programs. We’re going to do this work for the kids.” So all this stuff kind
of came out, and then it seemed like it kind of closed in on itself and, “Okay, we’re
going to narrow the mission. We’re just going to take care of women and kids, and
these other things, somebody else in the community needs to pick those things up.”

Though it is normal for an organization to undergo changes and focus on different programs
throughout several decades of operations, the BWP’s patterns of change eventually led to its
closure. The remainder of this chapter details these transitions.

While the BWP was experiencing changes internally, the community in which it was
situated also underwent transitions in social service provision to women. As previously
mentioned, there were two other non-profit organizations in the city dedicated to providing
services to women- the Rape Crisis Center and Women’s Choices. Both of these organizations
also received funding support from the local United Way chapter, the local government, and
the Junior League chapter. In addition, both organizations occasionally secured federal grant
monies for their programs.

The Rape Crisis Center was originally conceptualized as a local or county-based
organization designed to provide services to a small geographical area. Over time, it became
clear to the organization’s administration that the counties surrounding the Rape Crisis Center
also required services for survivors of sexual assault. Eventually, the Rape Crisis Center
changed its name and expanded its service district to include the 17 counties also served by the
BWP.

Women’s Choices provided outreach programming to women and referral services for
women’s issues in the local region. In addition, the organization provided support groups for
women that focused on issues other than domestic violence or sexual assault, such as widower support groups, midlife management seminars, and financial management workshops. Similar to the Rape Crisis Center and the BWP, Women’s Choices also underwent changes. In the mid-1980’s, the organization broadened their scope and changed their name to reflect their current programmatic emphases, most notably that of providing drug and alcohol abuse counseling and rehabilitation services.

While the Rape Crisis Center expanded its service region to increase their funding possibilities and the BWP remained an organization within the YWCA for stability, Women’s Choices was unable to survive amidst decreased funding lines for social service organizations. In the 1990’s the organization closed its doors and merged with another organization to create a new program focused on providing casework and counseling services to low-income families. Thus, at the time of this fieldwork, three organizations existed within one county to provide services to women and children in different capacities.

At the beginning of this fieldwork, the YWCA Battered Women’s Program (BWP) was located in a Mexican immigrant enclave, where Laundromats and convenience store signs were written in both Spanish and English. The neighborhood consisted of low rise apartment buildings, and on any given day it would not be surprising to see impromptu yard sales, mothers walking strollers and children to the bus stop, or pre-teens running around playing tag. On weekend evenings, the local bar pumped Latin disco music into the night air. This setting speaks to changing political economic conditions in the United States and Kentucky. In the United States, the migrant Mexican population is increasing due to the demand for unskilled labor (Anderson 2003). Indeed, the number of legal and undocumented immigrants to Kentucky has more than tripled in the past decade (Anderson 2003).

A two-story brick office building housed the BWP (see Appendix H for photos). It was a non-descript facility with dulled red brick, plain windows, a parking lot, and a fenced in backyard area. To get into the BWP, a visitor rang a bell and spoke their business via an intercom. Through the glass door, a visitor would see no people, just a flight of scarcely carpeted stairs. A staff member granted everyone’s access into the building through the intercom system. The front door locked automatically when closed, and the rumor among the advocates was that the only person with a key to the front door was the Director. Therefore, a staff person was always present in the building to allow entrance.

Once inside, your business was either first floor or second floor related. On the first floor were the advocates’ offices, the conference room, a school classroom, and a small kitchen. Advocate offices were a mismatched rainbow of colors, each with its own wall paint and mismatched furniture. All offices had telephones and most offices had computers, but only a couple of the offices were wired for the Internet.

The second floor formed a large horseshoe hallway with 6 bedrooms that served as the home for up to 24 women and children comfortably, upwards of 32 people when you allowed for cosleeping of women and children, children in cribs or toddler beds, and floor space. Some rooms had windows and areas that served as closets without doors. The sleeping arrangements relied on configuring women into wooden bunk beds with plastic covered mattresses. The resident rooms did not have telephones, televisions, or alarm clocks.

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26 Thanks to an advocate reviewer who reminded me of Saturday night disco parties near the BWP.
27 One sunny Saturday afternoon, I was locked out of the shelter with another advocate while we were unloading donations. We had the telephone with us, but had to knock on the front door to gain the residents’ attention to let us back in. It was an interesting role reversal!
BWP advocates offered domestic violence victims counseling, legal advocacy, access to a lawyer, support groups, casework services, and referral options to shelter residents and non-resident outreach clients. The organization also maintained a 24-hour a day toll free crisis line for the community.

Departments and Services

The BWP employee structure was departmentalized. Departmentalization is a model that divides the staff into different departments with specific job functions. This allows for specialization and creates a structure that requires victims to seek assistance and support from different individuals working in the same organization to fulfill different needs. Legal advocates answered legal and judicial questions, counselors fulfilled emotional support needs, caseworkers addressed practical needs, and the children’s workers met children’s needs. Primarily, four departments existed at the BWP, plus one part time advocate who served the immigrant and refugee population’s specific needs.

In addition, four supervisors placed in different departments oversaw the departments. Supervisors managed shelter activities as well as carried an on-call pager on a rotating basis. The supervisor title also carried a salary increase, but the additional duties surpass the benefits of the humble monetary benefit. In addition to managing the shelter activities and responding to emergencies, the supervisors were responsible for additional paperwork and administrative duties as required and needed.

Legal

The legal department housed four legal advocates, 2 working in the shelter and 2 based in offices in outlying counties. The legal advocates were a hodgepodge group, consisting of one male lawyer and three women who acted as advocates to assist victims through the legal and judicial systems. In addition, the legal department housed a BWP supervisor. The role of the legal advocates was twofold. First, legal advocates provided basic information to victims about the legal and judicial systems. They were able to provide women with the options that they may have, without providing any legal advice, as they are not practicing as lawyers. Their second responsibility was to accompany women to court related domestic violence matters, such as an Emergency Protection Order hearing. In the courtroom, legal advocates provided emotional support to the women and explain any processes that occur. Legal advocates did not represent the women in court or act as their lawyers. Legal advocates assist victims throughout a 17 county region on behalf of the BWP.

Outreach and Volunteer Coordination

The Outreach and Volunteer Coordination Department was staffed by two full time employees, neither of which had supervisory authority over other staff. They were responsible for a variety of tasks, including conducting educational presentations to the community, coordinating volunteers, overseeing students who were pursuing course credit for service at the BWP, promoting special events, and fundraising. The two advocates in this department were not responsible for providing direct services to residents of the BWP, but they did maintain ongoing counseling relationships with non-residential victims.

Children’s Department

The Children’s Department contained four full time staff people, two Children’s Counselors and two Children’s Activities Coordinators. As a combined team, the Children’s Department provided one-on-one counseling with the children in shelter and provided activities and programming after school during the week. In the summer months, the Children’s Department took the children on outings, such as swimming, skating, or miniature
golf. Additionally, the Children’s Department gave welcome “care packages” to new children in shelter and organized the annual donation drive for the Christmas holidays.

Department for Immigrant and Refugee Women

Calling the Department for Immigrant and Refugee Women a “department” may be a misnomer because only one woman staffed the department on a part time basis. As a result of the demands of the region’s influx of Spanish-speaking immigrants, the BWP hired a bilingual advocate who spoke both English and Spanish. The Department for Immigrant and Refugee Women advocate provided the same services to this population as the Women’s Advocacy Department provided to English speaking women. In addition, the bilingual advocate translated crisis calls and other service-related contact for the advocates and crisis counselors. Furthermore, the bilingual advocate provided legal advocacy for the Spanish speaking clients, assisted them with filing Emergency Protection Orders and provided translation services for the victims at judicial hearings related to those orders. Every advocate I spoke with at the BWP recognized the importance of the shelter program maintaining a bilingual advocate to respond to the needs of Spanish speaking victims in BWP service district.

Women’s Advocacy Department

The Women’s Advocacy Department was historically divided into two departments, the Women’s Counseling Department and the Women’s Casework Department. These two departments each housed two full time advocates for a total of 4 advocates providing either counseling or casework to the residents. Shortly before the announcement of the closure of the BWP, the two departments merged into the Women’s Advocacy Department for a total of 4 women who would provide both counseling and casework services to the residents under the title of Women’s Advocates. The advocates agreed that this model was more efficient and allowed for better quality services because women did not have to go back and forth between two workers for their needs. The Women’s Advocates were responsible for moving women through the program and assisting them in obtaining their self-identified needs.

The Women’s Advocates emphasized goals as part of their casework responsibilities, which includes the goals of meeting the practical and daily needs of the clients. These needs included securing financial resources for housing, obtaining resources for women and their children for their transition out of shelter (such as food stamps, medical cards, and other forms of public assistance), and other practical issues such as filling necessary prescriptions. In addition to the casework duties, the Women’s Advocates provided individual counseling and emotional support sessions to victims of domestic violence. The counseling sessions were not intended to be therapeutic in the clinical sense, because none of the Women’s Advocates held the qualification necessary to provide therapy.

Women’s Advocates were also responsible for a variety of administrative tasks. Women’s Advocates hired and supervised part time staff to cover the crisis line and staff the shelter on nights and weekends, maintained statistical records about the residents and clients to report to funders and the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association, and provided on-call support to the part time staff.

Crisis Counselors supported the Women’s Advocates by working evenings (4:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.), all weekend shifts, and holidays. The Crisis Counselors were a group of women who had a full time job and took on the work of a Crisis Counselor or were full time students

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28 “Care packages” included items such as a stuffed animal toy, crayons, a coloring book, or a clothing outfit. The content of the “care packages” depended upon the availability of items in the shelter. There were times children might not receive a “care package” as a result of a lack of items.
at the nearby state university working part time to support themselves through their schooling. There was an extremely high rate of turnover among the Crisis Counselor staff, who worked a minimum of one shift a month.

The Crisis Counselors’ primary responsibility was answering the 24-hour crisis line that rings to the Crisis Office on the second floor of the shelter. Crisis Counselors were never more than a short distance away from the phone to provide constant coverage of “the line.” Crisis calls usually fell into three primary categories. The first category consisted of women calling the BWP seeking shelter. In these cases, the Crisis Counselor conducted a brief assessment of the woman’s situation and determined her eligibility for shelter. If accepted, the woman and the Crisis Counselor developed a plan of action for the victim to “come to shelter.” The second type of crisis call came from women who wanted to “vent” about a domestic violence relationship. These calls were often lengthy and demanded the Crisis Counselor to use active listening skills to validate a woman’s feelings about her relationship, provide brief educational information about domestic violence, and engage the woman in a discussion about decreasing her risk of violence. The third category of crisis calls consisted of callers seeking information about another service in the region, also known as “referral calls.” Crisis Counselors assessed the caller for the type of service or information they were seeking, and if the BWP could not fulfill the request, then the Crisis Counselor provided organization information and telephone numbers for agencies that can fulfill the need.

The description of the BWP is based on data collection during the final weeks of the program’s existence. Among the advocates in the BWP shelters, hushed discussions constantly bounced around about the program’s structure and management. Shortly after a change in leadership on the Board of Directors at the YWCA, the domestic violence advocates became aware that the shelter program may undergo a change as well. However, the BWP advocates were unprepared for the course of action to come.

Closing the BWP: Contributing Factors

The YWCA Board of Directors called the BWP staff to a Friday morning meeting evening before. The board members before us were all female, sitting behind two long, rectangular folding tables. They were wearing suits, their hands clasped on the table, as they blankly stated to the team of shelter advocates that the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association withdrew their funding support through the state block grant, and the domestic violence program would be closed in 40 days, at the end of the fiscal year. The board informed the BWP advocates that all of the advocates were officially laid off in 6 weeks.

After 25 years of providing services, the BWP closed. The data I collected from the advocates working in the shelter and in the community supplement official newspaper accounts, which cited one of the reasons for the closure of the BWP as “a building in disrepair and other undisclosed concerns.” However, advocates continued to enter the building door, day after day, to provide services to domestic violence victims until the last hour of the last day of the program’s existence. During those last weeks of the BWP’s operation, the advocates identified three specific themes to understand the closure of the shelter program. The first theme was the poor condition of the physical facility that served as the shelter. The second commonly referenced issue was the financial transgressions that surfaced in the last months of the BWP. Finally, the advocates repeatedly cited the leadership of the BWP and the YWCA overseeing the shelter operations as a contributing factor of the closing.
“The Building is Falling Apart”

The BWP program moved to the current building 15 years prior to the BWP’s closure. One oral history participant worked with the shelter at the time the BWP moved to the facility. She remembered the first building the BWP occupied and the move, saying:

We were in a very dilapidated building, if there was ever any power outage, everybody had to go in the one common room. If there were extremely cold conditions, we had space heaters that were extremely dangerous. But it's all we had. It was an old building that was just very dilapidated and owned by the city. We paid a dollar a year for it and then they were telling us we had to get a new one. The director at the time was charged with finding a new place for the shelter because the city was ready for us to move out of there, and I guess they were going to sell it, which they did.

At this time, the YWCA began the process of purchasing the BWP building. The building’s condition and lack of adequate space contributed to the decision to close the domestic violence program. The physical environment of the BWP was a persistent topic among the advocates, as well as community members. A member of the community wrote to the local newspaper to say:

I have watched women and children escape their batterers and stay in a shelter that needs major repairs because it is better than being terrified. The women have lived with their children in small bedrooms and shared all facilities with other victims because it is better than being terrified.

In interviews collected before the closure of the BWP, I asked advocates to imagine and describe their dreams for the future program. Each time, before discussing the future, the advocates discussed the current problems with the facility.

An outsider might describe the facility as dirty and unfriendly. Advocates talked about the building as if they were not working in its walls each day and night. One BWP shelter advocate stated, “The building is falling apart, it's just disgusting. I'm okay with it because I'm used to it.” Shortly before we learned that the BWP was closing, the advocates discovered black mold in the building late one evening. Unfortunately, the black mold was not the only physical problem with the building:

It’s dirty. It’s filthy. It does not look like a professional environment at all. From the very basic things to the carpeting that looks like crap. The walls, the color of the walls is atrocious. Everyone can choose their own color of their office, which is okay but at the same time it’s not very professional to go from a pink room to a green room to a blue room. And there have got to be bugs that we do not see in there. That's just gross. The community room furniture is disgusting. The carpeting is atrocious up there. The playroom is really substandard. There aren't enough toys for the kids. Especially the kind of toys that infants and toddlers need. It’s all hand-me-down crap again. Just like an awful garage sale that you wouldn't even pay a quarter for that stuff.

The physical condition of the building was a significant contributing factor to the closure of the BWP shelter. Furthermore, at this point in the research, I had not identified the issue of professionalization as primary to my research goals. Therefore it is important to note that a “professional environment” became important as domestic violence shelter advocates articulated their opinions about the physical shelter.

The former BWP shelter was eventually refurbished and used as a non-profit community center. None of the advocates I worked with ever returned to the location.

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“It’s a Lot of False Security”

In addition to the condition of the building, there were numerous safety and security related concerns. The foundation of the shelter movement throughout the world resides in the promise of providing a safe environment for victims to seek refuge. At its core, safety from violence is the greatest contribution the shelter movement has made. The advocates who worked at the BWP recognized that providing safety was the most important service that the program could offer women and their children, and in fact providing a safe place to sleep must come before providing long term victim services. An oral history participant told me:

They're in very dangerous situations. They need a safe place that they can't find and if he knows about this, they really need to go to another shelter. Safety is everything at first and you can't do anything with a person until they're safe.

The advocates mentioned the security of the shelter facility repeatedly, and I anticipated hearing or seeing fear in the advocates as they discussed the inadequate security measures. I was constantly surprised when I noticed that the advocates were more fearful of becoming ill due to black mold than they were to come to work everyday in a building that could not physically protect them or the residents. Instead, their words reflected anger and disgust, but interestingly, not fear:

Anyone could come in here easily. The glass is not bulletproof. Anyone could just throw a brick at the door and be in here in two seconds. Even with our security cameras, it’s not trustworthy. The gate out back is not locked. So anybody can walk in the gated play area at any time and shoot anybody they wanted to. It is not safe.

The lack of safety measures to protect the BWP advocates and residents did not appear in the public eye as a contributing factor to the BWP’s closing. However, the advocates highlighted the insecurity of the building as a major concern with the program.

“It Should Be in Check and Balance”

Many advocates working for the BWP and people working within the community of domestic violence service providers were aware that the YWCA and the shelter program were in distress. The full weight of the problems became visible when the advocates’ payroll checks were returned for non-sufficient funds after presenting them for payment. Advocates were unaware of the financial shortage and continued to pay their bills, only to find that they drew their own checks with non-sufficient funds. Additionally, advocates’ bank accounts were charged for both the “bad checks” they deposited from the payroll account and those they wrote. The YWCA offered to reimburse advocates for expenses incurred as a result of the financial error.

In addition to the lack of available funds for the payroll account, upon notification of the pending closure of the BWP many advocates found that the YWCA did not appropriately supplement their retirement accounts under the retirement agreement. The retirement fund issue was explained to me during an interview by a full time advocate. The YWCA was to match 100% of the funds that advocates allowed for their retirement accounts. Upon request of transferring those accounts, the BWP advocates found that their money deposited, but the YWCA did not match it. While the YWCA did eventually match the dollar amount that advocates deposited to their retirement accounts, they did not receive the potential accrued interest had the retirement fund been holding a higher dollar amount.

Allegations of the mismanagement of program funds from the advocates, community members, and newspaper journalists magnified the accusations of financial mismanagement. This claim was substantiated in many interviews through the examples advocates provided
about the lack of available funds to pay for operating costs. Examples of the absence of funds previously available included money for smaller items such as office supplies, letterhead, coffee, or printing costs for the seasonal newsletter. However, the absence of money also affected general operations when the bills for utilities were unpaid and satellite offices in outlying counties received eviction notices.

“We Need Strong Leadership”

The week before the YWCA Board of Directors informed the advocates that the BWP program would be closing, they fired the BWP Director (hereafter referred to as the Former Director). This action created a significant level of heightened criticism towards the BWP from the advocates working within its walls. The advocates did not enjoy close, personal relationships with the BWP Director and disclosed that her role in the provision of direct advocacy services to victims was minimal. Before her dismissal, the advocates tolerated her perceived inactivity in shelter operations. However, after she separated from the shelter, the advocates spoke out about management styles and cited poor leadership as a contributing factor in the decision to close the BWP. For example, a former legal advocate said:

You take somebody who's a manager or who's a good social worker, and you throw them in a management slot and they're either good at it or they're not. And generally, they're not because they've never been trained to be. And you take people like the BWP Director, just completely in over her head, had not a clue as to what was going on. She was not psychologically or emotionally suited for a management type position and hated conflict and confrontation. And then put her in a position where she had to sit people down and tell them what to do, and she just wouldn't do it.

The Former Director’s management style at the BWP was supported by the interview data from advocates who did not feel she provided the support or motivating spirit they needed working at the BWP. The advocates desired:

...Someone who's willing to... be a good, strong leader for people, we haven't had that in a while. And it hurt us not to have that. Every single department suffered because we did not have a strong leader. And I can't tell you all the characteristics, I just know a strong leader when I see one.

The advocates sought a leader who led by example, who would motivate them in their advocacy work, and support their decisions. Unfortunately, the advocates did not feel they received these needs from the BWP Director. Advocates expressed to me that the BWP Former Director did not validate or recognize the potential of the advocates. Overall, none of the advocates expressed to me that they felt the decision to fire the BWP Director was not detrimental to the organization.

While the domestic violence advocates pointed in part to the leadership of the BWP as a contributing factor to the facility’s closing, this data must also be put in perspective. Similar to the theme of professionalization, I did not anticipate the level of discussion that focused on the Former Director’s leadership skills. This theme emerged as prominent in the fieldwork data, however, it neglects the impact of the structural level power that was simultaneously affecting the local situation.

The BWP operated under a mother organization (the YWCA) and agreed to follow state level standards as set forth by the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association. As a result of the factors described above, in addition to documented concerns of noncompliance with state level standards, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association withdrew financial support to the YWCA to support the BWP. When placed in a broader perspective, we see that the facility did
not close solely as a result of the aforementioned factors. The BWP would have remained in operation if political economic conditions allowed for the organization to thrive. However, the local level shortcomings of the facility were essentially triggers of a closure that was looming at a structural level.

At the structural level, the BWP suffered from the repercussions a larger shift in the political economy of social service organizations. The move to privatize social service organizations undercuts a safety net of federal support that can be funneled directly to human service providers. By increasing the layers of gatekeeping for federal funds, there are more opportunities for that funding to be rerouted, depleted, and even withdrawn. The uncertainty of this situation is not spoken about at the local (as witnessed in the advocate voices above) nor is it immediately recognized. For this reason, I argue that oftentimes in times of unrest at the local level, frontline workers are misdirecting their frustrations and the source of disempowerment at administrators at the organizational level. Consistent with other literatures examining power, local level actors do not often engage in an effort to resist structural level power.

The closing of the BWP affected the entire community of human service professionals. In an interview with an oral history participant, the impact of this transition was paired with hopes for the future of domestic violence services in the region:

I had very mixed feelings. I did hear about it closing. I had very, very mixed feelings, because it was very difficult for the women who depended on that shelter, and who knew where it was... There was a lot of confusion. A lot of people weren’t sure what number they were supposed to call. People weren’t sure where they were supposed to go. There wasn’t anywhere to go for a little while. I was very sad about it for the women. But there had been a lot of problems with that shelter before then. I know lots of people never thought it was really run appropriately, anyway. I mean it looked horrible. If you go to other shelters in other areas, they didn’t look like that. I mean that place was run down. I mean it was depressing to be in it. I would have been depressed if I had stayed. And they’re [the domestic violence victims] already depressed, because of the situation they’ve got going in. The way it looked was just frightening. When I said I had mixed feelings, I think I felt, in some ways, like this is a chance to start fresh. This is a chance for a new administration to come in. This is a chance for it to be something great, and something that’s able to provide more services for women in the community, and provide services in a little bit better way for women in the community. So it was a good thing and a bad thing when I heard that it was closing.

The day after the BWP closed its doors, a new program arose under the leadership of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association (KDVA). This section describes the first few days of the new organization, the employee structure, and the map for service provision. Additionally, I illustrate the transitional nature of the new program as the leadership changed and the advocate team moved the physical location of the shelter facility.

The Domestic Violence Center: “Home Sweet Home”

The day after the BWP shelter closed I slept in late. I felt as if a huge burden was both lifted and added into my world. The closing was complete, but the future was uncertain. I did not know how to proceed with my day, after experiencing a perpetual state of crisis for 40 days. At 12:50 pm, an advocate called me because she could not find her car keys. She was attending a “new staff” meeting at 1:00 at the Homeless Assistance Program HAP (a homeless
shelter which provided services such as a homeless casework assistance and soup kitchen) and was hoping that I was also going to attend. Even though I was not invited to the meeting, I went and picked her up and dropped her off at the HAP. At 1:30, another former BWP advocate called me from her cellular telephone and told me to come down to the HAP because they were scheduling shifts. She said that the two women in charge, the Interim Director and the Director of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association, told her to call me. So I got back into the car, drove to the HAP, and wondered what we were getting ourselves into.

I pulled into the campus of the Homeless Assistance Program (HAP). At the front desk, I told the worker behind the plexiglass that I was here for the domestic violence shelter. She pointed me through the doors on the other side of the reception area to a building on the other side of a fenced in playground. At the door to the building, I could see a living area. I opened the unlocked door and immediately found myself plus 6 other former BWP employees scheduling shifts for the month of July. On the wall was a sheet 8.5” by 11” purple paper with the words “Home Sweet Home” written in deep black calligraphy.

The seven women invited to this meeting were the first advocates to work for the new Domestic Violence Center (DVC). The DVC operated directly under the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association, a non-profit entity, until their own 501(c)3 non-profit status was secured 8 months later (see Appendix I for photos). An Interim Director was brought in to oversee the DVC’s operations while she simultaneously worked as the Executive Director of a shelter in a rural area of the state. She commuted 3 hours 2 or 3 days a week to assist us in setting up the transitional DVC.

After announcements and a brief question and answer session, it was time for us to begin scheduling shift coverage. Since there were only 7 advocates, who were working a 40-hour week or less, shift coverage was limited to 1 or 2 advocates. The shifts were as follows: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m.-12:00 a.m., and 12:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m. Shift scheduling began with the question, “So, which one of you ladies would like to work third shift tonight?”

After I signed up for an un-patterned mixture of first, second, and third shifts and the meeting concluded, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association Director sat down with me so I could interview for the position of Temporary Women’s Advocate. The interview consisted of reviewing the areas of responsibilities in our new positions:

Provides support and emergency service to abused women and children in a therapeutic environment; supervises and monitors shelter activities; accepts new residents; maintains security at the shelter; monitors the 24-hour crisis line and the business line, and completes necessary paperwork. Provides daily emotional support to women and children. Provides women and children with support groups in the areas of domestic violence education, life skills, parenting, self-esteem, anger management, etc. Provides and maintains confidentiality in the area of services to victims of domestic violence.

We were required to demonstrate a number of skills, which were listed as: assertive, organized, strong oral and written communication skills; ability to exercise good judgment; high degree of confidentiality; ability to work well with a diverse population; sensitive to the needs of abused victims and their children; able to effectively deal with domestic violence issues, a team player and willing to work flexible hours; physically able to bend, stoop and occasionally lift 25-50 lbs.; and performs other duties as assigned by the Executive Director. The service conditions were stated clearly in the job description, “Typical residential atmosphere: exposure to poor hygiene, unsanitary conditions, smoking, communicable disease and blood borne pathogens.”
Services

The Interim Director trained the DVC advocates in a model of victim service provision that was client-driven. The advocates’ daily routines and the services reflected the needs and the goals of the residential clients. These services, also known as “contacts,” would be the advocates’ focus until a permanent director was hired. Elizabeth stated that she did not mind what we did, as long as each resident received “daily contact.” Daily contact included any type of service provided to a woman resident or child, such as individual counseling, support/education group, providing transportation, filling a prescription, or anything else an advocate provided to the client on behalf of the program. The shelter program philosophy was to be “client-centered and client-direct.” Advocates are to record in the new client files, which mirrored the paperwork from Elizabeth’s domestic violence program.

There was no departmentalization, no division of labor, and no community outreach and education. Everyone worked in the shelter and everyone performed the same daily tasks: individual counseling, facilitating women’s support groups, children’s services, casework, cleaning, and all other forms of advocacy. In addition, advocates who may have previously worked a 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. shift were now required to work a minimum number of third shifts each month, weekend shifts, and second shifts. For some advocates, this transition in their role was intense and very difficult and involved rigorous training in victim service provision. Other advocates, who may have held a supervisory role at the BWP, were actually working fewer hours and held less responsibility at the new DVC. However, no one was performing the same tasks and/or services they were doing before, which made for a crash course in training and readjusting for everyone.

“The Women are Just On Top of One Another”

The HAP location for the DVC was a single floor building that housed 5 bedrooms, one office, a common community room with a television, and kitchen that also served as the children’s playroom. When an advocate had a counseling appointment with a resident, it meant that the advocate and resident had to meet in the office and talk while constantly interrupted by other residents needing bus tokens or wanting to use the telephone. Sometimes, when it was nice outside, an advocate would suggest to a resident that they meet outside on one of the picnic tables, but again the risk would always be interruption or a possible crisis which would demand that the advocate return to the building.

Working in one office definitely brought the advocates closer together spatially, but it also prevented advocates from having their own space to complete paperwork and meet with victims. However, while the advocates recognized their spatial limitations as a hindrance to their own work, for the residents the lack of space created an everyday set of crises. The residents constantly bombarded the advocates with complaints regarding the lack of privacy, different sleep patterns among women and their children, theft, and lack of room to store their belongings. The crisis in space was summarized by an advocate:

The women are just on top of one another. I think it just breeds problems. They don't have any private space. They, they have nowhere that they can go where they can just get away for a second, away from the chaos. So, because of that they're always immersed in just chaos and controversy. And then they get upset because we're right in there with it.

In addition to the less than ideal physical facility of the shelter, the fact that the DVC shelter was located on the HAP campus caused numerous problems. The goal of the HAP was to provide emergency, temporary housing assistance to the homeless, including men, women, and
children. Their supportive human services were minimal, as their mission does not explicitly seek to provide counseling, casework, or other assistance.

The problem became systemic when it became mandatory that the DVC program advocates alert the HAP staff when they were expecting a new resident, as the woman would have to walk through the main lobby and gain access via the desk staff. Unfortunately, the desk staff often denied admittance to the facility because the HAP previously evicted the women for misconduct. This ran counter to the mission and philosophy of the DVC, which did not deny shelter to any domestic violence victims for any reason, regardless of past behavior or conduct in shelter.

The location of the HAP in the community was also a problem to both the staff and the residents. Vehicles were constantly broken into while parked in the HAP parking lot and security for the campus was minimal. In addition, the surrounding area was a high crime neighborhood.

Perpetual Transition

The mystique of starting a “grassroots organization” quickly wore off. The YWCA did not allow the new shelter program to keep any of the resources the workers compiled to assist victims. We had no files from our former residents, they were all property of the YWCA, so any paperwork and/or forms that previously used in casework were unavailable. The YWCA board publicly stated that they would sue any individual advocate who produced forms developed for the YWCA’s BWP program for use at the new DVC.

We were working 40 hours a week as temporary employees. Health insurance was not available. Neither were retirement benefits, childcare options, or dental plans. Working over 40-hours a week was prohibited. Every week the advocates were paid for the hours completed the previous week. There was no program vehicle, so advocates used their personal vehicles to transport residents.

However, the Interim Director always stocked the Crisis Office with an unhealthy amount of chocolate candy for the advocates. Chewing gum practically seeped from the desk drawers. On one occasion, the Interim Director asked the advocates to provide her a list of three items that we liked that cost less than $25.00. The lists we compiled included candles, jewelry, books, CDs, etc. Two weeks later at staff meeting, Elizabeth brought an enormous basket packed with goodies per our requests and each advocate chose three items. We labored over our choices, comparing candle scents and necklace styles until we each had three perfect items. Amidst this joy was also a feeling of discomfort, the advocates told the Interim Director they had never experienced anything like this display of appreciation.

After 5 months of operating at the HAP location, a steering committee hired a new, permanent Executive Director. The woman selected for the position was not a surprise to the DVC advocates. The advocates were familiar with her expertise in managing domestic violence shelters, her most recent position was as the director of a shelter program that boasted over 100 beds.

The first order of business for the new Executive Director was locating a new shelter facility. At a staff meeting, she mentioned that a contact of hers told her about an abandoned children’s home located on the outskirts of the county, a facility that the advocates referred to as The Farm. The DVC had already outgrown the facility at the HAP, as witnessed by the beds were always full and advocates were constantly turning women and children away from shelter due to the lack of available space. We were all on the lookout for a new location for the shelter, knowing at this point that funds would not be available to build a new structure.
The Executive Director talked about how ideal the location would be, but the advocates were skeptical. After staff meeting, advocates began to discuss the drawbacks of moving to The Farm, specifically the distant location of the building from the center of town, public assistance offices, and potential job locations. One advocate even went so far as to drive to The Farm over the weekend to calculate the amount of driving time required to travel from the center of town. Yet, the facility was empty, designed for residential use, and beautiful. However, despite the benefits of the new facility, the majority of the advocates strongly disagreed with the proposal to permanently move the DVC to The Farm. However, the final decision rested on the Executive Director, and the advocates were soon making plans to move to The Farm, a process that took 8 months to complete.

“When We Get to the New Building”

The advocates continued to work for the DVC on a variety of shifts to build the domestic violence shelter program that provides services and support to victims in a 17 county area. Slowly, advocates began to pursue service provision to non-residential clients. The Executive Director began attending community meetings regarding domestic violence. The DVC continued to lack open bed space for incoming victims. However, as these external pursuits grew, my fieldnotes indicate that the file paperwork began to exhibit deficiencies, support groups were held on an inconsistent basis, and the staff began exhibiting stronger signs of burning out.

On a sweltering summer day, we finally moved to the new, permanent home of the DVC over a year after we moved to the HAP location. Every moment of the move to the permanent location was riddled with confusion, starting with the date of the move to the new location. The DVC leadership notified the Family Advocates a few weeks before the day we were to all move to The Farm. Even after the state legislature and other authorities signed the new lease and the new coats of paint were on the walls of the new facility, several advocates believed that “we were never moving” in response to the numerous postponements. Nevertheless, the advocates developed a detailed strategic plan to assist the residents in preparing for the move, which occurred on a Friday. Beginning on Monday, advocates provided the residents with daily briefings about what to pack, how much to pack on that particular day, and discuss the programmatic structure once we moved to The Farm.

And yet, there was a great deal of structural confusion regarding the move to The Farm. The advocates were unsure how the employee structure would change, how the service provision would alter, and how the guidelines and expectations for the women would change. One of these practical issues was that of growth with respect to the shelter’s capacity. By increasing the amount of bed space available, questions arose as to how the advocates would divide the service work among a finite number of employees, the amount of resources at our disposal to meet the needs of the women, and realistic issues such strategizing meal planning. Advocates came together to work on committees to assist in the transition to The Farm to address the variety of questions and apprehensions the advocates and women may have had about the move. The committees addressed different topics, including transportation, meals, and community resources.

Moving Day

After living at the HAP for over a year, the DVC advocates and residents moved to The Farm. The transition marked the beginning of very long journey to create a new domestic violence shelter, a journey that was in no way complete when I concluded this fieldwork. The series of physical locations and transformations of the shelter program provides the backdrop
for the data I collected for this dissertation research that focuses on the power negotiations and shifts in participation and professionalization in domestic violence advocacy. To complete the field site context, I share the following polished excerpt from my field notes describing the day of the DVC’s move to The Farm, combined with interview data. It captures the chaos and anticipation of one day’s transition, and sets the stage for introducing the participant populations described in Chapter 5.

“All Advocates, 8-4, MOVING DAY,” the note in the office stated. The morning started well enough, donuts were brought in for the women and the advocates, which the women ate while finishing their packing. I think more than anything the residents were in control on this day, the day that they would be moving to their new home. I imagined that they probably spent time thinking about how they were going to decorate their rooms before they drifted off to sleep within our concrete walls. For months I have been listening to the plans they have for the new shelter, the activities they have been anticipating, and all the cooking they can accomplish in the huge industrial kitchen.

In the meantime, the advocates were running around in an absolute state of chaos. One advocate reminisced and said, “Jennifer, guess what we were doing this time last year? We were doing exactly the same thing.” Until the last minute, we were frantically packing all the last minute items, telling each other that “if you won’t remember that we once had it here, throw it away!” At 11:00 a.m., the truck full of all the items we had in the world drove away to the new shelter. Most residents left with this truck to go to The Farm and began unpacking everything. A few residents stayed behind at the HAP to help with the remainder of the packing. Four advocates, including myself, remained in the old building. Our task was to pack the old bunk beds and dressers into a storage unit, get the last remaining items into a car to head out to The Farm, and to clean up the HAP facility.

At 7:30 p.m., the Chinese food arrived to The Farm for a welcome dinner while four advocates were still unloading beds and dressers into a storage unit. Around 8:00 p.m., I returned to the HAP to pick up my car after returning the rental truck. I walked back into our now abandoned home and swept the floors, took out the trash, and locked up.

The two advocates who worked the first full shift at the new shelter were so happy to initiate the new shelter. But the demands of advocacy did not skip a beat. About 9:00 p.m., a woman and her two young children found their way to shelter. Beds were made, paperwork was signed, and another family was shown to their room.

The chaos of program transition is captured in the chaos of moving day. As the domestic violence advocates negotiated their new home, they were also embodying a larger struggle for participation in the development and implementation of programming and services as well as experiencing pressures to professionalize domestic violence advocacy. Amidst these struggles and pressures, the domestic violence advocates simultaneously negotiated their relationship with the women and children receiving domestic violence services.
CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

"My ex-husband...thinks I'm a feminist. I think I am too! I used to think that was sort of a bad word, but it's not. It's just being a woman. And standing up for who you are."
-Mona, Battered Women’s Program and Domestic Violence Center Advocate

Introduction

This chapter introduces the research participants included in this dissertation, which includes the Battered Women’s Program shelter advocates, the Domestic Violence Center shelter advocates, and Kentucky domestic violence social movement oral history participants. After I initially gained access to the research participants, I began learning the language of domestic violence advocacy and worked to establish and maintain trust with the domestic violence advocates and activists in the region. I provide detailed information about the Domestic Violence Center shelter advocates, as their voices comprise the bulk of the data concerning participation and professionalization.

