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Reconceptualizing Leadership through the Prism of the Modern Civil Rights Movement: A Grounded Theory Case Study on Ella Baker

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Reconceptualizing Leadership through the Prism of the Modern Civil Rights
Movement: A Grounded Theory Case Study on Ella Baker

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

By

Edna R. Comedy

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
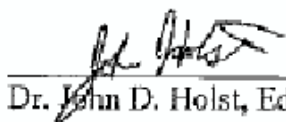FOR THE DEGREE OF
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UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

Reconceptualizing Leadership through the Prism of the Modern Civil Rights
Movement: A Grounded Theory Case Study on Ella Baker

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as meeting departmental
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and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final
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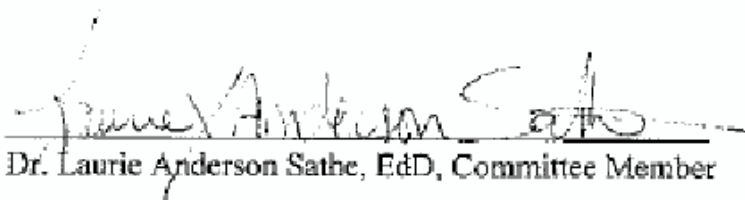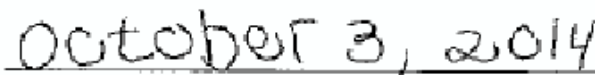
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October 3, 2014
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Final Approval Date

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Carrie. A mere acknowledgement is simply insufficient. She deserves much more.

Madear, you left this physical world approximately nineteen years ago on May 5, 1995, leaving behind my twelve siblings and me, nineteen grandchildren, two great grandchildren, and a cadre of other people who truly loved and adored you. You planted in me the seeds of curiosity about many things. Those seeds germinated, took roots, and completed their life cycle—today, in the form of this dissertation. Though you never attended college yourself, you encouraged my siblings and me to "better yourself." We knew your words not only meant graduating high school but also college.

Throughout this academic journey, I have felt your incredible presence. Right now, I imagine you looking down from your rightful place at the foot of God's throne and saying: "Well done, Edna!"

Madear, I miss you as though it were yesterday that God called you Home. Though your death continues to weigh heavy on my heart, I find some solace in knowing you are resting in eternal peace.

And Christ said to her: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21, King James Version).

Abstract

Guiding this research inquiry was a constructivist grounded theory case study—though interspersed throughout are various framing characteristics of a biographical study and oral history. Neither a biographical study nor oral history would have been an appropriate research method for achieving the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study was to reconceptualize the leadership of Ella Baker during the modern Civil Rights Movement, to develop a leadership framework in which her community and political activism naturally fits, and to place her leadership style in a broader framework of research. Using a purposeful sampling and criterion-based selection strategy, this study relied on responses of five (n=5) research participants to fifteen open-ended questions using a semi-structured interview protocol. All research participants are SNCC veterans and civil rights activists; each interacted frequently with Ella Baker. Results suggested the liberation leadership framework had the greatest potential for explaining Ella Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. Liberation leadership is a "process in which leaders" do not lead others but rather are "members of a community of practice, i.e. people united in a common enterprise, who share a history and thus certain values, beliefs, ways of talking, and ways of doing things" (O'Donovan, 2007, p. 30). The explanatory nature of this study narrows the gap in current social movement literature on Ella Baker's leadership.

Key words: adult education, Black feminist thought, community organizing, critical consciousness, double-choice, double-consciousness, double culture, feminist theory, informal learning, liberation leadership, nonformal learning, patriarchy, problem-posing education, organic intellectuals, outsider-within, traditional intellectuals.

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In all that I do, I give thanks to God for His blessings, goodness, and guidance. Without Him in my life, I know reaching this point would not have been possible. I praise His Holy name.

Completing this dissertation is only one of the countless reasons for my gratitude. This dissertation took several years to research and write. Many people played invaluable roles in making this occasion a reality. First among these is the love of my life, Ernie. You provided me throughout this journey your unconditional love, support, and encouragement. Your gentleness, kind words of inspiration, and unassuming presence helped me stay the course. To my two sons, Gary and Andy, I thank God for you. You never let me forget the depth of your love and the pride you felt for me after learning I had decided to pursue my doctorate. Mere words cannot convey the strength of my devotion to you.

To my two younger sisters, Debra and Vickie, I cannot begin to enumerate the many reasons I thank God for you. Throughout this academic journey, you were extremely confident I would complete my coursework and defend my dissertation successfully. You provided encouragement, love, and your continuous support. Indeed, you are a God sent.

To two of my dear colleagues and friends, Nancy and Sharon, who provided peer debriefings and support, I owe you so much. You provided critical insights, which I knew emanated from your own experiences as researchers and, in the case of Nancy, your own experiences as a social scientist and one who served on and chaired many dissertation committees.

To my dissertation committee, Drs. John Holst, Stephen Brookfield, and Laurie Anderson Sathe, I am extremely grateful for your willingness to serve on my committee. You graciously agreed to assume this responsibility with a clear understanding of the time

commitment involved. In the aggregate, you brought to the committee a strong commitment to

my academic success and a depth and range of knowledge and scholarship in adult education,

critical pedagogy, and feminist theory. I benefited greatly from them all.

I extend a very special thanks to Dr. John Holst, my dissertation chairperson, who

agreed to play this vital role. You are one of the most patient individuals and sage advisers I

have ever known. You helped me expand my intellectual boundaries and spheres of analysis.

Without your guidance, reaching this point would have been difficult and this journey more

protracted.

Thank you, thank you all!

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INTRODUCTION

Researcher's Positionality

Most people have only read about or watched documentaries on the modern Civil Rights Movement. An even smaller number of people have any knowledge about the leadership of the cadre of African-American women who dedicated their lives to eradicating segregation and other forms of racial and social inequality. This is not the case for me.

Growing up in the Deep South during the civil rights era gives me a uniquely personal perspective. Some might call it an "up close and personal" perspective on this historic freedom struggle. The reason is I was born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee, then a bastion of Jim Crow where Whites fiercely protected the racial caste system that relegated people of color to second class citizenship. Memphis also is the city of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's last mass demonstration, which he led on behalf of striking African-American sanitation workers who sought employment equality from the City of Memphis. My parents marched in that demonstration. It was during King's Memphis visit that a sniper's bullet ended his life.

I shall never forget that night on April 4, 1968 when my parents' telephone rang, and my father yelled out to my mother: "Carrie, somebody shot Reverend King. He's dead." It was late at night. With the exception of my three oldest siblings, my other siblings and I were preparing for bed.

Like so many Southern African-American adults at the time, my parents were deeply involved in the Movement through their active membership in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This was not surprising. My father was pastor of a large African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) church in Memphis—although we referred to ourselves as Baptists. While my parents did not know Ella Baker personally, she was the civil

rights activists about whom my mother spoke most frequently. Her respect and admiration for Ella Baker was quite discernible—such as in the cadence of my mother's voice and the way her face lit up whenever she spoke of an event in which Ella Baker was involved. One such story remains a vivid memory in my mind. It was the story about Ella Baker's work with "a group of *colored* college students" who, at the time, were crisscrossing the State of Mississippi to register African-Americans to vote.

To my mother, this was a sign of progress to come. Plus, the sociopolitical and legal landscape of Mississippi was not an unknown to my parents. They were native Mississippians; both were born and raised in Friars Point, Mississippi but later relocated to Memphis in the early 1930s. It was during our family's dinners when I first learned about Ella Baker and her work in the Civil Rights Movement. From my mother's perspective, Ella Baker was a courageous woman with Christian values and whose life's calling was fighting for social and racial equality for African-Americans and other marginalized groups. My mother frequently referred to Ella Baker as a *Colored woman of stature*, a clearly racialized descriptor but one widely accepted during that era. In addition to those stories, I also learned about the social obstacles Ella Baker encountered—the kind we recognize today as sexism and classism. Of course, my mother never characterized them in quite this way.

My first realization came years later when I learned that the leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) not only were men but also Baptist ministers. An irony to be sure, since my father was also a minister and not experienced as a proponent of gender equality. Much like Ella Baker and other women civil rights activists, my mother was not recognized for her leadership talents and contributions. Some might argue this lack of recognition reflected the social norms of the times. Others might characterize her experiences as

sexism. In fact, no single example evidences this more than my father's strategy meetings, which he convened in Fellowship Hall—the dining room within his church. Women parishioners did not participate in those meetings. My mother was not an exception. She and other women were relegated within the church to gender-defined roles: preparing and serving meals so that the men could focus on the "important business" of the church and/or some aspect of the Movement.

Granted, this is my recollection and interpretation of those events. But I cannot recall ever hearing my mother object to this form of exclusion. Perhaps, it was because my parents had reached a private agreement about the composition of meeting participants. No other supposition makes sense to me—since my mother was an intelligent, confident, and articulate woman. Though standing only 4 feet and 11 inches tall, she was not reticent to express her views as well as her disagreements, especially not to my father. The facts remain, however, that only men of the church sat at the long, brown wooden table in Fellowship Hall where they participated in what surely must have been important discussions about the social plight of African-Americans. Women were conspicuously absent, their voices silenced.

My mother was a wise and pragmatic individual—a person known for her laser-like focus on issues and skillfulness in setting aside tangential arguments. Much like Ella Baker, she was a proponent of equality and the dignity of the human person. There also were other similarities between the two women. Both my mother and Ella Baker were leaders in their own right. Nothing exemplifies this more than the many informal leadership roles my mother played. She served for decades as Assistant Superintendent of Sunday Schools for my father's church. Of course, this was a volunteer position. She recruited, trained, and mentored adult volunteers who functioned as Sunday school teachers—both for the youth and adult classes. My mother

also coordinated and oversaw all Sunday school classes including Bible Study groups—a task she eagerly performed with a lot of passion.

In fact, my mother took great pride in organizing, enlisting, and equipping new Sunday school teachers with the tools they needed to help develop this aspect of the church ministry. Like most effective leaders, she was well versed in her vocation. Yet, my father and other male church leaders did not recognize or seemingly appreciate her talents. This was Ella Baker's experience, as well.

Reflecting today on this part of my childhood, I concluded that my mother's own life experiences must have been the reason she felt such a personal connection to Ella Baker. Those childhood memories about Ella Baker revived my interest in her life story, leadership philosophy, leader-behaviors, and contributions to the Civil Rights Movement. On a more personal level, researching Baker's leadership also represents for me a heart-felt tribute to my mother. She opened my eyes to the Civil Rights Movement and Ella Baker in particular. This year, Ella Baker and my mother would have celebrated their 111th and 101 birthdays, respectively. I pray they both are resting in peace.

Introduction

For tens of thousands of African-Americans, the modern Civil Rights Movement is deeply engrained in our memories. This freedom struggle dismantled the Jim Crow racial caste system in Southern states and, more broadly, paved the way for African-Americans to claim their constitutionally guaranteed rights of full citizenship. The historical tentacles of the Civil Rights Movement reach as far back as the nineteenth century when renowned abolitionists such as Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett waged, in their own unique ways, a valiant effort to eradicate slavery and, in the case of Wells-Barnett, to end the most heinous of

all forms of racial and social injustice—the lynching of African-Americans.

Consistent with the social norms of the time, the modern Civil Rights Movement was also a social struggle for the dignity and civil rights of all people—though its leadership was dominated by men (Olson, 200; Ransby, 2003; Robnett, 1999). The leadership contributions of women were discounted, marginalized, and oftentimes ignored (Crawford, Rouse, & Woods, 1993; Olson, 200; Ransby, 2003a; Robnett, 1999). Ella Baker was among this large cadre of African-American women. Through the catalytic role she played in the Civil Rights Movement, Ella Baker co-founded, organized, led, and/or built the organizational structures of more than forty organizations and grassroots coalitions. Elliott (1996) argues she and other women civil rights activists were "agents of change" who waged an unrelenting fight for social justice (para. 2). Leading, community organizing, and training the socially and economically marginalized characterize Ella Baker's life. She and her contributions have left an indelible mark not only on the Civil Rights Movement but also on the leadership philosophies of social activists who chose and will choose to pursue a similar path.

Problem Statement

Several decades have passed since the modern Civil Rights Movement ended. Despite Ella Baker's many contributions, few theoretical studies within the vast body of movement research explore and name her leadership philosophy and style. Such under-theorization of this significant aspect of movement history has created a wide gap in the literature, leaving behind many unanswered questions. In fact, this paucity of research on Baker's leadership is matched only by the availability of scholarship on high profile male civil rights leaders, the strengths and weaknesses of their leadership, and the role Black institutions, especially the Black church, played in helping mobilize the African-American community.

It was not until the 1990s that scholars (Butler-White, 2008; Charles, 2007; Crawford, Rouse & Woods, 1993; Dallard, 1990; Elliott, 1996; Gilsson, 2000; Harris; 2009; Payne, 1989; Petty, 1996; Preskill, 2005; Ransby, 2003a; Robnett, 1996, 1999; Ross, 2003; Stephens, 2010) began postulating about Baker's leadership. They recognized that African-American women indeed represented the backbone of the Civil Rights Movement (Ezra, 2009; Harris, 2009; Payne, 1989, 1995). Though important in expanding our knowledge of Baker, this body of work fails to advance an integrated alternative to current leadership orthodoxy. The reason is this: the leadership frameworks reflected in earlier scholarly works do not reflect, represent, or encapsulate the multidimensionality of Baker's leadership. Many merely focus on one aspect of her leadership.

During the last decade, however, some progress has occurred in this area. Several relatively recent dissertations on Baker's leadership fare somewhat better in closing the literature gap. For example, Butler's (2008) dissertation, *Give Light and People will find Their Way: Ella Baker's Group-Centered Leadership in a Contemporary Workplace,* applies Ella Baker's group-centered leadership in a modern-day workplace. Charles' (2007) published historical case study, *Ella Baker and the SNCC: Grassroots Leadership and Political Activism in a Non-hierarchical Organization*, examines non-positional grassroots leadership within a nonhierarchical organization. Glisson's (2000) research study, *Neither bedecked nor bebosomed: Lucy Randolph Mason, Ella Baker and Women's Leadership and Organizing for the Struggle for Freedom*, examines the feminized and racialized strategies of two well-known women civil rights activists. It challenges the traditional women's leadership roles in creating and sustaining effective social actions. Finally, Petty's (1996) historical single case study, *Non-positional Leadership: The Case of Ella Baker and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating*

Committee, examines the leadership and organizational structure of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the influence of Baker's leadership on the Committee's early successes.

   While these recent studies provide different lens through which to examine this aspect of the Civil Rights Movement, they too suffer from similar shortcomings as earlier research studies. They, too, rely almost exclusively on traditional leadership orthodoxy. Such reliance limits the explanatory power needed to fully understand the multidimensionality of Baker's leadership. What is needed today is a leadership framework that incorporates her community organizing, political activism, training of the disenfranchised, and mentoring of student activists. It is this under-theorization that creates the research problem that this current study endeavored to address.

<div align="center">**Significance of the Problem**</div>

   Early scholarship on the modern Civil Rights Movement attributes its leadership to a few high profile African-American men. Former Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, current United States Congressman John Lewis, and the Reverend Dr. Ralph Abernathy are just a few such examples. In his early role as chief counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from the 1940s through the 1960s, Marshall litigated and won on behalf of the NAACP racial segregation cases and those involving racial discrimination, among which was the landmark Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Topeka Kansas Board of Education (Levy, 1998; Williams, 2000). King was president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the widely acclaimed leader of the Civil Rights Movement (Carson, 1995; Marable, 1998; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003a). As one of the chairmen of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Lewis helped orchestrate the 1960s student sit-in movements and freedom rides

(Carson, 1995; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003a; Zinn, 2002). And while succeeding King as SCLC president, Abernathy led the 1968 Poor People's Campaign that resulted in significant changes in several federal programs and the creation of others, such as the national Food Stamp Program—a federally-subsidized meal program for low income children and the elderly (Levy, 1998; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003a).

Admittedly, these civil rights leaders deserve our praise and gratitude for waging a tireless and effective social and legal assault on segregation and racial injustice, which for centuries pervaded the social fabric of Southern states and the United States more broadly. While we know a lot about their life narratives and are thankful for their efforts, we know far too little about Baker, her leadership philosophy, and leader-behaviors.

Baker was not an unknown within movement circles—not even to renowned civil rights leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois, A. Philip Randolph, Thurgood Marshall, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Harris, 2011). As a grassroots community organizer and political activist, she worked alongside each man in some capacity, on some activity or project on behalf of the socially and economically oppressed (Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Crawford, Rouse, & Woods, 1993; DeLaure, 2008; Grant, 1998; Olson, 2001; Payne, 1989, 1995; Ransby, 2003a; Robnett, 1999). For example, Baker's tenure with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) during the 1940s overlapped with that of W.E.B. DuBois and Thurgood Marshall. During this timeframe, Baker was field secretary and later director of New York Branches (Grant, 1998; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003a). DuBois was the founder and editor of the NAACP *Crisis* Magazine, and Thurgood Marshall was chief counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Moreover, Baker played numerous formal and informal leadership roles. There are few

more poignant examples of her leadership than Baker's work with the Young Negroes Cooperative League (YNCL), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), NAACP, Southern Conference Education Fund, and In Friendship. Her leadership represents a new brand of leadership, one that differs from our traditional understanding of leadership. Appendix E chronicles Baker's roles and leadership activities during her fifty-year career.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is three-fold: to reconceptualize the leadership of Ella Baker during the modern Civil Rights Movement; to develop a leadership framework in which her community and political activism naturally fits; and to place her style of leadership in a broader framework of research—focusing primarily on the role of leadership in social activism. Because of the explanatory nature of this current study, achieving these objectives is an important research endeavor. This current study helps close the research gap in current literature on Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors.

Having described the purpose of this study, it is important to state just as explicitly what this study is not about. This study does not attempt to explore, explain, or avenge historical oversights of the pantheon of courageous women who waged during the Civil Rights Movement an effective and valiant struggle for racial and social equality on behalf of African-Americans. Neither does this study attempt to render a biographical narrative or an oral history of Ella Baker's life. Doing so would have been beyond the scope of this study. Instead, this study is placed within a narrow historical context using a grounded theory case study approach to reconceptualize Baker's leadership through the prism of the modern Civil Rights Movement.

Research Questions

There remains much to learn about the multidimensionality of Baker's leadership

philosophy and leader-behaviors. This current study explores and explains this important yet under-theorized aspect of the Civil Rights Movement. Marshall and Rossman (2006) write that a study's research questions represent the basic foundation of the study. This study sought to and answered the following three broad research questions:

> Research Question 1: How does Ella Baker's community and political activism epitomize leadership?

> Research Question 2: What are the primary characteristics of her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors?

> Research Question 3: What leadership framework(s) best reflect and encapsulate the multi-dimensional character of both her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors?

The findings of this study make a significant contribution to the field of leadership. They not only close the gap in leadership literature but also provide a representative framework for understanding the multi-dimensionality of Baker's leadership.

Theoretical Framework

A critical aspect of any qualitative research study is its conceptual framework. Two frameworks form the theoretical foundation of this current study: feminist theory and adult education.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory and Black feminist thought in particular is a useful lens through which to understand the influence of the gendered character of the Civil Rights Movement on Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. According to Creswell (2007), feminist theory is helpful in exploring issues related to social justice for women and gender domination within a patriarchal society. The theory holds that people construct knowledge through their lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). Feminist theory gives voice to and creates the listening space for

women to share their perspectives. It also creates a social space in which the views of women are considered on equal par with those of men (Collins, 1990, 2000).

Black feminist thought is a unique shade of feminist theory and one of several feminist standpoint theories. It is a theory of activism and empowerment based on the centuries-long experiences and struggles of African-American women to achieve gender equality (Collins, 1990, 1998). Black feminist thought is particularly significant in that it "enriches our understanding of how subordinate groups create knowledge that fosters resistance" (Collins, 1990, p. 207). The theory provides that African-American women have a unique standpoint on their own oppression and the social machinations that caused and sustains it today. Simply put, Black feminist thought highlights the interconnectedness of race, gender, and class oppression.