The Language of Domestic Violence Advocacy

When I first began working as a domestic violence advocate, I learned a language of advocacy foreign to outsiders. In the fast-paced environment, words are shortened for efficiency and alternative words replace longer, descriptive phrases (see Figure 5.1). For example, “D.V.” replaces “domestic violence.” “The residents” is a phrase that encompasses the women and children residing in the domestic violence shelter. An advocate might say, “The residents want to watch a movie tonight.” As a domestic violence advocate and later a researcher, I quickly picked up the language and incorporated it into my daily practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 5.1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Violence Advocacy Language Key</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach Clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I also found that knowing the language granted me access to domestic violence advocates and activists in the community of service providers and across the state. At community agency meetings and in oral history interviews, I was able to follow conversations as a result of my familiarity with domestic violence advocacy language. This included my knowledge of commonly used acronyms such as: K.D.V.A. (Kentucky Domestic Violence Association), D.C.B.S. (Department for Community Based Services), A.P.S. (Adult Protective Services), C.P.S. (Child Protective Services), V.O.C.A. (Victims of Crime Act), and V.A.W.A. (Violence Against Women Act). Learning and using the language was a vital key to maintaining my access to domestic violence advocates and activists in Kentucky.

Battered Women’s Program Shelter Advocates

As described in the previous chapter, the fieldwork completed for this dissertation spanned several phases of a domestic violence program’s transition from operating under a
“mother organization,” in this case a local YWCA, to an autonomous organization. While this created two separate organizational identities with which I conducted my fieldwork, it also created two overlapping shelter advocate populations.

The first constituency included the BWP advocates. In total, 20 BWP advocates were interviewed prior to the facility’s closure (see Figure 5.2). At the time of the interviews, none of the advocates were aware of their future status with the yet to be created DVC. While many of the advocates had submitted their resumes to the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association for employment consideration at the new domestic violence shelter, none had received an employment offer. The majority of the advocates had distributed their resumes to other community organizations and businesses for employment consideration as a result of the future’s uncertainty. The interview data collected from the BWP advocates heavily informed the creation of the research design with the DVC program and is used throughout this dissertation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Degree/Background</th>
<th>Part Time/Full Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aurora</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Social Work</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erin</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Social Work</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erica</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Social Work</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Social Work</td>
<td>Part Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Psychology</td>
<td>Part Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Masters in Psychology</td>
<td>Part Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassie</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Social Work</td>
<td>Part Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindy</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Bachelor of English</td>
<td>Part Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Social Work</td>
<td>Part Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Social Work</td>
<td>Part Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Psychology</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Masters of Counseling</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoebe</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Spanish</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Masters of Social Work</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Social Work</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Bachelor of Social Work</td>
<td>Part Time</td>
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**Domestic Violence Center Shelter Advocates**

Another constituency that is not mutually exclusive from the BWP advocates group is the DVC advocate team (see Figure 5.3). The Kentucky Domestic Violence Association did not distribute a public announcement for applications to the DVC; therefore, during the first several months of operations all employees at the DVC were former BWP employees. The

30 All names are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of the research participants.
overlapping nature of these two groups provides a historic depth to the interviews and an
opportunity for current employees to compare and contrast the former organization with the
transitional program. The DVC advocates welcomed new members to their team about 8
months after opening the new transitional shelter. I consider these newcomers part of the DVC
advocate constituency. In addition, the DVC advocates include the Interim Director of the
DVC (Carol), the permanent Executive Director (Janine), and the permanent Assistant Director
(Joanna).

**Figure 5.3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Violence Center Shelter Advocates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoebe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below I describe each of the DVC advocates who consented to take part in this
dissertation research, in order of their length of employment with the domestic violence shelter
(longest term to shortest term). I introduce the women through their words describing how
they became involved in domestic violence advocacy. In addition, in this section I
contextualize the advocates’ found throughout this dissertation by sharing stories about them
as they go about their daily advocacy work.

Yet, these stories also illustrate the themes presented in this dissertation. We see the
domestic violence shelter advocates’ deep connection in a larger feminist social movement
through their recognition of patriarchal power structures. We also note their commitment to
domestic violence shelter advocacy rooted in a language of “caring” for women and children.
In addition, their commitment to the concept of empowerment is at the forefront of their
stories. However, as I end each introduction with a note on each advocate’s current position,
the results of their disenchantment with their domestic violence shelter advocacy become clear.
Many of the domestic violence shelter advocates had left or were actively seeking alternative
employment opportunities.

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31 All names are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of the research participants.
Alice

As the eldest advocate, Alice came to work at the shelter after retiring from a state social worker position. As a resident of an outlying county, Alice’s position with the domestic violence shelter was as an Outreach Advocate. She did not work in the shelter, but staffed an office in a rural county that provided counseling to outreach clients, support groups, and programs such as the Clothesline Project\(^{32}\) and Take Back the Night. Alice was often invited to conduct trainings and deliver presentations for the nearby colleges, faith based organization meetings, and local government meetings.

During difficult times in the shelter, Alice would remind the other advocates that she did not “do this for the money.” She was well respected among the advocates and throughout the community as a person who believed in what she doing and worked hard because it was “the right thing to do.” In the final days of my fieldwork, Alice quit her position at the shelter and retired from advocacy work.

Monica

After graduating from a nearby state college with a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work, Monica applied to the BWP because she could put her degree to work. After a five minute interview, she began working for the BWP as a part-time Crisis Counselor. After a couple months, Monica became the full time second shift Women’s Advocate. Monica told me, “I did a couple months [working second shift] and then I went to the supervisor and told her I was getting burned out and by that time, a third shift position opened and I really wanted to stay here, but I just couldn’t do second anymore. So I went to third shift for about a year.”

At that point in time, a Women’s Counseling Department Coordinator position became available and Monica moved into that position. She was now responsible for overseeing the crisis counselor team, providing counseling and casework services to residents and outreach clients, and writing grants for funding staff positions. Monica was the Coordinator when I was first hired at the BWP.

At the end of my fieldwork, Monica had been working with the domestic violence shelter for over 6 years. I asked her why she stayed in her position and what she liked about her job. She recalled a period when the shelter had to shut down for renovation and the first client who came to shelter after reopening:

…Our first client who came in was held hostage for three days in a trailer and he beat her with a golf club. She was naked and somehow, by the grace of God, she came out. She found the way to escape and she’s there naked in the trailer park and a police officer luckily just passed her and they brought her in. And all she had on was this raincoat that he had in the back of his trunk. And we sent her to a hospital and she came back and she was just awful and she was here for about three months. And then just the change that I had seen in her from the time that she came in until the time that she left. And seeing the transformation from helplessness and fear to being empowered, which may not be empowered to the point of independence, but much different from when they came in. That’s what I like about it. I like when someone becomes empowered and you get to start that journey of knowing themselves.

Monica’s loyalty to the shelter is rooted in her dedication to advocating for domestic violence victims. She was constantly working overtime, taking phone calls at home from other

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\(^{32}\) The Clothesline Project is an awareness event whereby participants are invited to design and create a shirt to commemorate or pay tribute to the people in their life affected by domestic violence. Shirts are then displayed by the organizing group.
advocates, investing time with residents, and supporting other staff members. At the end of my fieldwork, Monica continued to work at the shelter, though she was considering returning to school for Master’s degree in the future.

Janice

Janice came to the shelter as a part time crisis counselor at the same time I was hired. She worked full time for the local government judicial system as a juvenile caseworker. Also holding a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work, Janice came to work at the BWP because she “hadn’t had a chance to work with women in domestic violence situations” and she “wanted to have that experience.”

Though perpetually late for her shift, Janice put in extra hours at the domestic violence shelter by staying for hours after her shift ended and working more than her share of third shifts. Her boisterous personality and blunt style worked as an advantage and disadvantage in her advocacy work. The shelter residents often appreciated her straightforwardness, though her coworkers and supervisors often disagreed.

Throughout the shelter’s transformations, Janice maintained her position at the shelter to supplement her full time income. However, Janice also deeply cared for her advocacy work, which she showed by always doing “something extra” for the women. For example, Janice worked late into the evening hours one Saturday before Mother’s Day and then stopped at the grocery store on her way home for the ingredients to make a sausage and egg casserole for breakfast. At 8:00 a.m. on Mother’s Day, Janice was back at the shelter with the casserole to serve breakfast as a “special treat” for Mother’s Day. It was through these gestures that Janice showed her commitment to the women in shelter. Like Monica, Janice continued to work at the DVC, though she was working on a part time basis.

Mindy

Mindy joined the shelter advocate team at the same time as Janice. She came to advocacy work holding a Bachelor’s degree in English with an emphasis on Women's Studies. Soon after she began working as a part time crisis counselor, she successfully applied for a full time position as the third shift crisis counselor. After “burning out on third,” she continued working as a part time crisis counselor.

Shortly before moving the The Farm, Mindy removed herself from direct advocacy work and became the External Resources Specialist for the domestic violence shelter. Her primary role was to seek out funding opportunities for the shelter through grants and private donations. Though her role changed throughout her time with the domestic violence shelter, she remained with the organization because she “believed in the cause.” She once told me, “I love working with the women. I love being part of a bigger movement, and you know, something that's close to my heart and I feel very politically motivated about.” As Mindy worked at the DVC, she also began coursework towards a Master’s in Public Health degree at a nearby state university. Shortly after concluding my fieldwork, Mindy began pursuing an administrator position at a local non-profit agency serving homeless youth.

Bonnie

Bonnie is a Kentucky native who earned her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from a state university. She came to the BWP shortly after she graduated to work in the Outreach and Education Department. I asked her why she worked at the shelter, and she explained her motivations, saying, “I loved being a Crisis Counselor. I loved working with the women. So, my passion grew for the issue. I was just really interested in it. And it just kind of turned into what I really want to do.”
In addition to working full time at the BWP and DVC, Bonnie returned to school to begin working towards a Master’s of Social Work degree. She juggled her coursework and advocacy work, integrating the knowledge she learned from school in her practice and citing examples from the shelter in her term papers. At the conclusion of my fieldwork, Bonnie was working at the shelter full time with no plans to leave.

**Phoebe**

Phoebe is also a native of Kentucky. She earned a degree in Spanish with a minor in Women's Studies from the local university. She was first exposed to the BWP when an advocate delivered a presentation in one of her classes. Phoebe recalls that she came to domestic violence advocacy because “there was a need for these services and it was so prevalent. The statistics were so high. It just really caught my attention and so that's why I chose to do my internship there and then I just continued on as a volunteer after my four month internship.”

After Phoebe’s internship ended, a full time position in the Outreach and Education Department opened, which she successfully obtained. She utilized her Spanish skills to provide interpretation between Spanish-speaking shelter residents and the English-speaking advocates. In addition, Phoebe assisted in translating the shelter’s brochures and paperwork to Spanish.

The program transitions were hard on Phoebe, who was especially vocal about her stressful feelings. However, at the end of my fieldwork, Phoebe maintained her full time Women’s Advocate position with the DVC.

**Julie**

Julie joined the Women’s Advocacy team when she moved to Kentucky after completing a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology with an emphasis in Women’s Studies. As an undergraduate, Julie substantiated her life goal of working with marginalized women as a feminist therapist. She identified domestic violence victims as a population that she would like to work with and pursued a position at the shelter near her undergraduate college:

I wanted to do the volunteer work but I needed a job. A position opened up doing evening work, 20 hours a week, and I took that on. And with that I was basically an assistant to the volunteer coordinator, so I worked with the volunteers and helped with training and I also did intakes. It was not a confidential shelter, so we had walk-ins and I did that. The shelter was upstairs, so I had some contact with the women but it wasn't as much as I really wanted. An overnight weekend position opened up and I applied for that. And that involved the goal planning and case management and intakes. Basically we were in charge of the shelter. We just ran the shelter.

Like Monica at the BWP, Julie took on positions that did not necessarily meet her ideal goal until a position working directly with the residents became available.

After Julie graduated from college, she moved to Kentucky not only to work at the BWP, but to begin coursework at a state university to earn her Master’s degree in Social Work. Working full time at the shelter as she pursued her degree proved difficult, especially when she moved into the full-time Women’s Advocacy Department coordinator’s position. She eventually decreased her emphasis on her coursework to part time until the BWP closed, at which time she shifted her advocacy work to part time and her course work to full time.

Several months before the DVC moved from the HAP to The Farm, Julie resigned from her part time Women’s Advocate position in favor of completing her degree program on a full
time basis. After she earned her Master’s degree in Social Work, she moved out of the state of Kentucky to pursue therapist positions elsewhere.

*Mona*

Mona joined the shelter team as a part time crisis counselor to complement her full time job as a social worker in a local hospital. As an elder member of the advocacy group, Mona was at first intimidated by the youthfulness of the team. However, over the years Mona found that her membership with the advocacy team re-ignited her passion for women’s issues. She remembered her journey to shelter advocacy this way:

> Originally back in 1967 I was one of the first Women Libbers and I've always been about empowering women to do things for themselves and for women's rights. And after I got married and had my children I sort of lost that zeal, I guess. Because you're caught up in doing so many other things. And when I heard one of the Crisis Counselors talking about how she worked at the shelter, I thought, "Hey, this would be a great part time job!" And so I came for an interview and I was hired. And I had originally started out thinking that I would not keep the job very long but it's grown on me. And I love it.

At the end of my fieldwork, Mona was still working part time with the DVC. She worried about the future of part-time work at the DVC, as the Executive Director indicated that the ideal employee structure would not include part-time employees.

*Ursula*

Ursula was the first advocate hired after the transition from the BWP to the DVC. Similar to Bonnie and Phoebe, Ursula was a recent graduate with a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology. Her story is similar to the other advocates’ paths to domestic violence:

> Well my senior year in college I took a couple of courses in the psychology of women and we studied violence against women. It was just very interesting to me and I read a few books on it. And when I was job searching I just kind of randomly found your organization and inquired whether there was any positions open. I had no prior experience in domestic violence, but I had studied it a little bit in school. Turns out there was [positions open], and I applied and that's about how I got into it.

As the first new advocate to the team, Ursula was welcomed as an additional helping hand in the shelter. However, the advocates struggled to bring Ursula up to speed and share with her the recent history of the shelter’s transitions. Despite the difficulties in welcoming a new team member, Ursula brought a fresh perspective to the advocates’ daily work.

Immediately after the DVC’s move from the HAP to The Farm, Ursula resigned from her full time advocate position to pursue a graduate degree in Clinical Psychology full time.

*Leslie*

Leslie joined the DVC Women’s Advocate team as the full-time third shift worker. As a recent graduate from a local private college, she obtained a Bachelor’s of Liberal Arts degree with a major in Women's Studies. She was very active on her college campus as an anti-sexual harassment and anti-sexual assault activist, which led her to seek a position with the DVC. Her commitment to working with violence against women issues was instilled in her from a young age, as she explains:

> I guess growing up my parents instilled in me ideas of social justice and that was important. So in college, pretty early on I became involved in feminist activism and working for egalitarianism and equal rights in general…I see it as part of my life’s
work to work with women who have been violated because they live in a patriarchal society that thinks it’s okay to violate women's bodies and to control them.

As a newcomer to the advocate team, Leslie brought a great deal of enthusiasm to improve service provision and increase the efficiency of the advocate office. She became disheartened when the unstructured nature of the transition prevented many of her ideas from being implemented. However, as I concluded my fieldwork, Leslie moved from her position as a full-time third shift advocate to a full-time first shift advocate.

Wendy

Wendy was also a graduate student at a nearby state university seeking to obtain a Master’s degree is Social Work. Through a classmate, she learned of the practicum opportunities the shelter offered:

I was interested in domestic violence as a population And I wanted to do my practicum here at the domestic violence shelter. And then I found out that there was a job opening [from Julie]…I ended up actually getting the job. And that's how I ended up where I am. I think the domestic violence population is a population that's underserved in a lot of ways…I just felt like a lot of times domestic violence is so covered up and that a lot of women last year in Kentucky had dealt with horrific forms of domestic violence and had absolutely no help whatsoever, no resources.

The position Wendy accepted at the DVC was as a full-time third shift advocate. She also maintained her full-time status as a student as she worked at the DVC and completed her practicum requirements.

Wendy echoed many of Leslie’s frustrations about the barriers to implementing changes in the shelter. Furthermore, Leslie felt separated from the advocate team working third shift, since there is only one advocate staffed to third shift. Leslie eventually resigned from the DVC to pursue a position at another local agency dedicated to preventing violence.

Rachel

Shortly before moving to The Farm, the DVC hired another full-time first shift Women’s Advocate. Another recent graduate, Rachel earned her Bachelor’s degree from a private university with a Women's Studies major. She brought an energetic edge to the advocate team and a fierce feminist critical analysis to the daily work. Her interest in domestic violence advocacy originated in her desire to “help women” and fight for “women’s equality.” When she became discouraged in her advocacy work, she turned to inspirational feminist social movement books such as Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and The Future. While Rachel made no plans to leave her advocate position, she struggled to reconcile her passion for helping women with her frustrations over daily shelter operations.

Carol

Carol joined the DVC team as the Interim Director at the request of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association. In addition to her unpaid Interim Director responsibilities, Carol also worked as the executive director of a rural shelter in another part of the state. Throughout her 5 month appointment at the DVC, Carol traveled 3 hours to oversee shelter operations from her home town.

The DVC advocates were mixed in their feelings towards Carol. As described in Chapter 4, Carol instituted a client-centered model of service provision that was not familiar to many of the advocates. This model placed the client as the center of the advocates daily work by letting the clients identify their needs, rather than imposing a “program” or agenda on the clients. She was very strict in her efforts to create a consistent level of services and
accompanying documentation. Oftentimes the advocates felt she was too harsh, though after Carol left the DVC the majority of the advocates remembered Carol as “someone who taught them a whole lot.”

In her later 40s, Carol came to domestic violence work as a young, college aged woman. She earned her Bachelor of Social Work degree while raising a family and began working in domestic violence shelters. It was not long before her strong leadership and client-driven skills led to a directorship position in the Kentucky network of shelters.

**Janine**

After an extensive search for an Executive Director, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association’s hiring committee selected Joanna as the new, permanent DVC Executive Director. She had a history of working in the Kentucky network, as she described:

“I was fresh out of college looking for a job. Most of my studies were in women studies. And a friend said, they’re hiring down there at that spouse abuse center. And I thought, what spouse abuse center? I didn’t know we had a spouse abuse center. So I went down and interviewed and was offered the position. That’s how I started in this work. I had no idea what domestic violence was, I never learned a word of it in college, but I realized that’s what I was supposed to be. It was a good fit and been doing it every since.

Her first position was as a second shift advocate, working nights and weekends. After about 3 years, she took a job at a different Kentucky shelter located in an urban area. She moved through a number of positions before eventually earning the position as director of services. Six years later, she came to oversee the DVC operations. Janine came to the position with experience working in shelters and an overwhelming passion to improve the lives of women and children.

**Joanna**

Joanna was hired as the Assistant Director at the DVC several months after Janine joined the team. She was working in the DVC region as an advocate for many years before coming to the DVC. I asked her about how she came to domestic violence advocacy, to which she responded:

“One, I just grew up I think in a family that was always very politically conscious and had always showed interest in justice and the justice movement. But really I didn’t get involved with the domestic violence piece until I had been placed in an AmeriCorp position with a Sheriff’s office where I worked in the domestic violence unit. And that just sort of blossomed. And then sort of looking back through personal experiences and areas of interest, it sort of opened up a door to have a kind of consciousness that I didn’t even know that I had in a way.

After completing her AmeriCorp position, Joanna attempted a Master’s degree in Sociology, but never completed it. She continued to work in the region’s Sheriff’s office until the Assistant Director position opened at the shelter.

In the above descriptions of the DVC shelter advocates, we notice many patterns consistent with a new era of domestic violence advocacy (and human service provision in general). All of the DVC advocates hold a bachelor’s degree from a 4 year college or university. Furthermore, the majority of the advocates came to their work because they wanted to work with women and children affected by domestic violence. Domestic violence advocacy was not a second choice for most of the advocates, it was their first (and to many their only) choice. And this choice illustrates a key difference between advocates in the early domestic
violence shelters and today’s advocates. Early domestic violence advocates came to the work because they were previous victims of violence, not as a result of learning about inequalities between men and women through the course of formal education. These patterns will continue to be explored throughout this dissertation.

**Oral History Participants**

The final study population consists of the oral history participants. By inviting people to participate in an oral history, I created the opportunity to record the unique history of domestic violence advocacy and activism on a local level. Amidst publicity of the BWP closure, individuals who assisted in creating the first shelters in the region and those providing advocacy services to domestic violence victims vocalized their experiences with creating a domestic violence movement.

Conceptualizing a portion of the data collection as “oral histories” pushed me to get out of the shelter and explore the larger community of advocates and activists that have worked or were currently working in the region. By incorporating an oral history component, I created a venue for exploring the history of the region as well as expand my own preconceptions of the definition of “advocacy” and “activism.” I did not deny anyone an interview if they self-identified as an advocate, activist, stakeholder, or oral historian in the local domestic violence movement.

For the oral history component of my data collection, I targeted a number of community organizations and partner populations to recruit participants. The Kentucky Domestic Violence Association is composed of the executive directors of each state shelter. This entity distributes the federal and state grant money for domestic violence to each shelter, as well as creates the policies and procedures for provision of domestic violence services in the state. In addition, advocates in other “sister shelters” in the state network collaborate with the BWP and then DVC advocates to provide services. The advocates involved in these agencies provided background information, interview participation, and support throughout the research. All of the oral history participants agreed that as members of the community of service providers, the transition from the BWP to the DVC was confusing. Theresa, an advocate in the local government attorney’s office said, “There was a period there where everyone seemed unsure of what was happening…”

Participation from community organizations was not limited to providers of direct services to domestic violence victims. The state Cabinet for Health and Family Services partners closely with the DVC advocates to provide services and resources for domestic violence victims. Other local government organizations also provided services and assistance to the BWP, such as the job assistance program and the county health department. Members of the County Domestic Violence Board (CDVB) represent a number of agencies, organizations, and offices that address issues of domestic violence in the community and communicate potential problems in providing services to victims during quarterly meetings. Each of these entities works as a “partner agency” with the DVC, as they did with the former BWP. The DVC Executive Director attended meetings with organizations and collaborates to provide services to domestic violence victims as well as to promote awareness events such as the annual anti-violence rally to Take Back the Night.

33 A pseudonym.
34 Take Back the Night was traditionally organized by the BWP and the local rape crisis organization in October, national Domestic Violence Awareness Month. During the second October of my fieldwork, the agencies decided to cancel the annual event as a result of lack of resources, person power, and community participation. The
Furthermore, funding organizations such as the United Way historically distributed funds and resources to domestic violence organization in the region. For the purposes of this dissertation research, I identified funders and sponsors as potential oral history participants with a special interest in program functioning. During the domestic violence organization’s transition, a new set of funding stakeholders emerged after the public announcement that the BWP was scheduled closing. Two community women founded an informal group to encourage women in the community to pledge $1,000 each for a new domestic violence shelter. I originally anticipated that these groups of funders and sponsors of the domestic violence organization would serve as participants in the dissertation research. However, I was misguided in my perception of who self-identified as a member of the domestic violence social movement in Kentucky. Members of this population repeatedly denied interview participation because they did not claim an association with the BWP, the DVC, domestic violence, advocacy, or activism. One woman who joined the group of women raising monetary donations for the shelter called to tell me that she was not involved in domestic violence advocacy or activism, she “just raised money for the shelter” and declined participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Domestic Violence Advocacy/Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>Provides victim services in the same county as the DVC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Therapist</td>
<td>Provides therapy services in the same county as the DVC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fran</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>Provides employment casework through the county</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>Provides services in the same region as the DVC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>Trains domestic violence advocates throughout the state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estelle</td>
<td>Activist</td>
<td>Lobbies to improve the quality of victim rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veronica</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>Provides services through a local non-profit agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina</td>
<td>Legal Advocate</td>
<td>Provides services to victims negotiating the justice system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>Provides casework services to women and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>Children’s Advocate</td>
<td>Provides services to child victims of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theresa</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>Provides services to women and children violence victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>Legal Advocate</td>
<td>Provides services to victims negotiating the justice system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>Provides victim service in the same county as the DVC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>Provides victim protection and investigates violent acts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Figure 5.4, oral history participants represent a wide range of intersections with domestic violence services and activism in the BWP/DVC region. Each of the oral history participants either 1) provides services to women and/or child victims of domestic violence in the same region as the domestic violence shelter or 2) formerly worked with the BWP. For example, Judy worked as a social worker for families affected by a number of issues, including mental health illnesses and domestic violence. She describes her advocacy:

I really enjoy it and I enjoy it that we do—like we do home visits, if it’s safe, or we’ll meet them at McDonald’s, or we’ll meet them at the park, or we’ll meet them wherever following year, the event was brought to a local university’s campus with the support of the local rape crisis organization. The DVC assisted in this endeavor by working on the planning committee, though they were unable to provide monetary support for the event.
they can get to, since a lot of them don’t have transportation, and we also locate housing. It’s funny. I mean it’s anything and everything. It’s whatever they need. We really just try to meet them where they are, in all senses of the term, and just try to help them with whatever we can at that time.

Through these interviews, I also gained insight into shifts in domestic violence advocacy over time as individuals shared their life’s stories. For example:

…That program where I went in, it had two counselors, a first shift and second shift and we provided all support groups, which I averaged around nine to ten support groups a week and so did the other advocates or counselors at the time. And we were responsible for the family. You know we did the counseling with the moms, met individually at least twice a week with these women, the support groups above and beyond that, and then covered anything else that needed to be covered. So you know overnights, weekends or holidays, pretty much everything. Now I noticed that we didn’t get a lot of court work like we do now, not in the beginning. Later I did, but not in the beginning.

The role of domestic violence advocates, whether that advocacy is only with victims of domestic violence or with a broader population, is seemingly endless in scope.

My original research goals included the presentation of a fairly comprehensive oral history of the Kentucky domestic violence social movement. However, this goal was unmet. In total, I sent out over 200 letters recruiting potential oral history participants and followed up with those people via e-mail and telephone. Furthermore, I presented the projects to groups of individuals comprised of potential participants, including the CDVB. In addition, I created a postcard sized flier that was distributed at local non-profit and government organizations, as well as public spaces such as the library. Despite these efforts, the number of oral history participants for this project was 14 individuals. Thus, the data available to describe the overall Kentucky domestic violence social movement is limited.

To complement my efforts, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association generously provided me access to several oral history tapes collected in the late 1990’s for their archives. This data is interspersed throughout the dissertation, though the bulk of the data from these oral histories is presented as background information to contextual the contemporary struggles in domestic violence advocacy.

**Research Participants and Their Intersecting Relationships**

For the purposes of this dissertation, the domestic violence advocates and activists who participated in this fieldwork interacted with four primary intersecting entities. By examining power as it intersects participation and professionalization within each of these intersecting relationships, I am able to identify areas of dissonance that may cause tensions. The intersecting relationships are with the women, the domestic violence organization, the community, and the feminist social movement.

**The Women**

Since the emergence of the domestic violence social movement, a number of patterns have emerged to characterize both the advocates and the victims. These patterns are changing today in a number of ways, as I will discuss through interview data with domestic violence shelter advocates and oral history participants. The three themes I have woven throughout this dissertation emerge in different ways when examining the relationship between the domestic violence advocates and activists and “the women,” that is the residents and non-residential clients receiving domestic violence services.
While the women often do not have a voice in shaping the rules and guidelines that the domestic violence advocates enforce, the advocates also do not have input into the development of those rules and guidelines. The introduction of the rhetoric of “boundaries” allows the advocates to justify separating their personal lives from their professional advocacy, but those boundaries often frustrate both the victims and the advocates because it creates a division between the two groups of women. Additionally, there is an unequal distribution of power between the advocates and the victims, notably in the contemporary differences in victimization experiences, education levels, and socioeconomic class.

The Organization

Another recurring relationship is the relationship between the advocates and the domestic violence organization where they work. I primarily focus on the DVC organization and not the now defunct BWP facility as a relationship variable. In my fieldwork, I found that the DVC acts to professionalize the advocates through credential requirements and the strong emphasis placed on previous work experience in a shelter setting. Amidst these professional aims, the advocates struggle to participate in the creation of the DVC structure and its programs. Power is woven into this relationship as expectations are unmet and burn out runs rampant.

The Community

I also examine the intersection between the advocates and the community in which they work through the words of domestic violence advocates working in the shelter program as well as other agencies and organizations in the region. The domestic violence program described in this dissertation serves 17 counties and fosters partnerships with a variety of community organizations. Partnerships are working relationships based on the notion that the organizations/people share a common goal and can utilize distinct resources to jointly achieve that goal, in this case providing services to domestic violence victims. The partnerships in this community have shifted as the domestic violence program has transitioned, and the shelter advocates locate the restoration of their reputation among the community of service providers in professionalizing themselves and the organization.

The Feminist Social Movement

I found a very strong association between the local level domestic violence culture and larger feminist social movements that birthed the domestic violence movement in interview data from the domestic violence advocates and activists. Again, as outlined in Chapter One, the literature is rich with examples and analyses of the diversity of women’s movements throughout the world with regards to women’s identities and their activism goals. However, the diversity of women’s movements was not at the forefront of my conversations with domestic violence advocates I worked with. Rather, they articulated with “a larger movement,” “the movement,” and “the feminist movement.” Therefore, using their words as a starting point, this section introduces the advocates’ relationship with a feminist social movement that exists within their worldview.

The advocates and activists working in the domestic violence field at the local level are intensely inspired and motivated by their feelings of contributing to a larger social movement, specifically the feminist social movement. They closely identify themselves as social movement participants as they talk about their advocacy and/or activism work, their roles, and their motivations. They fiercely articulate their allegiance to the larger feminist social movement and choose to participate in domestic violence advocates and activists because of that loyalty. As participants in a larger social movement, they learn how to embody the larger
feminist social movement as local level actors through their educational training and from each other. The messages that the local level domestic violence advocates and activists are receiving use the language of power to understand and alleviate domestic violence. Furthermore, I argue that the feminist social movement is the source of the domestic violence advocates’ and activists’ rhetoric of professionalism in their work.

“We All Want to Be Advocates”

The domestic violence advocates and activists and oral history participants I worked with for this dissertation calculated a number of decisions in their pursuit of working with victims of domestic violence. The uncertainty of domestic violence advocacy as social service organizations were stressed for operating funds factored into their calculations. However, as this story indicates, the service providers weighed these uncertainties with the benefits of working as a domestic violence advocate. The following interview shares these struggles as one domestic violence shelter advocate processed her decision about her future employment.

During the final days of the BWP, I was sitting in the Crisis Office speaking with Amy, a part-time Crisis Counselor. The BWP advocates were living in the uncertainty and the chaos of cleaning and closing a shelter facility that serves as a home for women. In addition, they were considering their own future careers and personal lives once the shelter closed. I asked her, “Do you want to be a part of the new organization?”

She immediately responded, “At this time, no.” After a pause, she went on to say, “First of all, I'm already potentially getting a job at another agency that's in the area of domestic violence at this agency. So if I get a job with them, then I certainly would just want to stick with them and get a new perspective of the work. But I think in the transitional period, I'm too burned out to deal with it. I'm too burned out to be in a transitional period. With the new agency that's starting from nothing, I have a problem. I don't think I could do it emotionally. I think I'd be a crazy person. I think that in five years if it’s up and running and it’s wonderful as we all think it’s going to be, of course I would want to do it. But I think that right now it is too uncertain. I would not want to.”

She paused again and smiled, then said, “If someone just said, "Do you want to be a model?" For example, or an actress. If somebody said, "Do you want to be an actress?" Most people would be like "Of course, I'd love to be an actress." But would you put in your application and just accept a job not knowing anything else about it, you could be a porn actress. You could be anything and do just the nastiest, horrible stuff. Why would you sign on for that? Hell no. Nobody would do that. Not knowing how much money you would make. Not knowing what the hours would be or the circumstances. Nobody would want to do that. And so I think it's the same kind of thing. Do you want to be an advocate? Of course, we all want to be advocates! But under what circumstances?

In a cardboard box? Hell no, I don't want to be an advocate. In a building like this? No, I don't want to be an advocate. In a place where I'm not valued and my work isn't valued? No, I've done it and it sucks. I'm not doing it anymore. Unless I know more, unless I find out more and maybe at the end of the month they could come up and say, "This is the plan. This would be your job description. This is how it’s going to be run. Do you want to be a part of it? Your salary’s going to be twenty-seven thousand a year." Okay, maybe I would think about it. But at this time, I don't think there's enough information for me to consider doing it.”

Amy did not join the DVC advocate team, choosing instead to pursue a position as a domestic violence caseworker at a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center. She pursued her domestic violence advocacy in this capacity for nearly two years before returning to a domestic
violence-centered organization in Kentucky. Her story illustrates the personal experiences of advocates at the local as they negotiate a macrostructural political economic context that pressures individual social service organizations. This chapter provides that glimpse into the personal struggles amidst the larger backdrop of social service organizations today.
CHAPTER SIX
POWER INEQUALITIES AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY

“I really think that people need to feel empowered. Advocates need to feel empowered to do their job. Because if you don't, there's no way you can go out to a support group if you're intimidated by the women. If you feel incompetent, if you feel like you're not supposed to be there, there's no way you can lead or protect a support group, there's no way you can do a great counseling session. I really think it’s important that advocates have a good sense of self and are very empowered to do their work and are passionate about the work they do.”

-Mindy, Battered Women’s Program and Domestic Violence Center Advocate

Introduction

This chapter examines power inequalities in domestic violence advocacy. Power is woven in the relationships that domestic violence advocates negotiate on a daily basis. Domestic violence advocates sometimes exercise power, as in their relationship with the women. This relationship is marked by a deepening divide in power between the advocates and “the women,” as advocates today tend not to come to advocacy work through their own experiences of victimization. In addition, today’s domestic violence advocates are educated women who enjoy a higher socioeconomic class status than shelter residents. However, domestic violence advocates struggle for power within the DVC organization as expectations are unmet and burn out runs rampant. In addition, in a coordinated community of service providers, agencies attempt to maximize the use of a limited quantity of resources, and those organizations that hold the most resources also often possess the most power in the community. Finally, the domestic violence advocates embody a language of power that they learn from the feminist social movement, which easily translates into the rhetoric of domestic violence advocacy.

The Women

The data I collected for this dissertation indicates that the residents and clients receiving services as domestic violence victims, both in shelter and among the community of service providers, are different from the advocates and activists providing services. Specifically, I found themes substantiating the differences between the women and the domestic violence advocates and activists are located in different victimization experiences, socioeconomic class differences, and educational background. The differences alone do not indicate an inequality, however, based on these differences the advocates and women are allotted differential powers. Therefore, these differences are combined with unequal access to resources, thereby creating power inequalities between the advocates and the women.

Previous Victimization

Throughout the history of the domestic violence social movement, the advocates were typically women who experienced domestic violence themselves (Osmundson 2004; Schechter 1982; Schechter 1996). These survivors then turned to help the women experiencing violence to break free from the cycle. The only credentials necessary to provide advocacy was previous victimization, victim empathy, and the willingness to participate in a social movement to provide support to victims.

Throughout this dissertation and in the literature, it is apparent that the similarities between the victims and the domestic violence service providers have diminished. Very few of the domestic violence advocates and activists I spoke with self-identified as being a “former victim.” However, I found a replacement pattern in the relative absence of primary victimization among the domestic violence advocates and activists. The majority of the
domestic violence advocates and activists I spoke with identified their motivation to take part in their work as rooted in personal experience. For example, many advocates discussed that the issue of domestic violence is personally relevant to them because someone in their social support system is a victim or a survivor. One story that I learned from a BWP shelter advocate, Joe, remained with me throughout the fieldwork period:

The more that I became involved with domestic violence and the more that I learned about it, the more relevant it became to me. And you have to understand that in 1980, on the day after my mother's birthday at two o'clock in the morning, her birthday was a Saturday, this was Sunday morning. I got a call from my uncle who was my father's sister's husband and he told me that my mother was dead and my father was in jail for shooting her. And, during that period I discovered more and more that my father was a perp [perpetrator of domestic violence] and that he had killed my mother. And so domestic violence became more and more relevant to my individual life.