According to Collins (2000), this standpoint theory creates a "collective identity among African-American women about the dimensions of Black women's standpoint" (p. 32). Through what Collins (2000) refers to as *re-articulation*, Black feminist thought provides African-American women a different way of viewing and understanding themselves and the world in which they live. Standpoint theory also corroborates the view that African-American women are independent thinkers and culturally and experientially predisposed to providing a contrasting view of world as prescribed by society or, as Lorde (1984) calls it, the *mythical norm*—a stereotype purveyed by the dominant culture (p. 116).

Within Black feminist thought are two inter-related concepts, which help contextualize gender discrimination—specifically the kind Baker and other African-American women experienced in the Civil Rights Movement. The social hierarchies of gender, race, and class influence the social locations or border spaces that groups of unequal power occupy (Collins, 1990, 2000). This dislocating phenomenon is the concept of *outsider-within*, a metaphor

describing an individual who does not fit into a particular context, is located outside the sphere of power while still working on the inside (Collins, 2000). An outsider who is *within* is able to observe and learn the socio-political machinations the dominant group uses to secure and retain unjust privilege. African-American men represented the dominant group in the Civil Rights Movement.

Moreover, Black feminist thought embodies feminist standpoint theory. Collins (1998) argues that a standpoint in this context refers to groups with "shared histories based on their shared location in unjust power relations" (pp. 204-205). This theory focuses on relations between political and social power as well as knowledge. Standpoint theory not only views interactions from the standpoint of the participant but it enables researchers to describe and analyze the causal effects of power structures on the knowledge of participants (Collins, 1998). Exploring issues from the standpoint of African-American women in the Civil Rights Movement causes a new consciousness to emerge—one based on a new and unique set of knowledge, experiences, and perspectives.

Many African-American women like Baker and the coterie of other women civil rights activists used their imposed state of marginality due to race, gender, and class as inspiration for creativity rather than, as Collins (2000) argues, a source of frustration. In fact, many feminist theorists view Black feminist thought as a "U.S. Black women's critical social theory" (Collins, 2000, p. 9). This theory seeks to empower African-American women and represents an activist response to the subordination Black women may experience due to the nexus of race, gender, and class oppressions.

Adult Education Theory

The theory of adult education is the second theoretical framework on which this current

study relies. A large part of the history of adult education is woven into the structural fabric of social movements and represents one of the most reliable tools in collective action (Dykstra & Law, 1994; Foley, 1999; Holst, 2002, 2009; Kilgore, 1999). The reason is that social movements produce new knowledge within specific historical contexts (Foley, 1999; Holst, 2002, 2009). This alternative source of knowledge acquisition is a gateway to liberation and freedom for the socially and economically oppressed. By virtue of their character, social movements have as a goal the transformation of hegemonic sociopolitical structures and systems which historically have oppressed and marginalized various groups (Holst, 2002; Foley, 1999). Adult education is a primary instrument by which this form of social transformation occurs.

There are numerous ways to understand adult education. Among the countless adult educators, Freire (1970), Cunningham (1999), and Brookfield and Holst (2011) are a few who offer for examination unique frameworks in which to understand the role and purpose of adult education. For Freire (1993), the concept of adult education represents the practice of freedom rather than "education as the exercise of domination" (p. 59). He observes that all forms of education are political. It is political because education creates a space for learning in which learners engage in a process of dialogue and critical reflection. This, according to Freire (1993), leads to a form of agency and, finally, critical consciousness.

Central to adult education is "building and democratizing civil society... connecting dialectically to transformational learning in adults" (Cunningham, 1999, p. 16). Brookfield and Holst (2011) make the point in their book, *Radicalizing learning: Adult Education for a Just World*, that adult education has a "radical purpose and practice," radical in the sense that its focus is on "organizing and encouraging learning about the creation of democracy in political,

cultural, and economic spheres" (p. 4). For Brookfield and Holst, this shade of adult education more directly emphasizes the power of learning to construct and maintain a type of *democratic socialism* where learners become skillful in identifying various forms of oppression.

The underpinnings of adult education are the principles of learning—informal and nonformal—facilitated by human agency, dialogue, and critical reflection (Brookfield, 1986; Foley, 1999; Holst, 2009). Informal learning is unintentional and enables individuals "to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment" (LaBelle, 1982, p. 161). This type of learning can occur at anytime and anywhere.

During the Civil Rights Movement, activists routinely learned something new from each other, and this broadened their base of knowledge on a range of issues that mattered most to them. Nonformal learning is intentional and structured with pre-established outcomes. It occurs outside the formal educational system (LaBelle, 1982; Mundel and Schugurensky, 2008). The workshops and leadership conferences Ella Baker arranged and/or led for civil rights activists, especially for SNCC members, fall into this category.

Through nonformal learning, participants gained knowledge about decision-making, critical thinking, leadership, and more broadly about democracy. By virtue of these learning opportunities, civil rights activists developed a shared vision for social justice and learned collectively how to demand and achieve it. Brookfield (1986) observes that the more knowledgeable people become about their social conditions and the social culprits responsible for their oppression, the more likely they are to feel empowered to demand change.

Importance of the Study to the Field of Leadership

Every successful social movement, such as the Civil Rights Movement, is dependent on effective leadership (Morris & Staggenborg, 2002). The philosophy and behaviors of a leader

not only are critical success factors in an organization but also in a grassroots movement.

Regardless of the venue in which a leader exercises leadership, the effectiveness of that

leadership depends largely on the leader's ability to lead. Given this, there remains a pressing

need to better understand Baker's leadership philosophy, its nature and character, and the

leadership framework these elements represent. James MacGregor Burns (1978) stated it best

when discussing the sociopolitical dimensions of leadership. He writes:

> If we know all too much about leaders, we know far too little about
> leadership. We fail to grasp the essence of leadership that is relevant to the
> modern age and hence we cannot agree even on the standards by which to measure…and
> reject it ... One of the most serious failures in the study of   leadership has been the
> bifurcation between the literatures on leadership and the literature on followship. (Burns,
> 1978, pp. 1-2)

The significance of this study to the field of leadership is its potential to: (1)

reconceptualize the leadership of Baker within the context of the Civil Rights Movement by

illuminating her leadership strategy, vision, and philosophy; (2) formulate a leadership

framework, which encapsulates the full spectrum of her leadership philosophy and leader-

behaviors; and (3) enrich scholarly reflection on leadership theory.

Brazilian educator Paulo Feire (1993) observed that understanding the dialectical and

complex relationship between oppressors and the oppressed requires a different leadership

frame—one that differs from the plethora of traditional leadership theories. Freire's observation

embodies the significance of this current study to the field of leadership. However, it is

important to note here that no grounded theory single case study on Baker can represent itself as

a comprehensive explanation of her leadership without applying a sufficient level of contextual

rigor. The upcoming chapters achieve this specific objective.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into six chapters, including this one. Each chapter

concludes with a summary. After introducing the study in this Chapter 1, delineating its purpose, and enumerating the three research questions that guided this qualitative inquiry, I refocus my attention in Chapter 2. Within Chapter 2 is a case-type description of Baker and her activities as a community and political activist. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used to guide this study, including an introduction of the five research participants of this study. Additionally, Chapter 3 also describes steps taken to ensure methodological rigor, compliance with IRB research policies, participant anonymity, and confidentiality.

Chapters 4 and 5 situate the five research participants inside the data from which six data categories and five subcategories emerged. This study used these data to answer two of the three research questions—Research Questions 1 and 2. Chapter 6 functions as a theory chapter and achieves multiple objectives. It reviews prior literature— including the leadership frameworks most frequently associated with Baker's leadership—which this study contrasts and compares the salient characteristics of each to the preliminary findings of this study. Chapter 6 also answers Research Question 3 by proposing liberation leadership as the framework with the greatest potential for explaining Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. This final chapter also concludes the dissertation with a summary of the study, discussion of its findings, key conclusions drawn, and recommendations for future research.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this study, I use various key terms and concepts. This section defines each of these.

Adult education: A primary instrument by which social transformation occurs--especially within social movements. For Freire (1993), this concept represents "the practice of freedom" rather than "education as the exercise of domination" (p. 59).

Black feminist thought: A unique shade of feminist theory and one of several feminist standpoint theories. Black feminist thought is a theory of activism and empowerment based on the centuries-long experiences and struggles of African-American women to achieve gender equality.

Community organizing: A teaching and learning process from which oppressed groups emerge with new skills and knowledge (Brookfield & Holst, 2011). Community organizing is also the way "ordinary people respond to out-of-touch politicians and their failed policies" (as cited in Fisher, 2009, p. 3).

Critical consciousness: A state of personal awakening in which an individual gains critical awareness of their social condition after acquiring new knowledge—whether through informal, nonformal, or formal learning.

Double-consciousness: The sense or feeling of an oppressed or marginalized individual who is

> always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (DuBois, 1994, p. 2)

Double-choice: The rejection of vanity, self-aggrandizement, and the oppression of a race of people (Willie, 1983).

Double-culture: Results from a leader's awareness that by being forced to live in two cultures to survive, the leader "becomes a marginal person who knows and understands the ways of life of the…dominant and subdominant power groups" (Willie, 1983, p. 6).

Feminist theory: Represents a theoretical lens through which to explore social justice for women and gender domination within a patriarchal society. The theory holds that people construct knowledge through their lived experiences (Creswell, 2007).

Informal learning: An unintentional form of learning which enables individuals "to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment" (LaBelle, 1982, p. 161).

 Liberation Leadership: A "process in which leaders" do not lead others but rather are "members of a community of practice, i.e. people united in a common enterprise, who share a history and thus certain values, beliefs, ways of talking, and ways of doing things" (O'Donovan, 2007, p. 30).

Nonformal learning: An intentional and structured form of learning with pre-established outcomes. It occurs outside of the formal educational system (LaBelle, 1982; Mundel & Schugurensky, 2008).

Organic intellectual: An individual who creates daily knowledge, which is distinct from traditional intellectuals. Organic intellectuals are "distinguished less by their profession…than by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 3).

Outsider-within: A metaphor describing an individual who does not fit into a particular context, is located outside the sphere of power while still working on the inside (Collins, 2000).

Patriarchy: A social system in which men hold the power, authority, and depend on female marginalization and subordination.

Problem-posing: A method of education which contextualizes knowledge based on questions from both teacher and learner and which serves as a catalyst for learning. The efficacy of problem-posing lies in its ability to liberate and license the oppressed to resist oppressive social systems (Chapman & Hobbel, 2010; Freire, 1993; Shim, 2007).

Traditional intellectuals: Are individuals who have a unique relationship with the world of

production mediated by civil and political society. These intellectuals create and safeguard

historic and official knowledge (Cunningham, 1999; Gramsci, 1971; Holst, 2002).

CHAPTER TWO

Starting from the Beginning: The Case of Ella Josephine Baker

If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are [people] who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. (Douglas, 1857, para. 6)

Few civil rights activists have demonstrated during their adult lifetime a commitment to advancing the cause of freedom for everyday people more than Ella Josephine Baker. And few have displayed the acumen of grassroots community organizing and political activism more adeptly than she.

Born December 13, 1903 in Norfolk, Virginia—forty years after the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation, eight years after her parents' marriage in 1895 (Bohannon, 2005; Cantarow et al, 1980; Dallard, 1990; Grant, 1998; Charles, 2007; Payne & Strickland, 2008; Ransby, 2003a) and during the same year in which W. E. B. DuBois released his treatise, *The Souls of Black Folk*—Baker devoted her life advocating and organizing for social justice and racial equality. She worked to alter the social conditions for African-Americans and to advance them from oppression to liberation. According to Ransby (2003b), Ella Baker was an "untiring voice for the dispossessed, a democrat, and an egalitarian in word and deed…a true American hero" (para. 2). She lived a life of unrelenting activism in the name of racial freedom.

At different stages of her life, Baker was known by many names. None standing alone captures her essence entirely. To her grandfather, she was the "Grand Lady" (Baker, 1968, 1977; Cantarow et al, 1980, p. 55; Olson, 2001, p. 139; Payne, 1989, p. 898). To members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), she was *Miss Ella* (Dallard, 1990; Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a). Yet, beyond the structural walls of SNCC, Ella Baker was the *Fundi* of the Civil Rights Movement (Dallard, 1990; Elliott, 1996; Grant, 1998; Jensen &

Hammerback, 2000, p. 5; Preskill, 2005; Ransby, 2003a), which in Swahili is "the person in the community who passes on the wisdom of the elders, the crafts, [and] knowledge" (Grant, 1998, p. 143).

Still within the broader contours of the Civil Rights Movement, she answered to Miss Baker (Payne, 1995, p. 6). To others, Ella Baker was "a teacher and…learner" (Preskill, 2005, para. 1), "a teacher of great wisdom" (Elliott, 1996, p. 593). Yet still to those who worked closest with her, Baker was the "mother and mid-wife of the Civil Rights Movement…a renaissance woman…[the] architect of the Civil Rights Movement" (Ross, 2003, p. 32), and "an activist-intellectual with democratic vision" (James, 1994, p. 9).

Finally, for those who attended the December 13, 1986 memorial service held in the same month and on the same date of both Baker's birth and death (Payne, 1995), she was the "Godmother of SNCC and midwife to the SCLC " (James, 1993, p. 84). In fact, Baker's obituary in *The New York Times* described her as "a major force behind the civil-rights movement of the 1950's and 60's" (Fraser, 1986, para. 1). However, it was political scientist Cedric Kwesi Johnson whose article, "A Woman of Influence," offered the perfect summation of Baker's civil rights contributions. Johnson (2003) writes: "Ella Baker was a consummate organizer, a politically sophisticated intellectual, a patient teacher, faithful comrade, and in many respects a miracle worker" (para. 1).

Reading such laudatory characterizations of Baker might cause some to conclude she relished the limelight. Quite the contrary was true. Though having co-founded several civil rights and humanitarian organizations, built the respective organizational structures of many of those same organizations, led countless grassroots campaigns, mentored and advised student activists, and trained indigenous leaders and staff of various organizations for which she

worked, Baker rejected publicity (Charles, 2007; Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Crawford et al, 1993; Grant, 1998, 2001; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009; Ransby, 2003a; Ross, 2003). She preferred instead to work "behind-the-scenes" (Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001, p. 44; Crawford et al, 1993, pp. 45-55; Dallard, 1990, p. 6; Gyant, 1996, p. 641; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009, pp. 86-95; Ransby, 2003a, p. 154) organizing and empowering the socially and economically oppressed to believe in themselves, to believe they could make extraordinary differences in their lives and those of others (Charles, 2007; Crawford et al, 1993; Grant, 1998; Payne, 1989, 1995; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009; Ransby, 2003a; Ross, 2003).

In fact, Baker responded in the following way during a 1980 interview in which the interviewer inquired about her community organizing philosophy.

> You didn't see me on television; you didn't see news stories about me. The kind of role that I tried to play was to pick up pieces or put together pieces out of which I hoped organization might come. (Bobo, Hudley, & Michel, 2004, p. 79; Mueller, 1990, p. 51) Baker's vast body of work lacked any hint of self-aggrandizement or self-adulation.

Instead, her efforts were geared toward organizing everyday people around issues that mattered most to them while encouraging them to embrace their racial and self-identity, sense of self-efficacy, and belief in their own ability to forge significant social change (Allen, 1996; Barnett, 1993; Bohannon, 2005; Campbell, 1994; Cantarow et al, 1980; Carson, 1981; Charles, 2007; Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Crawford et al, 1993; Dallard, 1990; DeLaure, 2008; Elliott, 1996; Glisson, 2000; Grant, 1998, 2001; James, 1994; Levy, 1998; Morris, 1984; Mumford, 1988; Olson, 2001; Orr, 1991; Payne, 1989, 1995; Preskill, 2005; Petty, 1996; Ransby, 2003a; Ross, 2003; White, 2008).

While recalling during an interview the impact Baker had on his life, former SNCC field secretary Bob Moses remarked that her vision of leadership was to inspire organizers to "develop a spiritual belief in human dignity, a faith in the capacity of Blacks to produce leaders

from the ranks of their people, and perseverance when confronting overwhelming obstacles''

(as cited in Jensen & Hammerback, 2000, p. 2). By no means was Moses the only SNCC

member who held this view. Former SNCC field secretary for the State of Mississippi, Charles

Cobb, agrees and said of Baker:

> When I think of these ordinary people and the extraordinary struggle they waged, I think
> of Ella Baker, whose hands shaped a half-century of civil rights organizing. To effect
> change, Ms. Baker told us once, you have to face a system 'that does not lend itself to
> your needs and devise the means by which you begin to change that system.' (Cobb,
> 2002, p. 30)

Baker displayed a clear-eyed understanding that agency, knowledge acquisition, and

adaptability represented the gateway to the type of social transformation African-Americans

desired and sought to achieve. The social gains made during the modern civil rights era stand

testament to her invisible hand of leadership.

Developing a Community Organizing Ideology

Described as "the greatest organizer the Civil Rights Movement ever knew" (Houck &

Dixon, 2009, p. 245), developing a community organizing ideology which was grounded in the

precepts of egalitarianism and social justice was not a protracted developmental process for

Baker. She was indoctrinated at an early age by her grandparents, who were former slaves, and

her mother who was deeply involved in the Black Women's Missionary Movement (Cantarow

et al, 1980; Dallard, 1990; Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2001, 2003a; Ross, 2003). Ella Baker's

grandfather, like many male civil rights leaders, was a Baptist preacher (Cantarow et al, 1980;

Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a). Her mother was a strong independent woman and along with her

grandparents were stalwarts of the community and staunch believers in God (Grant, 1998;

Payne, 1989; Ransby, 2001, 2003a; Ross, 2003). As a missionary, Baker's mother "preached

and practiced an activist woman-centered faith…a type of black feminist theology" (Collier-

Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Ransby, 2001, p. 45).

Both her mother and grandparents took great pride in serving their community (Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a). Sharing their farm equipment and fall harvests, lending money to the needy, and caring for the sick were illustrative of the family's Christian values (Bohannon, 2005; Cantarow et al, 1980; Dallard, 1990; Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2001, 2003a). In addition to these examples, nothing illuminates this point more clearly than when Baker's grandfather mortgaged the family farm to feed hundreds of flood victims whose homes had been decimated (Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a).

Fortunate than most, Baker had many role models in her life. From her parents and grandparents, she developed a strong religious and egalitarian perspective, a sense of civic and philanthropic purpose. Both of these culminated in a type of selfless service to marginalized and oppressed communities service. Citing early influences on her life's work, Baker said:

> Where we lived there was no sense of hierarchy, in terms of those who have, having a right to look down upon, or to evaluate as a lesser breed, those who didn't have. Part of that could have resulted, I think, from two factors. One was the proximity of my maternal grandparents to slavery. They had known what it was to not have. Plus, my grandfather had gone into the Baptist ministry, and that was part of the quote, unquote, [and] Christian concept of sharing with others. I went to a school that went in for Christian training. Then, there were people who "stood for something," as I call it. Your relationship to human beings was more important than your relationship to the amount of money…you made. (as cited in Crawford, 1993, p. 60; Bobo et al, 2004, p. 84)

Because of this early indoctrination, Baker came to associate Christianity with egalitarianism. It was her deep sense of humanity that enabled her to identify with people from all social classes. Baker thought of her childhood upbringing as a type of

> Family socialism, a world…where homes were shared, where informal adoption of children was taken for granted, a world with a minimal sense of social hierarchy in terms of those who have, having the right to look down upon, or to evaluate as a lesser breed, those who didn't have. (Payne, 1989, p. 886)

During her early teenage years, it became clear that Baker had inherited her mother's penchant for social activism. The first indication was during her senior year at Shaw University when she protested the school policy, which required female students to wear silk stockings (Baker, 1977; Bohannon, 2005; Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a). Baker viewed the policy as an infringement on the civil rights of female students. From her perspective, females had the right to make such decisions—not college administrators. While reflecting on that incident during an interview, Baker explained:

> I didn't have any silk stockings, but I felt it was their right to wear their stockings if they wanted to. These women were not only my seniors in terms of physical maturity, I suppose, but they were about to finish college and the like. But they didn't dare do the talking. (Baker, 1977, p. 30)

Since female college seniors felt constrained to oppose school policy, Baker gave voice to their rights. This awareness of her heritage and unbridled penchant for social justice were evident in her 1927 valedictorian speech to the graduating class of Shaw University. In that handwritten speech, titled "Our Heritage and Its Challenges," she wrote:

> Each individual is a threefold debtor to time—to the past, the present, and the future. To the past, one owes his entire social heritage; to the present, his best efforts to improve that heritage; and to the future, the transmission of this heritage enlarged by the experiences and achievements of his own age. Today, our debt is enormously more than that of any generation which preceded us. We are the heirs of all the ages. Ours is the science of ancient Egypt, the glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome. (Baker, 1927)

In subsequent sections of Baker's valedictorian speech, she reminded the senior class of their educational, "social wealth," and heritage (Baker, 1927). From Baker's perspective, she and her classmates were "products of the idealism sacrifice," which many brave people made but whose struggle for equality occurred many decades and even centuries earlier (Baker, 1927). Later in this same speech, Baker asked and answered for the graduating class the following

thought-provoking question.