In another story from Jamie, an oral history participant working in one of the state’s rape crisis centers, shared a similar story:

And I saw that [domestic violence] when I was a kid, family-wise. My uncle was very violent. So I always wanted to deal with that as a social worker. I’ve always seen it as a social problem. And after a while, I just liked to help people and help victims of domestic violence, people that are in crisis. I love to work with crisis situations and empower women to become independent and be free from violence. It just happened, I guess. It’s part of me.

Estelle also shared a personal story about her decision to become an advocate for victims of violence:

I came here to go to school, and while there, my roommate was raped, and we were young and very naïve and not sure how to handle it. Keep in mind this is 30 years ago, 35 years. I mean, it was a long time ago, so things were very different then.

The personal relevance of domestic violence in many advocates’ lives made their work more than “just a job.” A personal experience contributed the domestic violence advocates motivation to alleviate gender inequalities through their jobs.

Unfortunately, the absence or shortage of advocates who self-identify as former victims creates a distance with the residents and clients—today’s victims. As noted in the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence newsletter in an issue focusing on the “Certification Debate”:

…I do not think you discount knowledge gained by having survived something and that has always been my greatest fear in certifying Domestic Violence advocates. Historically, many Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault service providers have been survivors. This movement exists because dedicated, passionate, strong women were willing to stand up and demand that the culture change. (Stewart 2004: 18)

This shift was widely recognized by the domestic violence advocates and oral history participants alike. Veronica, a former BWP employee and oral history participant, noted:

I think that in the beginning of the grassroots movement, you often see people who had been victimized, people who had that personal experience, be it cancer organizations or another same kind of a thing. Or when people who’ve had that personal experience who could tell you their thoughts, those are the people who have the, I don’t want to say experience about it, and so that creates that spark. I don’t think those people can withstand that forever. You’re probably going to start pulling in people who at least
have some interest in that, and you’re going to get people who have studied human nature or they’re studying some element of it. So, you start pulling in those people. Well those people have a stake in their professions, and so I think one kind of marker would be when you start getting the bulk of the people who are doing the work are people who have professional affiliations. They have a national social work association. They’ve got psychology or whatever.

My fieldnotes and participant observation experience in the shelter show that the advocates were constantly negotiating conversations that were overwritten with “what do you know” and “you have never been in my situation” from the women. The advocates responded in a number of ways to the assertions of difference in victimization experiences. An advocate might redirect the resident by asking, “Why is it important for you to know to about me?” Alternatively, a common response was for an advocate may indicate to the resident that the shelter program is about the victims and not the advocates, therefore it is not important to discuss the advocates’ personal or professional lives. While these practices are meant to refocus a woman to her own situation, it serves widens the gap between the advocates and the women.

Class

When a woman calls the DVC’s crisis line seeking shelter, the advocates conduct a screening process that requires the caller to discuss the violent incident that led to her decision to seek shelter. During this screening interaction, the advocates also problem solve with the caller to substantiate the “need for shelter.” For example, an advocate may talk with the caller about alternative places to stay, such as with family or friends, until the safety issue is eliminated.

The advocates recognize the fact that the women who come to shelter have no place else to go. They cannot afford a hotel room, they cannot afford to pay the cost of gasoline to drive to another state to stay with family, and they cannot afford to establish their own residence without the abuser. Therefore, the residents in shelter see the program as “their only option.” The residents truly have nowhere else to go, and often conveyed to the advocates that they felt they “had no choice” but to enter the shelter program. The advocates, on the other hand, are able to go home. The residents perceive them as those who “have a choice” about being at the shelter.

By necessity, the residents enter shelter because they are unable to afford alternative, safe housing. The advocates do not live in shelter; they have residences to return to at the end of the day’s work. The difference in socioeconomic class manifested itself in numerous ways. Often, the advocates and the women would explain different behaviors or approaches as resulting from class difference. For example, Rachel pointed out the there may be patterns of parenting among different classes:

I think there are definitely things about working at a shelter that are difficult. And I think a lot of people wouldn't enjoy it. Maybe being exposed to a lot of the poverty that we see. And maybe the ways that people chose to live. Parenting, inappropriate parenting that maybe you weren't raised with coming from a middle class environment. The struggle over the “right way” to discipline children is an everyday occurrence in shelter. Based on the numerous examples detailed in my fieldnotes, the residents and the advocates constantly negotiated whose ways were “better” when it came to attending to the needs of the children in shelter, a pattern found elsewhere (Krane and Davies 2002). In my fieldnotes, the most recurrent examples is the shelter’s policy against spanking (in any form), which was often
inconsistent with a mother’s pattern of punishment at home. The fact that the majority of the shelter advocates did not have children themselves exacerbated these struggles.

In the context of residential issues the class differences between the residents and advocates is further exposed, specifically the problem with theft in the shelter. It seemed that every day, a resident reported to the shelter advocates that something has gone missing. Missing items might have been personal, such as shampoo left on a person’s dresser, or the items may have belonged to the “shelter,” such as food. The advocates were not able to address every theft reported, due to policies discouraging the advocates from searching residents’ rooms and the lack of available time to conduct such investigations. Regardless, the advocates generally were unfamiliar with an environment punctuated with the daily competition for resources and were often unsure of how to address the recurring theft problem. Sometimes the advocates responded with anger, for example, Mona said:

I think we've come across situations that we don't know how to deal with. Like the alcohol and the drugs and the stealing. And we do become judgmental. I'm guilty of that. Because I get very angry when people steal, between the women steal from other women. Because these women come from these homes where they've been betrayed, they've been abused. And when someone steals from someone else I just get very angry. On behalf of them, which is not right. Because they're learning to trust and they're being violated in a battered women's shelter where they're supposed to be safe from all that. I think we get a little judgmental sometimes.

As Mona indicates, the advocates’ sometimes judgmental attitudes are a result of the unfamiliarity with the residents’ way of life. According to the advocates, the residents viewed stealing as a necessity and a normal adaptation to an environment of scarcity, which the advocates very often have not experienced themselves. The advocates often spoke of the “theft problems” at the weekly case review meetings, when advocates problem solved individual cases and issues related to community living.

Examples of this issue emerged in different forms. In my fieldnotes, I recorded a story involving a resident stealing nearly $200 in bus tokens and dozens of toiletry items from the advocate’s office. The advocates expressed anger and frustration about the situation because they felt the resident was both exploiting the program’s ability to provide basic needs and diverting resources away from other residents. At least two advocates spoke with the resident directly about their feelings to better understand why the resident stole the items. According to the advocates, she argued that she was saving the items for when she transitioned out of shelter and would not have our stocked office to rely upon. While this defense “made sense” to the advocates, they were also skeptical of her. This example illustrates the different socioeconomic life histories of the women and the advocates, each of whom have experienced different relationships with money and the availability of basic human needs.

**Education**

I have already established that the domestic violence advocates and activists and oral history participants I spoke with throughout this fieldwork who worked in the residential shelter and in other organizations hold degrees and credentials. I identified education levels as a variable of power and professionalization from the domestic violence activist literature, which is further discussed in Chapter Eight. Leslie captured the difference in education level between the domestic violence advocates and activists and the residents:

…Looking back historically, this is kind of a new age of advocacy because the advocates today are educated, bright people who have gotten to go to college. Whereas
if you can't pretty much afford to live a life on a crappy salary and they do and did.  
**And the residents today are not like us.**  Whereas in the past the advocates were the residents.  (emphasis mine)

When compared to the residents and clients receiving services, the domestic violence advocates and activists possessed higher levels of education.  As the quote above indicates, the advocates recognized the inequality.  As one advocate said, “These ladies tend to be high school graduates thereabouts, not of a very high economic status, not overly educated.”  

While the domestic violence advocates viewed the residents as “not college educated,” the advocates saw themselves as “college educated people.”  The advocates also recognized that women without college degrees historically filled their roles.  For instance, Mindy shared this reflection:

So I don't know whether or not women working in this field are more educated or not.  But I think there have probably been changes in the university so that a lot more people are graduating with master’s degrees in social work and women's studies degrees and things like that.  So we're more recognized as educated people with training.

The shelter advocates’ college educations were often called into question by the residents, who occasionally pointed out that “book education” is different from the “lived experience” education many of them were been exposed to.

Yet, the domestic violence advocates feel their acquisition of degrees and certifications is useful to the provision of victim services.  For example, the advocates understood the dynamics of domestic violence in a way that might not be familiar to the residents, who may have a “different perspective about domestic violence and they are not necessarily educated to what it is and not even experienced and what all aspects of domestic violence are.”  The advocates felt their knowledge was important and useful to the women even when the victims themselves deny the effectiveness of it.  This was apparent when Julie told me about her experience attending a conference and the issue of education level:

You know what pisses me off?  I went to the National Domestic Violence Conference and there were these victims standing up, and they were like, "Don't use social work models on us.  Don't use psychology.  Don't use this and that."  And I'm like, do you say to your doctor, "Don't use all that you know about the heart to fix me when I have a heart attack?"  I feel like I went to school for a reason and I think that we can learn a lot from the research and a lot from what work has been done and what hasn’t worked.  

Julie considered her knowledge useful, but her defense of her degree is in opposition to the perceptions of the victims.  The difference in education level creates tensions among the advocates and the residents or clients, as they engaged in a battle over justifications for knowledge acquisition.

Oral history participants also situated their work in patterns towards a domestic violence advocacy culture of degreed professionals.  Veronica recalled her early years of advocacy:

... Early on I can remember, there were people who really were against hiring people with degrees.  You know, “What do they know?  We’ve had this problem for years and years and they haven’t done anything about it.  Why are they interested now?”  Some of this anti-degree kind of atmosphere.  So I think you have to get past that...  But then as soon as you start hiring people, I think they have a tendency to want to go towards professionalism and then you recognize you have a specialized knowledge...  So you almost get this selective, “Well, we don’t want to let just anybody do this work.  We
want to share what we know. This experience we have is valuable. Let’s see if we can get this out and educate people.” And they should have a minimum amount of education at least before they do this work.

Within a short period of time, the Kentucky domestic violence advocacy workforce has become a degreed workforce, one that Veronica did not know in her early years of domestic violence advocacy.

The residents would point out to the advocates their privilege when it came to education level, but the advocates resisted addressing the difference in education level, or for that matter socioeconomic class and victimization experiences. Instead, as I repeatedly recorded in my fieldnotes, the inequalities between the domestic violence advocates and activists and the residents and clients remained visible but unacknowledged. This frustrated the advocates as they tried to communicate with the residents, and neither side fully understood the other’s experiences. Leslie spoke of this disjuncture:

I feel like I don't know how to resolve this issue but I think we're not seen as professional by some of the residents because we're so young and because we go to college and they think our lives have just been laid out for us. When God knows it hasn't. But there's not much you can do with that when your residents are living such different lives.

Advocates struggles to see the commonalities when the differences between the domestic violence advocates and the women seemed irreconcilable at times.

Despite the domestic violence advocates attempts to decrease the distance between themselves and the women they serve, the distance is increasing. One may conclude that there is no shared sense of struggle among the advocates and the residents. This troubles the advocates because they want to best meet the needs of the domestic violence victims they serve. The advocates did not overlook the difference between themselves and the women; for example, Julie contemplated:

If you think about it, the shelters started in the 70’s and a lot of the philosophies that we're using, they were designed for white middle-class women. I think that would really probably work for the most part. But right now, for the populations that we're serving, we have no idea what they're experiencing out there. We have no idea. And I can't even begin to pretend I do. So I just don't know what we need to do to change, to actually meet the needs of the women that we're serving currently.

The DVC leadership constantly ignored the absence of commonalities between victims and the advocates, who promoted the shelter environment as a “we’re all in this together” atmosphere. As described above, the advocates resisted this notion as they attempt to recognize and confront differences.

**Race**

The discipline of anthropology is both burdened by a past that simultaneously perpetuated inequality according to race and investigated its uses and misuses (Baker 1998). Race is a term used to categorize people, usually ethnic groups, based on assumed, shared genetic characteristics. Sanjek (1996) states “race is the framework of ranked categories segmenting the human population that was developed by western Europeans following their global expansion beginning in the 1400s” (Sanjek 1996: 1). Race is an idea, and as such, does not correspond with human biology. However, race and racism are sociopolitical realities and the source of power inequalities.
Beginning with the assumption that race is a cultural category, anthropologists have conducted extensive inquiries of the everyday social lives of people who articulate a racial discourse, identity, and position (Sanjek and Gregory 1994). Examining the cultural notion of race allows us to understand inequalities that have arisen because of or along side racial subjugation. Most notably, anthropologists have uncovered the persistence of poverty and gender inequality alongside racial inequality. For example, anthropologists and other social scientists have examined the stratification of reproduction resources according to racial status (Litt 2000), the terrain of racial discourses in an American culture that struggles with the operationalizing a model to understand diversity (Goode and Schneider 1994), the collective adaptations of urban black families living in poverty (Stack 1974), the political activism of black Americans in a New York City borough through the household sites where political action is organized (Gregory 1998), the political and social class struggles as a community shifts from a predominantly white neighborhood to a multiracial population (Sanjek 1998), and the intersection of poverty and households headed by minority women around the world and the historical patterns of racism and discrimination that perpetuate racial and gender disparities (Mullings 2001), to name just a few of the many studies that identify race as a central variable.

As discussed in Chapter One, women of color, working class women, poor women, and rural women have historically been differently placed within the feminist social movement (Berger Gluck 1998: 35). The feminist social movement in its “collective ideology and construction of the battered woman problem, has indeed failed to represent those women-battered women- most at the margins” (Kanuha 1996: 45). The failure of the feminist social movement, and subsequently the domestic violence social movement, to historically account for minority women exacerbates structural racism already pervasive in American society and further perpetuates racial and ethnic barriers to accessing services (Richie 2000; Richie 1996; Sokoloff 2005).

For example, in Scott’s analysis of racial politics of two women’s organizations, she found that women of color often challenged the white-dominated models of understanding domestic violence and providing services to victims (Scott 1998). This is compounded by studies noting the absence or shortage of minority women working in shelters and the potential negative effects on service provision this creates (Scott 1998). The racial politics and tensions within domestic violence shelters is also found in the community response to domestic violence. For instance, the legal system does not respond to all people the same way and has a different history with different populations. Therefore, black women may be more hesitant to contact the police or file an Emergency Protection Order due to a history of racism and historic inattention to minority protection (West 2002). Furthermore, racial and ethnic minorities are more likely than white women to speak a language other than English as a first language, furthering their exclusion from accessing services.

In addition to previous victimization experiences, class, and education level, race also served as a marker of power inequalities between advocates and shelters residents. Statistics collected by the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association indicate that the resident demographics for the BWP and the DVC over the 2 years this fieldwork took place are as follows: 26% of the residents were Black, 64% were White, 5% were Hispanic, 2% were Native American, and 3% were listed as Other. Throughout the data collection period, 1 part time staff member was Black, and the remaining advocates and administrators were White.

Yet, the advocates did not directly articulate inequalities or injustices based on race or racial differences when they discussed the divide between themselves and the residents. As
described above, they did point out differences based on experience, class, and education level, differences that do give rise to unequal access to resources and support. However, the domestic violence advocates did not describe racial differences as a source of inequality. Their resistance, either passive or purposeful, to engage in an analysis of racial differences between themselves and the residents is surprising given the disparity between the number of Black residents and Black advocates.

Despite a lack of interview data highlighting racial differences, there are several moments described in my field notes that illuminate the advocates’ awareness of those differences, including the following example. The shelter program provides women and children with basic needs items such as clothing and food, but also everyday items such as laundry detergent, towels, washcloths, and toiletries. When stocking up on toiletries such as shampoo, conditioner, and soap, several Black residents pointed out to a White advocate that she did not buy any hair care products designed for Black women. Upon returning to the store, the advocate realized she had no idea what types of products she was supposed to purchase for the Black residents. After discussing the issue with the other advocates, the one Black advocate volunteered to go to the store to purchase the appropriate products and provided information to the other advocates about the products’ uses. The interactions surrounding this situation were not tense or uncomfortable, rather, they provided a moment for residents and advocates to recognize their differences and learn ways to address those differences in a residential environment. Similar examples exist with food as the focus, as advocates scrambled to identify and purchase culturally appropriate foods for shelter residents, including pork-free products for Muslim women and children and corn tortillas for Spanish-speaking women and children.

The BWP and the DVC also pursued programming targeted toward the increasing immigrant population in the region, particularly the rapidly growing Hispanic population. Both the BWP and the DVC actively sought to reach out to Hispanic women through Spanish language support groups (which included transportation and child care), tabling at events for the Spanish-speaking population such as health fairs, and via printed materials in Spanish. Individuals who were non-English speakers were provided the use of a translator either in person or using the telephone through a confidential, fee-based translation service. Non-English speaking clients were never asked to pay for translation services and were often offered the use of the shelter’s translators in other settings, such as court or social service worker appointments.

Furthermore, the shelter programs I worked with engaged in awareness raising efforts to illuminate the different types of violence that many women experience, which may fall outside of our popular imaginary of violence. For example, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association and the shelter programs became involved in a human trafficking campaign, bringing to the public’s attention examples of human trafficking in their own backyard.

In addition to the provision of services and outreach efforts to vulnerable or underserved populations such as Black women, Hispanic women, and immigrant women, the BWP and DVC were physically located in areas that would be easily accessible to underserved populations. As described in Chapter Four, the BWP was located in an area heavily populated with Spanish speaking immigrants and non-white residents. The transitional DVC was also located in an area considered to be comprised of lower-income populations and more heavily populated with non-English speaking and Black residents than other areas of the city. These

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35 I extend my gratitude to the advocate who reviewed this example and its accuracy.
locations were physical symbols of the programs’ commitments to reaching and serving vulnerable and traditionally underserved populations.

It may be surprising that none of the participants mentioned race as a source of tensions or problems within the advocate group. While only one of the advocates was Black and the remaining advocates White, neither the White advocates nor the Black advocate discussed racial tensions within the team. It does not appear that racial differences were a source of conflict within the group. Furthermore, the advocates did not vocalize race as an indicator of power inequalities between themselves and the residents to the same extent as they did with regards to previous victimization, class, and education level. Despite this, racial differences between the staff and the residents provide another avenue for separating the advocates from the women. However, the advocates did not specifically point these racial disparities to explain tensions between themselves and the residents. It was common to talk about class, education level, and life experience as sources of difference, but race was almost entirely absent from the participants’ interview data.

Does this lead one to conclude that the domestic violence advocates recognized that “the very nature of violence against women is different for different women” and that “violence against women is different for women who live in communities where disadvantage is concentrated” (Richie 2005: xvi)? Or possibly that this group of advocates are self-selected as individuals with a fairly sophisticated, academically-orientated understanding of race/ethnicity and domestic violence? Or perhaps that this group of predominantly white advocates are resisting a race rhetoric as a result of their own misunderstandings of the powerful impact of their privileged race? The data collected for this project does not provide a singular answer to these questions, but based on the interactions I observed between the advocates and the residents, it is likely to be a combination of the factors named above. The advocates bring with them a critical toolbox of knowledge developed in Women's Studies, Social Work, and Literature courses that highlighted racial and ethnic inequalities. The domestic violence shelter program’s mission to provide outreach, education, and services to vulnerable populations was clear as potential advocates interviewed for positions.

Organizational Hierarchies as Pyramids of Power

The domestic violence advocates are also negotiating a power laden field in their relationship with the shelter agency. One of the most pronounced and recognized symbols of an unequal power distribution between employees in an organization is the presence of an employee hierarchy. As described in Chapter Four, the departmentalized BWP structure was replaced with a structure that placed all the domestic violence advocates as equals at the interim DVC program. The DVC advocates welcomed the linear structure, as they repeatedly criticized the BWP departmentalized model for perpetuating inequalities between different groups and departments.

The literature cites organizational structures as an “important component of movement strategy because it reflects a group’s orientation toward dominant society” (Poster 1995: 669). Within the domestic violence social movement, activists have often pointed to bureaucracies as symbols of patriarchal dominance (Poster 1995). Therefore, participants have created egalitarian, democratic structures to resist that dominance (Martin 1990; Poster 1995). However, other participants have adopted bureaucratic, hierarchical organizational models to best serve their purposes (Poster 1995; Staggenborg 1988). Poster (1995) found that women’s organizations use different models of organizational structures along race and class lines. When comparing two women’s organizations, she found that the middle-class, white women’s
group employed a “classically bureaucratic” hierarchy and the low-income, black women’s group subscribed to a “collective democracy” organizational structure (Poster 1995: 670). Additional studies also show that working-class women reject hierarchical organizational models and favor instead egalitarian relationships (Bookman and Morgen 1988) that are based on family/community models of organization (Stack 1974; Stall and Stoecker 1998).

In the early phases of this fieldwork, the BWP advocates often mentioned the hierarchical nature of the BWP structure when I asked them to consider the future domestic violence program employee structure. Phoebe talked about her opinions about organizational hierarchies:

I don't think there should be that much hierarchy either. If there's a director, yes. But I still think the director should let people know what's going on. And the supervisors shouldn't walk around saying, "Oh, I can't say this to you." Here the volunteers are the lowest, then the crisis counselors, then the staff that's not supervisors, and then the supervisors. But there is that sort of hierarchy and I guess that's true anywhere. I've worked in corporate before and I hated that. I hated that. And I figured non-profit social service would stay away from that, but that's not the case.

She describes the levels in the hierarchy at the BWP, from lowest to highest and also notes that a hierarchical employee structure is common, though she did not expect to see that pyramid structure in a social service agency such as a domestic violence shelter.

The hierarchy at the BWP is exacerbated by the lack of communication between the different levels in the hierarchy. The part time Crisis Counselors disclosed feelings of being “left out of the loop” regarding programming decisions made by the Former Director. Alternatively, the supervisors expressed concern that the part time Crisis Counselors had “their own language and culture” within the organization that prevented open communication. As a proposal for the future, Kate suggested, “You got to get rid of the structure, put everybody on the same page. So everybody feels comfortable, so everybody says this is how I feel, this is what I think, here are my ideas, and let us all work together for the same purpose.”

At the interim DVC, the employees were all Family Advocates except for the Interim Director. In this structure, Women’s Advocacy supervisors were demoted to Family Advocates and part time Crisis Counselors were promoted to the same. Initially, there were no supervisors and everyone answered equally to the Interim Director. Phoebe described the linear structure this way:

We don't have that, "I'm better than you" sort of setup. Which I think is good, I really do. So it is different. I think we work together. Before [at the BWP] it became so much about money and power. You know, power- it’s just ironic to me because we talk about the dynamics of power and control when we talk about domestic violence. It seems that was what was going on within the [BWP] shelter. There was a lot of struggle going on amongst staff. And therefore among residents, too because the structure was affecting them. The way that the staff interacted with one another, such as the lack of professionalism, things like that.

The linear structure reduced the hierarchy, however, the structure did not last long. Two months after the DVC opened, the Interim Director appointed two Family Advocates as supervisors who previously worked as Women’s Advocacy coordinators at the BWP to supervisory positions. These positions included a salary pay increase and required additional administrative responsibilities, though not disciplinary authority over the Family Advocates.
As the DVC began to expand their services, the hierarchical employee structure was created, as mentioned in the section about the DVC retreat. The domestic violence advocates recognized the hierarchy as imbuing a feeling of “tension” among the advocates, thereby changing the workplace atmosphere. In addition, since the hierarchy was created, competition surfaced between the advocates to vie for the positions “over” the Family Advocates. Mindy recalled, “And all of the sudden there was competition. We started talking about the hierarchy and who were going to be in the key positions.”

The competition for the “key power positions” is illuminated in the hiring process for the Assistant Director. At the DVC retreat, the advocates decided that the hiring process would include the use of a panel of advocates to interview a potential candidate. The advocates perused resumes together and narrowed down the pool, then advocates would join a panel to conduct the interviews for all of the candidates for a position. The DVC had to first fill the new position of the Assistant Director. The process for hiring this position immediately became awkward, as one of the Family Advocates submitted her resume for the position along with a number of external candidates. Many advocates declined to participate in the process at that point, indicating their discomfort over having to choose between a coworker and an outsider. This disappointed Joanna, who was confused about the advocates’ reaction:

…[The advocates] didn’t want any part of that, didn’t want any part of interviews. Didn’t want to have to interview and make the tough decisions but then felt not valued on who got what positions. But [they] weren’t willing to be part of the process. So granted that’s just one example, there’s been multiple examples like that as we are growing along and whether they are not participating in the process. So I guess the only recourse we have is to go back and say, “You’re not part of the process, you’re part of the problem and you decide where you want to be.”

The panel conducted a round of interviews and narrowed down the applicant pool to two women, which did not include the internal Family Advocate candidate. The initial reaction to this decision by a minority of advocates was that of disdain. This group of advocates felt that the decision to exclude the internal candidate the DVC was promoting people to power who did not possess the history of the program like an internal candidate.

The hierarchy also took a new form, in that the Family Advocates differentiated themselves as either the “part timers” and the “full timers.” Throughout the interim DVC period, the Interim Director did not distinguish job responsibilities or accountability for those responsibilities between the advocates who worked full time versus those who worked part time. However, this changed as the DVC structure became more permanent under new leadership. Mona explained the inequality by saying:

I'm not sure I know how to put this. But I feel like sometimes there's a hierarchy now whereas there wasn't before. And the Executive Director made it pretty clear that she's not really into part time people, but yet she's keeping us. And sometimes I feel like she's keeping us because we originally started out as part time people.

The new organizational procedures expected the full time Family Advocates to take on their own residents as primary clients whereas part time advocates did not act as a “primary advocate” to individual residents. The weekly case reviews were scheduled during the day, which prevented the part time Family Advocates from attending since the majority of them worked full time jobs. Finally, the biweekly staff meeting was rescheduled from an evening time block to a dinnertime hour, which similarly prevented a number of part time Family Advocates from attending.
The Family Advocates, both part time and full time, indicated concern over the creation of the employee hierarchy contributed to a power inequality and the subsequent “atmosphere of disempowerment.” The advocates felt that the employee structure removed them from the processes of participating in the creation of the program, which was noted to be especially frustrating since the leadership repeatedly reminded them that their voices and opinions were integrated into the development of the program. The advocates felt they were removed from power as a result. Mindy was particularly vocal about her feelings of disempowerment:

I think we lost power somewhere in this process... And I don't think that's something we had control over so I don't think there's anything we could have done differently. I think we've done a damn good job creating what we have created. I feel like it’s slipping but I feel like we can have ownership over this program. I think a lot of things should have been done differently at the retreat. I think that's when a lot of decisions were made that should have been made differently, like the organization… And I think we should have used that time more, I think we didn't realize how precious that time was to try to be heard.

Mindy’s words echoed the opinions of the majority of the advocates, who felt the employee hierarchy precluded them from the decision making process in the domestic violence program, thereby removing them from positions of power in the organization. Furthermore, as I will discuss later, the hierarchical nature of the employee structure is a signal in the shifts towards a more professional model of domestic violence service provision.

A Community of Power, Resources, and Services

Domestic violence advocates also negotiated the unequal power distribution with the community of service providers. The value of the coordinated community is the ability for a number of service providers to share the burden of resource and service provision with a limited quantity of each. The shortage of resources distributed to social service organizations at the local level is an example of the repercussions of neoliberal political economic policies that deplete resources during the trickle down process. In other words, federal resources for social service organizations are now distributed to smaller and smaller levels, and each level is able to retain a portion of those funds. Therefore, as money travels from the federal level, to the state level, then the regional level, to the local level, contract and distribution fees detract from the original contribution to local level services.

Maria, an oral history participant involved in law enforcement, indicated the importance of the coordinated community in her work:

... A stronger partnership among community agencies to prevent domestic violence, a commitment from our city to place this issue at the heart of every budget decision that the council and mayor make. Many of the crimes that occur in our community are domestic related, but this does not seem to outrage the right people. Our city only has 2 domestic violence detectives, and only a few more domestic violence court advocates. Domestic violence is costly to our community (in medical expenses, incarceration expenses, etc…), however, there is not adequate time and attention given to finding ways to reduce the number of incidents.

Domestic violence coordinated communities share a limited amount of federal, state, and local grant monies. Funding is often sought through a grant writing process, and the community generally knows which other organizations are seeking funds. Funders may grant preference to organizations that specifically discuss the ways in which the programs they develop will enhance the services and programs in other organizations. For example, a federal grant
available through the Violence Against Women Act funds a position at the area’s residential substance abuse treatment home for women. The position is for a Domestic Violence Coordinator, and a major component of the advocate’s effort is to conduct awareness education and programming with other community organizations.

**Resources**

In the coordinated community in which the DVC operates, the community of service providers was very aware of the finite nature of resources. The community of service providers even held fundraisers jointly, particularly around the winter holidays such as Christmas. For example, certain department store chains would hold charity shopping days benefiting the non-profit organizations in the region. These fundraising events required purchasing a ticket where the cost of the ticket would directly benefit the organizations. The organizations generally acknowledged that in order for members of the coordinated community to maintain their operating costs, it would be in their best interest to participate in these “community wide” fundraisers in addition to any individual fundraising events for the organization.

Based on the limited availability of funds and resources to support programming and basic operations, the organizations in the coordinated community often look to fill unmet needs in the community and not “duplicate services.” The question for member service providers becomes, how can an organization provide a service to clients that may be beneficial to clients from other organizations? In the coordinated community, I identify two types of service-related partnerships I repeatedly witnessed during my fieldwork. The first example is the provision of support group services, and the second is the network of referral and resource providers and receivers. As I will demonstrate, the ability to accumulate or provide these services correspond to a higher power status in the coordinated community.

**Support Groups**

Many organizations held support groups that were open to residents or clients of the other programs. Support groups are gatherings of women with a facilitator, usually an advocate employed for a social services organization, focused on a set of topics. The support groups are educational in purpose and a licensed therapist or a similar professional did not necessarily facilitate the support groups. Indeed, I conducted support groups at the DVC for both women and children during my time in shelter.

Domestic violence advocates develop support groups for two primary purposes. First, support groups fill a gap in a program’s curriculum by supplementing their services. For instance, the Domestic Violence Coordinator at the substance abuse treatment home developed a group about drug and alcohol use to conduct with the residents of the DVC because the program did not provide such services. The Domestic Violence Coordinator gained contacts with the DVC residents to meet the minimum requirements of her grant mandates and the DVC residents received a service that the shelter advocates were not able to provide.

In addition to filling a gap, support groups meet the requirements or mandates set forth by the courts for victims of domestic violence. Advocates discussed these court orders in both semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Among the 17 counties that the DVC served, the District Court judges (which includes domestic violence court and family court judges) often mandate both the petitioner and the respondent named on an Emergency Protection Order to attend a domestic violence support group or individual counseling\(^{36}\). The organization

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\(^{36}\) The advocates’ experiences with court-ordered support groups and/or individual counseling for domestic violence victims contradicts judicial and legal insider perspectives on domestic violence court (Logan, personal
facilitating the support group is then required to produce documentation to the court on behalf of the woman who completed the minimum requirements for the mandate. Advocates felt that requiring, or “forcing,” women to attend a support group because they filed an Emergency Protection Order against a perpetrator is very disempowering and may deter women from obtaining orders.

Nevertheless, when the BWP closed its door and the future of domestic violence services in the region was uncertain, a major concern of the advocates was for the women who were court ordered to support groups or counseling. What would happen to them? Would they be able to fulfill their court orders? Or would they be held in contempt of court for failure to do so? It had traditionally been the BWP’s role in the coordinated community to provide the support group services for victims of domestic violence who were court ordered.

When the DVC opened, providing support groups was not on the agenda. The State Coalition requested that the regions’ judges would not penalize the women for the lack of availability of the services cited in the court orders. It was not until a year after the DVC opened that the program offered the first support group in the community for victims of domestic violence. This support group was a general domestic violence education group to meet the requirements for court orders. During the interim period, advocates referred victims of domestic violence to partnering agencies in the coordinated community for support groups. However, the number of support groups in the community did not increase due to the absence of the DVC’s ability to provide them. The support groups that were already in existence simply experienced increased enrollment.

Referrals and Resources

A primary domestic violence advocate responsibility is to locate, advocate for, and subsequently obtain the resources or services a woman in shelter identifies as a goal or a need. The larger community of human service providers provided these resources and services, and advocates negotiated the process of learning eligibility requirements and filling out applications. This task also required the advocates to foster relationships with the people in the community. Oftentimes, an advocate would ask another advocate who she should call for a specific issue. Who do I call to find a car seat? Who do I call to arrange emergency dental work? Who do I call to request school supplies for the children in shelter? Who do I call in the admissions office at the local community college to beg them to waive the application fee for a resident? Who provides free diapers? Who provides any of the above services to women who speak Spanish as a first language? Adding another layer of complexity is the fact that the

Monica described a situation to me that illustrates her feelings about court ordered support group participation. As a BWP supervisor, she facilitated a number of general domestic violence support groups in the community to assist women in fulfilling their court order. We were sitting in her office, and she recalled an incident that occurred the previous day, “I had a lady last night come in who described herself as a different victim, which I thought was interesting. She described herself as strong and she knew what she was dealing with and it was bullshit for the court, to court order her for counseling. She says, “I know what I need to do.” I don't need someone telling me what to do. I was like, if you feel that strongly about it, then you can contact your legislature and get involved in this movement because we're trying to change that to make it where it's mandatory for perpetrator, but optional for the victim, which I think it should be.”

communication, 2006). However, I reviewed the data collected for this dissertation and followed up with key informants to substantiate the accuracy of this claim. The judicial mandates for support groups and/or counseling for victims of domestic violence are an important, widely recognized issue for the domestic violence advocates I worked with in this Kentucky region. Therefore, I have elected to retain this section of the dissertation despite conflicting perspectives. In addition, my thanks is extended to several advocates who provided feedback regarding this issue. They unanimously supported the decision to retain this section of the text.
options are different for each of the 17 counties in the region. While an advocate may know the best place to find a car seat on short notice in the DVC’s home county, she may not have a resource readily available in the other counties.

Take for example the following case when the advocates worked to secure a number of services and resources for a long-term DVC resident. After nearly a year in the shelter, the advocates located a transitional housing program through another agency that could place her in an apartment. In order to meet the eligibility requirements for the transitional housing program, the clients have to 1) enroll in school or demonstrate employment and 2) demonstrate a documented disability. The shelter advocates first secured the documentation of the resident’s disability and arranged for all medically necessary issues to be met once the resident obtained an apartment. The advocates then had to petition for the resident to get into a local university. To do this, the advocates contacted the resident’s former college to order transcripts because the resident did not have the funds to pay for this service. The college would not release the transcripts because the resident owed payment on an outstanding bill. The advocates then called a dozen churches and filled out application after application to obtain the money for the outstanding bill. After weeks of dead ends, the advocates were able to request the funds from the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association’s Victim Assistance Bank. By this time, the application deadline had passed for the school’s admission. Therefore, the advocates called around to find the name of a contact in admissions at the university to request a deadline waiver. Then there was the matter of the application fee, which necessitated another round of telephone pleas for financial assistance. After the university accepted the resident as a student, she was officially eligible for the transitional housing program. The next step for the advocates was to secure furniture for the resident and then move her belongings to the apartment. As an agency without a supply of its own material and support resources, the DVC was in a poor position to provide consistent services.

Building partnerships between the members of a coordinated community is essential to service provision. In the example above, advocates worked with dozens of community partners to successfully place a resident in an apartment. The process took months of daily telephone calls and follow up discussions. Fortunately, the outcome was positive, which is not always the case.

There is a basic resource computation to assume among the members of a coordinated community. The organizations that possess or hold the resources do not need to expend the resources such as staff hours to obtain resources. Organizations with limited resources may spend enormous amounts of time and energy seeking and securing resources and services. The coordinated community itself relies on the idea that there are inequalities in resources and services among the organizations in a community, and therefore partnership is vital for organizations to survive.

For the DVC, it seems that the resource shortage has limited their ability to accumulate resources; therefore, they were perpetually investing labor resources to obtain material and service resources. Without an accumulation of resources or services such as support groups to offer to the community of service providers, the DVC advocates are rarely called upon to provide for other organization’s clients. They are not an organization in the coordinated community that other members will contact in a time of need, unless it is for emergency shelter. The DVC was unable to allow for a full time fundraising or resource development specialist in the first year. The absence of such a position was palpable for the advocates.
working in the shelter. Here is one example of the resource and personnel shortage that Cassie brought to my attention:

I have been told that a lot of the women will take stuff with them. Well, understandable when you're starting with nothing when you see a drawer full of forks you think two forks isn't going make that big a difference, but if everybody takes two forks, there's no two forks. So I really wish we had somebody who was more active in the community in getting donations of items we need.

Sometimes the advocates could not meet even the smallest needs, such as the provision of eating utensils. The constant and persistent shortage of resources and services prevented the DVC and the DVC advocates from participating in the coordinated community as “provider partners” because they were generally “receiver partners.”

**Domestic Violence, Power, and the Feminist Social Movement**

As described in depth in Chapter One, a broad goal of the feminist social movement was to increase the power of women in society, and the domestic violence shelter movement contributes to this overall goal by creating intervention for victims of domestic violence to restore power in their individual lives. Domestic violence organizations aim explicitly to restore power to victims of domestic violence, and in so doing eliminate the power inequalities between men and women in American society.

Domestic violence advocates and activists draw attention to unequal power relationships between men and women to explain the presence of domestic violence. Their work is founded upon the philosophy that abuse is not only about violence, it is about the perpetrator exercising power and control over the victim. In domestic violence advocacy, the actual form of violence is a symbol of the unequal power relationships between men and women. For example, a relationship in which the male is the sole provider of financial support for the family unit, the presence of repeated violence may be explained by a domestic violence advocate as the woman’s inability to provide financial support for herself. In this explanation, the woman would continue to stay in an abusive relationship because she depends upon the man’s financial support. Without her own economic options, she is trapped in an abusive relationship.

The creation and perpetuation of the feminist social movement engages a language that is constantly citing power in society. Gender inequality persists because power is not balanced between men and women. The feminist social movement seeks to instill or restore power in women to promote equality between genders. This goal requires constant attention to the process of power and how to reduce inequalities between men and women in society. The feminist social movement’s messages about power inequality have entered the mainstream repertoire through successful participation and collaboration with institutions and organizations (Tarrow 1998).

As this chapter indicates, power inequalities were created at multiple levels in domestic violence advocacy. Domestic violence advocates were taught the language of power inequalities according to gender, and then experience power shortages first hand at the community level. However, even though resources are scarce at the community level and social service organizations may collaborate to accumulate resources, some organizations are positioned to be more powerful because they are not “scraping for resources” such as clothing, diapers, or financial support. As a result of program transition, the DVC was not in a position to accumulate resources, and is therefore caught in a cycle of powerlessness as a community provider. Within the organization, advocates attempted to understand their place in a
hierarchical employee structure and wrestled with their own feelings of disempowerment in that structure. All of these messages of power flowed into the relationship between the advocates and the women. The advocates maneuvered their positions in relation to the women, and constantly confronted differences according to victimization experiences, education, and socioeconomic class.

**Summary**

As power inequalities manifest themselves between the advocates and the women they serve, the organization, and the community, they are linked to larger political economic forces at work. Increased sponsor demands for credentialed and educated staff precipitate tensions between the advocates and women who search for common ground among increasing differences. Without identifying a larger structure as one source of these tensions, advocates are left to interpret the disconnect between themselves and the women at the micro level. This disconnection is consistent with the notion that people are often unaware of the ways and means that structural powers impress upon their lives (Wolf 1999). However, this often leaves them feeling frustrated and inadequate in their positions, which in turn decreases their effectiveness as advocates. With no common ground at the structural level, such as joining in a “sisterhood” of activism against gender inequality, and little shared experiences at the individual level between women, the distance because domestic violence advocates and domestic violence victims is great.

In addition, without understanding the macrostructural pressures the organization and the community exists within, the advocates neglect to recognize the constraints at the mezzo level. This does not exonerate the actions of the organization or the community, but it does add a layer of complexity in that they too are also often left confused about the power they possess and exert within the neoliberal political economy. In other words, the examples in this chapter often indicate that the domestic violence advocates look to the shelter organization and other organizations in the community as the source of resource shortages or mechanisms of power oppression for frontline workers. However, the level of blame does not take into account the political economic constraints working upon these organizations. One must consider the possibility that a recognition of the macrostructural pressures on all human service organizations might unite frontline workers with administrators.

However, since none of these factions are actively engaging in a discussion of the constraints impressed upon them by large political economic forces, it is difficult to imagine each party coming to the table for meaningful evaluative discussions. Furthermore, without understanding a larger force bestowing power unequally upon these different players, they cannot be leveled.

**24 hours**

The following story is an excerpt from my fieldnotes, a story that encompasses a 24 hour period in the DVC shelter and highlights the micro-level manifestations of power inequalities in domestic violence service provision. Throughout the story, power is visible in the distribution of scarce resources (clothing donations), squabbles over resources that are available among social service providers (the playground at the HAP), and the advocates’ exertion of power over the residents (by disciplining mothers’ childcare behaviors).

*At 8:00 a.m., one advocate arrived for first shift. The second advocate on duty that day arrived 40 minutes late. At 9:00 a.m., they put out four garbage bags of clothing donations for the women to rummage through. Usually we put out donations at 9:00 p.m. when they available, but there were too many to put out all at once last night. There were only a few...*
items from the bags of clothing that were not stained or ripped, and after the women selected the “good stuff,” they donated the remainder to the HAP clothing bank.

A resident enters the advocate office complaining because she smoked a whole pack of cigarettes yesterday and has not been eating regularly.

One advocate leaves to take a resident across the state for visitation with her child.

A former resident came by and got some food, Lysol spray, etc. for her and her soon to be born baby. Later, a woman came by with donations of half used, hotel-size bottles of shampoo and lotion. The advocates provided her a donation receipt.

The phone rang 23 times between 8:00 a.m. and noon. Fifteen of those calls were crisis calls and eight of those calls were referral calls. Advocates accepted two families to the shelter program from these calls.

A little after noon, the staff woman at the HAP told one of our residents that her children could not play on the playground. One of the advocates called and told the staff woman at the HAP that this was not true and that our residents and their children could play on the playground adjacent to our building. The staff woman took the advocate’s name and said she would “deal with her later” and hung up. The advocate called the Executive Director to tell her what happened. The Executive Director told the advocate not to worry because she is sure that this is all a mistake. In the meantime, the resident who was kicked off the playground is upset and her children are disappointed because they were going to the playground as a reward for good behavior.

Eventually, the staff person from the HAP called back and said there was a misunderstanding and the women and children in our program could use “their playground.” She also let the advocate know that she felt that she had an anger management problem. This caused the advocate to become agitated, and she called the Executive Director back to let her know that the matter was resolved and that the HAP staff were diagnosing the DVC advocates’ emotional states.

At mid afternoon, we ran out of ice in the house. The DVC does not have an ice machine and obtains ice from the HAP’s soup kitchen using an old red Coleman cooler. Someone needs to get ice every day, because the cooler can only hold enough ice for one day. Plus the ice melts. An advocate provided a resident with $5 from our petty cash box to get ice from across the street at the gas station. The advocate told the resident that she needed to get a receipt and bring her back the change so that she can balance the petty cash box. After the resident left, the advocate looked at the other advocate on duty and mused that it was amazing they even had $5 in petty cash because usually we have a collection of change.

One of the residents is out of town visiting family and she called to say she is enjoying her visit. The advocates each spoke with to her about her visit and wished her a safe trip back.

The organization that provides supervised visitation for families undergoing custody struggles called to pass on a message to one of our residents. They said that she does not need to bring her child to visitation because the father will not be there. The advocates took the message and put it in the hallway bulletin board that served as the mailboxes for the residents.

At 3:15 p.m., one of the residents wanted to go get her hair cut. The advocates mentioned to her that the walk-in haircut salon was only open until 5:00 p.m. The resident became upset because she had really wanted to get her haircut today, so the advocates called her a cab. They also provided her $10 from the petty cash box for the haircut and asked the resident to bring back a receipt and change. The advocates noted that they were now out of petty cash.
At 4:00 p.m., the advocates conducted shift change. Another advocate came in about 5 minutes after 4:00 to work second shift. One of the advocates from first shift will be working second shift as well. The three advocates sat in the office with the door closed to provide a briefing of the day to the next shift. They laughed about the incident with the staff woman from the HAP telling the advocate that she had an anger management problem. They talked about the two families that were accepted to shelter, noting that neither family were expected to be arriving this evening. In reviewing the day’s activities, the incoming second shift advocate noted that one of the resident’s did not return to shelter last evening and has been gone for more than 24 hours. She was supposed to have returned to shelter no later than 3:00 p.m. The 3 advocates determined that the resident needed to be departed from the domestic violence shelter. Shift change went quickly since one of the advocates was working double shifts.

The advocates filed incomplete departure paperwork for the resident who was a “no return.” This process took about 10 minutes and once filed, the resident’s paperwork was placed in the file drawer for former residents’ paperwork.

Another crisis call came in from a woman who was a former resident from the BWP shelter. She was accepted to shelter, though both advocates remembered the woman as being something of a trouble maker.

A crisis call is patched through to us via the National Domestic Violence Hotline. She was calling from a large city more than 300 miles away. At this point, the advocates put the caller on hold and problem solve the issues of availability of beds. There are no available beds left in shelter, and so far today they have accepted 3 families. They decide that they have to tell the woman that the shelter is currently full. The woman became panicked and asked what she could do to get into the shelter so she could plan on when she could flee her husband. The advocate told her to continue to call for availability regularly and that she hoped beds were available as the time for her escape approached.

A resident came into the office and requested a child care form from the advocates. One of the advocates took the lead, asking the resident if she had to go to either work, a doctor’s appointment, or a legal appointment. The advocate pointed out to the resident that these were the only allowable reasons to arrange child care with another resident. The resident looked at the advocate and said that she just needed a break. The advocate talked about the childcare policy again. She also told her that she was understanding of her needing a break, but this was not what the childcare form was intended for.

Around 6:00 p.m., the advocates encountered an issue with obtaining a prescription for a resident. The resident is at the pharmacy and was told by the pharmacist that her medical card does not cover the cost of the medication. The advocates spoke with the pharmacist and gave him the DVC credit card number and authorized him to provide the resident with a 3 day supply of her medication. They hung up the phone and then called a cab to pick up the resident and return her to shelter.

About an hour later, the county sheriff called seeking a bed for a victim of domestic violence and her 4 children. The advocate explained that the shelter was full and asked the sheriff to hold while she explored the option of securing a bed at the HAP next door. The advocate spoke with the HAP staff and put a bed on hold for the victim. She came back to the line on hold with the sheriff and told him that a bed was available next door. He thanked her, and she thanked him and apologized that we were full.

Shortly thereafter, a call came in from a frequent prank caller, who the advocates jokingly refer to as “the jacker.” A little after 8:00 p.m., a woman who was formerly accepted
to shelter arrived at the DVC. The advocates explained to her that no beds were available in our facility, but that she could stay at the HAP while still accessing all of our services. They tell the woman that when space becomes available in our building, she can move over here. The woman was extremely tired and opted to complete her intake paperwork the next day.

While this was going on, the woman who was considered a “no return” resident earlier in the day phones to tell the advocates that she is on her way back to shelter. The advocates explained to her that she was “departed” because she did not return to shelter last evening and did not return by 3:00 p.m. as the guidelines state. The woman hung up on the advocate.

Fifteen minutes later a resident came into the office and asked for the telephone numbers for the Executive Director and the Assistant Director. She spoke to the woman who was departed on her cellular phone, and the departed resident would like to speak with them. The advocates let the resident know that they were not going to discuss another person’s case with her, and asked the resident to tell the woman to call them directly. The resident walked out of the office.

A few minutes later, the woman called on the crisis line and asked for the telephone numbers. The advocates explained that she would not be providing the woman with those numbers. The woman told the advocate that she was at work and that is why she did not return to shelter. She stated that she would have nowhere to go when she got off from work. She asked if we could still provide her legal advocacy and that she was not going to stay at the HAP. The woman indicated to the advocate that she would be calling tomorrow to speak with the Executive Director or the Assistant Director about the situation.

At 9:00 p.m., one of the advocates held a meeting with the residents about their role in shaping program policy. This short-lived group was called the “Resident Council.” The women in Resident Council were very excited to talk about their proposed Welcome Committee that is supposed to be launched when we move to the new building. They want to purchase baskets, labeling tags, journals, stationary, organizers, calendars, ribbon, tissue paper, phone cards, bath items for women and children, small toys. The residents suggested that each family receive a laundry hamper when they first arrive to shelter. The Resident Council also noted that there was still a need for a suggestion box for the Resident Council ideas.

The third shift Crisis Counselor arrived at 11:00 p.m. The first phone call that she answered was the “jacker.”

Two residents entered the main office upset because some women have the lights on all night long and then sleep during the day. The residents are frustrated because they feel this does not allow those women to work towards their goals.

The woman who was departed earlier in the day called to discuss her case. The advocate told her that she was departed and she would need to be reassessed if she would like to return to shelter. The woman told her that she would call again in the morning.

Around 3:00 a.m., a police officer arrives seeking emergency shelter for a woman and 3 children. There are no beds available at the HAP and there are no beds open at the DVC. The advocate told the officer that she could offer the couch in the community room for the family. The woman said she did not want to sleep on the couch tonight. The police officer expressed concern over her decision not to accept the couch, because he said that her partner had “done a number on the woman and children.”

Around 5:00 a.m., the woman who was departed arrives at the door. The advocate let her sleep on the couch and advised her that the staff would need to talk about her situation.
By six o’clock in the morning, the residents were in the main office complaining that the children were up and they were playing without their mothers’ supervision. The advocate woke the mothers up and requested that they watch their children at all times.

And then it started all over again. Advocates working every day to make an impact on their own segment of a society riddled with gender inequalities and abuses. Constantly justifying the crisis and chaos by invoking “the greater good.” Phone calls. Prescriptions. Intakes. Departures. Tensions. Crisis after crisis. Never enough resources. And never enough beds.
CHAPTER SEVEN
AGREEMENTS AND DISAGreements OVER PARTICIPATION

“There was a] lack of forethought, lack of funding, lack of the actual people who cut a check listening to the people who actually work in the facility, lack of communication between shelter employees and Executive Board members, you know. There is... not much participation allowed for the people who work here to have much say in how it's ran or what works effectively or what changes would be adequate.”

-Kate, Former Battered Women’s Program Crisis Counselor

Introduction

The language of “participation” recurs often in my fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and focus group texts as something that advocates are “fighting for,” questioning other entities’ participation, or disagreeing with the rules of participation. For example, the women who come to shelter often do not have a choice but to participate in the domestic violence program, while the advocates are required to participate in a process of service provision that they often do not have a voice in creating. The tensions in defining program participation is visible in the DVC shelter program’s “participation agreements” that residents are required to sign. Furthermore, domestic violence advocates struggle to participate in the program’s development, oftentimes without success. Similarly, the domestic violence advocates fight to participate as equals in the community of service providers. While these relationships are sites of contestation and participation, domestic violence advocates identify a close relationship with the feminist social movement and they identify their advocacy work as a mechanism to participate in the larger feminist social movement.

As the domestic violence advocates seek to participate with individuals in these different relationship spheres, they are not questioning how they might participate in the larger political economic process. Indeed, the frontline workers are often unaware of the constraints placed upon the organizations from the federal government or sponsors when they question policies that limit their participation in a process at the local level. Despite this, they grasp tightly to the “imagined community” they find with the feminist social movement (Anderson 1991).

Participation Agreements and The Women

The most striking example of participation in the relationship between the advocates and the women is the creation and enforcement of rules and guidelines, which form the basis for resident’s agreements to stay in shelter and receive services. I highlight the ways that the shelter advocates participated in the creation of rules and guidelines. In addition, this section examines the enforcement policies of those rules and guidelines, which in essence determines which victims are eligible to begin and continue to receive services.

The BWP expected the residents to follow certain rules and guidelines, such as returning to the shelter by curfew time (11:00 p.m.) and participating in the household chores (such as making meals and cleaning the bathrooms). Advocates enforced those rules as a part of their job responsibilities. At the DVC interim location, advocates were also expected to enforce rules and guidelines, however, as I discuss below, those rules and guidelines changed from the BWP structure. In addition, once the DVC moved to The Farm location, the rules and guidelines changed once again. With each shift in the structure of the resident rules and

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38 Women and children were not limited in the amount of time they were allowed to stay in shelter by a blanket policy mandating departure after a maximum number of days. Residents might stay in shelter for a few hours or over a year, depending on the situation.
guidelines, the nature of the relationship between the advocates and residents changed as the amount and rigidity of the rules and guidelines decreased over time. Before my arrival to the BWP, the rules and guidelines were very strict and regimented. In an interview with Monica during the final days of the BWP, she recalled:

If you look in the old files, there used to be demerits. And they [the residents] had to sign it and initial it if they had a chore violation, they had to sign it, and if you had three you were put on probation and after four you were out. And they also had curfew violations. KDVA hated that. They hated it, because you were treating them like they were in prison.

The Kentucky Domestic Violence Association cited the BWP with a deficiency in their service provision based on their strict rules and guidelines and the program then moved to a model of resident agreements that was very individually based. However, the transition through different rules and guidelines structures illuminates the discussions about why rules and guidelines exist, who created and enforced the resident rules and guidelines, and how the rules and guidelines affected the relationship between the residents and the shelter advocates.

At the BWP and interim DVC, there were two justifications for the presence and enforcement of rules and guidelines. The first justification was the idea that rules and guidelines serve to protect the safety of both the residents and the advocates. For example, a curfew guidelines prevented women from staying out all night during a potentially at risk time and limits the number of times the advocates would open the door to the shelter during the night. The advocates also invoked “safety” to justify the rules related to illegal substances, as well as legal substances such as alcohol in the shelter. This rule stated that residents could not possess or ingest illegal substances in shelter, and if the advocates had “a good enough suspicion that such a thing’s going on we can address that.” Addressing the situation involved speaking with a resident and reviewing the program participation guidelines set forth at intake and possibly requiring a resident to sign a “participation agreement” that outlined the specific behavior modifications the program required for a resident (and her children) to remain in shelter.

The second avenue of justification is rooted in the idea that the “women need structure” as a way to assist them through their healing process. Rules and guidelines were seen as a part of the program the shelter creates as a service, the structure was viewed as positive and benefiting the women within this justification. Mona explained this to me by saying:

I think it’s very important that we have a structure for the women to go by. Since they have had no structure their whole life other than to be told “You're not good,” “You’re ugly,” or “You’ll never amount to anything.” And I think they need that structure in their life to be a success.

The rules and guidelines provided that “structure” to the residents. The focus on rules and guidelines as a way to structure the residents in shelter is another indicator of the professionalization of the advocates.

Women Disciplining Women

The enforcement role of the advocates often created an “us against them” atmosphere in the shelter, the advocates acting as enforcers and the residents resisting the rules and guidelines. The distance between the residents and the advocates was greatest in moments of discipline. The disciplinary process tended to follow similar steps. First, a resident would break a rule, such as the curfew. The resident would return to shelter and then an advocate
would ask to speak with the woman in the office. As told to me by Julie while the BWP was
still open:

They realize what they've done. So they're very defensive, but what I do is just say,
"I'm here to talk with you, do you have any idea what I'm here to talk to you about?"
Normally, I just let them kind of tell their story about it and then I say, "Okay, well
these are my concerns." And I go back to what they signed when they came in, the
guidelines, and say "This is one of the guidelines you haven't followed through on your
part" and explain. I love to talk about why we have the rules so it doesn't feel like I'm
just enforcing to be an enforcer.

Julie went on to explain that an advocate might have a conversation about why the shelter
program has rules and guidelines. As retold to me, this discussion might look like this:

Well I first ask them, "What, why do you think we have a curfew?" "Well, because you
treat us like babies," would be an example [of a response]. Or, "Someone just thought
of it." So I say, "Well, the reason that we have a curfew rule is because it's for safety.
There are women here 24 hours a day. And to know that someone's going to be in at 8,
by 8:30 or eleven o'clock or whatever that specific time is, opening that door is always
a safety risk. Particularly at night when it's dark and you can't see the parking lot." So
I explain that. And also it's about being on a regular schedule and being able to be up
in the morning. And being able to do the things that you need to do, to accomplish your
goals which is what we're about here. So I just kind of try to let them fill in the pieces.
I feel like when they understand why they're more likely to follow through rather than
just, "This is the rule."

But inherent in this process is the problem that the advocates are both the residents’ counselors
and the enforcer, “You want to be their counselor and their supportive advocate, but you have
to enforce these rules and be authoritarian.” Part of the enforcement role was to have residents
sign a “participation agreement” that outlined specifically the behaviors that a resident would
modify as a condition of continuing to stay in the shelter. If participation agreements are
violated, the shelter retains the option to request the resident leave shelter.

Ultimately, the advocates felt they had very little power in determining whether or not
residents are asked to leave the shelter, a process referred to as “departing residents.” This
feeling is a result of the leadership’s ability to override decisions to depart residents on a case
by case basis. This practice was well known among the residents, who often let advocates
know that they would simply go to the administrators should an advocate ask them to depart
shelter. I witnessed multiple occasions of this conversation, when an advocate would indicate
to a resident that she would need to be home by curfew (for example). The resident would
then tell the advocate she would not get departed because the leadership would not make her
leave. Sometimes the advocate would try to let the resident know that it was the Family
Advocates who makes those decisions, but both sides recognized that this was not necessarily
true. For example, according to one advocate, if a resident violated a participation agreement,
for instance if she signs an agreement stating she will return to shelter before 9:00 p.m. each
evening and then returns at 10:00 p.m., it “then becomes a decision of the director whether or
not they're [the residents] going to be asked to leave.”

The shelter advocates enforced the rules and created participation agreements, yet the
advocates did not ultimately determine the outcome of these disciplinary actions. As a result,
the advocates enforced the rules in an uneven manner, as they constantly negotiated, contested,
and followed the rules and guidelines. Both the advocate team and the residents viewed the
inconsistency in enforcement as a problem. The advocates constantly challenged each other
and the decisions made throughout the day, asking each why they did or did not depart a
resident, called a cab for a resident, filled a prescription, let a resident stay on the phone longer
than allowed, and so on. The residents then fueled the tensions over the inconsistencies,
reminding the advocates that they unpredictably enforce and ignore the rules and guidelines.
After transitioning to the DVC, Bonnie explained to me her frustrations about shelter rules and
guidelines:

Things that aren't consistently followed would be certain rules. Like letting people
smoke after midnight and letting people stay up out of their room after midnight. Little
things that the residents always pick up on and bring to you as an issue. Using the
phone longer than you should during the day, things that seem very trivial, but they're
not. To them, they're not trivial.
The inconsistent enforcement of the rules is stressful for both the residents and the advocates
because the resident agreement states that the residents will follow the rules and guidelines to
avoid disciplinary action, such as departure from shelter.

Perceptions of Participation

Previously, I discussed the DVC’s move from the HAP location to The Farm. The
advocates repeatedly felt that they were left out of the decision making process to move the
DVC program to The Farm. The discussions about the move to the new location culminated in
a one night event referred to as “the retreat.” Held one month after the Executive Director took
charge, the retreat location was at The Farm. All advocates were expected to attend while the
Kentucky Domestic Violence Association’s staff worked the shelter. The majority of the
advocates attended the retreat, although a few declined to sleep over in the facility and two
advocates were unable to attend altogether. The retreat served as a venue for advocates to
determine two primary organizational structures. First, the advocacy team substantiated the
employee structure at the retreat. Second, the advocates discussed the extent of services for
both residents and non-residents and determined the guidelines for service provision.

Before the group delved into the two primary tasks before them, the advocates engaged
in a conversation about moving past their experiences closing the BWP shelter. After this, the
Executive Director prompted the advocates to share their feelings towards moving to The
Farm. A few advocates mentioned the shortcomings of the location of the facility, citing the
far distance from the center of the city and the lack of immediately available services such as
emergency police and fire personnel. Overall, the advocates did not speak with the ferocity in
the retreat setting that they spoke with amongst themselves in this setting. Ultimately, the
advocates did not attempt to launch or pursue a full-scale resistance to the move to The Farm
and the passive decision was made without further discussion.

After settling on the official location of the DVC, the group discussed the remainder of
the structure of the program. “At that retreat, we talked about our vision and what services we
wanted to provide and what we thought the shelter should look like and where things should be
and go and what we should do in all of the counties,” Phoebe recalled. The discussions
became more informal as the hours passed by, and eventually the advocates were all sitting
around the large, executive style table learning more about Joanna and her background. Later
in the evening, the majority of the advocates retreated to bed in the rooms that would become
the resident rooms.

One of the first items discussed after the advocates gathered on Saturday morning was
the organization’s employee structure. Several structures were devised, each with the
Executive Director at the top and the third shift crisis counselors occupying the bottom of a pyramid, or hierarchy. In the middle were various combinations of a potential assistance director, team leaders, and other middle management types supervising the family advocates. The advocates voted to accept a structure, as described by Mindy:

We chose the structure that we have. With the director, assistant director, two team leaders, and then family advocates. And that structure is a pyramid structure. That's very different from a line… I think that the goal is to have it as linear as possible but you have to ultimately have a structure in place, a hierarchy. I think it’s a matter of how you administer it. I don’t think it matters so much about the titles or if it’s top down or whatever, it’s how you implement it. But I do think you need to ultimately have a director and you need to have point people so that somebody’s accountable, somebody’s responsible.

Initially, the advocates were pleased with the structure they decided upon and felt that the structure was fair. I discuss the benefits and drawbacks of the hierarchical structure later in this chapter, but here it is important to note the ways that the advocates participated in the development of this structure and agreed upon its implementation.

Immediately after the retreat process, the advocates felt positively towards about the experience. For example, Monica reflected on the retreat experience:

I think that going to that retreat at the beginning and being able to have a voice in creating something was a new experience for me. So it was scary but also exciting to become part of that vision that we were like, "Oh my god, Yes! It’s going to happen!" But it’s scary to have a voice and having it be heard and then it be the wrong thing. And how do you know what's right in the end?

Her words indicate that she believed the retreat process to be participatory in that it provided an opportunity for her to share her vision and her voice.

Unfortunately, the positive reaction to the retreat was supplanted by negative feelings once the strategies and structures set forth were implemented. In an emotional interview, Mindy shared these reflections about the retreat and the implementation of the structures and policies developed:

I think when we had the retreat I actually thought that the structure we're putting in now would be an ideal structure. It’s turning out that it’s not ideal for me… I think it’s difficult because I would like us all to be rewarded and recognized and I think the only way that can happen is either we all get promoted or we cut out the tiers. I really don't think that this in-between is working. So I'm not sure at this point that I even feel empowered. What keeps coming back to me when I suggest changes or suggest a different way of doing things is, "Well, you all voted on it. You all talked about it at the retreat." So what keeps coming back to me is that we already talked about this at the retreat and we agreed to it so now we have to stick to it. I'm not really feeling like this is negotiable at this point. So I think I've stopped thinking about it.

Once the leadership operationalized the structure, it did not fit the vision that many advocates felt they conveyed at the retreat. The advocates perceived a disjuncture between what they created conceptually at the retreat and the structure eventually implemented.

Participation “Agreements” Between the Advocates and the Organization

The advocates work within an organizational canopy of power, where certain expectations are enforced and others ignored. The DVC’s participation expectations of the advocates are often paradoxical. For example, the DVC Policy and Procedures manual stated
that advocates are to “dress professionally” for work. The specifics of professional dress are not detailed in the DVC Policies and Procedures manual, though the Executive Director was often seen wearing a suit with heeled shoes. Despite the expectation of professional dress, most advocates (including myself) did not wear a suit to work, nor did the advocates wear clothing that “they would not want to get bleach all over.” The advocates’ jobs required them to clean toilets, wash dishes, mop floors, and a variety of other housekeeping and janitorial tasks that often dirties clothing. These tasks prompted one DVC advocate to tell me, “I’m not going to wear a suit to work to clean shit off the bathroom walls.”

However, there was a division in the types of clothing the advocates wore to work according to the shift they were scheduled to work. The first advocates were much more likely to provide legal advocacy in a courtroom setting or attend meetings with other organizations. Therefore, they were more likely to “dress professionally” than the second shift advocates, who usually wore jeans to work with tennis shoes. Third shift advocates wore the most casual clothing, particularly when there was not a permanent third shift Crisis Counselor and Women’s Advocates were rotating first, second, and third shifts. During the interim period when the advocates were rotating the responsibilities of covering the third shift, it was normal to see the advocate wearing sweat pants and house slippers. During my fieldwork period at the DVC, I neither witnessed nor learned about any disciplinary action pursued against an advocate because of failing to comply with the dress code expectations. While the advocates were expected to conform to a dress code participation requirement of their employment, it was inconsistently followed and enforced.

The expectation to dress professionally is one example of the DVC’s policies failing to overlap with the reality of working in a shelter. However, while the advocates often fell short of participating according to the policies set forth by the DVC, it was far more common for the DVC to fail at meeting the expectations of the advocates. This failure is noticeable in the year-long struggle to obtain the benefits promised to the advocacy team. During the interim DVC period, Carol clearly informed the advocates that they would not be eligible for benefits until a permanent structure was in place. In the first few weeks, advocates surmised that the permanent structure would come to fruition in 2-3 months. It was not until 10 months after the DVC opened that the organization offered a benefits package. Unfortunately, the benefits package was promised to be in place for the advocates much earlier than when they finally received them.

The benefits package was available only to the full time advocates and provided a $500 stipend per month to advocates for health insurance, dental coverage, and day care related expenses. Advocates were to obtain their own insurance package without the luxury of buying into a “group plan” under the auspices of the organization. Once an advocate enrolled with an insurance company, it was up to the DVC to pay the monthly bills. The DVC did not meet the advocates’ expectations of paying these bills by the due date. For example, one advocate repeatedly received letters from her health insurance company stating that the payment was overdue and her benefits may potentially lapse. Several times the advocate brought the issue to the attention of the DVC leaders and the financial manager completed the payment. Unfortunately, shortly before I ended my fieldwork period, the advocate received notice that her benefits had in fact lapsed\(^39\). This occurred only 6 months after she began receiving the benefits package from the DVC.

\(^39\) This matter was addressed by the DVC, which did admit that the payment was not made. After the completion of my fieldwork, the DVC began investigating the possibility of a group health insurance plan.
The benefits package issue became a central focus point for the advocates to discuss the failure of the organization to provide the services it promised to the advocates. The shortcoming was not the benefits themselves, it was the fact that the advocates were told for months that the following month they would begin to receive benefits, only for another month to pass without the benefits. For the advocates were able to afford to pay for health insurance out of pocket, the burden was great and only increased as the months passed.

The advocates did not have a formal mechanism to hold the organization accountable for the participation expectations they had of the DVC. Repeatedly, the organization was unable to meet the needs of the advocates. In addition to the concerns over the health benefits, the DVC also promised the advocates (and therefore they expected) the services of a life coach to assist in providing emotional support to the advocates, the possibility of higher salaries, and a steady supply of chocolate candy in the main office. Regrettably, the promises were broken or delayed. The lack of follow through created a cynicism among the advocates, who eventually claimed that they no longer perceived any use in requesting support or assistance from the organization.

Perhaps the most pronounced area of deficiency in the relationship between the advocates and the organization was in the area of “support,” broadly defined. The advocates did not feel “supported” by the organization. The lack of support contributed to an overall environment of burn out among the advocates. Advocates were not able to maintain a balance between their work and personal lives, which led to the feeling that they were “always working.” The organization relentlessly stressed to the advocates that the women should be their first priority in everything. The constant attention to the workers as advocates and not as people was harshly integrated into the advocates’ discourse. Amy struggled with the tension between her work life and home life:

One of my first concerns should be our clients, yes. When we're at work our first concern should be helping victims of domestic violence. But when we leave our job we have our own lives. And I think that that should be encouraged. I think it would improve morale, it would improve job performance, it would improve everything. And I think if we were treated like, "Your life does matter. It matters that you make enough money. It matters that you're compensated for things." I think that if those things are happening you'd have a lot happier staff, a lot more productive staff. The staff is already productive, don't get me wrong. But I burned out really fast. And I think that could have been avoided.

The BWP and DVC’s lack of attention to the advocates’ personal lives and well-being hastened feelings of burn out and contributed to employee dissatisfaction.40

I found that it was not only the domestic violence shelter advocates who experienced feelings of burn out. Judy, a local social worker, discussed her battles with burn out:

…There’s been times in the past, already—I’ve only been working in the field for eight years. And after working in [a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation center], I went to another job that was a lot less stressful, where I didn’t deal with domestic

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40 “Burn out” and organizations’ lack of attention to domestic violence advocates’ well-being is shown to contribute to vicarious trauma, also known as compassion fatigue and secondary trauma. Vicarious trauma “can result in physiological symptoms that resemble posttraumatic stress reactions, which may manifest themselves either in the form of intrusive symptoms, such as flashbacks, nightmares, and obsessive thoughts, or in the form of constructive symptoms, such as numbing and disassociation” (Bell, Kulkarni, and Dalton 2003).
violence. I didn’t deal with substance abuse. I worked there about a year, because I needed a break from it. I already was feeling kind of burned out. I think if anything I ever left this line of work, it would be just because of burn out. I mean you get fried, dealing with crisis after crisis after crises. If I ever left, that’s what I would leave over…

Gina, an oral history participant working in the judicial system as a legal advocate for victims of crime also spoke of her negotiations with balancing her work life:

… I dream about some cases, and think about them all weekend long. On Sunday night, you start preparing for it the next day and things like that. I think that I’m good at my job. I think I get better every day. However, I think that that also can be your downfall. I think I care, and sometimes I think I care too much, if you can say that. I mean, I know it’s kind of like a little backwards to say that, but I definitely think I try to invest a lot into my cases and the people that I work with. But you know, it’s so hard to try to explain the criminal justice system to people who didn’t choose to be here. You know, I chose to be in this profession, however, they didn’t choose to have to come and work with me.

While burn out was rampant among the domestic violence advocates and oral history participants I spoke with, the lack of support from agencies was not. Many oral history participants prided their agencies as supportive environments for advocates to vent their feelings, process an experience, and support the personal lives away from work. For example, Jamie worked at a local rape crisis center and told me:

If you’re going to do this kind of job, like working with people who are traumatized, who are in crisis, you have to take care of yourself, in order to continue doing this job. That’s key… If you need to take time off, you take it. If you have big problems after you go to a hospital to help a rape victim who is physically assaulted and emotional and all that, process. Process what you feel. A good mentor will listen, will open you to processing.

Jamie cited the director of her agency as a source of support for “self care.”

Amidst the lack of benefits, the broken promises, and burn out, why did the advocates choose to continue participating as employees of the DVC? The advocates stayed with the organization because they felt they had no choice. They would often refer to the organization as “their perpetrator” that they could not leave because of financial reasons. The advocates walked me through the cycle of violence many times to describe their relationship to the organization. The situation was bad when the advocates worked 40 hours a week with no benefits at the interim DVC facility, and the leadership’s promise of benefits and salary increases to help them “see the light at the end of the tunnel” and the ability “to build the program from the ground up.” Again, this promise went unfulfilled, as the as the leadership did not take into account the advocates’ voices during the implementation of the structure of the permanent DVC. At the retreat, the advocates were promised the support of a life coach when they raised concerns about advocate morale and feelings of burn out, only to later learn that the leadership was unable to secure funding for the endeavor⁴¹. According to the advocates who framed their experiences in this model, the organization itself reflects the

⁴¹ Over a year after the retreat, and months after this fieldwork concluded, the domestic violence advocates were finally offered the services of a life coach. A life coach is a personal advocate who provides moral support and personal consultation, usually in a person’s professional career. While not therapists, life coaches ask questions to prompt a person to understand their behaviors and attitudes.
characteristics of the cycle of violence that the advocates empowered the residents to understand.

Disembodied Workers and Organizations

One way to understand the discontents of the domestic violence advocates and their relationship to the organization is by placing them within a body of literature examining the relationship between workers and organizations, but particularly the literature examining the concept of the disembodied worker. Anthropologists and ethnographers have examined the relationships between workers and residential organizations in a variety of settings. One ethnography describes the interaction among staff (nurses and social workers) and between staff and residents in a Jewish nursing home. By placing the daily activities in the nursing home within a framework of liminality, Shield (1988) analyzes the experiences of residents who are amidst a rite of passage between “productive living” and death, and how this liminal status acts to dehumanize the elderly residents. This allows the staff to separate themselves from their work and the residents and distance themselves emotionally and personally from the daily negotiations of nursing home care work (Shield 1988).