> What is our heritage? To answer this fully is impossible, but let us briefly consider a few of the high points in the fields of intellect, religion, social reform, and education…Our religious thinking has largely been determined by outstanding characters. Among whom we make mention of John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, John Wesley, Roger Williams and Lott Carey. In 1738 Wycliffe decided that not the Pope, but the Bible was to sanction his religious life. Luther in the Reformation became the mouthpiece for religious freedom and personal salvation. Wesley started the reform movement of 1730 with the view of serving the masses untouched by the high state church. Roger Williams became the voice of religious freedom in America. Lott Carey, the Negro from Virginia, who did a great work in Africa, exemplifies for us the ideal of missions. Freedom and justice have ever been the ideals of social reform. For the love of freedom, despots and monarchs have been overthrown. In the name of freedom, life blood has been freely shed. Upon the ideal of freedom, governments have been built. Justice has ever demanded that the individual worth be recognized and that all should have equal opportunities in the pursuit of happiness. (Baker, 1927)

As the speech progressed, Baker paid homage to early civil rights leaders whom she referred to as "crusaders for the cause of Negro freedom" (Baker, 1927). Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth were among that widely acclaimed group of early freedom fighters whom she highlighted. Baker (1927) told graduates: "These and many others have bequeathed to us the results of their sacrifices on the altars of Freedom and Right because of their beliefs in the worth of all men. Shall we do less for the future?"

Undergirding Baker's valedictorian speech was a vision—the belief that the Shaw University class of 1927 could make a difference, and that they had a social and moral responsibility to do so. While there are numerous other examples of this type in the archival records, Baker's valedictorian speech represents the beginning of her journey toward what Freire (1993) calls conscientização, the development of critical consciousness. The upcoming sections crystallize this point more compellingly.

Looking through the lens of a community organizer. Community organizing has a long and proud history in the United States. It places prominently in social movements—

especially in the modern Civil Rights Movement. Baker's organizing activities paved the way for many effective grassroots campaigns. Her fifty-year career as a grassroots community organizer began in earnest in Harlem, New York in the early 1930s during the Harlem Renaissance Period (Cantarow et al, 1980; Grant, 1998; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003a). Though she was affiliated with and worked for many organizations, Baker was swayed by the work of several bold thinkers—most of whom were as controversial sociopolitical, African-American protagonists. George Schuyler was one such individual. He inspired Baker's initial involvement in broad-based grassroots organizing, which began with the Young Negroes Cooperative League (YNCL), to which Baker was later appointed executive director (Cantarow et al, 1980; Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a; Ross, 2003). The YNCL was a buying club that helped facilitate for African-Americans economic self-sufficiency (Baker, 1968; James, 1994; Ross, 2003).

One of Baker's guiding principles was that ordinary people can transcend any social impediments they faced if provided the tools and social space within which to do so (Cantarow et al, 1980; Charles, 2007; Grant, 1998; Payne, 1995; Preskill, 2005; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009; Ransby, 2003a; Ross, 2003). As the YNCL leader, Baker organized and empowered others to open stores and buying clubs across the United States (James, 1994). In discussing her passion for community organizing, Baker said:

> The sense of community was pervasive in the black community as a whole ... It was a deep sense of community ... the things that helped to strengthen my concept about the need for people to have a sense of their own value, and their strengths, and it became accentuated when I began to travel in the forties for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (Cantarow et al, 1980, p. 61; Dallard, 1990, p. 19)

From the late 1920s to the mid-1930s, Baker used her editorial staff positions at the *American West Indian News*, *Negro National News*, and the NAACP's *The Crisis* to bring

attention to widespread social injustice that pervaded minority communities (Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a). She learned first-hand while organizing with Harlem trade unions during the Great Depression that community organizing was a pre-requisite for effectuating social change. In the 1940s, Baker joined the NAACP staff—first holding the position of field secretary, then national director of branches, and several years later president of its New York City branches (Bohannon, 2005; Cantarow et al, 1980; Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Dallard, 1990; Elliott, 1996; Grant, 1998; Levy, 1998; Payne, 1989, 1995; Preskill, 2005; Ransby, 2003a; Ross, 2003). Each position required her to travel extensively. In fact, Gilkes (2001) writes that as field secretary, Baker "became a traveling prophet for the NAACP" (p. 205).

She made this point quite eloquently during a December 1970 interview in which she recounted her NAACP tenure as Assistant Field Secretary of Branches. Baker recalled leaving New York in mid-February and traveling across the Deep South for four months at a time to help increase NAACP membership and, in the process, organize the African-American community in those southern counties and cities. She recognized that the Deep South had a distinct history of racial oppression, and that African-Americans lived in constant fear of violence—even lynching. To motivate and inspire them to get involved and organize, Baker said:

> Maybe you would start with some simple thing like the fact that they had no street lights, or the fact that in the given area somebody had been arrested or had been jailed in a manner that was considered illegal and unfair, and the like. You would deal with whatever the local problem was, and on the basis of the needs of the people you would try to organize them in the NAACP...Part of the job was to help them to understand what that violence was and how they in an organized fashion could help to stem it. The major job was getting people to understand that they had something within their power that they could use, and it could only be used if they understood what was happening and how group action could counter violence even when it was perpetrated by the police or, in some instances, the state. My basic sense of it has always been to get people to understand that in the long run they themselves are the only protection they have against violence or injustice...People have to be made to understand that they cannot look for salvation anywhere but to themselves. (as cited in Lerner, 1970)

Baker's six-year tenure with the NAACP marked a period of great accomplishment. She not only built within the NAACP an apparatus for social change but also empowered people through the community organizing and training activities she led. These included NAACP membership drives throughout the Deep South, development and coordination of leadership and other training workshops for community activists and NAACP local leaders (Grant, 1998; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003a). Speaking on the topic of community organizing, Baker noted that "one of the guiding principles has to be that we cannot lead a struggle that involves masses of people without identifying with the people and without getting the people to understand what their potentials, what their strengths are" (Payne & Strickland, 2008, p. 56; Grant, 1998, p. 231).

As time passed and her disenchantment grew, Baker began publicly critiquing the leader-centered leadership of the NAACP and SCLC (DeLaure, 2008; Grant, 1998; Payne, 1989, 1995; Ransby, 2003a). From her perspective, the male-dominated leadership of both civil rights organizations failed to focus on the important social problems that plagued the African-American community. According to Baker, the leaders were "overly concerned with recognition from Whites… [their sponsored] programs were …oriented to a middle-class agenda and not nearly strong enough on the kinds of economic issues that meant most to working-class Black people" (Payne, 1995, p. 87).

Concerned that staff at local NAACP branches did not have a voice in deciding issues that affected them directly, Baker recommended to the NAACP executive director that local branches help determine programs and policies for their own organizations (Crawford et al, 1993; Ransby, 2003a; Ross, 2003). She once remarked that "the work of the national office is one thing, but the work of the branches is the life blood of the Association" (Payne, 1995, p. 88).

During the mid-1950s, the New York City Mayor appointed Baker to the Commission

on School Integration for which she held city-wide meetings and encouraged parents to sign

petitions in protest of school segregation (Campbell, 1994; Elliott, 1996). She worked to

integrate local schools and improve education quality for African-American children (Grant,

1998; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003a). During 1956, Baker and representatives from

approximately 25 religious, political, and labor groups formed the New York-based In

Friendship (Bobo et al, 2004; Bohannon, 2005; Cantarow et al, 1980; Campbell, 1994; Collier-

Thomas, & Franklin, 2001; Dallard, 1990; Grant, 1998; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003a).

In describing the purpose of In Friendship during a 1974 interview, Baker said the

organization provided "some material and legal assistance" to people who were "being evicted

from their tenant farms and households and other situations in Clarendon County [South

Carolina] and Yazoo [Mississippi] and in other places" (Walker, 1974).

Because of the effectiveness of the In Friendship organizational model, Baker encouraged

Martin Luther King, Jr. and other Baptist ministers to form the SCLC—of which she was a co-

founder (Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Grant, 1998; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003a; Ross,

2003). She posited such an organization could capitalize on the momentum of the Montgomery

Bus Boycott, serve as a catalyst for the Movement, and provide organizational support for it

(Ross, 2003). Though reluctant to accept Baker's counsel and the recommendation of two senior

civil rights leaders who recommend hiring her to establish more than twenty programs for the new

Crusade for Citizenship (Baker, 1974), King hastily warned that the SCLC "would not pay [her] a

salary" for playing that role (Charron, 2009, p. 292). Consequently, she accepted odd jobs to earn

a living while still functioning as an unpaid SCLC staff member. One of those positions was

Human Relations Consultant for the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), where she

conducted workshops on human relations to educate people on the value of diversity and

inclusion or as Ransby (2003a) writes to "foster greater interracial understanding" (p. 260).

Like many small non-profit organizations, the SCLC relied on private donations to fund most of its programs. Baker also played the role of fundraiser. In proposing AFL-CIO financial support of her SCLC fundraising campaign, A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, told AFL-CIO leaders that

> Ella has the unique quality of having the necessary sense of struggle for an oppressed people to achieve the alleviation of oppression, and at the same time…capable of understanding…certain principles of organizing…to achieve an objective. (as cited in Grant, 1998, p. 111)

For the SCLC, fundraising was a prerequisite for launching a successful organizing and voting registration campaigns. Baker recognized the linkage between the two and capitalized on the strong relationships she had built to help achieve this important objective. In fact, during her 1969 speech titled "The Black Woman in the Civil Rights Struggle" at the Institute for the Black World, Baker told the audience the following story.