In a spatial, cultural geographical analysis of a nursing home, Gubrium (1975) analyzes the ways that residents and caregivers in a nursing home utilize their organizational landscape, as well as the ways the facility constructs space within a communal facility as either public or private. Using the notion that people are “supposed” to be in some places (administrators on the bottom floor) and not in others, power hierarchies and allocations of responsibility between different staff positions (e.g. nurse versus administrator) are manifested in this geographic distribution, allowing administrators to separate themselves from the daily care work carried out by floor nurses and nursing aids (Gubrium 1975).

In the ethnography Emptying Beds, Rhodes (1991) describes the daily life of workers and patients in an Acute Psychiatric Unit. As workers negotiated ten day maximum stays, repeat patients, lack of resources to address the issues patients presented, and the constant crisis atmosphere, they resisted power to maintain their relationships with patients and to keep grounded in the task at hand (Rhodes 1991).

Similarly, Fleisher (1989) studied a Federal Penitentiary by becoming a correctional worker himself. The author sought to “investigate the pressures affecting the performance and turnover of new COs [correctional officers] and to develop an intervention programs that might alleviate those pressures and improve retention” (Fleisher 1989: 15). Fleisher’s work documents the period of becoming a prison worker, describing the ways he was increasingly learning and embodying the prison ideology of “prisoner=bad and wrong” and “prison worker=good and right.”

These ethnographic examples provide an in-depth analyses of the phenomena of the “disembodied worker” (Acker 1990). The disembodied worker is viewed as a detached laborer, one without personal responsibilities, individual ambition, and non-work related commitments (Acker 1990; Bentovim 2002; Martin 1987; Williams 2000). In this case study, the disembodied worker concept highlights the contradicting messages the advocates receive about their care worker roles and the care they provide to their personal lives. Advocates were asked to demonstrate high levels of loyalty and commitment to the women and children in shelter and those receiving non-residential services, but discouraged from developing their personal lives and families. By asking advocates to separate their public (work) and private lives and careers, the DVC did not meet the federal minimum for the number of employees to provide maternity leave under the Family Medical Leave Act and did not voluntarily provide such employment protection.
(personal) lives, the domestic violence shelter organization is reproducing a patriarchal ideology that separates market-driven lives and lives focused on care work (Bentovim 2002).

In response to the disembodiment of laborers, particularly care workers, there is a “care movement” that seeks to mend this division between care and work and re-embody workers (Folbre 2001; Stone 2000). While the care movement seeks to highlight the importance of care and care work in capitalist societies, we must also recognize that the very emergence of “care work” is a contradiction. Providing care has historically been a service, not a job. Decreased social service support from federal, state, and local governments, non-profit organizations has led to the marketability of care workers. In a gendered neoliberal, capitalist system, the care workers are primarily women. The women care workers are perceived by political economic structures as:

...An unlimited supply of unpaid female labour, able to compensate for any adverse changes resulting from macro-economic policy, so as to continue to meet the basic needs of their families and communities to sustain them as social organizations (Elson 1994: 42).

The advent of care work has turned into a transnational market, as women migrate to the United States to provide domestic care to professional women and families working in the public sphere (Acker 2004; Colen 1995; Glenn 1999).

For domestic violence advocates, their role as disembodied workers is very similar to the disembodiment of other careworkers. Individuals who choose a human service professional job are usually motivated by a commitment to “care for” the population they serve- whether it is the elderly, people living with HIV/AIDS, or victims of domestic violence. People enter carework jobs because they are committed to the population, yet they are then asked to distance themselves from the individuals they work with, oftentimes using the language of professional boundaries (discussed further in Chapter Eight). This separates workers from the very reason they sought carework positions to begin with. However, there is also a difference between domestic violence advocacy and other forms of carework. The first domestic violence advocates were domestic violence victims themselves, so the careworker was also being cared for. Today, domestic violence advocates dealing with the issue of being asked to separate themselves from their work are also negotiating a historic transition in domestic violence work itself.

**Participating in the Coordinated Community**

The DVC operates within a specific coordinated community with multiple discourses about partnership. As shown above, partnerships in this community are rooted in the unequal resource and service distribution among the service providers. The DVC advocates were hoping to restore their positions in the coordinated community by becoming more professional in their advocacy work. During my fieldwork, I witnessed two primary shifts in the coordinated community. First, I observed a shift in the way the shelter advocates participated in the community’s coordination to provide services to victims of domestic violence. Second, I noticed and learned how the community itself adapted to the closing of the BWP and what the members of that community of service providers desired for the future of the network.

The BWP fostered partnerships with the members of the coordinated community through the Former Director. The Former Director would go out into the community, advocate for the BWP amongst other service providers, solicit donations, and conducted publicity for the BWP shelter. The BWP Director was the primary mechanism for partnering with the coordinated community as a result of her position but also out of necessity. The BWP
advocates were unable to work partnership building into their schedules. When I interviewed Monica at the BWP, she told me:

I’m not on any domestic violence councils or anything like that because I don't know how to do that. I would love to do that, but I can't get out of here. It's very hard and very frustrating, because I’ve got to deal with whatever goes on up there [on the residential floor] and all the crisis counselors to try to give support to them, so it's kind of hard to get out of the building.

Often even when Women’s Advocates were scheduled to attend meetings out of the building, an emergency or situation often prevented them from doing so.

The advocates noticed a different role in the development of community partnerships between the community of service providers at the DVC. Previously the advocates in the Outreach Department built those partnerships, however, the Executive Director of the DVC acquired that role. While advocates participated in the shelter work, the Executive Director was participating in the external, non direct-service related work. This left the advocates feeling “left out” of the process of community partnership building, which was previously an activity that advocates were primarily responsible for and invested a great deal of personal pride in. I found examples of this throughout interviews with DVC advocates. Shortly before Julie announced her resignation from the DVC, we talked about the advocates’ feelings of disconnection with the community:

I guess I just feel like the Executive Director is out there in the community. She's trying to get all these things set up and trying to get the building and make contacts, and get things started. And work with the board. And I feel like she's really left the shelter stuff up to the staff and I think she trusts that we're going to get the job done. And that's it! I don't feel like it’s my role to do that [build partnerships with the community] or it’s going to be my role in the future even necessarily.

Julie’s words, and the voices of many other shelter advocates, told a story of removal from the front lines of partnership building. Participating in the process of developing relationships in a network of service providers was no longer a role that the shelter advocates occupy, instead the advocates fulfilled the needs of the women through those partners. The paradox in the advocates’ restricted role was interesting, as the program’s leadership expected advocates to work with partners to fill the needs of the women but they were not actively building those partnerships at community meetings.

**Participation and the Feminist Social Movement**

Advocates working at the local level in the field of domestic violence are participating in a larger feminist social movement. Social movements are “collective challenges to existing arrangements of power and distribution by people with common purposes and solidarity, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities” (Meyer and Tarrow 1998: 4). New social movements are groups of interacting individuals who share a motive, a common inspirational source and/or a goal to achieve a social or cultural objective. “Old” social movements are deeply rooted in class and labor struggles, while “new” social movements are “identified with counterculture” and place cultural or social change at the fore of their agenda (Touraine 1985: 740). New social movements embrace a motivation to include “alternative” ways of expressing both social and cultural aspects of life. In other words, new social movements shift the focus away from identifying only a labor struggle as the impetus for mobilization and expand to create changes in the quality of every day life for people. This includes the domestic violence social movement.
Domestic violence advocates and activists comprise a group that is constantly engaging with the feminist social movement and are therefore sites of social reproduction for the feminist social movement ideologies. The participants I worked with in this community explicitly spoke of a larger “feminist social movement” when asked to trace the roots of their participation in domestic violence work. Furthermore, they so closely identified with the goals of the creating gender equality that they were willing to make profound personal sacrifices in the pursuit of empowering women. These points are explored below.

As noted in earlier chapters of this dissertation, the feminist social movement is a multifaceted, multi-vocal, multi-national movement that is different for many different women, particularly for women of different racial and socioeconomic status backgrounds. However, when the domestic violence advocates talked about the “movement,” they did not recognize these multiplicities. Rather, they viewed the feminist social movement as a unifying, imagined community that provided a source of inspiration and motivation for their work.

“I Love Being Part of A Bigger Movement”

Advocates expressed their connection to the movement by tracing the roots of their advocacy to “the movement” or “the cause.” They saw their commitment to the feminist social movement, often accessed through a Women's Studies course or professor in college, as the motivation for becoming a domestic violence advocate. For example, Leslie traced the roots of her work in the feminist social movement to her own upbringing and education. She said, “My parents in their own way like instilled in me ideas of social justice and that those were, that was important. And so in college I pretty early on became involved in feminist activism and working for egalitarianism and equal rights in general. And then I decided to petition to become first women’s studies major at my university. I see this as part of my life work of working with women who have been violated because they live in a patriarchal society that thinks it’s okay to violate women's bodies, to control them.” The people who spoke with me were participating in the feminist social movement as domestic violence advocates (including oral history participants) because they “believe in the cause,” “they care about the cause and they care about helping people more than the money,” and they are “driven by the cause.”

Oral history participants also traced their inspiration for participating in the feminist social movement and the domestic violence social movement specifically in their school experiences. Gina, an oral history participant who worked as a victim advocate in the judicial system, shared her story of coming to victim assistance work:

It’s kind of a long story. In my sophomore year of college, I took a Women’s Studies course and we had a speaker come out to one of our classes from the rape crisis center. And I really liked what they had to say and was very interested. She kind of plugged the Rape Crisis Center and the fact that they need volunteers, and actually said that they had a training coming up for volunteers. I thought, “Wow, I’d sort of like to get involved in that. That’s something I want to do.” And so I went for an interview and went through the training process to be a volunteer with the Rape Crisis Center… So I volunteered with the Rape Crisis Center, and then I graduated from college and put some resumes out, and just got lucky and ended up here [as a victim assistant]. So somebody recommended me to here, and it’s just kind of one of those strange things that just kind of happened.

The consistency in both the domestic violence advocates and the oral history participants indicates that they found their roots in the feminist social movement in their schooling.
Advocates were fiercely protective of the feminist shelter movement and their role within it. They framed many of their experiences in terms of the movement, seeking the companionship and support of those who advocated before them and those who advocate in the future by using the language of the movement and the cause. One particular advocate, Mindy, was constantly justifying her position at the BWP, and then later the DVC, by referring to her relationship with the movement. I asked her, “Why did you want to come work here?”

Because I believe in the cause. I did a practicum at a BWP, and loved it and loved the work, and that kind of got me going in social work and doing work with women primarily in non-profit agencies. And then when I came here, I started doing rape crisis line and then when a position opened here for part-time crisis counselor, I applied, because I love the work that I do. I love working with the women. I love being part of a bigger movement. That is something that's close to my heart and I feel very politically motivated about.

She speaks of the larger “movement” as an old friend and a partner, using words reserved for close personal relationships such as “love” and “heart.” After college (and exposure to Women's Studies and other feminist ideologies), the domestic violence shelter became a site for experiencing oneself as part of the larger feminist social movement.

Wendy also likened her domestic violence work as a good friend, saying, “Silly as it sounds, I've only been here 3 months. It's like when you meet somebody and become good friends with them and then you can't remember not knowing them.” She said that she is “so deep into the cause and so deep into what I’m doing here all the time” that she dreams about her job as a domestic violence advocate.

An oral history participant, who did not work in the domestic violence shelter environment but carried a caseload that partially consisted of domestic violence victims, placed her own work in the feminist social movement as well as recognized her role in a long history of feminist activism. I asked her what motivates her to work in domestic violence advocacy:

I think it's partly a personal thing, it affects so many women and so many children, so I feel like it's just important to take part in changing lives and part of a larger movement to, that truly does change people's lives on a really basic level. I feel connected to the larger movement over time through. Especially starting in the seventies as this started, these shelters started popping up and women were really working to spread, I guess, started to advocate for, starting to advocate for other women and really get the word out that this was going on in so many homes. And women started organizing for a change. And I feel like it's part of- decades now- of change for women trying to better women’s lives.

The domestic violence shelter advocates and the oral history participants I interviewed explicitly placed their work in the terms of the feminist social movement. They felt that they were a part of the larger feminist social movement community. The language of dedicated commitment to a relationship with the feminist social movement is common among feminist activists (Hyde 1994). This closeness and intimacy contributes to the receptiveness of local level actors in the feminist social movement to the messages of the movement, particularly messages about the benefits of professionalization.

“For the Sake of the Movement”

During the closing of the BWP and after the DVC opened, everyone involved in domestic violence service provision expressed that the closing of the BWP was for the “sake of the movement.” It was something that had to occur because the BWP itself, its structure, the
services the program provided, and its mismanagement were impeding the progress of the very movement that created it. Sometimes this idea was expressed in terms of what was “best for the women” and other times it was explicitly discussed.

For the domestic violence advocates, their work was not “just a job.” Their role as a domestic violence advocate is a part of their identity. Take for example the way that Mona articulates her relationship to the feminist social movement. Mona, an elder to the other advocates, worked full time as a social worker and came to work at the BWP for extra money. She talked to me about her reasons for continuing her advocacy work and her very strong and inspiring relationship with the domestic violence movement. We started out talking about her ex-husband’s reaction to meeting the team of advocates at a social event. She laughed as she whispered to me:

My ex-husband never had seen women act like that before. But now he thinks I'm a feminist. I think I am too! I used to think that was sort of a bad word, but it’s not. It's just being a woman. And standing up for who you are. It’s just being comfortable with who I am, and standing up for what I believe in. I've always done everything to avoid controversy. But now I say, bring it on honey. Bring it on! You guys taught me that.

She found a relationship with the feminist social movement through her advocacy work. She was welcomed into the imagined community at a stage in her life when she could look back and recognize her contributions and struggles within the movement. She recognized that she identified with the domestic violence shelter movement today but that throughout her life she was engaged in feminist struggles, which now influence and guide her advocacy work. The feminist social movement provided the inspiration for many advocates, including the DVC’s Assistant Director, Janine:

So what makes you come in? There is something unique about this work, it will compel people to come in because they do feel part of the community. They feel part of the movement. And that feeling of being that community that’s bigger than you compels you to do things and to justify your individual behavior because of something larger that isn’t tangible very often.

The process of identity building is common among actors in the feminist social movement as an identity centered social movement. This paradigm acknowledges that conflicts do not solely arise in the political realm or between opposing sides; rather, struggles occur in everyday cultural and social life over the creation and maintenance of identity. In other words, the identity-centered paradigm recognizes the struggles (for equal participation, recognition, and protection) against forms of domination in public, private, and social life (Cohen 1985). Collective identities form to solicit or promote participation of actors with common interests or goals. Furthermore, the “creation of identity occurs through collective interaction itself” (Cohen 1985: 692). Collective identity and collective action intertwine- a collective action implies a collective identity and collective identity implies collective action. Collective action is defined as “the capacity of human societies to develop and alter their own orientations- that is, to generate their normativity and objectives” (Cohen 1985: 699). The feminist social movement rallies around the collective identity of “female” and participates in collective action for women’s equality and liberation. Furthermore, a feminist perspective might argue that “collective identities form the mortar for negotiating power relations in women’s lives” (Abrahams 1996: 793).

Since the advocates did not see their work as separate from their identity, they were able to frame the closing of the BWP and the changes they influenced as a personal
contribution to the overall feminist social movement. They recognized themselves as both participants and forces of social change, not simply a people being laid off due to the facility’s closing. Their collective identity rooted in the feminist social movement surfaced contributed to their greatest sacrifice - willingly giving up their financial livelihood as an action that would further the goals of the overall movement.

Monica articulated this notion during an interview during the BWP closing period. I asked her what she thought about the closing of the domestic violence shelter and what she imagined the future would hold. She said:

Everything will be better, and am I going to be at peace for knowing that. And to know I had some part because I don’t think if it wasn’t for us bringing up things that we didn’t know about or bringing them to the forefront of everyone’s attention, this wouldn’t be happening today. It would not. And I think we took a part in that and we know that we've made things better for people and we know we're not going be a part of that in the future. We did that. And what we’ve done as staff to help these women, I know I can take comfort in that.

As participants in the feminist social movement, the domestic violence advocates and activists I worked with expressed their commitment to empowering women and promoting gender equality through their positions. They explicitly incorporate the feminist social movement ideology into their own identities. At the local level, the domestic violence advocates and activists look to the feminist social movement for guidance and inspiration.

Summary

This chapter has examined the levels of participation regarding domestic violence advocacy. There are constant tensions between domestic violence advocates and the women, the shelter organization, and the coordinated community about who gets to participate, their level of participation, and negotiating mechanisms for increased participation. Inherent in gatekeeping practices of who gets to participate and when is the fact that power is unequally distributed. However, to understand the domestic violence advocates’ tensions and struggles with participation, we must link their overall participation in the domestic violence social movement with their commitment to the feminist social movement.

The importance of properly fostering investment with regards to participation among the domestic violence advocates is increasingly important, as the advocates felt that by allowing them to participate in decision-making it symbolized their importance in the organization. Furthermore, investing the power to participate in the organization is one small way the agency can restore value to care work in an oppressive neoliberal political economy. When constraints are exerted upon the local level from multiple directions, this dissertation data indicates that value can be added into the frontline workers’ lives in small, but meaningful ways. For example, including domestic violence advocates in the creation of shelter rules and guidelines that they will be asked to enforce as part of their job descriptions. Alternatively, this data indicates the importance of following through on promises, such as that of a benefits package.

However, as I mentioned in the introduction, struggles over who participates and at what points in the process fail to recognize the larger political economic structures that may dictate patterns of participation. Without recognizing that funding shortages prevent the DVC from offering the support of a life coach, the advocates are left resenting the organization’s leadership. Without understanding sponsor demands for outcome measures and clear indications that shelter guidelines (“participation agreements”) are being followed, frontline
workers become frustrated with their administrators. Therefore, without recognizing or understanding the macrostructural pressures, frontline workers and administrators are viewed as opposing sides, when in fact they are often both workings towards the same goals.

**Four Women**

As an active researcher and advocate, I often crossed the line between “objective anthropologist” and domestic violence advocate. In the following excerpt from both my fieldnotes and interview data with Monica, I expose the daily tensions and pressures of participation. Advocates enforce participation guidelines they are not responsible for creating, and the ways they enforce those guidelines is inconsistent. At the end of the day, decisions about who gets to participate fall on the shoulders of individuals working in shelter.

*We were working a second shift at the transitional DVC facility. At shift change, the first shift advocate informed us that two of the residents did not return the previous evening. The rules, the policies, and the advocate team would expect us to depart the two women from the shelter.*

*About 9:00 p.m. in the evening, after we had each conducted a women’s support group and a children’s group, the two residents returned to shelter. When they entered the shelter, we indicated to each of them that we would like to speak with them individually in the crisis office. We did not have to tell them that they violated the overnight rule, they already understood and had witnessed the routine performed for other residents.*

*We brought them each into the office individually and listened to their stories. The two women cried, pleading with us to not depart them. They made promises about their future behavior. Each of them pointed out to us the steps they have taken to heal from their abusive relationships. After we heard their stories, we told the women that we would need to discuss the situation in private.*

*Once we closed the door, I turned to the advocate working with me. I asked her about the history of the “overnight rule” and how advocates enforced it through time. She traced the enforcement of this rule, as well as several others regarding residents, to the work of an advocate who had since left the shelter. The advocates held a Master’s degree in Counseling, which was the highest degree held by the shelter staff. She brought with her a toolbox of professional knowledge and attention to the details of service provision that focused on accountability for both the residents and the organization.*

*My coworker told me, “The participation agreements started with clients and they were held accountable for their actions and they knew what was going happen if it happened again. And it was kind of like a safety net for us to make sure we do what we're supposed to do and then it graduated to participation agreements. And if they were not complying to guidelines or were being abusive, we would sign another participation agreement and then depending on how many there were, then they were asked to leave.”*

*I asked her, “What about when you have a resident who's gone more than twenty four hours?” Such as the two we have to deal with this evening, I thought.*

*“I struggle with that today, always have. I feel twenty-four hours, if you're not here, you don't have a safety issue. But then I've had to look at it, why were they gone? Maybe they had to go to work and maybe perp found them and maybe he wouldn't let her go, and maybe she’s too ashamed to tell me that or afraid that we'll be mad at her.”*

*“Yeah,” I nodded, understanding her point, but also concerned about the possibilities of manipulating the services provided.*
“So there's this whole other way of thinking that you have to look at it. But then who is using or abusing the system. Once we had a resident who was gone for twenty-four hours and I knew we were closing, so I probably didn’t strictly follow the rule. I said, if you're not going be here, if you're not going stay here, you can't be here. And you have to come back knowing that. If you're not going to stay here, you're going have to go somewhere else, because that’s not the purpose and we’re talking about a safety issue. And she's kind of, well, I was in danger and my family was in danger. I was like, you needed to come back here. Well I had no ride. Well, you need to call us and we’ll call the police. Well, he knows the policemen. We would have found you a way to come back, there's no excuse for that. The twenty-four hour rule is difficult, and that's why we debated across the state overnight passes. We used to give overnight passes for the weekend, and that became a problem because they wanted it all the time.”

“Okay,” I said, thinking this all seems reasonable to discuss, yet in practice advocates make decisions based on individual situations.

She continued, “So we eliminated that and made it to twenty four hours. If they're not back within twenty four hours, they are departed. Well, what happens if call?. Then there’s a big discussion, if they call is it ok? Can we just extend it? But then it was, twenty-four hours and that's it. I don’t care if there are phone calls.”

She sighed, “And that's been as struggle for me as a supervisor and as an advocate. You just kind of have to assess the situation and what's best for the client, knowing what's best for everyone else. Sometimes I don't see a reason about it and that can be very difficult, making a decision on whether somebody needs to be referred on because are you sending them back to change their situation. Or what? So it's ambiguity, and that's where I think I’m not sure this works. And that's where the twenty four hours rule needs to be enforced a little bit better or, I don't know, maybe there shouldn’t be twenty four hours, maybe if you're not back by noon the next day, you're gone. And some shelters don't even have that policy, they just move them onto the couch or they sleep on the floor and make room for new residents that come in.”

I considered this history of the twenty-four hour rule and asked, “What about the thirty day stay policy?” This policy is now abandoned.

“I think when that was in effect, it was lot more structured and I think goals were met more often. But I think some goals were not met and some clients were not getting what they needed.”

“What weren’t they getting?”

“Advocacy, as far as getting all their options. And certain workers were not meeting with clients and they were just putting it off.”

And now here we are. The DVC does not have a 30-day maximum stay, nor does any other shelter in the state where I conducted this fieldwork. However, the shelter did ask the women to sign a Resident Agreement during the intake process and the agreement states residents are to stay at the shelter overnight. We talked for quite a while that evening about the rules and guidelines advocates enforce among the residents. Together, we applied the history of these rules to the present situation, and added the individual accomplishments of each resident. We recognized that as advocates, we are to depart the two women because they did not follow the guidelines set forth. We surmised that other advocates might admonish us if we did not follow the guidelines we set forth.
For a moment the weight of our decision made it hard for me to breathe. These unspeakably profound moments become normal as an advocate. You actually have a person’s future in your hands and you have to make a decision about that person based on the factors before you. Do you abide strictly to the rules? Do you follow your heart? Do you trust your own instincts? Do you force people to make promises? Do you believe the excuses? Do you question the structure? Do you pass the decision on to the next shift? Do you understand the weight of your decision?
CHAPTER EIGHT
SEPARATION AND UNIFICATION IN PROFESSIONALIZATION

I think when you are representing them [the women] and advocating for them, I think that's different. Because you work where they live. And I think that in order to advocate for them, and give them the quality of services, you do have to step up that appearance. You do have to wear the suit; you do have to wear the skirt, because if you were in jeans and a t-shirt you would be thrown out of court. Or you wouldn't have that same respect and that's not good advocacy work. And that's not to say those that wear skirts or suits to work in the shelter are not doing their job.

-Monica, Battered Women’s Program and Domestic Violence Center Advocate

Introduction

This chapter explores patterns towards professionalization in domestic violence advocacy. Professionalization, like power, possesses no universal definition or consistent indicator. However, at its most basic, it is a pattern of behaviors and attitudes that transforms individuals with respect to their vocation:

The professionalization process entails learning the appropriate theory and code of ethics, associating with the professional regulating body (i.e., professional engineers), and adjusting to or internalization the values, norms, and symbols of the professional culture…Transformation into a professional person requires adjustment to the culture, a process that consists of accepting certain values and norms and identifying with particular symbols. (Dryburgh 1999: 666, 668)

That professionalization is a process also allows for professionalization to exist as a continuum, ranging from unprofessional to very professional. This is consistent with the literature citing professionalization as a “developmental process” (Tjaden 1987: 41).

Basic tenets of professionalization posited in the literature seek to create consistent variables by which to measure professionalism. For example, drawing from Wilensky (1964), Underwood (2001) identifies five indicators of professionalization:

- The creation of a full time occupation
- The establishment of training
- The emergence of a professional association
- Gaining the support of law
- Adhering to code of ethics

These indicators, which operate at the organizational level, are complemented by signs of professionalization at the individual level, referred to as attitudinal professionalization (Hall 1968):

- Using the professional organization as a major point of reference
- Possessing a service orientation, such as service to the public
- Believing in self-regulation
- Possessing a sense of calling to the field
- Gaining autonomy

Using these potential variables have helped organizational theorists to understand where a group of workers exists on a continuum of professionalism.

The literature also identifies several nuances with regards to the professionalization process. First, since many professions are gendered (such as teaching, nursing, etc.), professionalization is also a gendered process (Dryburgh 1999). As a gendered process, we may find differences between men and women’s processes or attitudes towards
professionalization, as well as differences among genders with regards to the professionalization of a certain vocation. Another nuance of professionalization is that the process is sometimes bottom up but also sometimes top down (Neal and Morgan 2000). The source of professionalization is therefore inconsistent, it can either originate from either pressures from above, pressures from below, or a combination of multiple pressures. A third prominent theme with regards to professionalization is that it is contested in nature, as “within any professionalizing occupation there will be segmentation and conflict, both within and between various subgroups of the occupation” (Tjaden 1987: 42).

Examining the professionalization of various vocations is popular in the social science literature (Halmos 1973). Studies have analyzed the professionalization of the system of biomedicine (Good 1994; Good and Good 1993), the nursing profession (Melosh 1982), and the professionalization of midwifery and childbirth (Borst 1995; Fletcher 2003; Tjaden 1987). Studies have also analyzed the professionalization of the discipline of anthropology (Kuklick 1993; Loewen 2005). Recently, gender has become a focus in professionalization studies of several vocations, such as the biomedical sciences and mathematics (Smyth, et al. 1999; Witz 1992), and the psychological effect on women as they increasingly enter professional organizations (Nicolson 1996).

Recently, the question of professional domestic violence advocacy has witnessed increased attention. Providing advocacy and assistance to victims of violence against women is undergoing a transition towards a more professional, business model of care work. Professionalization is often perceived as the next “natural” step in advocacy, for example, one Victim Assistance website states:

> The task for the emerging profession of victim assistance is to define the components and aspects of the profession, assess the extent of professionalization already achieved, and develop strategies to achieve further progress (Alabama Crime Victims Compensation Commission 2005).

In essence, this chapter responds to this statement by defining the components domestic violence advocates identify as measures of professionalization, the extent to which these measures are in place, and the strategies domestic violence advocates are engaged in with regards to professionalization.

In addition to the organizational studies of professionalization, feminist scholars have considered the move towards professionalization and the effects on women’s organizations, including domestic violence shelter programs. After the elimination of grant programs, such as the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) funding (previously mentioned in Chapter Four), domestic violence shelter programs were faced with questions about their future identities as they sought funding for their programs. One question was that of organizational structure and mission: Were domestic violence shelter programs to focus on social change/activism or adopt a “mental health frame of reference” (Tice 1990)? In addition, should the structural organization of the program focus on a bureaucratic model or a collectivist model of advocacy and activism?

Indeed, the answers to these questions are numerous. While some feminist scholars decry the move towards a bureaucratic, mental health model of domestic violence service delivery (Collins and Whalen 1989; Rodriguez 1988), others note the successful accounts of domestic violence shelter programs that have adopted a professional organizational structure in terms of stability (Staggenborg 1988) and ability to obtain funding.
In general, the literature characterizes formal or bureaucratic organizational structures as non-feminist or women-centered. The professionalization of violence against women advocacy services places a professional organization model as dissimilar to the “early movement” and neglectful by not recognizing “patriarchal power.” The characteristics of professionalization are therefore a feminist concern:

...The bureaucratic organization of public life directly controls the work of most women who hold jobs outside the home and affects the entire society in a way that is antithetical to the goals of feminist theory and practice, it is a crucial target of feminist concern (Ferguson 1984: 4).

Oftentimes, a bureaucratic organizational model is presented in opposition to a women-centered organizing model (Stall and Stoecker 1998). Indeed, feminist organizations that adopt a “counterbureaucratic structure may represent a more rational form of organization than bureaucracy” (Rodriguez 1988: 214).

The following data indicates that the question of professionalization of the domestic violence shelter social movement continues to figure into daily advocacy work. However, contrary to the literature that depicts the struggle over professionalization and feminist philosophies as oppositional, the domestic violence advocates I worked with saw themselves as uniting the two models to provide the best advocacy services to domestic violence victims. Furthermore, they cite the benefits of professionalization in their feminist practice mentioned in the literature, such as organizational stability (Markowitz and Tice 2002) and the usefulness of special skills (such as drug or alcohol abuse counseling) (Rodriguez 1988).

The debate concerning the benefits and dangers of professionalizing domestic violence advocates continues to rage in the United States and abroad. While the academic literature and activist literature rage against trends to professionalize, at the local level tensions arise as the domestic violence advocates and activists process multiple, paradoxical messages about their increasing professionalism. For instance, the introduction of the rhetoric of “boundaries” allowed the advocates to justify separating their personal lives from their professional advocacy, but those boundaries often frustrate both the victims and the advocates because it reconfirmed a division between the two groups of women. Additionally, there is an unequal distribution of power between the advocates and the victims, visible in the language of “professional boundaries.” However, the organization acted to promote a message of professionalization to the advocates through an emphasis on credentials and previous work experience in a domestic violence shelter. Additionally, the domestic violence shelter advocates received a strong message in favor of professionalizing their work from the community of service providers. Finally, I argue that the advocates also received a message about the positive benefits of professionalizing advocacy work from the feminist social movement.

**Professionalization and Boundaries**

“Boundaries” are a way for human service providers to create physical, social, and/or personal distance between themselves and their clients. As I previously alluded, boundaries have effectively justified disembodying frontline human service workers from their roles as careworkers. The boundaries that I witnessed during my fieldwork fell into two primary categories: physical boundaries and professional boundaries. Advocates learn the discourse of boundaries, the definitions of healthy boundaries, and the dangers of not maintaining boundaries in school. Similar to the ways in which advocates learn about the benefits of professionalism in their training, as social workers or women’s studies majors, the advocates
also learned about boundaries. I was exposed to the concept of “boundaries” repeatedly throughout my fieldwork, and I learned how to create and maintain them from the other advocates.

The physical boundaries between the residents and the advocates shifted from each of the three separate shelter facilities I observed. At the BWP, the advocates worked downstairs and the residents lived upstairs, creating a very distinct physical separation between the workers and the women. I asked Jill, a BWP part time Crisis Counselor, if she liked dividing the residents from the staff. She replied:

No. I think that it has its pros and cons. I don't like the segregated feeling because I think that there definitely could be an illusion of a power differential there, and I don't like that at all. We're trying to empower these women but yet we're setting up this division.

The division also fostered the maintenance of boundaries between the residents and the advocates, the distance indicated that there were workers and there were residents and the two populations were not the same. The difference was not only in the occupation of physical space, it was punctuated by the recognition that the advocates working downstairs had more access to resources (therefore power) than the women living upstairs.

At the DVC’s HAP location, the residents and the advocates occupied the same floor and coexisted in the common areas such as the kitchen or the community room simultaneously. The only space designated officially to the advocates was the office, which was not exclusive to the residents. On the other hand, the residents were not restricted in their use of space at the DVC HAP location. The freedom of the residents to move about the building placed the women in a position of power when it came to determining physical boundaries. For example, the advocates were encouraged to not enter a resident’s room without permission, placing the women in the authoritative role to grant permission to the advocates to move throughout the physical space of the building. The advocates’ spatial limitations symbolized the workers recognition that the facility was “the residents’ home” whereas for the advocates it was a place to go to work- and leave at the end of the shift.

After living and working “on top of each other” with limited space at the HAP location, the DVC moved to The Farm. This location created yet another set of physical boundaries between the residents and the advocates. In the spacious facility, the building’s bedrooms were located down long hallways and away from the main office and the Family Advocates. The advocates noted after moving to The Farm that “we hardly even see the women anymore!” Since the facility is so spacious, there was little competition for “ownership” over the common areas because if one community room television was already in use, a resident could simply use the other community room. However, since the “residential areas” are located away from the advocate areas (such as the main office), the amount of interaction between the residents and the advocates decreased after the DVC moved to The Farm. The creation of physical boundaries became present once again.

Furthermore, boundaries are created in a non-physical sense through interpersonal measures. In an interview with Wendy, a new Family Advocate with the DVC, she mentioned the maintenance of boundaries as a sign that advocacy is increasingly professionalized. I asked her to define “boundaries” in her work. Wendy told me:

Basically a boundary is that line between professionalism and becoming maybe too close with a client. It's keeping up that wall of- okay, we're not friends. I have to be the professional and you are the client. Even though in some ways it doesn't always
feel that way because it's a residential facility. Boundaries are hard, I think harder in a residential facility than maybe just in a counseling session. So I think it's extra important to make sure you're keeping up those boundaries in a place where they can easily be crossed. So that's it, mapping out where you stand and where the client stands in the relationship. I think individually you have to find that line of where their life ends and your personal slash professional life begins. I don't know, I struggle with this, like getting wrapped up in a particular person's problems and separating that from you personally but still advocating for them and still wanting better for that client.

Professional boundaries require advocates to actively separate themselves from the residents and clients they serve. As one domestic violence shelter advocate explained, to have a professional boundary as an advocate is to “not really befriend them [the residents]. Not go out with them outside of work. Not disclose personal information to clients.”

Advocates described “good” boundaries as clearly indicating to the residents that they were advocates and not their friends. To create and maintain this boundary, the advocates I spoke with placed emphasis on a number of behaviors that might compromise those boundaries. For example, it was a violation of boundaries to discuss the advocates’ or residents’ personal lives with the residents. Bonnie brought to my attention that the clients sometimes know “personal information about staff that they shouldn't have any business knowing.” Bonnie spoke about this particular situation, which involved an advocate’s marriage relationship, saying, “And I'm questioning how they know it. I don't know if staff is telling them or if staff is talking to staff and residents overhear it. So that's a big issue. I hear some of these residents talk to me about staff, about things that I don't even know is going on with staff. Just stuff that they shouldn't know at all. So that's definitely professionalism.”

Every domestic violence advocate and activist I spoke with discussed the importance of maintaining good boundaries with their clients. Boundaries are good because they are thought to promote “the emotional and physical safety of residents and staff” and they allow the advocates to provide “objective” services to the women. Good, clear boundaries allow the advocates to step back from the emotionally charged environment in which they work to determine the best strategies to provide services. The language of boundaries often serves to justify an unrealistic goal of maintaining objectivity when providing domestic violence services.

In addition, boundaries were repeatedly associated with “being professional.” Advocates viewed colleagues who do not maintain clear, strong boundaries as “unprofessional” or “lacking professionalism.” The advocates argued that showing your emotions as detrimental to professional boundaries, especially when those emotions are negative towards the residents, the advocates, or the organization. Rachel’s words summarize this attitude towards boundaries:

Being an advocate I think you want to be an empathetic counselor but you also want to be able to be professional and not focus all of your needs on a certain few clients. Be available to everyone. I think dealing with frustration, sometimes with some of the advocates isn't professional or appropriate. I know we all get frustrated, but when you relay that frustration to a woman in crisis, sometimes it makes for an even worse situation.

Boundaries allow the advocates to veil their emotions under the rhetoric of professionalism.

Yet, advocacy work in a shelter merged together with the lives of real women as they were thrown together into a community space and required to live under the guidelines of
people they are not familiar with— the DVC advocates. Tempers ran wild, emotions became confused, crying was common— there were emotions everywhere in the atmosphere. To expect the advocates to always remain emotionless was not always reasonable, and I witnessed numerous times when advocates did not meet this expectation (even advocates with reputations for having “the best boundaries”).

Additionally, throughout the different domestic violence shelter programs that were the focus of this fieldwork, I noticed advocates change their approaches to boundaries. Monica, who relinquished the title as the “most closed off advocate” after the transition to the DVC, reflected on her own “professional” transformation. Monica told me:

At the other place [the BWP] I was very professional and I didn't discuss my personal life. I was very closed off because that's what I was taught in school. But now I try and to see them as women and not just clients. You get the whole aspect of it. You have to give a little bit and be willing to share a little bit. But that's difficult.

She learned from different leaders in the shelter programs that there was a balance to seek when creating boundaries between advocates and the residents— but that she would still have to remain professional in renegotiating her boundaries. Furthermore, her words reflect earlier grassroots ideas of domestic violence advocacy of “women helping women.”

Boundaries are a clear way to delineate the difference between the “professional” advocate and the “help seeking” resident or client. The advocates learned about boundaries early in their careers, often before entering a practicum or internship experience. In their work, the advocates strived to maintain the boundaries between themselves and the residents to provide quality, objective services. This expectation was overwhelming at times, when advocates encountered a variety of clients with different needs and stories. Nevertheless, the advocates perceived boundaries as “good” and associated them with being professional, a goal that advocates also strived towards.

This dissertation does not present the reaction to increasingly professionalized services from the domestic violence victims, however, domestic violence victims and shelter residents have voiced their criticisms on the World Wide Web and through feminist popular media (especially “zines”). These reactions assert that the domestic violence social movement’s professionalized model of service provision is “disloyal to feminism” (Koyama 2003) because the domestic violence shelter industry asserts power over domestic violence victims in a way that revictimizes women. In addition, the “professionalized” domestic violence social movement is criticized for preventing women in need of shelter from accessing services who have:

…substance abuse issues, homeless women, women with mental illnesses, women who are HIV-positive, women who won’t attend parenting classes, women with physical disabilities, women who don’t want protective orders, women who won’t submit to drug tests and searches (Dorian 2001: 24).

Former victims and self-identified radical feminists have denounced the move towards a professional relationship between domestic violence advocate and resident, and often assert a solution to the problem of boundaries and difference:

The Feminists…gathered the wounded advocates together, along with those that had remained true to the original battered women’s movement and they wiped out the mainstream professionals and wicked taskmasters with a flood of tears that came from the broken hearts of battered women and wounded advocates from all over the world (Gaddis 2001: 15).
It is apparent that the domestic violence advocates I worked with during my fieldwork are negotiating a contested and difficult terrain in their relationships with the women.

It is also clear that the move towards professional boundaries, their creation and upkeep, is a new phenomena in domestic violence advocacy and other forms of carework. Business model expectations from funders and sponsors stress the importance of an experienced, skilled workforce to work with domestic violence victims. Organizations now embody this expectation, by mandating certain education credentials and experiences from their frontline workers. Thus, both the macrostructural and organizational levels act as agents of disembodiment for their workers. Boundaries force domestic violence advocates to separate themselves from the women and children they serve, even if shared experiences exist.

The Credentialing of Advocacy

When the feminist social movement incorporated the issue of domestic violence, activists and researchers devised the cycle of violence model to understand the phenomena of domestic violence. The cycle of violence model requires the intervention of a person to assist a woman in leaving her abusive partner. The people, primarily women, who serve as the intervention agents in ending interpersonal cycles of violence are the domestic violence advocates. Over time, the characteristics of domestic violence advocates have changed as a result of domestic violence organization’s employment requirements.

For the first 2 decades of the domestic violence shelter movement, the domestic violence advocates were very different from today’s domestic violence advocates. The advocates were primarily former victims themselves, who broke through the cycle of violence and emerged from an abusive relationship to “help other women” like themselves break free. Joanna placed her own advocacy work in this history:

… I think of the women who first opened shelters, who were displaced homemakers, women off the street, survivors, who opened the door and found some way to provide food, network among other homes and other women and things like that. But it was really about women helping women, and that we’re no different than the people we’re trying to help.

The women who served as advocates harbored women in “safe houses” and not the multi-bed domestic violence shelters common today. Leslie described the shift this way, “Thirty years ago it was just basically women or men that just felt the need to help people. And a lot of times they were upper society or whatever and felt like they needed to be helping quote/unquote lower society.”

Today, domestic violence organizations and other programs dedicated to addressing issues of violence against women expect that the staff hold certain professional credentials to engage in advocacy work. Essentially, in the relationship between the shelter advocates I worked with and the domestic violence organization, the DVC acted as a mechanism to establish and enforce credential requirements. The DVC enforced the credentialing of the domestic violence advocates through education expectations, by focusing on previous experience providing direct services to victims of domestic violence, and through the completion of certifications and training programs.

Education

The DVC uses minimum education requirements to enforce increased degree requirements for domestic violence advocates. The DVC required that advocates hold at least a Bachelor’s degree to qualify for employment. The shelter advocates working for both the BWP and the DVC were often women who had recently obtained a college degree. Their
degrees were in liberal arts, women’s studies, psychology, social work, and the Spanish language. These degree areas were all perceived conducive to pursuing the “direct services” in a domestic violence shelter. In addition, advocates viewed their degrees as necessary for gaining access across different systems. For example, Joanna mentioned the utility of holding a degree to establish domestic violence advocacy in the legal system as compared to historical domestic violence advocacy efforts:

… In the courtroom, you know 20 years ago we couldn’t get in the courtroom. No, 25 years ago you couldn’t get in the courtroom. Nobody was going to pay any attention to you, but if you have a degree then maybe you knew what you were talking about…

There were limitations to the types of professional degrees that the DVC employed. For example, none of the staff held a license, certification, or degree to conduct therapeutic counseling with the residents. The fact that the advocates were often referred to as “counselors” and they regularly wrote in client files that they engaged in “counseling” sometimes made the advocates uncomfortable. Bonnie was telling me about her job responsibilities and mentioned “individual counseling.” She then said:

I hate saying that because I’m not a counselor. And it feels so weird for me to say that because I feel like I’m saying something that’s not true. I guess because in my mind, if you’re a counselor, you have a degree to do it. You’ve been trained and licensed to do it. I guess that comes from my schooling.

During the period of application review at the DVC, the shelter advocates did not see a lot of resumes for individuals holding advanced degrees or credentials to conduct individual, therapeutic counseling. The shelter advocates recognized that those individuals did not often seek employment as a domestic violence advocate because of the low salary.

The advocates and oral historians I spoke with placed value on having a college degree or a higher degree to do domestic violence advocacy work. In the domestic violence activist literature, in interviews, and in focus groups, a degree symbolized legitimacy in domestic violence service provision. Degrees served as a “certification” in their right, indicating an individual’s qualified status to do domestic violence work.

During the interim period of the DVC when the shelter was at the HAP, the advocates talked about what they wanted in an Executive Director, naming things such as a “social work degree” or someone that has “geared their degree toward family.” When the DVC program moved to The Farm location, all advocates held a college degree and the Executive Director held a Master’s degree in the field of social work. However, she herself questioned the value of that degree in her everyday advocacy work, stating:

You know I think those of us in this work- including myself- for unknown reasons somewhere, somehow got bought into this whole process that you could make more money, you would be more visible to either the community or the government or when you do proper, it’s just the same reason I went and got a master’s degree because the grant requiring that. Did I want the Master’s degree at that time in my life, no. That’s fine. But that’s not the reason I did it and that sure didn’t make me good at this work or knowledgeable or an expert as far as understanding how to do this work. Not that degree. But in order to get money, in a lot of ways we professionalized in order to gain respect from the powers that be. And so we get educated and then we have programs and then they require that our program staff have education and it’s amazing to me how many advocates come in with a degree anymore.
However, the DVC did have minimum degree requirements for employment, for example an Bachelor’s degree for Family Advocates.

*Experience*

Another example I present is that of experience working with victims of domestic violence in a shelter environment. As the shelter advocates reviewed resumes for their future colleagues, repeatedly they preferred the candidates who possessed experience working shelters. In Emma’s oral history interview, she mentioned that there is “such a camaraderie when you’re working in shelter, there’s a difference.” Numerous applicants had extensive experience working with victims of domestic violence in a clinical setting or in a non-residential setting; however, the advocates on the hiring panels were looking for “shelter experience” and people who have “done the work.” Take for example my own entrée into the field site. As a researcher, I possessed an advanced degree (a Master’s in Arts) and research knowledge of violence against women. However, it was my ability to prove myself to the advocates and the Interim Director through “doing the work” that allowed me entrance into the advocate culture.

Advocates often joked that there were two types of people in the world: those who have worked in shelters and those who have not. Experience working in a shelter provided a level of authenticity and invoked a shared sense of struggle for the advocates. Similar to the shelter advocates’ expectations of hiring an Executive Director with a college degree, they sought someone who “had enough experience under their belt and has shown enough leadership to be able to lead a group of people because you really do have lives in your hands.” The qualification for “experience” among the advocates is narrowly defined as experience in a shelter, which may not always be in a domestic violence shelter, but definitely in a residential facility providing direct services to women.

By demanding prior (and sometimes substantial) experience among their colleagues, the shelter advocates sometimes excluded comrades in the struggle to address domestic violence. For example, when I returned to The Farm from the first module of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association’s Level I certification training, I mentioned to an advocate who the trainers were during the session. The advocate gave me a quizzical look and said, “She shouldn’t be doing that training, she doesn’t have enough shelter experience.” Notions of “shelter experience” were never clearly defined, but the general idea was that people who worked in shelter possessed a level of commitment that surpasses those who did not work in shelter.

In addition, the domestic violence shelter advocates created a difficult environment for fellow advocates who may want to leave “the work.” An oral history participant, Emma, recalled announcing to the shelter advocates she worked that she was resigning from her position at the shelter where she worked. “…People called me traitor the whole day,” she said, pointing to the fact that she had left shelter work as the impetus for the hostility.

The focus on previous shelter experience has taken hold in this advocate community with rapid speed. Considering it was only a few short decades ago that the domestic violence advocates were former victims, with no experience “working” in a shelter, the level of gatekeeping the advocacy work is surprising. However, it is also important to note that previous experience working in a shelter goes hand in hand with education and credentials, in that a person may have to possess education and credentials to enter into a shelter setting as a worker. Taken together, it is clear that women who are former victims are no longer perceived
as the experts in the field. Rather, domestic violence advocacy is reserved for those with college degrees and experience working in domestic violence shelters.

**Certifications and Training**

In addition to education and experience requirements, the DVC expected the shelter advocates to engage in the statewide domestic violence certification program. The DVC is responsible for ensuring that the shelter advocates obtain and subsequently maintain the mandatory certification for domestic violence advocacy. For all domestic violence shelter advocates working in the state, the completion of the first level, or Level I, of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association’s certification was mandatory within the first year of employment. The purpose of Level I certification was to learn the basics of working with victims of domestic violence, such as the cycle of violence model, the power and control wheel, methods of addressing crisis calls, and tips for working with diverse populations.

The BWP expected full time advocates to complete the Level I certification within 1 year, however, the BWP Former Director did not permit part time Crisis Counselors to attend the certification trainings. Furthermore, the BWP closed before many advocates could complete of their certification. Additionally, the BWP advocates did not feel adequate support or pressure to complete the Level I training. In Mindy’s words:

> They [the BWP] didn't put a lot of emphasis on training. As long as you were there and a warm body to answer the phone or to let people in the door or whatever. There really wasn't anything beyond that as far as expectations for staff or empowerment of staff. So the Level I, as much as I was really excited about it when I got the job, really excited about it, I think I lost all motivation to go above and beyond in that job because of the environment. I just wasn't empowered to do it. And there was no emphasis put on, "This is a really valuable training. And we really want you to have this. We see a future for you in this organization and go ahead and advance you're going to need this Level I training."

She did not feel that the support was present in the organization to motivate her to complete the training, nor did she feel the pressure to complete the mandatory training.

When the DVC opened, of the seven advocates present on the first day of operations only two were Level I certified domestic violence advocates. The Interim Director instructed the advocates working at the DVC delay pursuing Level I certification until the program became more stable and permanent. Once the DVC program moved to The Farm, the Executive Director expected the advocates to pursue their Level I certification in addition to their regular advocacy responsibilities. The expectation to complete Level I certification was codified in several shelter advocates’ 1 year evaluation. Advocates discussed this requirement in a focus group, pointing out the burden of completing training when the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association only conducted the certification modules during the day and an hour’s drive away.43

To maintain the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association’s Level I domestic violence advocacy certification, advocates must complete a minimum requirement of continuing training credits. There are numerous opportunities for fulfilling this requirement both in the county and across the state to fulfill this requirement. Often times the trainings are provided free of charge, and the training that require a fee are usually covered by the DVC. Again, the DVC leadership expected the advocates to complete their training hours throughout the year in addition to their regular job responsibilities. For example, third shift advocates might be

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43 Advocates were able to count training hours towards their timesheet hours.
expected to attend training after finishing an all night shift to meet the requirements for continuing education.

The advocates found the networking aspect of the Level I trainings to be the most useful in terms of learning about working in a domestic violence shelter. The shelter advocates learned about the practices of advocates in other shelters firsthand from other women doing “the work.” For instance, Monica talked about her experience attending the Level I modules:

The most helpful part was the connection. Going out and being with other advocates, learning how other shelters did things. So we talked a lot about other programs and what they were doing. I think it was just good because I didn't get a lot of information at the BWP. So it was good to be able to go to the Level I training and hear from people who were doing fantastic work across the state because I didn't really feel that was happening in our shelter.

The informal training that advocates pursued amongst each other, usually during the lunch hours and coffee breaks, was reportedly the most significant mechanism for learning about working in a domestic violence shelter.

An example of a training that I attended was a 2-day workshop about relationship violence, particularly among the adolescent population. Topics included bullying, safe dating practices, the creation of health boundaries, and ways to talk to teenagers about relationship violence and health relationships. The workshop location was 40 miles away from the DVC, and the DVC advocates commuted back and forth over the 2-day period. One advocate went to the workshop during the day and returned to The Farm that evening to work second shift.

At the workshop were shelter advocates from around the state as well as people who work with domestic violence services, such as police officers. Attendees to this training paid a registration fee of $200, which most of the participants’ organizations provided. While this training was not mandated by any grant requirements, shelter advocates were required to attend trainings throughout the year to maintain their Kentucky Domestic Violence Association certification.

The trainers provided workshop participants with information binders and presented a series of sessions within the workshop. In general, trainings were useful to the advocates, and this workshop was no exception. I learned the information I would need to train others (such as teachers or other advocates) to teach adolescents about relationship violence. In addition, I networked with other advocates and professionals in the field of domestic violence. After the training, advocates returned to their own shelters and did not interact except to call each other looking for available bed space in the state.

Professional Reputations and the Coordinated Community

The domestic violence advocates and activists I spoke with, whether they worked in the domestic violence shelter organization or with another organization that provided services to victims of violence against women, participated in a larger network of service providers. As discussed earlier, this network is the region’s own coordinated community. Individuals working in member organizations in this coordinated community participated in the process of creating and maintaining a community of service providers. The coordinated community model provides a network of resources and services in a field of work where scarcity persists.

As a community, there are constant shifts and transitions that the coordinated community of domestic violence service providers undergoes. As the BWP and the DVC opened, there was a noticeable difference in the accounts of the closure between the shelter advocates and the non-shelter advocates. The shelter advocates noticed the breech in their
relationship with the community of service providers, and they invoked a discourse of professionalization as the mechanism to restore this rift.

Throughout my discussions with both shelter and non-shelter domestic violence advocates and activists, I unearthed the presence of different perceptions of the coordinated community and different understandings of the BWP/DVC operations. These differences were primarily between the shelter advocates and the non-shelter community members. In the two sides of the same story, the lack of coordination and communication among the community of service providers is visible.

For example, when the BWP was undergoing the closing period, the shelter advocates felt “left out” of the discussions occurring among the coordinated community members. There were also a number of uncertainties regarding the future of the domestic violence organization and the shelter advocates’ positions, causing further tension. It left the shelter advocates feeling confused, as Erica complained:

Nobody will talk to us directly, and tell us what's going on. We hear one thing that was supposedly said from this someone in the community, or whoever. And we've heard something different from the Y, and something different from the Former Director.

And then there's articles in the paper that say something totally different.

The advocates expressed that they felt “things were out of control” amidst the multiple rumors they were presented with from different members of the community of service providers.

On the other hand, individuals working for organizations in the coordinated community disclosed a feeling of control and confidence amidst the closing of the BWP. It appeared that there were two streams of knowledge, that which was internal to the shelter advocates and that which rested in the larger community of service providers. One community partner summarized her knowledge of the future of domestic violence services in the region in an interview, saying:

You know we had the meeting over at the Homeless Assistance Program, we all knew what was going down. There wasn't any question about what was going on within the community of domestic violence providers. It can't be a secret when you're providing direct services.

Yet, the advocates working the BWP shelter expressed that they felt the future was a secret, and that they did not have knowledge of the future. The multiple messages they received confused and frustrated them as they went about providing services to victims on a daily basis until the shelter’s closing. After the BWP closed, it became clear to the shelter advocates that they would have to restore their place in the coordinated community. The difference between perceptions of the BWP closing illustrates the rift between the shelter advocates and the community of service providers.

Building a “Professional Reputation”

The advocates were painfully aware of the community’s perception of their organization and effect that a negative reputation might have. In fact, it was widely recognized that the community of service providers were influential in the closing the BWP. However, the advocates were actively seeking to repair any injuries between the BWP and the community of service providers throughout the closing period and respected the role that the community of service providers embraced to ensure service provision to domestic violence victims.

It appears that the BWP had a history of struggling to secure their place in the coordinated community of domestic violence service providers. In the early years of the shelter, the BWP secured a strong position as a leader in the community. This later cycled out,
and the BWP began to lose their strong leadership in the community. An oral history participant and former BWP advocate described this downturn:

Back in the day, they were probably well equipped to run the program. I've heard stories about when I came on, I think back in eighty nine, I think they were starting to lose their place. They were slipping, I think, even back then. They were not as strong as they used to be, and they kept getting weaker in the community. And they didn't have strong Boards [of Directors]. They weren't getting the strong Board people, Boards that could help them build their reputation and build their place back in the community.

As this quote indicates, the BWP’s presentation in the community was slipping even before the BWP closed. The emphasis on money and funding was not highlighted when this oral historian references “back in the day,” but then she recognizes increasing professionalization by moving to a discussion of the organization’s Board of Directors.

However, before the beginning of the end of the BWP, most people I spoke with agreed that the program was experiencing another upswing in terms of their reputation. Recent efforts to maintain a presence at meetings with the coordinated community members were successful in establishing the BWP as a reputable member of this community.

However, during the period leading up to the announcement of the closing of the BWP the program rapidly lost its reputation. The greatest measure of this loss was in lack of support from the community of service providers and the community at large. Advocates constantly complained about the absence of clothing donations during their time at the DVC’s HAP location. Julie pointed out to me the diminishing support from the local university, measured in the number of intern and practicum students seeking placement with the DVC for course requirements. She told me:

I know that there are enough MSW students that are really interested in doing this work. But they're getting feedback from people in the community like, hold off. It's a new program, don't go there. They're even getting pushed into other practicums and other opportunities and experiences.

Through these mechanisms, the community of service providers conveyed to the shelter advocates that they would contribute their services to victims of domestic violence after the BWP closed its doors and the agency restructured itself. An oral history participant and community partner advocate said:

I know that there's been some agencies and organizations in the community that have stepped up and said, "Well, these guys can house some of the residents here." The problem with that is the locations are not confidential. And that's a really key factor for these women. They're avoiding very dangerous people and they need to be in a confidential location where they can't be found. And unfortunately that's not going to be the case when they're with these other organizations.

According to the shelter advocates, the message from the community of service providers was clear: partners will provide support once the program is restructured44.

Shelter advocates working for the BWP and later the DVC were frustrated from the lack of support from the community of service providers and connected that to an overall loss of a “good reputation with the community.” The shelter advocates repeatedly located the restoration of the program’s reputation in the rhetoric of professionalism. The advocates

44 The research phase began after the closure of the BWP was initiated, therefore, the issues contributing to the decline of the BWP can only be referred to in the past tense.
longed to present the image of a “professional organization” to the community of service providers and the community at large. According to the advocates, a professional organization has printed letterhead, a user-friendly website, individual offices for workers, a “company logo,” expectations of staff and clients, and apparel standards for staff.

They spoke of this professional image as essential to the success of the organization and vital to their advocacy. Additionally, the advocates connected the idea of a professional image with their reputation in the community. In response to the question asking advocates to consider whether the DVC should more or less professional than they currently were, Wendy responded:

Well, I think in some ways we should be more professional. But I think in other ways it's really hard to be professional in a residential setting because you're dealing with not only with just the counseling and emotional support, but you're also dealing with running out of toilet paper and running out of eggs. So, in a lot of ways we just can't be more professional for that reason. But around the community I think it's really important that we're presenting professional attitudes at all times. Just because we need to be taken seriously.

I often asked a question in interviews with advocates previously employed by the BWP to consider whether the DVC organization was more professional than the BWP organization. Julie did not hesitate to respond, “No.” I asked her why not and she said, “Like I said, we're doing the bare minimum. We're not out in the community educating. We're not drawing in a volunteer base. We don't have a face in the community. And a lot of this is too soon. So I don't know.”

Leslie responded to a question about the level of contributions she would like to make to the structure of the DVC organization by saying:

I think that in a lot of ways we come off to the residents and probably people in the community not in a professional way. Like our pathetic excuse for a letterhead. Like no, that's not okay. We can come up with something better. I know that's small but it shows a lack of attention to detail that contributes to the bigger picture. And that you can't like just ignore.  

I also asked Mindy what the term professionalism meant to her in terms of domestic violence advocacy. She thought a moment before saying:

I think you have to a professional whenever you walk through the door. And being a representative of the agency and the women and children you represent to the community and the court system in meetings, in the community education or on the media. I like to be able to go out, and wear heels, and feel like I'm part of the community and I'm making relationships and building bridges with other agencies.

“Building bridges” is a way for the advocates (and the organization) to establish legitimacy in the community of service providers while establishing a distant, professional identity to the women.

The advocates commonly conceptualized the link between themselves and the community of service providers in terms of professionalism and being a professional amongst that community. Projecting a professional image also served to garner resources for agencies, which can then be shared within a community of service providers. Veronica, an oral history participant and former BWP advocate, voiced her opinion about the benefits of moving

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45 Leslie later provided feedback to me indicating that she felt the shelter program still needed a professional image, despite efforts to create a cohesive image via consistent letterhead, business cards, etc.
towards a professional model of domestic violence advocacy when I asked her what she thought about the trend towards professionalism:

It’s a struggle. I think that that’s a struggle for lots of things that started out one way, there are probably some programs that have succeeded in other cities or states that have been able to hold on to that grassroots, but you’re going to be on the fringe if you do that. And it makes it very, very hard to succeed. But controversial or not, you’re going to have to move with the middle of what’s the mainstream if you’re going to try to find money for what you want to do. So I think there’s always that push and pull of, “Oh, it needs to be this way.” It used to be like a little family of people…That was then. It probably has to evolve. It can’t really stay, even though I think people often – when you’re in a movement – they want that. They want to hold on to what they’ve got because it feels good.

**Feminist Social Movements and Professionalism: Influences and Contradictions**

The nature of feminist social movements is changing. The local level domestic violence advocates and activists I worked with sought and maintained a deeply rich and loyal relationship to the feminist social movement. Therefore, it follows that domestic violence advocates and activists working at the local level receive influence from the larger struggles, tensions, and debates of the feminist social movement.

For example, feminist social movements worldwide are struggling to understand the effects and merits of the changing political economic landscape. Specifically, the globalization of a neoliberal economic framework reduces the provision of social service from government responsibility and privatizes it within communities (Hemment 2004). The political economic effects of neoliberalism have therefore changed the nature and pressures affecting domestic violence organizations. In essence, because of the transnational political economic environment, “the advocacy agenda has been sidelined as women’s organizations must now work to provide services that were once part of the welfare state” (George 2005: 1). As a result, social service agencies such as domestic violence shelters must now meet the minimum criteria and eligibility of non-governmental sponsors and funders. The grassroots organizations now must link to the larger political economic initiatives that abandoned them as a result of neoliberal agendas (Naples and Desai 2002).

For feminist social movements, the changing regional, national, and global political economic landscape that favors a neoliberal agenda has contributed to a growing demand for “specialized, policy-relevant, expert knowledge about women and gender- expertise increasingly supplied by more technically skilled, professionalized feminist organizations” (Alvarez 1998). This has opened the possibility of advocating for feminism from the “top down,” as feminist actors now occupy roles that influence policy at the macro level.

In Kentucky, the move towards professionalization is thriving in contradictory ways. While the domestic violence advocates long for a professional reputation individually and as an organization, they also yearn for a close connection with the women. As substantiated professionals in the community, armed with degrees, education, and credentials, any of their activism and advocacy can be construed as top-down, thereby eliminating the illusion that grassroots action exists.

**Summary**

Current trends in domestic violence advocacy demonstrate an increased acceptance and demand for professionalism. The advocates are working to embody a professional image and provide professional advocacy services as result of pressures from the feminist social
movement, the coordinated community, and the organization. The advocates recognize that by conforming to professional standards and expectations (such as dress codes, employee guidelines, and business presentation measures such as letterhead), they will increase their power with these groups by assimilating with the contemporary expectations of professionalism, accelerating their supervisory position in the organization, and increasing their access to resources in the community. However, the pattern of increased professionalization among domestic violence advocates is complicated in relation to the women. As the advocates support the ideology and practice of professional boundaries, they also recognize that those boundaries “separate them from the women.”

Yet, local level domestic violence advocates are not looking to the larger political economic forces that demand increased professionalism in social service provision. Furthermore, the organizational and community levels are not articulating with the neoliberal political economy when they explore the move towards professionalization of domestic violence advocacy. Thus, activities of the local level are adapting to pressures which they are not identifying. Therefore, local level actors are not engaging in an active negotiation of the tenets of professionalization such as education demands, dress codes, or credentials. Instead, local level players are using symbols of professionalization to hold each other accountable to actions and representations. This is leading to tensions between groups at the local level about what professionalization means and not necessarily what it does. However, these local level discussions are not articulating with a larger structure that prefers a professional model of domestic violence advocacy.

However, I am also reminded of the following:

…Many scholars judge feminist organizations against an ideal type that is largely unattainable and that excessive attention has been paid to the issue of bureaucracy versus collectivism to the neglect of other organizational qualities. The varieties of ideology, form, and strategy that feminist organizations embody should be analyzed in relation to outcomes for women, the women’s movement, and society. (Martin 1990: 182)

Thus, this chapter broadens the scope of analysis to identify other areas of professionalization that the domestic violence advocates indicated were important to them, such as letterhead. Furthermore, the domestic violence advocates place their opinions within their multiple relationships, including the women they work with and larger feminist social movements.

“I Don’t Want to Give Up My Youth”

The following story I share in this dissertation captures the paradoxes of professionalization and power in domestic violence advocacy. Today’s advocates are pressured to conform to professional standards and expectations and move away from a grassroots ideology. However, in their own ways, they seek to embrace traditional power ideologies such as the feminist social movement. The revolution they are engaged with is an institutionalized revolution, one that interacts with patriarchal power structures. Domestic violence advocates expect to be able to go home at night, to separate themselves from their domestic violence advocacy, and enjoy the ability to dress up for work. While these pressures are conveyed from multiple sites, these sites occasionally emit contradictory messages. This story also intersects with the themes of power and participation, as emphasis is placed on the organization’s lack of commitment to the advocates as witnessed by the absence of benefits, a salary, and job security during the transitional period.
The following story also illuminates the double bind that professionalization creates. Patterns towards professionalism creates standards and controls over the quality of service provision through bureaucratic oversight and surveillance. However, these goals are difficult to implement within a neoliberal political economic context that reduces funding to social service organizations.

“We are in for a very long haul and we are asking for everything you have to give. We will never give up. You will lose your youth, your sleep, your patience, your sense of humor, and occasionally, the understanding and support of the people that you love very much. In return we have nothing to offer you, but the pride in being able to help others. The fulfillment of all dreams you’ve ever had for your children and grandchildren. And the certain knowledge that at the end of your days you will be able to look back and say, that once in your life, You gave everything you had for Justice.” (Quotation attributed to Jill Ruckelshaus from a speech delivered before the National Women’s Political Caucus California Convention in 1977)

We had been at the HAP for 10 months and I was sitting in the office drinking coffee with Julie, another Family Advocate. As our conversation began, I was unaware that she would be announcing her resignation within the next few weeks to dedicate herself to a Master’s of Social Work degree full time. We were enjoying each other’s company before her last day at the DVC, less than 2 weeks away. I asked her, “If we could go back in time to our first day here at the HAP and we were setting for the transition to where we are now. What should we have done differently that we didn't do?”

“People should have had permanency, benefits, salaries. I remember saying to a friend of mine, "We're a woman's organization." And here we are. And ultimately at the end of the day, those things are extremely important to women and we didn’t have that. And I feel like, why is that okay? And then, why, as employees did we accept that? And what does that say about the leadership? And it doesn't necessarily mean one person. But overall, advocacy in general.”

“Right.”

“It’s that fight until you die attitude. Like that quote that the Executive Director gave us, "You may give up your youth." Do you know what I'm talking about?”

“Yes.” I remembered the quote. The Executive Director distributed the quotation to the Family Advocates at a staff meeting 5 months prior, shortly after she came on board.

“And I was reading that the other day. And I was like, “FUCK THAT!” I don't want to give up my youth. And when she first gave it to us, I was like, “Oh this is cool.” And then I was sitting here and I was working late, and I was like, "You know what, I'm NOT giving up my youth.” So to me, that makes me sick. And that's something that I pushed down and I just kept going forward. And that should have been different. I don't think we should have ever been here. I think we should have looked at the mission and the philosophy of the HAP prior to being here. I think it was the best that we could at the time, but it should have been thought out better. I almost wish it would have just not been open. That was to me, at the time, the worst thought. But to have had something a little more suitable would have been better. The women have been victimized by the HAP, the staff has been. They don't even have the access to food or to meals or to cook their own food. This facility is just not conducive. There's two toilets, two showers. Without benefits, without permanency, without a salary, without a regular schedule.”

“Yes, thank you. Without a regular schedule!” I was particularly vehement when it came to the schedule because it was my assigned administrative duty. It was a constant
struggle to ensure that the shelter was covered for each shift, particularly third shifts and weekends. “When the exoticness of starting something new wore off, why did you keep coming?”

“God, I have no idea. It’s like, "Am I codependent?" I think because I have identified with so long that this is my work and all of that that goes with it. And now I'm kind of thinking more broadly. Okay, I wanted to work with women and all of what that means. And that’s why I want to get more experience with substance abuse and stuff. But I was thinking about it yesterday. I've been in school and higher education for 7 and a half years by the time I'm done with this program. And I'm doing this because I wanted to have choices and I wanted to have options. And I want my employment to support my life, not be my life.”

“Yeah.”

“And so. If anything, I've learned that lesson. It's just crazy, I have no idea why any of us stayed. I have no idea, Jennifer. No idea.”

She put her head down in her hands on the desk, defeated. I gave the back of her head a reassuring rub, and the phone rang. Back to work.
CHAPTER NINE
WOMEN HELPING WOMEN NO MORE:
THE FUTURE OF CAREWORKING IN AMERICA

The residents fill out a questionnaire at the end, but come on. Some of the residents don't even
know how to write well and they don't put down what they feel. They communicate best by
what they do all the time. They speak out loud. But they don't have a say. If anybody has a
say in how the shelter should run or what should work and what would be better, wouldn't it be
the person who is receiving the services? And they don't have a say either.
-Erica, Former Battered Women’s Center Advocate

Introduction
There was no easy way for me to depart from the fieldwork I conducted for this
dissertation research. I would set an exit date, only to delay my departure so I could include
certain events. Eventually, I decided to end the daily participant observation work on the rainy
Friday of the Grand Opening of the DVC at their permanent location and concluded all data
collection with the domestic violence advocates and oral history participants at the DVC’s first
staff Holiday Party. After my daily data collection ended on site, I continued to speak with the
shelter advocates on an almost daily basis. To this day, several advocates continue to update
me about the shelter activities. There is no logical ending point to this story of transition
because the transformation of domestic violence services in the region was not complete at the
end of my fieldwork. This is indicative of the larger story of transition for social service
organizations in the United States and around the world.

Summary
This dissertation describes my fieldwork examining the contemporary culture of
domestic violence advocacy. By using the theoretical lenses of political economy and feminist
anthropology, I examined the themes of power, participation, and professionalization by
analyzing the relationships that the domestic violence advocates engage in, which exist in a
continuous process of negotiation and contestation. Over a total of 18 months of data
collection, I utilized participant observation, conducted semi-structured interviews, and
facilitated a series of four focus groups with domestic violence advocates and oral history
participants in domestic violence advocacy. These primary data were complemented with
information I collected from local archive material and popular media outlets, such as
newspapers.

After providing detailed ethnographic descriptions of the two programs that constitute
the field location and the events that led to the closing of the BWP, I examined the relationship
that domestic violence advocates maintain and negotiate in their daily advocacy work. The
feminist social movement serves as an inspiration for many of the domestic violence
advocates, who invoke discourses of power, participation, and professionalization consistent
with the overall feminist social movement’s language. Domestic violence advocates often
exist within and participate in a larger community of service providers, a community that
struggles over resources and power while promoting the benefits of professionalization in the
field of domestic violence advocacy.

The domestic violence advocates also negotiate their place in the domestic violence
organization. As they struggle to participate in the development and implementation of the
program and its services, they are simultaneously pressured to become more professional
through credentialing mandates and experience requirements. Unfortunately, the advocates do
not possess an adequate level of power in relation to the organization as the agency
consistently neglects the advocates’ needs. However, while the advocates feel powerless in relation to the organization, they possess power over the women residents, who often do not have a choice but to participate in the domestic violence program. Advocates are separated from the women through the imposition of boundaries and different life experiences in terms of previous victimization, educational opportunities, and socioeconomic class.

These measures are carried out in the pursuit of the ideal of professionalism in domestic violence advocacy. Boundaries separate the advocates from the women, allowing the relationship to become more distant and static, such as that in a business transaction. Furthermore, the advocates’ own life experiences (including previous victimization, education level, and class) are different from the victims that they serve, and those differences are then sanctioned by the domestic violence shelter and the larger community of service providers. Power and professionalization are therefore inextricably connected, as it appears in this case study that increasing levels of professionalism may have a disempowering effect among frontline workers.

By immersing myself in the culture of domestic violence advocacy in one region in Kentucky, this dissertation has explored power inequalities at the intersections of participation and professionalization. The problem, in this case, is how to create a reactive structure to the crisis of domestic violence in America that adapts to changing political economic conditions that favor the privatization of human service provision.

The goal of this dissertation has been to understand the construction and transformation of domestic violence advocacy using one case study. By placing this case student within the political economies of neoliberalism, I am able to examine the everyday context of domestic violence advocacy and activism. Focusing on the political economic context helps to reveal the sources of the multiple pressures on domestic violence advocates as they continue to provide services to domestic violence victims.

In Kentucky, local level frontline workers feel the pressures of the macrostructural political economy. Current economic conditions place the burden of providing and funding human services on local level organizations that struggle for funds and compete for resources. Within a neoliberal political economy, this model fulfills the framework, as the federal government privatizes social services and allows state and local governments to regulate the provision of those services. The BWP’s failure to comply with state-level regulations contributed to the decision to close the facility, yet the state-level Kentucky Domestic Violence Association did so without the ability to provide proper funds to operate the program.

In the United States, state coalitions have emerged to manage and distribute the block grants the federal government now provides for domestic violence shelters. These associations are also responsible for providing any self-regulating certification mandates set forth by those state level coalitions. As state coalitions confront smaller and smaller block grants for distribution, shelters seek extramural funding to provide the necessary services. In Kentucky, several domestic violence shelters have located grant funding very successfully by integrating additional services into their programs, such as substance abuse treatment. Therefore, local level programs are struggling at two levels which are illuminated in this study. First, they are...