> About twenty-eight years ago, I used to go around making speeches, and I would open…my talk by saying that there was a man who had a health problem…he was finally told by the doctor that [he] could save his sight or save his memory, but [he] couldn't save both. The [doctor] asked him which did he want, and he said: save my sight because I would rather see where I am going [rather] than remember where I have been. (as cited in Grant, 1998, p. 230)

Like the man in the story, Baker set her sights on the future. Her vision remained constant: to help African-Americans achieve racial equality and social justice and to empower them to embrace that vision.

The Essence of a Grassroots Community Organizer

For some, hearing the phrase *community organizer* may not only evoke memories of Baker but also of Saul Alinsky, the Chicagoan grassroots strategist. Referred to as the "father of direct action organizing," it was Alinsky who recognized the efficacy of community organizing.

He argued that:

> The powerless must seize power from the powerful in order to incentivize the latter to meet the needs of the former…but achieving success requires collective direct action and without it, the powerless will resign themselves to their current state of oppression. (as cited in Zepatos & Kaufman, 1995, p. 119)

While Alinsky offers one description of community organizing, social change literature is replete with many others. Some scholars distinguish between organizing and mobilizing. Others either use the two concepts interchangeably or remain silent about their inherent differences. Williams (2009) writes that Baker was one of the first community and political activists to differentiate between organizing and mobilizing. Clarity on this issue is critical to understanding Baker's contribution work. To illustrate this point, Brookfield and Holst (2011), Castelloe, Watson, and White (2002), and Stall and Stoecker (1998) distinguish between the two concepts in their respective publications. In reflecting on the underlining principles of Baker's pedagogical praxis, Brookfield and Holst (2011) characterize community organizing as a teaching and learning process—one from which oppressed groups emerge with new skills and knowledge. Brookfield and Holst (2011) argue that mobilization focuses on galvanizing oppressed and marginalized communities in order to push into the public consciousness various social issues believed will effectuate social change.

Lending support for Brookfield and Holst's (2011) postulations, Stall and Stoecker (1998) posit in their article, "Community Organizing or Organizing Community? Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment," that organizing is the "process of building a mobilizable community…which involves the craft of building an enduring network of people who identify with common ideals and who can act on the basis of those ideal" (Stall & Stoecker, 1998, p. 730). Here, the focus of community organizing is on building collective relationships, identifying and mobilizing around issues, and maintaining sustainable organizations. Thus,

community mobilizing is predicated on community organizing where organizing precedes mobilizing (Stall & Stoecker, 1998). Castelloe, Watson, and White (2002) do not differentiate between organizing and mobilizing but argue that organizing is a process concerned with "bringing citizens together" in order to "effectuate social change…to help community activists develop skills in organizing, problem analysis, leadership, and organization formation" (p. 2).

Most recently, the act of community organizing echoed with partisan voices around the world during the 2008 and 2012 United States presidential elections. President Barack Obama began his political career as a community organizer—an aspect of his career which some detractors frequently highlighted as a disqualifier for the presidency. Responding to the criticism, Obama campaign manager, David Plouffe, replied in the following way during a September 2008 interview: "Community organizing is how ordinary people respond to out-of-touch politicians and their failed policies" (as cited in Fisher, 2009, p. 3).

While social movement literature suggests Plouffe's thesis has merit, Stall and Stoecker (1998) caution that a prerequisite for social change rests on the ability of organizers to build strong relationships within targeted communities. Doing so establishes a support system on which activists can rely during periods of collective actions. By many accounts, community organizing was the means by which Baker and other civil rights activists succeeded not only in achieving major social transformation but also in reshaping the sociopolitical agenda and landscape in the United States. Ransby (2003a) writes that Baker's "theory of social change and political organizing was inscribed in her practice" (p. 1). She was the quintessential example of leadership during a socially tumultuous time when women's leadership was not respected or understood.

The Gendered and Class Character of the Movement

Sexism and classism within the Civil Rights Movement were two social obstacles Baker and other women activists encountered (Barnett, 1993; Cantarow et al, 1980; Collier-Thomas, 2001; DeLaure, 2008; Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a). Arguably, these social impediments were antithetical to the moral principles that movement leaders advocated. Yet, they failed to enact them. Theories abound about the reasons why the Civil Rights Movement, which was driven by Christian values, failed to model them. Harris (1999) points out that during the 1950s and 1960s, the majority of southern African-American preachers were reared in a religious, patriarchal culture, which "prescribed limited spaces for Black women" (para.18). Morris (1984) posits that the Black church was the institutional center of the civil rights movement.

Although many African American churches provided women worshipers the opportunity to develop civic and organizational skills (Harris, 1999), such a practice reinforced the ideals and practices of male domination and female subordination. In the African-American church, men sought to dominate positions of power. Harris (1999) argues that the patriarchal values of society and those found in Christianity bear much of the burden for sexism in African-American churches.

During the modern civil rights era, men sat at the helm of the major civil rights organizations, such as the SCLC, NAACP, SNCC, and CORE. White men even held the top leadership position of the national NAACP. Arthur B. Spingarn served as NAACP president from 1940 to1965 and was succeeded by Kivie Kaplan—both of whom were among a large group of Jewish civil rights leaders (Finkelstein, 1997). In fact, men occupied the national NAACP presidency until the October 2013 appointment of Lorraine Miller as interim President of the NAACP (Neuman, 2013). The same male-dominated leadership existed in the SCLC and

SNCC. Martin Luther King served as the first SCLC president; Ralph Abernathy succeeded

King following his assassination. In the case of SNCC, its first three chairpersons were also

men; Marion Barry served as the first SNCC chairman, followed by Charles McDew, whom

John Lewis later succeeded (Carson, 1981; Lewis & D'Orso, 1998). Such male monopoly over

power fosters and promotes the notion that men have an innate talent or intelligence, which far

exceeds that of women (Lerner, 1997). Women in these types of patriarchal organizations are

perceived as inferior to men and, as a result, are subordinated and marginalized (Lerner, 1997).

Much is known about the experiences of women activists during the Movement. Barnett

(1993) argues that their "class and gender did not permit adequate recognition of their efforts"

(p. 177). Despite this historical social trend, Baker did not identify as a feminist. She also did

not attempt to develop her civil rights agenda around gender issues (DeLaure, 2008; Ransby,

2003a). In fact, Baker addressed this issue during a 1969 speech at the Institute for the Black

World where she expounded more fully in her speech about the role of women in the

Movement. She told the audience:

> I have never been one to feel great needs in the direction of setting myself apart as a
> woman. I've always thought first and foremost of people as individuals ... [but]
> wherever there has been struggle, Black women have been identified with that
> struggle…I don't think you could go through the Freedom Movement without finding
> that the backbone of the support of the Movement [was] women. (as cited in DeLaure,
> 2008, para. 9; Grant, 1998, p. 227)

One year later during a1970 interview, Baker returned to the issue of gender, as it

related to her role in the Civil Rights Movement. She provided the following expanded

perspective.

> From the standpoint of my work and my own self-concepts, I don't think I have thought of
> myself largely as a woman. I thought of myself as an individual with a certain amount of
> sense of the need of people to participate in the movement. I have always thought what is
> needed is the development of people who are interested not in being leaders as much as in
> developing leadership among other people. (Baker, 1970, para. 26)

Though Baker may not have viewed herself as a feminist or an individual concerned about her gendered role, her approach to community and political activism encompassed basic feminist principles. Consider DeLaure's (2008) postulation that Baker was an assertive and independent thinker who was willing to speak truth to power, unwilling to be silenced and consistently rejected inequality of any kind.

Throughout her life, Baker witnessed and experienced the negative effects of patriarchy and sexism. No single example illustrates this point more clearly than her tenure with the SCLC. The male-dominated, church-based SCLC leadership, comprised of Baptist ministers, appointed Reverend John Tilley as the executive director—despite the fact Baker was one of the co-founders of SCLC, built the SCLC organizational structure, and possessed more organizing wisdom and experience than all the men combined (Baker, 1968; Grant, 1998; Olson, 2001; Ransby, 2003a; Ross, 2003). When Tilly resigned one year later, SCLC appointed Baker interim SCLC executive director (Britton, 1968; Ransby, 2003a).

Despite her formal but temporary leadership position, which carried with it greater responsibilities, SCLC leaders asked her to accept a salary reduction due to SCLC's budget problems (Baker, 1968). Baker explained during a 1968 interview the reason she honored the request. She said: "You see, having not a great deal of personal ambition, to me, it was more important to go ahead. I may as well play the supporting role there as anywhere else" (Britton, 1968). Reflecting further on her SCLC experiences during a 1974 taped interview, Baker observed that her gender and class were factors in the decision of the SCLC ministers not to consider her for the permanent position of executive director. In expounding on previous comments she made during the interview Baker said:

> I had no ambition to be (let's call it) executive director. If I had had any, I knew it was not to be. And why do I say that? Two reasons: one, I was a female. The other, I guess, a

combination of female and non-minister, plus the kind of personality differences that existed between me and the Rev. Dr. King. I was not a person to be enamored of anyone. My philosophy was not one of non-violence per se and I knew enough about organization (at least I thought I knew enough about organization) to be critical about some of the lack of procedures that obtained in S.C.L.C. Within the inner councils, whenever there was discussion, I did not try to force myself upon them recognizing the sensitivities that existed. Now, I did not hesitate to voice my opinion and sometimes it was the voicing of that opinion it was obvious that it was not a very comforting sort of presence that I presented. (Walker, 1974)

Despite Baker's SCLC experiences, these social impediments did not deter her (Cantarow et al, 1980; Grant, 1998; Gyant, 1996; and Ransby, 2003). They simply intensified her determination. A useful way of understanding the complexities of her lived experiences in the Movement is best represented by Collins' (1990) notion of an *outsider-within location*, which refers to social border spaces that mark the boundaries between groups of unequal power. Individuals acquire their "identities as outsiders-within by their placement in [certain] social locations" (Collins, 1990, p. 300). For Baker, the intersectionality of her race, social class, and gender conspired to shape her experiences and bar access to promotional opportunities at the SCLC and, more broadly, within the Movement.

At the same time, that experience provided her insight into the broader implications of intersectionality—particularly when the three categories of constructed differences intersect. Baker's experience created for her a different type of standpoint, the standpoint of intersectionality, where she not only experienced the heavy weight of oppression because of her race but also because of her gender and class. The social potency of this tripartite structure of oppression cannot be understood fully without first giving voice to the perspectives of individuals, like Baker and others, who have experienced its effects or those who have stood at this particular intersection.

Patriarchy Doubling as Sexism and its Presence in the Movement

Understanding patriarchy and its oppressive reach provides insight into the internal structure of the Movement and the social forces Baker confronted. Patriarchy has a long and unyielding history in our society. According to Lerner (1986, 1997), this social construct is based on an institutionalized system of male dominance, which rationalizes the relationship between gender and power. The term patriarchy itself describes a society—one that is male-dominated and male-centered in which "men hold power in all the important institutions of society and…women are deprived access to such power" (Lerner, 1986, pp. 238-9). This social system privileges one gender over the other giving men control over the services and labor of women.

Male dominance has existed throughout history and persists today. The Civil Rights Movement was not unique in this regard. Men held, and still do today, a great majority of positions of authority. Positions such as chief executive officer of private and public organizations, college and university president—even among the historically Black institutions—and, most certainly, the key leadership positions within the Civil Rights Movement—fit into this category. Thus, the patriarchal system represents an oppressive gender legacy where gender inequality, subordination, and domination continue to thrive.

Understanding the reasons patriarchy thrived and pervaded the internal structures of the Civil Rights Movement requires a brief review of four critical facts. The first fact concerns the history of patriarchy (Lerner, 1986). Most women lacked a historical perspective on patriarchy and a frame of reference in which to contextualize a different kind of society or condition other than the patriarchal system in which they have long lived and experienced. This, Lerner (1986) instructs, is the very nature of male hegemony which has harmed women and guaranteed their subordination and oppression.

The second fact relates to the inability of women to "develop a group consciousness" because no tradition existed to "reaffirm the independence and autonomy of women at any period in the past" (Lerner, 1986, p. 219). Furthermore, "male hegemony over the symbol system took two forms: educational deprivation of women and male monopoly on definition" (p. 4). It was not possible for women to aspire to positions of power; they did not have a historical frame of reference. Women did not have heroines or role models whom they could emulate. Absent these, men were free to hold a "monopoly on definition" (Lerner, 1986, p. 219). On this basis, Lerner (1986) argues that men were able to conceptualize and interpret "the world in their own terms and define the important questions so as to make themselves the center of discourse" (p. 220). This hegemonic control serves to bar women from accessing knowledge.

The third fact relates to issues of class and, more specifically, the relationship between class and patriarchy in a capitalistic, highly political, male-dominated society. As Lerner (1986), Collins (2000), and Hooks (2000) point out, one cannot separate class from gender or class from race and gender. There is intersectionality, an interlocking nature among the three (Collins, 2000; Hooks (2000); Lerner, 1986). Class and gender are rooted in the patriarchal power structure—production and reproduction. Men control the means of production, and this institutionalizes class relations between men and women (Lerner, 1986). Within this context, some men use their power through customs or legislative enactments to regulate and control women's reproductive capacity and social behavior whether as protector or transgressor (Lerner, 1986). During the early years before the Women's Movement and the Civil Rights Movement forced social and legal changes, men regarded women as a resource much like they would a piece of equipment or real estate property. Thus, men exploited women for their labor—whether unpaid or paid, inside or outside the home (Lerner, 1986).

The fourth factor is women victimization where they are the primary victims of a

patriarchal system (Lerner, 1986). By denying women their history, women were assured of

accepting the patriarchal system as legitimate as well as the gender role of men and women

(Hooks, 2000; Lerner, 1986). Unaware of their own history led women to internalize their own

subordination. This is believed to be one of the reasons women have remained subordinated to

men.

Like most social institutions during the 1950s and 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement was

not a model of inclusion. Patriarchy plagued the Movement—despite its overarching objective to

secure social equality for African-Americans and other marginalized and oppressed groups—those

whom, as Lerner (1997) argues, had been relegated to a status of "Otherness" (p. 138). While in

theory, women and men then and today play visible leadership roles, men historically have been

responsible for the subordination and marginalization of women. By restricting and ultimately

preserving top leadership positions in the Civil Rights Movement for themselves, men promoted the

notion that women were incapable of holding leadership positions. Baker and the skillful women

civil rights activists demonstrated the reverse was true. The upcoming section discusses a few of

Baker's leadership contributions.

Ella Baker and the SNCC

One of Baker's most significant contributions to the Movement was her role as orchestrator

of SNCC and her subsequent role as advisor and mentor. As orchestrator of the two-day Youth

Leadership Meeting at her alma mater, Shaw University, in April 1960, Baker organized and

executed event plans. Her pre-event announcement provided the community basic information,

such as the purpose of the meeting, who should attend, meeting schedule, cost, and contact

information. The announcement also described the meeting's purpose and referenced the success of

the first sit-ins and other non-violent student protests, which she described as a "drive for Freedom

and Human dignity in America" (Baker and King, n.d.). Contained in the announcement was the following paragraph:

> This great potential for social change now calls for evaluation in terms of where do we go from here. The Easter week-end conference is convened to help find the answers. Together, we can chart new goals and achieve a more unified sense of direction for training and action in Nonviolent Resistance. (Baker and King, n.d.)

Baker did not hold a formal position in the organization (Charles, 2009; Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a), although nowhere in the literature or archival records is it even implied she vied for a leadership role. Instead, Baker served for six years as the "resident elder and intellectual mentor" of SNCC (DeLaure, 2008, para. 33; Ransby, 2003a, p. 271). In fact, SNCC members elected her and another civil rights activist to serve as their first "adult advisors" (McDowell [pseudonym], personal communication, November 5, 2013; Custer [pseudonym], personal communication, October 4, 2013). She listened, advised, and helped student activists develop their leadership skills. Her involvement with the group made it possible for the seeds of her grassroots political philosophy to take root. In a real sense, Baker's work with SNCC epitomized her life's calling and capitalized on her strengths as a community organizing.

Even today, the influence of her leadership on SNCC remains uncontested. Through her leadership and empowerment of SNCC members, they established "forty-one Freedom Schools in twenty communities" and built "thirteen community centers," which resulted in a countless number of registered African-American voters' (Grant, 1998, p. 178). The foundation of the Freedom Schools was based upon what Ransby (2003) calls a "radically democratic pedagogy," which Baker espoused and SNCC enacted (p. 299).

Among Baker's legacies, one stands out more clearly than others: her philosophy and practice of participatory democracy. Adopting a participatory democratic philosophy rather than a leader-centered approach was central to the philosophies she instilled in SNCC members (Bobo et

al, 2004; Brookfield & Holst, 2011; Carson, 1981; Crawford et al, 1993; Elliott, 1996; Grant, 1998; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003a). SNCC's organizational structure during its first six years provided members a sense of inclusiveness, a place in which major decisions reflected the collective input of all members.

Though the participatory democratic approach presupposed the presence of a common leadership reality among SNCC members, which generally was not the case, it nonetheless created for the young activists an authentic public space to learn from each other, think critically, and develop leadership skills. This, Baker confirmed during a 1970 interview when she said, "I have always thought what is needed is the development of people who are interested not in being leaders as much as in developing leadership among other people" (para. 25). The leadership skills she referred to were on full display during SNCC's formulation and implementation of the voters' registration campaigns—such as the Freedom Ballot Campaign and both the Freedom Rides and Freedom Summer project (Crawford, et al, 1993; Olson, 2001; Orr, 1991; Payne, 1995, 2004; Ransby, 2003a; Zinn, 2002).

Baker recognized the potential of SNCC and the importance of it remaining independent of the older and more established civil rights organizations (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013). For example, she informed the young activists of SCLC's overtures to anoint SNCC "the student arm of SCLC," which funded the April 1960 meeting (Baker, 1966, 1968). SNCC decided "it was too early to fix the structure of the organization… [and that]…it ought to be independent from adults" (Baker, 1966, 1968). Baker feared the "largely middle-class, male-centered leadership of [those] organizations" would acclimate student activists to a class- and gender-based leadership ideology (Ransby, 2003a, p. 259). The fact that she had worked with and/or for several prominent civil rights leaders, led her to conclude that their

leadership philosophies were antithetical to those she was teaching and encouraging SNCC to adopt.

Furthermore, Baker understood that organizational independence would afford SNCC freedom to set and execute its own agendas and develop leadership skills in the process. Here, her emphasis was on leadership development, which Baker believed was possible if SNCC adopted democratic and group-centered leadership principles (Butler, 2008; Cantarow et al, 1980; Carmichael, 2003; Charles, 2007; Crawford, et al, 1993; Glisson, 2008; Grant, 1998; Mueller, 1990; Olson, 2001; Orr, 1991; Payne, 1995, 2004; Petty, 1996; Preskill, 2005; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009; Ransby, 2003a). Baker did not believe the young activists would receive this type of leadership orientation if SNCC merged with the SCLC.

In fact, she spoke candidly about her views concerning top-down leadership during a 1970 taped interview with Gerda Lerner. She said:

> I have always felt it was a handicap for oppressed peoples to depend so largely upon a leader, because unfortunately in our culture, the charismatic leader usually becomes a leader because he has found a spot in the public limelight. It usually means he has been touted through the public media, which means that the media made him, and the media may undo him. There is also the danger in our culture that, because a person is called upon to give public statements and is acclaimed by the establishment, such a person gets to the point of believing that he is the movement. Such people get so involved with playing the game of being important that they exhaust themselves and their time, and they don't do the work of actually organizing people. (Baker, 1970)

Baker frequently critiqued the leadership style of one charismatic church leader in particular, Martin Luther King (DeLaure, 2008; Elliott, 1996), whom she concluded "did not identify closely enough with the people he sought to lead…[and] did not situate himself among them but remained above them" (Ransby, 2003a, p. 190). From Baker, SNCC members received frequent reminders about organizing the poor—those disenfranchised the most by the injustices of Jim Crow laws (Grant, 1998; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003a). In many respects, the foundation upon

which SNCC was formed exuded a sort of "messianic resonances of black liberation theology…though its organizational ethos worked against the idea of a church-based messianic leadership" (Shor, 2004, p. 176).