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46 Here I refer to the Owensboro Area Shelter and Information Services (OASIS), a domestic violence shelter that also houses a certified substance abuse treatment facility. The combination of services is contested among domestic violence advocates in Kentucky, as some factions argue that the combination of services compromises the original goal of the domestic violence social movement to provide shelter services without questioning other situations in a woman’s life.
subject to state level regulations that are inconsistent throughout the United States and irregularly enforced. Second, local domestic violence shelters are struggling to compete for insufficient block grant formula funds while attempting to compete for additional grant funds through private and government sponsors.

Furthermore, tension arises between the newer state coalitions distributing block grants and the mother agencies that absorbed domestic violence shelters beginning in the 1970s. As we have seen with the BWP, as well as shelters in Tennessee, Connecticut, and elsewhere in the United States (O'Sullivan 2001), domestic violence organizations that cannot comply with state coalitions expectations and their mother’s agency’s regulations, separation often occurs. Therefore, while domestic violence shelters originally joined with mother organizations to secure funds, they are now having to abandon those organizations to comply with state coalition’s regulations. In the case of the BWP, both entities removed funds to contribute to the closure because the shelter had not secured enough external funds to continue operating. This case study examines this process in the hopes that other organizations considering similar actions or negotiating similar tensions may refer to the process and the outcomes of this case study.

By looking to the political economic context that supports the privatization of human service provision and shifts the burden of responsibility for the poor, marginalized, and abused from the state to civil society, I am problematizing “who is to blame” for trends in domestic violence advocacy (and other forms of human service provision). By doing so, I argue that the inequalities are more complicated than a model that simply puts “the women” as subjugated to the service providers and the service organizations. We see that the advocates are not in positions of absolute power and that they themselves have to negotiate multiple layers of power being exerted upon them while providing services to women and children. In fact, domestic violence advocates are working to empower their clients while seeking empowerment from the mezzo and macro-level structures they are working within.

Thus, this dissertation provides a picture of the daily routine of domestic violence advocates as they interact with the women, the organization, the community, and the feminist social movement. I now return to the intersections of power, participation, and professionalization in domestic violence service organizations. The literature examining the changing field of domestic violence advocacy questions the move towards unequal power relationships between the advocates and the women, the lack of victims’ involvement in the creation and implementation of programming and services, and the dangers of professionalizing domestic violence organizations and workers. Amidst this literature, I found that the advocates are receiving multiple messages about these issues, sometimes intensely paradoxically, every day. This local case study contextualizes this debate and these trends that are currently acting upon social service organizations in general, thereby illustrating the complexity of human service provision by examining the multiple messages that domestic violence advocates, and thus human service workers in general, negotiate. In addition, this chapter posits recommendations for other domestic violence programs.

Power in the Neoliberal Age of Social Service Organizations

I remember a BWP advocate looking me in the eye to say, “It’s all about power,” somewhat exasperated that I may not have already figured it out myself to her satisfaction. As an anthropologist, I encountered a culture that directly and constantly talks about power and the inequalities of its distribution. The advocates recognized the power inequalities in their relationships with the women, the organization, and the community of service providers, a
recognition that often served to disempower them from their work because they were unable to level the power field.

Yet, at the local level amidst the daily crises of domestic violence work, the political economic conditions that inhibit advocacy work are nearly invisible. As domestic violence advocates continue to be paid at near poverty levels, live without health insurance benefits, and struggle to support themselves and their families they are not positioned to place their situations within a larger neoliberal framework. Therefore, they are not positioned to resist a neoliberal political economy that privatizes social services nor are they situated to understand the macrostructural power exertions on their work. Oral history participants who explicitly chose to pursue human service provision in a non-domestic violence shelter settings cited low wages, late hours, and job insecurity as reasons for pursuing advocacy in other settings; however, they did not place their personal decisions within the larger web of political economic pressures. Therefore, initiating a conversation about these macro-structural pressures is a key contribution of this study.

Ironically, domestic violence advocates are often working to obtain for the women the same benefits they themselves are lacking- a living wage, affordable and flexible day care, and sustainable living arrangements. Within the new neoliberal social service organization, workers are forced to give up in order for others to obtain and survive. This results in high levels of burn out and turnover in domestic violence shelter advocacy and among human service providers. We notice that among the research participants described in this dissertation, only 7 of over 20 advocates elected to continue their advocacy work with the DVC. Of those 7 original DVC advocates, only 4 remained at the conclusion of my fieldwork.

While the political economic landscape of power inequalities persists under a veil at the local level, the effects of neoliberal social service provision is a sharp reality at the community level. As the American federal government has displaced the responsibility to provide supportive services for the most marginalized populations, social service organizations vie for limited funding and resources. As a result, communities have coordinated to maximize service provision. The result is an unequal playing field wherein a community of service providers is divided into those who have and those who have not. Traits of the organizations with adequate resources include low employee turnover rates, access to transitional resources such as housing, and daily needs resources such as food and clothing. I saw the BWP, and later the DVC, as the “have-nots” in the community of service providers. Their lack of resources, both material and service-related, does not allow them to be positioned as powerful in the community. Power in the community of service providers is not simply a competition for prestige, it is a matter of sustainability. Well-funded programs are more likely to be able to demonstrate success, therefore powerful programs are better investments for funders and sponsors. The example of this cycle is found in the BWP’s closure itself. The program lacked a foundation of sponsorship that would have prevented them from having to close after one sponsor withdrew funding. In other words, the program lacked a safety net for protection from such an event. Social service organizations that are able to direct people-power to large

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47 Only two of the advocates had dependent children and very few of the advocates (nearly none) supported spouses or partners. Advocates who were married at the beginning of my fieldwork were divorced by the conclusion of data collection. Furthermore, advocates who resigned from the DVC were very often those with partners. Based on this information and in my opinion, the current stresses of domestic violence advocacy are not conducive, both emotionally and financially, to building relationships with life partners or children.

48 The advocates’ inability to place their work within a larger political economic framework runs parallel to the fact that the domestic violence advocates do situate their work within a larger feminist social movement.
 fundraisers to store financial reserves are less likely to be devastated by a withdrawal of funding and are more likely to demonstrate to funders their fiscal responsibility.

The community of service providers reminded the domestic violence shelter advocates of their low power positions regularly, because the advocates often had nothing to offer in exchange for a goods or service request to other organizations. Phone calls from other agencies in the community of service providers were rarely for services other than emergency shelter. The power invested in the feminist social movement to provide services does not necessarily translate to the community level from the advocates’ positions.

At the organizational level, the effects of the neoliberal political economy are also visible. Since social service organizations are competing for limited funds, from the federal government, state and local government, non-profit agencies, and private donors, the organization has no choice but to conform to their professional expectations in terms of the staff’s credentials and image. Again, the punishment for not meeting these expectations is becoming clearer. Sponsors will withdraw funding and organizations may be forced to close their doors with necessary financial support. At the community level, partnerships have become harder to build if an agency does meet the expectations of a professional image.

The organization’s goals to professionalize are therefore achieved by conforming to larger structural demands to hierarchize their employee structure and distance themselves from employees in a corporate, business style manner. As discussed in Chapter Seven, the domestic violence shelter organization did not actively seek to support advocates’ personal lives through the appropriation of vacation leave or benefits. Furthermore, supports services for the advocates (such as weekly supervision or the use of a life coach) were not offered to alleviate the advocates’ constant transitioning between the multiple programs.

These pressures upon the organization are translated to the domestic violence advocates and the oral history participants as the organization exercising its power. More than any other entity, the domestic violence shelter advocates cite the program as the source of power inequalities. The organization can grant power through support or by listening to the voices of the advocates. But the advocates cited repeatedly throughout my dissertation research that they are essentially powerless to the organizational forces that structure programming and service provision. They are caught in a cycle where they are tempted to remain employees of the organization based upon promises of a better future, but as my fieldwork progressed it became clear both to me and to the advocates that the better future would not be realized any time soon. One advocate who chose to resign from the program told me she projected that the program would take no less than 10 years to reach its most basic goals of providing services to the women and children throughout the service area. Fewer and fewer of the advocates disclosed to me that they would remain with the program because they wanted to pursue work in an organization that would value their knowledge and expertise.

Similarly, the micro-level interpersonal effects of the neoliberal political economy are seen in the power inequalities between the women and the domestic violence advocates and oral history participants. It appears on the surface that the only area where the advocates possess the upper hand with regards to power is in their relationship with the women. Indeed, the advocates have more access to resources and human service knowledge, and are thus seen as gatekeepers to those resources by the residents.

However, the advocates argue that much of the power the women feel they possess is false power or not accessible. For instance, the advocates do not ultimately have the power to determine if a resident will be departed from the shelter, it is the leadership in the organization
that does. While advocates make the frontline decisions, both advocates and residents understand that those decisions can be overturned at any time by the organization’s administration.

Therefore the advocates are constantly caught between an organization that does not invest power in them and the clients who feel they are invested with more power than they actually have. In service provision, this becomes problematic because the advocates often feel that the clients expect things of them that they cannot fulfill because the organization prevents them from accessing resources or materials.

Yet, according to the research participants, they do not link their local, organizational, or community level struggle within the macro-level political economic conditions which contribute to the local level resource shortage. Therefore, tensions and contradictory messages appear within and between these groups as local level actors search for answers. The different ways power is distributed to and from domestic violence advocates in these relationships highlights the tensions they experience in their daily work. While they are invested with power by the feminist social movement, they are made aware of their shortage of power in the community, and they have more power than the victims they serve. The advocates do not want more power simply to be more powerful, they feel that by lessening power inequalities they can do their jobs better. Constantly mixed messages about who has power and who can exercise it are worsened by the advocates’ unmet expectations of participating in the organizational development process. Furthermore, the organization promoted a message of professionalization, but also resisted recognizing the benefits of the move towards domestic violence advocacy professionalism. However, the local level actors are not placing these power inequalities and struggles for power within the larger political economic framework.

Seeking Power in Participation

A predominant theme I identified in the early predissertation fieldwork is that of participation as it intersected with power. Advocates talked about their voices not being heard, their knowledge disregarded, and their input unsolicited. They felt removed from the processes that work to guide their service provision. Repeatedly, removal from actively participating in the process (of creating a new shelter, charting service provision, or developing rules and guidelines for clients) equaled an absence or shortage of power.

Returning to the feminist social movement, the domestic violence advocates and activists closely identify their roles as domestic violence advocates as the mechanism by which they participate in a larger feminist social movement. They participate in the struggle for gender equality by working as domestic violence advocates, a relationship they treasure and seek solace with during difficult times.

Furthermore, the feminist social movement teaches domestic violence advocates and activists the language of power, specifically the unequal power distribution between men and women. The advocates learn about the feminist struggles for women’s equality through school and their social networks. The uses and abuses of power is used in their advocacy work, where “power and control” is heard constantly throughout a day of providing victim services. Furthermore, the feminist social movement invests power in the domestic violence advocates to provide victim services. Victims require assistance to break the cycle of violence, thereby justifying the existence of domestic violence advocates. Advocates must also possess a certain level of knowledge to assist women in breaking the cycle, a certain level of power to help women in need.
The feminist social movement bestows domestic violence advocates with both power and the tools to exercise it. And yet, the feminist social movement’s perspectives of power in domestic violence, conceptualized as a perpetual “cycle of violence,” creates a power inequality. As a model, I have described the fact that a victim requires the assistance of someone else— an advocate— to exit a domestic violence relationship. This immediately places advocates in a position of power over the victims, as the domestic violence advocates possess the knowledge and the information about how to utilize that knowledge and the victims do not. Essentially, from the feminist social movement the domestic violence advocates are learning that indeed the women are “helpless” and need their assistance.

For many domestic violence advocates and oral history participants, the partnership with the feminist social movement was enough— certainly enough for women to sacrifice employment stability (and personal goals) to pursue work at a domestic violence shelter. Thus, based on the data from the research participants in this dissertation, domestic violence advocates feel a relationship with the feminist social movement. This contradicts other scholars’ arguments that feminist allegiances among domestic violence advocates is dwindling. Recent reactions against professionalization from the feminist social movement may be working to distance self-identified “feminists” from domestic violence advocacy work, as witnessed by the few numbers of feminist social workers who “have embraced feminist social work, and the majority tend to distance themselves from anything associated with the word feminist” (Danis 2003). Diverging from this literature is the case study presented here, where domestic violence advocates and oral history participants found power in their participation with the feminist social movement. This may also indicate that different generations of feminist social movement participants are finding different meanings in their relationship with the overall movement.

Domestic violence advocates also participate in the coordinated community of service providers. Their participation is necessary to provide services to victims, as organizations are increasingly unable to meet the diverse needs of women and must call upon partners to fill the gaps. Furthermore, advocates are less and less likely to shoulder the responsibility of building community partnership themselves, as the DVC leadership has taken on the responsibilities of attending community meetings. Paradoxically, while the advocates’ responsibilities demand daily interaction with community partners, they do not participate in the process of building relationships with the community of service providers. This diminishes their power in the coordinated community, and therefore their power to provide services to victims of domestic violence.

The advocates articulate frustration with their lack of participation in the domestic violence organization itself, because low levels of participation contribute to feelings of disempowerment. They viewed the retreat held by the DVC leadership prior to moving to The Farm as false participation, a time when they were made to believe their participation would be vital to develop the program only to learn that their knowledge would not be incorporated into the structure. While the domestic violence shelter advocates felt they were removed from participating in the process of program development and decisions, they were negotiating the messages they received from the leadership that they either 1) chose the policies and procedures the organization currently employs or 2) they do have a voice and their input is taken into account. The organization sanctions advocates who speak out against the policies and procedures already in place by pursuing disciplinary action against those advocates in the form of written warnings. The advocates’ removal from participating at the level of the
organization is cited it as a direct cause of high turnover and low employee morale and motivation. Feelings of disempowerment are directly affecting the quality and sustainability of social service organizations such as domestic violence shelters.

Domestic violence advocates also participate in providing services to victims of domestic violence. While the advocates are responsible for enforcing rules and guidelines with shelter residents, they do not participate in the creation of those rules and guidelines. The advocates believe this to be a tension not easily resolved, as the residents feel the advocates make up rules and guidelines unnecessarily and enforce them unevenly. Advocates then have to choose whether or not to explain to the residents exactly how little they participate in the process of creating rules and guidelines or passively support the misconception. The tension between the advocates and the residents is further intensified by the fact that the leadership (who does create the rules and guidelines) is nearly invisible in the daily shelter operations and negotiations between advocates and residents.

*The Power is in the Professionalization*

For many, the question of professionalization has already been answered. Numerous feminist scholars and activists have demanded a return to the grassroots model of domestic violence service provision, for the sake of the feminist social movement and the victims of domestic violence. However, as I have discussed throughout this dissertation, the domestic violence advocates and activists often disagree with the academic literature. For example, the domestic violence stated they wanted a more professional workplace, which would include the availability of letterhead, corporate benefits such as healthcare, and a regular schedule. Their desire for a more professional workplace is opposite the feminist scholarly literature calling for resistance to a professional domestic violence advocacy culture (Markowitz and Tice 2002).

Furthermore, domestic violence advocacy’s move towards professionalizing the work is consistent with the overall feminist social movement’s increasing professionalization in advocacy and activism. Professionalizing has its benefits, such as increased attention from sponsors and funders and the tools to organize large amounts of people. In terms of their advocacy work, domestic violence advocates embrace professionalizing because they recognize the benefits of moving in that direction. The benefits include health insurance and prestige for the advocates themselves, and a more professional reputation for the organization to obtain resources within the community of service providers.

The community of service providers also supports the trends towards professionalization in domestic violence advocacy. The domestic violence advocates and activists enter courtrooms and government offices on a regular basis, and they feel they are taken more seriously if they are dressed in suits and heeled shoes. If people in positions of power in the community take them more seriously, it will benefit the victims by providing access to more resources. Furthermore, resources are already spread thinly throughout non-profit organizations and agencies. In order to have a place at the table during partnership discussions, the domestic violence advocates and activists must decide whether to conform with the standards the community of service providers sets forth. It is clear from the data collected for this research that the advocates feel the community of service providers imposes expectations of professional dress, credentials, and education status upon the key partners. The domestic violence advocates and activists accept this imposition and strive to meet the community’s expectations in order to provide the best services possible to victims of domestic violence.
At the organization level, shelter advocates receive two competing messages regarding professionalization. On the one hand, the DVC expects the domestic violence advocates to carry college degrees and advanced knowledge of working with victims of domestic violence. This limits domestic violence advocacy, and to some extent activism, to people who are different from the victims they serve in terms of previous victimization, education level, and socioeconomic class. However, the DVC also promotes a message demanding the advocates to place their work in a framework of grassroots activism, which conflicts with the demands of professionalism. The mixed message confuses the advocates, who are more comfortable merging the grassroots activism history of the domestic violence social movement with today’s professionalism demands and expectations.

Again, it is in the relationship with the women where the advocates experience an opposing message from the constituents in their other relationships. The following words from Mindy summarizes the changing nature of the relationship between the advocates and the victims:

I think we're more aware of ethics and boundaries and things like that. We can't just say, "Do you need a place to stay? I've got a friend who's got a room." Of course I wasn’t doing the work in the seventies but I think that’s how it was done. I just think that it places a distance. It also creates a hierarchy, we're seen as professionals. We come in wearing heels. We dress differently than the women we serve. We're expected to be professionals. We're not expected to be women helping women. So I think that creates a hierarchy and it creates a distance between us and the women we serve.

The advocates are constantly negotiating their increasingly professionalized roles with the women and struggling to find a common ground when it seems the distance is increasing. The distance is articulated through the language of boundaries and justified using the language of professionalization. Advocates recognize that these demands “separates us from the women,” but they are also aware that they have limited power to bridge the divide when they are pressured by so many others to “be professional.”

However, in the neoliberal era of social service organizations, resisting the move to professionalize domestic violence services has led to feminist organizations’ reputations as “self destructive” (Gamson 1995). Indeed, the data here indicates that failure to comply with professional standards will result in organization closures, as with the BWP. In order for social service organizations to gain power in their communities and accumulate resources to provide human services, the data from this dissertation indicates that professionalization is necessary. The results of my fieldwork present a picture of women and men who serve as domestic violence advocates and activists in a changing world. They are increasingly embracing and negotiating the tenets of professionalism while simultaneously removed from the process of creating the structure they work within, leaving them feeling disempowered.

My attempts to include the domestic violence advocates and activists, and the shelter advocates in particular, were overcome by the overwhelming amount of work they participated in and their removal from the participation process throughout all stages of the closure of the BWP and the development of the permanent DVC program. Advocates repeatedly confided in me their frustrations with their work, provided I agree to the disclaimer “not to tell the leadership.” I would request a reason for not transmitting the information back to the DVC leadership, and the typical response was, “It wouldn’t matter.” Not only did I find this resistance from engaging the leadership in a meaningful dialogue about evaluation exasperating as a researcher, I was frustrated as a domestic violence advocate. Refusing to
confront the power inequalities that arise as a result of decreasing participation among human service providers, including domestic violence advocates, and increasing professionalization further paralyzes social service organizations.

However, the advocates did share with me their reflections about the data collected and the dissertation paper. Research participants were provided the option to convey their thoughts, reflections, and feedback about their interview transcripts. In addition, domestic violence shelter advocates were provided with drafts of the dissertation product to provide feedback. Many of their responses are mentioned throughout the dissertation, as I integrated the material they provided as it was conveyed to me.

What I found among the participant feedback was 1) comments on the dissertation product itself, ranging from specific notes about a particular piece of information to general responses to the paper. The specific feedback has been worked into the dissertation, such an advocate reminding me of the details of a situation I may not have observed. The struggle to bring in a life-coach is an example of information provided to me through this feedback process.

Fewer than half of the respondents elected to provide feedback after reading their interview transcripts. Responses included participant’s reactions to reading their own words and feeling uncomfortable with “the number of “hee-hees” and hmmms…” exposed. Other feedback captures the ever-changing situations for the domestic violence program and the community in which it was situated. One oral history participant disclosed that she felt “a sense of relief that during the time since the interview more community parts of service to survivors have stabilized and resumed.” Noting the ideas or concepts that were implemented or issues that were never resolved was common in the feedback, as participants noted often how things had changed since their opportunity to participate in an interview. An oral history participant and community service provider noted that in her interview, she mentioned expanding services to the YWCA’s community center that opened after the BWP closed. However, in her transcript notes, she indicated that this expansion “didn’t happen.” Sometimes, the feedback was based on reactions to the answers participants provided. For example, I asked BWP advocates to describe their “dream shelter.” In reading her transcript, one advocate noted that a memorable point for her was reading “my description of my dream shelter and how close it is to the shelter we are in now.”

In addition, advocates who read their interview transcripts were often overwhelmed with emotions about tumultuous times in the shelter’s history. When reading her interview about the BWP closing, Monica wrote to me the following:

I felt empty. I was re-living the whole experience again. Remembering the anger, the bullshit, and the sense of loss. Anger at the process of closing of the shelter and the people in charge. Bullshit of how our shelter was operating and little support and guidance we had. Loss of trust in others, loss of time, and loss of self.

Another advocate commented that “I can see the cycle of advocacy which is parallel to the cycle of violence.” In general, the domestic violence advocates expressed that the process of providing an interview and later reading and commenting on their interview transcripts was positive. For example, one note I received stated, “The interview process provided a much needed outlet to express my opinions and frustrations.”

With regards to the dissertation itself, drafts were distributed to the research participants as requested. I send out over a dozen drafts, which were in turn copied by a few
additional respondents. I was surprised by the number of people who read the complete dissertation draft and provided their thoughts. As Monica said in an e-mail to me:

I have read it twice and preparing to read it for the third time. I laughed, cried, got angry, and was amazed all at the same time. I was a little embarrassed that I wasn't more articulate, I read as if I were under the influence of a substance. Ha! I found it to be therapeutic.

Other advocates shared their responses with me through various means. I met an advocate at a local Starbucks to discuss how the dissertation could be used to “make things better” for domestic violence advocates. She agreed with my recommendations, though she emphasized the need for participation in the shelter decision-making process to a greater degree than I did in this dissertation.

Other respondents noted that the final dissertation product was very different from their expectations. For example, an advocate indicated that she thought the dissertation would be much more focused on the program transitions themselves and not on the issues that were raised by the advocates. In one e-mail note I received, a former BWP advocate said:

Your dissertation is very interesting, Jen. I don't think I took you seriously enough when you posed topical questions that seemed random. I guess I didn't have a good understanding of the nature of this type of research.

The feedback indicates that the conversion from conducting interviews to a final, academically acceptable dissertation is often a hard translation to both convey (on the part of the researcher) and understand (on the part of the research participants). This further substantiates the need to provide the final product to the research participants and keep them informed of research processes.

**Recommendations For Other Programs**

Throughout this dissertation, I have provided information and analysis about the different organizational structures, services, and practices from the different phases of the shelter program. From this fieldwork, I am able to posit general evaluations and recommendations for other domestic violence programs, as well as the DVC. I return to the themes of power, participation, and professionalization as a guide, themes that the advocates themselves identified and engaged in a dialogue about throughout my fieldwork.

**Power as Support**

The advocates repeatedly speak to the level of support offered by the organization, the community, and the feminist social movement to conduct their advocacy work. The domestic violence advocates and activists I worked with indicated through their words and actions that commitment to the feminist social movement and the domestic violence shelter movement is not the motivation and inspiration for pursuing advocacy work; however, the feminist social movement cannot provide the direct support for their work in terms of economic support or social support. For these needs, the advocates turned to the community and the organization.

The advocates measure support in several ways, for example economic or financial support. The DVC program opened its doors without a stable funding source; therefore the program was unable to offer the advocates a reasonable salary or a benefits package. While the entry level salary was low for the level of service the advocates provided, the more significant problem was the issue of fringe benefits. The advocates were repeatedly promised health insurance, a benefit that was postponed for many months. The lack of economic support contributes to an atmosphere of constant transition and not permanency, as Julie explained before she announced her resignation from the DVC:
People should have had permanency, benefits, and salaries. I remember saying, "We're a woman's organization." And here we are. Ultimately at the end of the day, those things are extremely important to women, and we didn’t have that. And I feel like, why is that okay? Why, as employees, did we accept that? And what does that say about the leadership. And it doesn't necessarily mean one person. *But overall advocacy in general.* [emphasis mine]

Economic security is vital to creating a shelter program and attracting qualified advocates to join the program team. While the advocates secured housing and health care for the residents in shelter throughout the program’s transition period, they were simultaneously struggling to maintain their own rent payments, often compromising other essentials such as their personal health insurance.

The financial support issue is a delicate one when placed in a larger context. It is true that domestic violence advocates are coming to the work because of a dedication to women and children affected by domestic violence. This motivates them to seek out a job in the carework industry. Domestic violence advocates knowingly accept positions in domestic violence shelters, such as the DVC, for the salaries offered. *However,* it was also my experience during this field work that the domestic violence advocates’ dedication to the women and children is used to justify their low salaries. Why, some might ask, should we consider paying more or offering more benefits—domestic violence advocates are not in this work for the money? This is an insidious pattern that no doubt appears in other carework industries, such as nursing home care, child care, and public school teaching. There must be a move towards uniting domestic violence advocates sources of motivation and drive to provide carework with appropriate compensation.

In addition to the shortcomings in economic support, the shelter advocates state they lacked the social support in their jobs. Social support includes positive recognition for excellent job performance, empathy during difficult shelter situations, and respect for the advocates’ personal lives. In terms of recognition for a “job well done,” the advocates maintained an informal mechanism to convey appreciation for each other by leaving notes for an advocate who may have performed well above expectations. For example, an advocate received a note from another advocate congratulating her on her performance in de-escalating an argument between two residents during dinnertime. Another example would be the note an advocate received after working three consecutive shelter shifts.

Another situation that the advocates feel necessitates a strong message of support is during the difficult times in shelter. There were many times when I thought the bad times outnumbered the good in the shelter, when the advocates repeatedly ran into dead ends with casework goals or received bad news from former residents about their custody cases. The advocates burned out fast with little reprieve. For example, for many months during the early stages of the DVC program an advocate would have to take time off without pay for a vacation (the absence of income during that period was a hardship itself for the advocates). Even when the advocates finally began accruing paid time off, the persistent staff shortages delayed or prohibited advocates from taking a day or two off from work.

Perhaps for me the most poignant example of the lack of support for the advocates’ work is in the messages they receive about their personal lives. For today’s domestic violence advocates, their work is their job. It is paradoxical to suggest that the advocates practice the creation and maintenance of boundaries with their clients but not support the advocates’ personal lives. The advocates are not “one with the clients,” there are very real differences
between the two groups of women, but not allowing the advocates to pursue their personal goals sends a message that their work should be their life. They are simultaneously disembodied from their work and their personal lives. This prevents the domestic violence advocates from maintaining boundaries with the organization, in other words, attempting to foster their personal lives without letting their advocacy career choice overrun those attempts. Amy expressed her frustrations with duality of being told to separate herself professionally from the residents but not pursue a personal life emotionally summarizes the message from the leadership about the advocates’ lives:

And I think that having a staff that feels when they go home, that they're not like "I'm never going to be done. I'm never going to get everything done." I think that that can be eliminated. I think that having a staff that goes home and cries at night because they don't know how they're going to pay their rent that month or they have to get a second job because they can't pay their bills, that can be eliminated. Those stresses can be taken away to provide a much better advocate. I think that people look at us and they think that our heart and soul and life should just be dedicated to this work. Screw having a husband, screw having a family, screw having a lover, screw everything. We should be our clients. We should be one with our clients, and that should be all we think about. I don't agree with that. I think that we all have a passion for it, but I think we all have our lives to live too. And I think that needs to be recognized by administration. One of my first concerns should be our clients, yes. When we're at work, our first concern should be helping victims of domestic violence. But when we leave our job we have our own lives. And I think that should be encouraged. I think it would improve morale, it would improve job performance, it would improve everything. And I think if we were treated that way, if we were treated like, "Your life does matter. It matters that you make enough money. It matters that you're compensated for things." I think that if those things are happening you'd have a lot happier staff, a lot more productive staff. The staff is already productive, don't get me wrong. But I burned out really fast. And I think that could have been avoided.

Burn out, which contributes to high rates of turnover in domestic violence shelter programs, can be avoided or lessened by supporting the advocates’ personal pursuits. The often promised support from a life coach is one example of providing support for the advocates. The advocates also identified smaller symbols of support, such as chocolates, during this fieldwork.

I argue for providing suitable resources for two reasons. First, as mentioned throughout this dissertation, the advocates wished for more support and resources. They asked directly for more resources, but their requests were often displaced as unrealistic or disregarded as too insignificant. Second, by providing support and resources to the domestic violence shelter advocates, the organization can begin to re-embodily the domestic violence advocates as complete, holistic human workers. While this recommendation would make people feel more valued, which in turn would make the organization run more efficiently, this might not reconcile the advocates’ issues with the agency’s hierarchy, their feelings of lacking social distinction, and overall employment chaos.

Participation and Knowledge

At each stage of the transition, the decision-making power determining the nature of the domestic violence program does not rest with the advocates. With the introduction of each leader, the advocates conformed to the leader’s model of service provision. At no moment were the advocates asked to engage in a discussion before the identification of options, for
instance the selection of The Farm as the permanent DVC location. Wendy outlined what that participation would look like:

At least ask us what we need, or what would be better. Or if you are going to try something new then say, let's just try this out for a week, give me some feedback. But it wasn't like at all. If it want to make a new shelter, and if they want to have redesigned structure and to redo the services and if they want to decide what is going to work, then they should do more communicating with the people who are actually directly providing services.

By not taking into account the advocates’ expert knowledge about providing services to domestic violence victims and negotiating multiple relationships with the overall feminist social movement and the community of service providers, the organization is sending the message that their knowledge is not important and not useful. Furthermore, by positing that the advocates are free to participate and provide input, but then not utilizing that knowledge and expertise, the organization is subjugating the advocates’ experiences even further. As one advocate articulated, “It is worse for them [the leadership] to pretend to listen to us than to just not ask our opinion to begin with.”

I recommend an organizational practice emphasizing the use of participatory methods to develop and deliver domestic violence services. Multiple levels of stakeholders should invest time and energy gathering information from the advocates providing the direct services to victims. Organizations can then use this information to develop programming. In addition, it is necessary to conduct on-going evaluation of the programming and the service provision because the nature of advocacy work is constantly changing because of external forces such as funding availability. Similarly, the advocates may promote a practice that they later find deficient; therefore, the organization should create an atmosphere conducive to constant reflection. This recommendation is echoed by Emma:

I do think as a movement that we’re not willing to look at ourselves and... criticize ourselves or critically think about the work that we’re doing. If we’re blaming each other, then we really don’t have to even look at that I guess.

As social service agencies will continue to have to creatively devise funding and sponsorship strategies, the imperative of a coordinated community increases. The domestic violence advocates and activists I worked with commented on their own network by voicing their hopes for the future of the community of service providers. The reflections are particularly salient because the coordinated community I worked within was experiencing shifts among their members as the BWP closed and the DVC opened. These programs provided the only emergency shelter assistance to victims of domestic violence in a 17 county area. Therefore, the effects of the transition radiated throughout the community. After 6 months of the DVC operating, I asked a member of one of the community organizations what she wanted to see as far as partnerships were concerned. She said:

I think that there's still transition and shuffling occurring right now. I know there are struggles for certain programs and money. I know there are turf wars and political power plays and all kinds of things that are still occurring and going on. But I think it has only been one year. I think over time things will settle down and people will find their place in the community. And hopefully everyone will find a place so that everyone can work as a community. And for the benefit of the survivors, the people that we provide services for. That's my hope. And my hope is that we work with as
much care with each other that we provide for our clients. That's not always the case but I hope that that's what happens.

The community of service providers wanted to see each member organization work together to provide services and resources to victims of domestic violence. However, the community did not want to struggle to access the domestic violence service or information, as stated by Maria, an oral history participant who worked as a local law enforcement personnel:

“I have followed this [the transition from the BWP to the DVC] closely and have felt like I have had to demand information about the new shelter. Our office never received any information that we did not call and request. I do not feel like the operator of the new shelter has considered law enforcement as a community partner.”

The partnerships were riddled with the politics of inequality, some organizations have “more” diapers, support groups, counselors, money- resources and services. Shortages, or perceived shortcomings, bring tension. Nevertheless, the members of the coordinated community were hopeful that in future the focus would be to “bring people together” with a “positive attitude” to “make it work.” At the conclusion of my fieldwork, the DVC was still struggling to secure its place at the table with the other service providers. Shortages in staff regularly led to the absence of the DVC Executive Director at the CDVB meetings, lack of funds prevented the advocates from gaining e-mail accounts to “link into” the list serves, and the DVC was not a participating member in the winter holiday fundraisers for two consecutive years.

The coordinated community model specifically seeks to link all sectors of a community to enhance services and response to domestic violence and assist victims with seeking services. The model is implemented in varying degrees around the world as a result of the successes witnessed in communities in the United States. In Chile, a quarter of the female population experiences abuse within their family (Aron and Lorion 2003). As the legal system slowly responds, the mental health community is responding by emphasizing a preventive approach to domestic violence based on a community wellness model. This model takes into a community’s existing social network by encouraging key individuals and organizations (medical institutions, community service facilities) to support domestic violence interventions. In Aotearoa, New Zealand the Hamilton Abuse Intervention implements a coordinated community model of service provision as a pilot project to provides advocacy for battered women, education programs for batterers, and government agency monitoring (Balzer 1999). In Britain, women experiencing abuses are unable to efficiently locate a sympathetic response when they were help seeking. Today, the Duluth model is used in two British areas focus on “the availability and accessibility of information, documentation of good practice, consistency in response messages, publicity for providers, and effective interagency communication” (Holder 1999: 258). Program advocates bring together housing, social services, and child protection organizations with battered women shelters to develop an interagency model of service provision and community education.

The local CDVB served as the stage for the coordinated community in the region where this fieldwork was conducted. In this venue, organizations could garner enough support to voice opinions regarding policies and agendas in the community. For example, late in this fieldwork, the members of the CDVB jointly submitted a letter voicing concern over proposed changes to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services policies. The proposed policies would decrease the amount of interventions when an adult abuse report was filed. Together, this unit
was able to voice their concerns rather than presenting a scattered, individual organization resistance.

Coordinating a community of service providers is widely recognized as an effective method of distributing resources and services to address the issue of domestic violence. Based on the data presented in this dissertation, participation in a coordinated community will be vital for the survival of social service organizations, including domestic violence agencies. Furthermore, by cooperating in a coordinated community, non-profit domestic violence organizations are better equipped to negotiate the bureaucratization of social service provision. By uniting with and assisting other organizations, domestic violence shelters may be able to maintain a level of grassroots flexibility in the face of increased funder and sponsor demands and guidelines.

**Professionalization and the Culture of Domestic Violence Advocacy**

I have established that the domestic violence advocates and activists I worked with viewed the professionalization of the advocacy field as a benefit to service provision. The advocates receive a message to professionalize from the feminist social movement, from the community of service providers that they collaborate with, and from the shelter organization itself. The move towards professionalism is accompanied by a shift towards a business oriented organizational structure with an employee hierarchy.

Within this hierarchy, the leadership oversees the creation, implementation, and enforcement of rules, guidelines, policies, and procedures in advocacy work. The advocates look to the leadership for guidance and mentorship. In the absence of leadership in an organizational structure that includes a hierarchy, confusion and frustration arises. In the past, the advocate population may not have actively requested strong leadership, however, with the advent of professionalism trends there is often a hierarchy within domestic violence organizations.