In his review of Ransby's (2003) book, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*, civil rights scholar Charles Payne wrote the following about Baker's work with SNCC:

> I used to give a speech which began by claiming that Ella Baker invented the 1960s. That's not as crazy as it sounds. It was Baker who responded to the energy of the sit-ins by calling the meeting out of which grew the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); it was she who helped develop its distinctive democratic and anti-hierarchical ethos, its emphasis on community organizing and the development of local leadership. SNCC, to a degree that is still not widely appreciated, went on to shape the very idea of activism not only in the black struggle but in the other struggles that define that decade. (Payne, 2004, para. 3)

Because of the emphasis Baker placed on mentoring and teaching, SNCC members gained an appreciation for participatory democracy as well as the importance of human agency. Carson (1994) argues that:

> The most successful SNCC projects unleashed the power of communities, allowing residents to become confident of their collective ability to overcome oppression. The most effective organizers of the 1960s realized that their job was to work themselves out of a job. They avoided replacing old dependencies with new ones. (as cited in Marable, 1998, p. xv)

Like most organizations, SNCC experienced internal conflicts. One such conflict concerned strategies and tactics, which arose during a meeting at the Highlander Folk Center in Monteagle, Tennessee. One-half of the student activists believed direct-action should be the organization's first priority while others wanted to pursue voters' registration (Baker, 1968). Fearing a split into two organizations, Baker proposed a bifurcated tactical approach. Her proposal, which SNCC adopted, established two units within the SNCC organization—one which focused on direct-action and the other on voters' registration (Baker, 1968). Some SNCC members considered

the latter extremely important, given that only highly educated African-Americans were permitted to register, such as "ministers, teachers, doctors, and other professionals" ("Voters' registration," 1960, para. 5). Table 8 below depicts the 1960 voters' registration statistics for African-Americans in McComb, Mississippi and surrounding areas.

Table 8

McComb Project: 1960 Voters' Registration Statistics for McComb, Mississippi

County	Number of Adult Blacks	Number Registered	Registration Percentage
Pike County (McComb)	8,000	200	2.5%
Amite County	5,000	1	0%
Walthall County	3,000	0	0%
Note: Based on 1960 Census data. Blacks comprised 42 percent of the 12,000 McComb, Mississippi residents. McComb is the largest city in Pike County, Mississippi Source: Civil Rights Movement Veterans Website, http://www.crmvet.org/tim/timhis61.htm# 1961mccomb			

These statistics bring into sharp focus the magnitude of the challenge SNCC and other civil rights activists confronted. This, among other reasons, is why Baker encouraged SNCC to resolve their disagreements. She kept her eyes on the prize and encouraged SNCC to do the same (Berkeley [Pseudonym Identifier], personal communication, October 16, 2013). In fact, Baker reminded conferees during her 1960 speech at the Youth Leadership meeting at Shaw University of the ultimate objective of the Movement. She told them that the Movement was loftier than simply eating at integrated lunch counters. According to Baker, the ultimate objective concerned

> Something much bigger than a hamburger or even a giant-sized Coke…that [students] are seeking to rid America of the scourge of racial segregation and discrimination - not only at lunch counters, but in every aspect of life…We want the world to know that we no longer accept the inferior position of second-class citizenship. We are willing to go to jail, be ridiculed, spat upon and even suffer physical violence to obtain First Class Citizenship. (Baker, 1960, para. 1-3)

From her perspective, the meta-goal of the Movement was to ensure African-Americans gained and were able to exercise their full constitutional rights. While recalling the 1960 Youth Leadership Conference, Stokley Carmichael (SNCC's fourth chairman) echoed this sentiment in his book, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture)*. Carmichael (2003) wrote that Baker empowered students to think boldly about "transforming the entire social structure" of the South (p. 141). This, Carmichael argued, energized students and provided them a sense of broader purpose.

One of Baker's guiding principles was the belief that students could develop personally and professionally while working in the *field*, and she encouraged them to do so (Charles, 2011; Crawford et al, 1990; Grant, 1998; Payne, 1989, 1995; Ransby, 2003a; Ross, 2003). A few of SNCC's major accomplishments included the 1961 Freedom Rides and numerous voters' registration campaigns (Crawford et al, 1990; Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a). The student sit-ins and freedom rides exposed the effects of the Jim Crow codes used to maintain separate and unequal facilities and other oppressive social systems, which deprived African-Americans of their civil rights. SNCC was instrumental in bridging the chasm between student activists and the SCLC and NAACP, which stemmed from students' disenchantment with the leadership and direction of the older civil rights organizations (Charles, 2011; Crawford et al, 1990; Elliott, 1996; Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a). Doing so required planning, strategizing, and patience. Clearly, leadership placed prominently in SNCC's many successes. The question, however, still remains: What was the nature and character of that leadership? An exploration of this very question is the objective of Chapter 6.

Understanding the Civil Rights Movement as a Social

Movement and Incubator for Learning

Understanding the Civil Rights Movement as a social movement is an important prism through which to understand Baker's leadership, community and political activism, and pedagogical approach to training indigenous leaders. The Movement served many purposes— although one which prepared many activists for the challenges ahead was its role as an incubator for learning within which African-Americans in the Deep South acquired new knowledge about collective action, the practice of participatory democracy, and democracy more broadly. Stall and Stoecker (1998) instruct that the catalyst for any successful social movement is the community or systems of communities. Stall and Stoecker (1998) add that:

> communities provide social movements a range of benefits...sustainability during difficult periods when the movement itself is in abeyance…social reproduction services—such as childcare…to allow parent-activists participate in movement activities…a public place within the community…called free paces…environments in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtues. (p. 17)

This, Breines (1989) refers to as the practice of *prefigurative politics*—the process of reimagining a different world in which community members influence social change. African-Americans in the Deep South were intimately familiar with racial injustice of different types. However, "they did not have…the basic information necessary to transform their prefigurative politics, based on personal experience, to an understanding of their constitutional rights and the strategic politics of the movement" (Robnett, 1999, p. 90). Baker created an interpretive space in which community residents and indigenous leaders could learn.

Learning and knowledge creation occurred in the Civil Rights Movement. It was the type of learning and knowledge production, which Dykstra and Law (1994), Foley (1999), Holst (2002), and Kilgore (1999) argue occurs in social movements. This type of learning deepens when

individuals engage in a process of action. Some might argue that a clarifying illustration of this is the realization that prior to the Movement, many African-Americans possessed limited knowledge about collective action, leadership, and, more broadly, about the democratic process. What they surely knew was that their social conditions were the result of an unjust sociopolitical, legal, and economic system.

Social movements represent direct action, which marginalized and oppressed people pursue to challenge oppressive systems and "dominant cultural meaning" (Holst, 2002, p. 86). This form of grassroots collective action affects the way politics are conceived, practiced, and even changed. It also represents "expressed shifts in the consciousness of actors as they articulate the interactions between social movement activists and their oppositions in historically political and cultural contexts" (Holst, 2002, p. 82). Moreover, social movements represent a politics built on shared knowledge and lived experiences. And this enables social actions to evolve through discourse and social interaction (Foley, 1991; Holst, 2002). Learning occurs as a result of both. Brookfield (2005) posits that learning occurs not by fiat but through dialogue and collaborative analysis of life experiences. Creating a participatory democratic process in which both teacher and learners participate is what allows this period of discovery and learning to occur.

In defining social movements, Eyerman and Jamison (1991) do so in the context of cognitive praxis. Creating knowledge is the cognitive praxis of social movements. It is through this process, which includes both knowledge production and action, that movement actors form a collective identity by which they produce both self-knowledge and social knowledge (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991). Using cognitive praxis to address social injustice, the oppressed can question and work to challenge ideological and political boundaries (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991).

Three dimensions comprise cognitive praxis: cosmological knowledge, technological

knowledge interest, and organizational knowledge interest. Cosmological knowledge of a movement is its worldview, its "utopian" mission; technological knowledge interest is the specific technological issues the movement develops around the specific object of the protest (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991). A movement's organizational knowledge interest concerns the way social movements disseminate messages and "the way organizational form within its cognitive praxis unfolds" (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991, p. 69). Creating knowledge is essential to the success of social movements and the construction of its collective identity—the results of which are neither predetermined nor completely self-willed (Holst, 2002). Rather, its meaning derives from the context in which actors carry-out the movement and the understanding they bring to and/or derive from it (Holst, 2002).

Dykstra and Law (1994) instruct that social action is an "educative process," a type of incubator for learning in which civil rights activists learned to engage in counter-hegemonic actions to dismantle oppressive systems that impeded the access of African-Americans to social and racial equality (para. 8). The knowledge activists gained through this process enabled them to relate their own immediate actions to larger political concerns—such as those about liberation, freedom, and ultimately social justice. Dykstra and Law (1994) wrote that:

> Understanding learning in social movements requires not only a concept of the group as a learner and constructor of knowledge, but also an understanding of the centrality of the group's vision of social justice that drives it to act mostly in conflict with other groups in the larger social, economic, and political field of meaning making. (para. 2)

An exploration of the political aims of education is incomplete without offering a brief discussion about civil society. It is within civil society that movement activists mobilize to challenge the hegemonic forces that create the structural inequities that give rise to a movement (Holst, 2002). Social movements are ideal places for educating adults and building civil society. Gramsci instructs, however, that social change is expedited by organic intellectuals in ways

distinct from traditional intellectuals because the former engages with others to collectively guard historic unofficial knowledge (as cited in Holst, 2002).

Though reassuring on its face, there remains a pivotal question: How might this occur? Dykstra and Law (1994) answered this question by offering an analytical framework for popular social movements, which they divide into three parts: vision, critical pedagogy, and pedagogy of mobilization. Vision is an essential dimension of education. It allows actors to develop an alternative map of reality, grounded