However, that hierarchy distances an organization’s leadership from the frontline workers. Furthermore, that hierarchy separates the domestic violence advocates from the women. This creates multiple layers of inequality that separates each group from each other. Indeed, we note that the literature is consumed by critiques evaluating social services at the organizational and critiquing the administrators for the professionalization practices pursued at the local level. Particularly critical is the emergence of the “Abusive Power and Control Wheel within the Domestic Violence Shelter” (Koyama 2003). The components of this wheel are as follows:

- **Intimidation**: Involuntary alcohol and drug tests and forced "treatments"; Arbitrary application of house rules and use of "warnings"; Constant surveillance by the staff
- **Emotional Abuse**: Pretence of "safety" used manipulatively; Forced self-disclosure and public humiliation; Questioning survivor's intelligence and abilities
- **Isolation**: Confidentiality requirements forcing survivors to break ties with community, friends, and family; Curfews may conflict with cultural and family activities; Restriction on access to telephone
- **Minimizing, Denying & Blaming**: Accusing survivors of "working the system"; Punishing certain coping mechanisms and survival skills; Overlooking presence of additional barriers

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49 To view the copyrighted wheel, visit www.eminism.com.
• Using Children: Threats to call the child welfare system; Mothers punished for using disciplinary methods from their culture; Requirement to attend "parenting" classes
• Economic Abuse: Interference with employment due to curfews and requirement to attend meetings and to perform "chores"; Survivors forced to quit or change jobs due to strict confidentiality rules
• Using Privilege: Staff does not reflect the population; Biases in shelter rules; Lack of culturally appropriate food, supplies and services; Power of service providers over survivors unexamined
• Coercion & Threats: Constant threat of eviction to keep the survivor "in line"; Punishing survivors who speak up by labeling their complaints "disrespectful communication"

As this wheel indicates, domestic violence shelter practices are under fire for their professionalization practices because many of them bring accusations of exerting power and control over domestic violence victims. In fact, we note that many points of tension mentioned in this document are similar to those in the wheel. However, many of the issues brought up in this wheel are not present at the DVC, most notably the issue of confidentiality (the DVC was not housed in a confidential location).

Thus, the data presented in this dissertation leads me to conclude that the domestic violence social movement, in all of its variety and differences, is largely misdirecting their efforts at reform with regards to professionalization. Do local level domestic violence shelters warrant meaningful evaluation and critical self-reflection? Absolutely. However, limiting criticism to the local level further weakens service provision to women and children by masking the larger sources of power at work. Koyama’s “Abusive Power and Control Wheel within the Domestic Violence Shelter” wheel, while useful to critically self-reflect on shelter practices, further separates the actors in a shelter. It divides the women and the advocates into different struggles, which is ironic since one of the goal’s of this wheel is to reunite advocates and victims. Furthermore, the wheel completely neglects to place the struggle over professionalization of domestic violence services in a larger political economic perspective. This perspective does not force us to consider that domestic violence shelter organizations are forced to succumb to external pressures to provide the services they can, while grappling with the slippery slope of professionalization. Reuniting local and structural level struggles can be one of the greatest contributions of this dissertation.

My position to not resist all aspects of professionalization may seem paradoxical to a call to return to the grassroots. However, given the multiple perspectives on professionalization, I argue that it is possible to incorporate the benefits of professionalization with the lessons learned from the earlier years of the domestic violence social movement to reunite the women, the advocates, the organization, and the community.

At a time witnessing declining support for all social and human services, I recommend that social service organizations must be supportive of each other to achieve the goals of increasing the wellness of members of society. While this may seem overly optimistic, we can remember the successes of predecessors in the feminist social movement to garner resources through grassroots techniques. These techniques included high volume marches, co-organizing, and large scale lobbying for reform at the local, state, and federal government levels.

Currently, the “dailiness” of carework, whether it is nursing home aids, childcare workers, or domestic violence advocates, often overwhelms the larger structures at work. This
emerged in this dissertation with regards to the domestic violence advocates. Unforeseen or negative outcomes were many times viewed as the fault of the domestic violence shelter’s organization. However, this type of finger pointing veils the true sources of the pressures acting upon all fields of human service. These political economic pressures

Returning to the grassroots means reclaiming the tenets the domestic violence social movement was founded upon. I suggest we begin with furthering our concerted efforts to affect legislation, address the very real issues of competition for resources between organizations, and consciously engage frontline workers in a discussion of the macrostructural factors affecting their work. Furthermore, these efforts can be pursued within a model of professional domestic violence advocacy. We can use both influences to better serve women and children.

Right Now

Based on the above recommendations and the data presented in this dissertation, what can domestic violence shelter do in the immediate future? What are the practical implications for today?

As previously mentioned, both in the data and the research analysis, I feel that domestic violence advocates and the leadership of the shelter organizations must strategically and creatively devise communication opportunities. As this data indicates, there were many examples of miscommunication or a lack of communication between domestic violence advocates and the leadership. This miscommunication has led to distrust and divisions between the actors within the domestic violence shelter. This not only affects service provision, but also affects levels of job satisfaction among the frontline advocates.

In addition to more open and honest communication, domestic violence shelter employees must engage in self-reflection and evaluation of their organizations. This evaluation must go further than measuring service outcomes, and must openly examine the power inequalities between different levels of actors in domestic violence service provision. Open self-reflection and evaluation will focus on the systemic issues the entire shelter staff faces, so as to change shelter policies and procedures to better serve the women and children in shelter and create a more efficient, productive shelter environment for residents and employees.

Furthermore, woven throughout all of these recommendations, domestic violence advocates at all levels, from frontline workers to upper level administrators, must embrace a holistic perspective of their work. In other words, domestic violence advocates must engage multiple levels of intersections in their communications and self-reflection. We must speak of the micro, mezzo, and macro levels simultaneously, because they are interconnected on a daily basis in domestic violence service provision. This would help illuminate the ways the macrostructural political economic forces affect daily service provision, thereby changing the nature of shelter self-evaluations. As this dissertation has shown, domestic violence advocates are often left feeling out of control and powerless to the decisions of shelter leadership. However, they are also not engaged in a discussion of the macro levels of power affecting those decisions. By bringing these pressures to the fore and seeking to understand their work from a holistic perspective, shelter works working at all levels will better understand the sources of decision making with regard to shelter operations.

Additionally, the data indicates there is often a vast difference between the advocates providing domestic violence services today and the women receiving services. These differences include past previous victimization experiences, racial/ethnic backgrounds,
socioeconomic status, educational opportunities, and access to resources. While current certification training seeks to highlight these differences between advocates and residents, it is often difficult to translate a conversation about inequalities to the daily shelter work. Thus, I recommend that shelter advocates be offered training opportunities that focus specifically on the inequalities present between themselves and the women and how they can negotiate those differences. The current training falls short of providing advocates a toolbox of resources to manage their relationships with the women, though it does present the theoretical foundation for recognizing and understanding inequalities. A practical intersection is to provide training that focuses specifically on the inequalities advocates identified in this data and train advocates to recognize difference while decreasing the divide between themselves and the women they serve.

Additionally, the data indicates there is often a vast difference between the advocates providing domestic violence services today and the women receiving services. These differences include past previous victimization experiences, racial/ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status, educational opportunities, and access to resources. While current certification training seeks to highlight these differences between advocates and residents, it is often difficult to convert a theoretical presentation about inequalities to the daily shelter work. Thus, I recommend that shelter advocates be offered training opportunities that focus specifically on the inequalities present between themselves and the women and how they can negotiate those differences. The current training falls short of providing advocates a toolbox of resources to manage their relationships with the women, though it does present the theoretical foundation for recognizing and understanding inequalities. A practical intersection is to provide training that focuses specifically on the inequalities advocates identified in this data and train advocates to recognize difference while decreasing the divide between themselves and the women they serve.

**Women Helping Women No More: The Future of Careworking in America**

Throughout this dissertation research, I have examined power inequalities, struggles over participation, and increased professionalized service provision and structures in domestic violence advocacy in shelters and in non-residential settings. I looked at how they are at work in the everyday relationships among domestic violence advocates and activists in one region during a period of intense program transition.

Yet, this case study’s analysis is not limited to the field of domestic violence. As I have noted throughout this document, the shifts and struggles I have chronicled among domestic violence advocates are also experienced by careworkers in other fields, such as elder care, homeless assistance, residential psychiatric care, etc.

Carework, such as domestic violence advocacy, presents a paradox of human service. Originally considered a service provided by women who were victims of domestic violence helping women in a domestic violence situation, domestic violence carework is now provided by paid “advocates” who often hold different lifetime experiences (such as previous victimization and education level) than the women who are their “clients.” Furthermore, this shift illuminates the fact that in the past, carework was a service, not a vocation or profession. Thus, we are now living in a nation where human service provision is provided by professional careworkers, who are expected to follow guidelines, certification requirements, obtain degrees, and maintain a distance between themselves and the clients.

However, the “care” in carework has not been displaced, rather individuals who elect a career in human services continue to cite a dedication to the population they serve as the
motivation for pursuing carework. But the “work” in carework now carries different stakes. Work suggests that services are provided in exchange for payment and there are expectations for the workers that must be met in order to receive that payment. Additionally, domestic violence advocates are often referred to as the clients’ “workers,” which symbolically places the advocates in a separately defined category from the women.

All forms of carework are undergoing transformations. At the macro level, neoliberal political economic policies have forced carework organizations to evaluate their services and who will provide those services to conform to external demands. For example, as federal support for carework has diminished, human service organizations have turned to private and non-profit sponsors and donors for support. Therefore, the organizations must conform to external expectations for the carework force, such as education level and past experience in the profession.

Thus, this dissertation not only provides a glimpse of the nature of domestic violence advocacy in the 21st century, but also reflects the changing characteristics of carework. By examining the ways that participation and professionalization intersect with power, a number of explanations for recent trends emerge. For example, the advocates recognize that the feminist social movement is investing power in them and their work. The feminist social movement also sends a message proclaiming the benefits of professionalizing to achieve goals set forth. It is therefore unreasonable to expect that domestic violence advocates and activists would be resisting a move towards professionalization when the same entity supporting such a move is also a source of empowerment and inspiration for them. The feminist social movement social movement and a deep commitment to assisting victims of domestic violence provide the source of emotion for domestic violence advocacy and places the “care” in their carework.

Yet, there is also the work aspect of domestic violence advocacy. The recurring emphasis on high heels indicates that for the domestic violence advocates, high heels are a metaphor for professionalization. Advocates do not resist wearing high heels to court (in fact, they embrace the opportunity to wear their “nice clothes”) to make a positive impression upon the community of service providers because they need to foster that relationship in order to gain access to resources for their clients. It makes sense that domestic violence advocates and activists want to conform to those expectations because they recognize the possibility of greater positive outcomes, both for their own lives and for the women and children they are helping. Additionally, this move towards professionalization highlights the “work” in human service provision while displacing the emphasis on “service.”

The research data I collected demonstrates that the culture of domestic violence carework demands the actors to constantly negotiate paradoxical pressures in terms of power, participation, and professionalization. The successful future of domestic violence advocacy and activism will be measured by how well the actors in this culture are able to negotiate those pressures as they provide services to victims of domestic violence.

Domestic violence programs should begin by recognizing the power inequalities that advocates must navigate throughout their multiple relationships. Advocates shift between being more powerful in their relationships with the victims to less powerful in relation to the mezzo and macro level forces that influence their work. Furthermore, domestic violence programs may consider endowing additional power in the advocates conducting the direct service work with victims. One way this goal can be achieved is by investing in the domestic
violence advocates the ability to meaningfully participate in the development of programming and agency structure.

Finally, domestic violence programs will best meet their goals if they actively reflect on the impact of professionalization on their organization and consider the expectations of stakeholders with regards to professionalism. In this case study, the only message against professionalization is coming from domestic violence organizations while other stakeholders are promoting and encouraging professionalization of domestic violence advocacy and activism. The goal is to then consider merging the two ideologies to provide the best services possible to victims of domestic violence.

Ultimately, domestic violence advocacy is about providing services to victims of domestic violence, a philosophy which has remained constant throughout the transitions in carework. All domestic violence advocates and oral history participants agreed on this goal and recognized this as the domestic violence advocates and activists primary responsibility. However, the daily activities involved in reaching this goal coexist with the struggles to maintain multiple relationships necessary to providing services to victims of domestic violence.

Arguments for the return to a grassroots domestic violence advocacy and activism, for a return to women helping women, must reasonably take into account the macro-structural political economic pressures and demands. Based on the data I presented here, the ideology that domestic violence advocacy is based on “women helping women” will not be carried into the future without incorporating these professionalizing demands. Domestic violence advocates and their supporters are amidst an identity and practice redefinition, where the outcome will surely recognize that they are no longer the same women helping women.

Six Months Later

On a spring day, I am back at The Farm. My car is riding low from donations I collected from friends and colleagues to bring to the shelter. Toiletries, gently used clothing, office supplies, diapers, etc.

I pull up to the gate, which now holds a wreath proclaiming “Welcome.” The gates were not closed, but propped open. I pulled into the driveway and began bringing the bags of donations to the door. I walked inside and greeted the domestic violence advocates, women, and children mingling inside. In the office were people making phone calls, answering the crisis line, taking medications, and asking questions. Many faces were familiar, some were not.

Two of the children living in shelter got a wagon and walked me to the car to help me unload the donations. They were excited to meet a “new person” and even more eager to see what I brought. We spent some time chatting and I got to know their favorite places to play in the shelter as we brought more bags into the shelter’s foyer.

After we placed the bags in one of the entry offices, I spent time catching up with the advocates. A couple of the advocates were eating lunch, others were filling out paperwork. We joked about how busy there were, they teased me about becoming a “doctor,” and talked about some of the changes around the shelter since I have left. The DVC has hired several Outreach Advocates who work in the community with domestic violence victims not living in shelter. Legal advocacy services have increased in the DVC’s home county. Male members of the community have embarked on an ambitious fundraising effort to raise $100,000 for the shelter’s operating budget. A few advocates I worked with during this fieldwork have left the
shelter for other positions, all working in some capacity to provide human services. We chatted, promised to meet for coffee or dinner soon, and I was on my way out.

On the front porch, I paused to watch a storm rolling in over the farmland around the shelter. A couple residents and a new advocate joined me outside. The residents pointed out to the advocate that she was wearing different clothes than usual, today she had a nice pair of jeans and cotton shirt with sandals. The new advocate laughed and told the residents that during the first two weeks she worked at the DVC, she was wearing skirts and blouses to do dishes, so she changed her wardrobe approach. The residents laughed, as did I, at her explanation for her “dress down” clothing. However, I also commiserated with the new advocate, sharing with her my own history of clothing choices for shelter work.

One of the residents then looked at me and said, “Are you the Jennifer that wrote the paper?” I told her that yes, I was the former advocate named Jennifer who wrote the paper. I asked her if she had read the paper and where she obtained it from. She told me her primary advocate let her read it and she read the whole thing. She said that it was funny that the new advocate worried about it her clothing, because it “reminded her of the part of the paper where I talked about what the advocates wear to work and what the residents wear.” The other resident asked her to explain what she meant. She went on to say, “Well, you know, if the advocates are all dressed up and we are walking around in house clothes, it makes it seem like we are really different from each other whereas in the past it was just victims helping victims. Right?” She turned to me for confirmation.

“That is what I talked about,” I said, “What did you think about the rest of the paper?”

“I thought it was real interesting and I was glad I read it. I think some of the other girls are reading it now.”

I said, “Well, if you have any questions or thoughts about it, the advocates know how to reach me. I appreciate your feedback. Thanks for reading my paper!” We said our goodbyes and see-you-laters, and I walked away.

Out the long sidewalk to the parking lot, down the driveway to the open gate, and through the winding roads back to town. These are examples of the conversations that have been furthered among myself and the domestic violence advocates who served as participants in this dissertation, as well as the residents they serve. We speak about the research I conducted and the influence it has had on their advocacy work. After this research concluded, the domestic violence advocates were provided with a life coach’s support, a group health benefits plan, and generous salary increase. While this dissertation research did not directly cause these changes, this fieldwork certainly sparked conversations between advocates and discussions between the advocates and the organization’s leadership.

I interact with the DVC on a near daily basis after I accepted a position at a nearby state university Women’s Center as the victim services coordinator. We consult about shared cases and discuss common barriers we encounter in our work. We attend the same coordinated community meetings addressing domestic violence, usually meeting beforehand for a cup of coffee to catch up.

In addition to collaborating with the domestic violence advocates for casework related issues, I also keep in touch with them because over the years we have become close companions. I receive invitations for weddings, baby showers, and children’s ballet recitals. I attend these events and their friend. Maintaining these relationships have forced me to consider the applications and implications of this dissertation research on a daily basis, a process that has been difficult at times.
I have been asked the question, by domestic violence advocates and anthropology colleagues, “What would you have done differently in your research?” I have considered many answers. For instance, I have thought that I would limit my daily participant observation to preserve my own independent life, maybe not have worked so many third shifts or doubled up so many first and second shifts. Maybe I should have drawn the line between myself and the advocates deeper, maintained more stringent boundaries with the research population. Perhaps I should not been as involved with the daily operations of the shelter and certain decisions, as this may have influenced participant responses. It is possible I should have ended the data collection earlier, so as not to confuse so many different phases of the domestic violence program.

But in the end, I am not sure I would have done any of these things. The level of rapport I established with this group of domestic violence advocates surpassed my expectation, and yielded deep, emotional, and unrestrained responses to my questions. Therefore, the fifth relationship intersection in the dissertation is that between the domestic violence advocates and the researcher. This relationship is rooted in our common interests, maintained by trust in each other, and bonded together by shared experiences. This did not change when I stopped asking questions and taking notes. And it is this relationship, between researcher and researched, that drew me to anthropology and will invigorate my research for decades to come. Reflecting on that relationship forces us to confront ourselves as we examine others.
Appendix A

[Date]

Dear [Battered Women’s Program Advocate],

As you may know, I have been working at [BWP] for two years now as a part time crisis counselor. At the same time, I have been completing coursework for a PhD in anthropology. I anticipated conducting my PhD research with the YWCA [Battered Women’s Program] for 9-12 months beginning in January. However, I feel that right now I have an even more important project to complete.

I will be conducting semi-structured interviews with individuals affiliated with the YWCA [Battered Women’s Program] to talk about the upcoming restructuring. I hope to document, through interviews, the services each of you provide through the YWCA [Battered Women’s Program] and your vision for the new organization. This information will hopefully be combined with future dissertation research, which will document the creation of the new domestic violence organization.

If you would like to volunteer to participate in an interview, we need to arrange a day and time for you to complete a Consent Form. Please detach and complete the Participation Request Note below and place it in my mailbox on the first floor of [BWP]. You can also contact me by phone at [xxx-xxxx] or e-mail me at Jennifer.Wies@uky.edu. We can then arrange to complete the Consent Form and schedule an interview at your convenience.

I feel that focusing my dissertation research on domestic violence and an organization that serves survivors is the best way for me to contribute to the solution of domestic violence. Addressing the organizational aspects of service provision is an important part of the solution. I know that there is very little free time at [BWP] and this is a difficult time for everyone, and I appreciate your participation very much!

Best,
Jennifer R. Wies, M.A.

(Detach Here)

*Participation Request Note*

Name:

Best time to contact you:

Best way to contact you (telephone, e-mail):

Please drop this note in Jennifer’s mailbox on the first floor of [BWP]. I will contact you shortly to set up a time to discuss the Consent Form and answer any questions you may have. Thanks for taking the time to consider participating in this project! ☺
Appendix B

[Date]

Dear [Domestic Violence Center Advocate],

As you may know, I am focusing my dissertation research on the restructuring of domestic violence advocacy and activism in central Kentucky through the themes of participation and professionalization. This research will be conducted from February through December.

I will be conducting semi-structured interviews with advocates at the [Domestic Violence Center]. I hope to document, through interviews, the services each of you provide and your role in domestic violence advocacy. This information will hopefully be combined with other data, which will document the restructuring of domestic violence services in central Kentucky and the changing roles of advocates.

If you would like to volunteer to participate in an interview, we need to arrange a day and time for you to complete a Consent Form. Please detach and complete the Participation Request Note below and place it in my mailbox at the [Domestic Violence Center]. You can also contact me by phone at [xxx-xxxx] or e-mail me at Jennifer.Wies@uky.edu. We can then arrange to complete the Consent Form and schedule an interview at your convenience.

I feel that focusing my dissertation research on domestic violence and an organization that serves survivors is the best way for me to contribute to the solution of domestic violence. Addressing the organizational aspects of service provision is an important part of the solution. I know that there is very little free time when doing domestic violence advocacy, and I appreciate your participation very much!

Best,
Jen

(Detach Here)

Participation Request Note

Name:

Best time to contact you:

Best way to contact you (telephone, e-mail):

Please drop this note in Jennifer’s mailbox or let her know that you are interested in interviewing. I will contact you shortly to set up a time to discuss the Consent Form and answer any questions you may have. Thanks for taking the time to consider participating in this project! ☺
Appendix C

Oral History Participation Request Letter

[Date]

Dear [Potential Oral History Participant],

I am writing you because you have been or are currently active in the domestic violence advocacy and activist movement in central Kentucky. I am focusing my dissertation research in anthropology on the restructuring of domestic violence advocacy and activism in central Kentucky through the themes of participation and professionalization. This research will be conducted from February through December.

I will be conducting semi-structured interviews with advocates and activists in central Kentucky. I hope to document, through interviews, the services you provide or provided in the past and your role in domestic violence advocacy. This information will hopefully be combined with other data, which will document the restructuring of domestic violence services in central Kentucky and the changing roles of advocates.

If you would like to volunteer to participate in an interview, we need to arrange a day and time for you to complete a Consent Form. Please detach and complete the Participation Request Note below and return it to me in the enclosed self addressed, stamped envelope. You can also contact me by phone at [xxx-xxxx] or e-mail me at Jennifer.Wies@uky.edu. We can then arrange to complete the Consent Form and schedule an interview at your convenience.

I feel that focusing my dissertation research on domestic violence and an organization that serves survivors is the best way for me to contribute to the solution of domestic violence. Addressing the organizational aspects of service provision is an important part of the solution. I know that there is very little free time when doing domestic violence advocacy and activism, and I appreciate your participation very much!

Best,

Jennifer R. Wies, M.A.

(Detach Here)

**Participation Request Note**

Name:

Best time to contact you:

Best way to contact you (telephone, e-mail):
Appendix D
University of Kentucky Institutional Review Board Consent Form

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

TRACING POWER THROUGH PARTICIPATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY

WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?
You are being invited to take part in a research study about domestic violence advocacy in Kentucky. You are being invited to participate in this research study because you are currently involved in domestic violence advocacy and activism or you were active in domestic violence advocacy and activism in the past. If you take part in this study, you will be one of about 100 people to do so.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?
The person in charge of this study is Jennifer R. Wies, M.A. (PI) of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Kentucky. She is being guided in this research by John van Willigen, PhD. There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
The purpose of this study to better understand the themes of participation and professionalization in domestic violence advocacy. In addition, I will provide an ethnographic description of daily life for advocates within a domestic violence shelter organization. Finally, I will produce an oral history of the central Kentucky domestic violence social movement and the regional domestic violence organization. By doing this study, I hope to learn more about domestic violence advocacy and activism.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?
The research procedures will be conducted at the [Domestic Violence Center]. You will need to come to the [Domestic Violence Center] or a location convenient for you once during the study for an interview. This visit will take about 60-120 minutes. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is 60-120 minutes over the next year.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?
If you would like to volunteer for this research project, you will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher, Jennifer. She will ask you questions about your current roles at the [Domestic Violence Center] or your past experiences with domestic violence advocacy and activism in Kentucky.

You will be asked permission to audiotape the interview. If you choose not to have the interview audiotaped, the interview will continue and Jennifer will take notes about the conversation. If you choose to permit Jennifer to audiotape the interview, the conversation will be recorded. Audiotapes will be kept in a locked location in Jennifer’s home office.
throughout data collection and analysis. Upon the completion of data analysis, which will be approximately 2 years from now, all audiotapes will be destroyed.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
You are free to decline to take part in this study for any reason you choose.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?
To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in this study.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?
If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

IF YOU DON’T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?
If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?
There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY PAYMENT OR REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?
You will not receive any payment or reward for taking part in this study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION YOU GIVE?
Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study, such as advocates and activists currently working for the [Domestic Violence Center] or individuals associated with the history of domestic violence services in central Kentucky. When I write up the study to share it with other researchers, I will write about this combined information. If you choose, you will be identified in these written materials.

If you would like for your name to remain confidential, I will make every effort to prevent anyone from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. For example, your name will be kept separate from the information you give, and these two things will be stored in different places under lock and key.

However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. I may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure I have done the research correctly; these would be people from organizations at the
University of Kentucky such as the Department of Anthropology or the Office for Research Integrity.

**CAN YOUR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?**
If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

The individuals conducting the study may need to take you off of the study. They may do this if you are not able to follow the directions they give you, if they find that your being in the study is more risk than benefit to you, or if the agency funding the study decides to stop the study early for a variety of scientific reasons.

**WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?**
Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the project, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Jennifer Wies at 859-268-9910. If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Kentucky at 859-257-9428 or toll-free at 1-866-400-9428. I will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

**WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?**
You will be told if any new information is learned which may affect your condition or influence your willingness to continue taking part in this study.

________________________________________  _________________ _____________
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

__________________________________ ______
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

________________________________________  _________________ _____________
Name of person providing information to subject   Date
Appendix E

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

TRACING POWER THROUGH PARTICIPATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY- FOCUS GROUP

WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?
You are being invited to take part in a research study about domestic violence advocacy in Kentucky. You are being invited to participate in this research study because you are currently involved in domestic violence advocacy at the [Domestic Violence Center]. If you take part in this study, you will be one of about 15 people to do so.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?
The person in charge of this study is Jennifer R. Wies, M.A. (PI) of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Kentucky. She is being guided in this research by John van Willigen, PhD. There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
The purpose of this study to better understand the themes of participation and professionalization in domestic violence advocacy. In addition, I will provide an ethnographic description of daily life for advocates within a domestic violence shelter organization. Finally, I will produce an oral history of the central Kentucky domestic violence social movement and the area domestic violence organization. By doing this study, I hope to learn more about domestic violence advocacy and activism.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?
The research procedures will be conducted at the [Domestic Violence Center]. You will need to come to the [Domestic Violence Center] or a location convenient four times during the study for a focus group. This visit will take about 60-120 minutes. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is 240-480 minutes over the next year.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?
If you would like to volunteer for this research project, you will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher, Jennifer. She will ask you questions about your current roles at the [Domestic Violence Center] or your past experiences with domestic violence advocacy and activism in Kentucky.

You will be asked permission to audiotape the interview. If you choose not to have the interview audiotaped, the interview will continue and Jennifer will take notes about the conversation. If you choose to permit Jennifer to audiotape the interview, the conversation will be recorded. Audiotapes will be kept in a locked location in Jennifer’s home office.
throughout data collection and analysis. Upon the completion of data analysis, which will be approximately 2 years from now, all audiotapes will be destroyed.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
You are free to decline to take part in this study for any reason you choose.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?
To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in this study.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?
If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

IF YOU DON’T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?
If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?
There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY PAYMENT OR REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?
You will not receive any payment or reward for taking part in this study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION YOU GIVE?
Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When I write up the study to share it with other researchers, I will write about this combined information. If you choose, you will be identified in these written materials.

If you would like for your name to remain confidential, I will make every effort to prevent anyone from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. For example, your name will be kept separate from the information you give, and these two things will be stored in different places under lock and key.

Furthermore, due to the collective nature of this focus group, I ask that each person maintain the confidentiality of each other’s responses. In other words, please do not share with anyone the information you hear in this focus group. Your commitment to respecting this guideline will allow each of us to speak freely.
However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. I may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure I have done the research correctly; these would be people from organizations at the University of Kentucky such as the Department of Anthropology or the Office for Research Integrity.

**CAN YOUR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?**
If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

The individuals conducting the study may need to take you off of the study. They may do this if you are not able to follow the directions they give you, if they find that your being in the study is more risk than benefit to you, or if the agency funding the study decides to stop the study early for a variety of scientific reasons.

**WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?**
Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the project, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Jennifer Wies at [xxx-xxx-xxxx]. If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Kentucky at 859-257-9428 or toll-free at 1-866-400-9428. I will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

**WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?**
You will be told if any new information is learned which may affect your condition or influence your willingness to continue taking part in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study</th>
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<td>Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of person providing information to subject</td>
<td>Date</td>
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Appendix F

University of Kentucky
Institutional Review Board

[Date]

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to confirm that the YWCA [Battered Women’s Program] in Kentucky has agreed to allow Jennifer Wies to conduct a predissertation project in preparation for her dissertation fieldwork. She has shared with us her predissertation proposal for our comment and approval, which we find to be in good standing.

[Name], if necessary, will provide confirmation to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) confirming the appropriateness of the research for the local population at the YWCA [Battered Women’s Program].

The [Battered Women’s Program] has reviewed the project and finds that it is appropriate for the population. The facility has adequate capabilities to support the research procedures as approved by the University of Kentucky IRB.

Sincerely,

[Women’s Advocacy Department Supervisor]
Appendix G

University of Kentucky
Institutional Review Board

[Date]

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to confirm that the [Domestic Violence Center] in Lexington, Kentucky has agreed to allow Jennifer R. Wies, M.A. to conduct a predissertation project in preparation for her dissertation fieldwork. She has shared with us her predissertation proposal for our comment and approval, which we find to be in good standing.

The Executive Director if necessary, will provide confirmation to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) confirming the appropriateness of the research for the local population at the [Domestic Violence Center].

The [Domestic Violence Center] has reviewed the project and finds that it is appropriate for the population. The facility has adequate capabilities to support the research procedures as approved by the University of Kentucky IRB.

Sincerely,

Executive Director
[Domestic Violence Center]
Appendix H

Pictures of the Battered Women’s Program

Advocate Office, close up on desk with security monitor and paperwork
Advocate Office, desk with windows
Door to the Advocate Office, second floor
View of the hallway from the desk in the Advocate Office
View of the 2nd floor hallway, showing rooms for women and children
View of Advocate Offices on the first floor from the front door
Room for women and children, showing bunk beds
Room for women and children with bunk beds removed
Board used to identify women and children in shelter, left empty the day before the BWP closed
Appendix I

Pictures of the Domestic Violence Program Homeless Assistance Location

Advocate Office
Advocate Office
View from Advocate Desk looking out into Community Room
Close up of the Advocate Desk with daily use items
Kitchen/Play Room
Kitchen/Play Room, including microwave in the absence of a stove
Kitchen/Play Room with refrigerator and pantry shelves for food storage
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Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui

Yllo, Kersti

Zavella, Patricia
Vita
Jennifer R. Wies
Born: November 26, 1977
Euclid, Ohio

EDUCATION

May 2002  Master of Arts in Anthropology, University of Kentucky
Thesis Title: A Community Responds: Identity, Politics, and Gender Analyses of an AIDS Service Organization

January 2000  Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Sociology, Loyola University Chicago
Conferred Cum Laude

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2005- Present  University of Kentucky Women's Place
Advocates in the Community: Promoting Safety on Campus
Program evaluation of the Students Educating and Empowering to Develop Safety (SEEDS) program. Data collection methods include focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and longitudinal analysis of quantitative survey instruments to better understand why students serve as peer educators and improve our understanding of campus social movements.

2004-2006  University of Kentucky Department of Anthropology
The Political Economy of a Domestic Violence Shelter, Doctoral Research
Ethnography and program evaluation of domestic violence advocacy in Kentucky. Data collection methods include semi-structured interviews, focus groups, oral histories, and participant observation fieldwork to examine trends in participation and professionalization in direct service provision to victims of domestic violence.

2002  University of Kentucky Department of Anthropology
A Community Responds: Identity, Politics, and Gender Analyses of an AIDS Service Organization, Master’s Research
Ethnographic study of an AIDS service organization dedicated to serving evening meals to people living with HIV/AIDS in a county-wide area. Data collections methods include participant observation, survey interviews and semi-structured interviews to examine disparities in service provision according to gender among HIV+ individuals.

1999  Loyola University of Chicago
Archaeology Field School, Excavation of Early Woodland Shell Midden Site
Archaeological excavation of an Early Woodland Period (dated to 800-200 B.C.) temporary settlement. Systematic excavations and deep testing methods to recover material culture remains to better understand the pottery technology, plant domestication practices, diet/subsistence patterns, and sedentism among this group of Early Woodland peoples.
PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS


2005  Responding to Violence Against Women: Lessons Lived and Learned from Three Cultures. Workshop presented at the 7th Annual Ending Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Conference, Lexington K.Y.

2005  Undergraduate Mentorship Session. Discussant at the Society for Applied Anthropology, Santa Fe, NM.

2005  Advocacy and Scholarship in Minoritized Communities: Engaging Activism and Academia. Discussant at the American Anthropological Association, Atlanta, GA.


2004  Student Conference Welcome and Orientation. Organizer at the Society for Applied Anthropology, Dallas, TX.

2004  SfAA Past Presidents and Student Luncheon. Organizer at the Society for Applied Anthropology, Dallas, TX.


2002  “This is who we are:” Collective Identity Boundaries of an AIDS Service Organization. Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association, New Orleans, LA.


GRANT DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

2006  Assistant to Principle Investigator
   Systems Response Project
   Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, Violence Against Women Grant- Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors (STOP) Grant Program

2006  Assistant to Principle Investigator
   Providing Victim Services to a Campus Community
   Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, Victims of Crime Act Grant Program
2006 Assistant to Principle Investigator
*Grant Proposal to Prevent Violence Behavior Among College Students, University of Kentucky Research Foundation*
Department of Education, Grant Competition to Prevent High-Risk Drinking or Violent Behavior Among College Students

2006 Assistant to Principle Investigator
*Grants to Reduce Violent Crimes Against Women on Campus Program FY 2006- University of Kentucky Research Foundation*
Department of Justice, Grants to Reduce Violent Crimes Against Women on Campus Program

2005 Principle Investigator
*Advocates in the Community: Promoting Safety on Campus*
Southern Association for College Student Affairs

2005 Principle Investigator
*Applying Anthropology to Domestic Violence*
University of Kentucky Department of Anthropology Susan Abbott Jamieson Predissertation Research Fellowship

2002 Assistant to Principle Investigator
*Social and Cultural Pathways in Health Disparities (Cervical Cancer)*
National Institutes of Health

**AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS**

2006 Sarah Bennett Holmes Award Nominee, University of Kentucky
2004 McClinton Book Scholarship, University of Kentucky
2004 Susan Abbott-Jamieson Pre-Dissertation Research Fund Award
2003 University of Kentucky Emeriti Faculty Endowed Fellowship Award
2003 Carrie Hunter Tate Award, National Association of Student Anthropologists
2003 President’s Award for Diversity Nominee
2003 President’s Commission on Women Scholar to the National Research for Violence Against Women Conference
2003 Elsie Bourke Ewing Award for Experiential Learning Initiative
2002 National Association of Student Anthropologists, Travel Grant
2002 Provost’s Award for Outstanding Teaching, Teaching Assistant
2002 William Y. Adams Award for Excellence in Anthropology Teaching
2001 University of Kentucky Alumni Association Scholarship
2001 University of Kentucky Student Development Award
1998 Loyola University Chicago Community Service Leader Award
1996 Loyola University Chicago Presidential Scholarship

**COMMUNITY ACTIVISM AND SERVICE**

2002-2005 Domestic Violence Advocate, Bluegrass Domestic Violence Program.
Lexington, KY.

2000-2002 Medical Advocate and Crisis Counselor, Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center.
Lexington, Kentucky.

2000 Youth Hotline and Crisis Counselor, Native American Women Health
Education Resource Center and Domestic Violence Shelter. Yankton Sioux Reservation, South Dakota.


1997-1998 Auction Committee Chair, National Hunger Week, Loyola Chapter. Chicago, Illinois.

**RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE**

2005-Present Assistant Director/Services and Programs Coordinator, University of Kentucky Women's Place.

2004-Present Adjunct Faculty in Women's Studies. Bluegrass Community and Technical College.

2004-2005 Adjunct Faculty in Anthropology. Eastern Kentucky University.

2000-2004 Teaching Assistant and Primary Instructor. University of Kentucky.


2000 Domestic Violence Shelter Manager and Women’s Health Researcher, Native American Women’s Health Education Resource Center. Yankton Sioux Reservation, Lake Andes, South Dakota.


**LEADERSHIP AND COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

2006-present University of Kentucky Women’s Forum, Executive Board Member and Program Committee Co-Chair

2005-present LexCare Human Services Network, Committee Member

2004-present Society for Applied Anthropology, Executive Board Member

2003-2004 National Society for Applied Anthropology, Student Committee Chair

2001-2003 Anthropology Graduate Student Association Distinguished Lecturer Series Coordinator

2003 University of Kentucky Provost’s Outstanding Teaching Award Committee

2002-2003 National Society for Applied Anthropology Student Committee Secretary

2001-2003 University of Kentucky Anthropology Graduate Student Association Secretary

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

- AIDS and Anthropology Research Group, section AAA
- American Anthropological Association (AAA)
- Association for Feminist Anthropology, section AAA
- National Association for the Practice of Anthropology, section AAA
- National Anthropology Student Association, section AAA
- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence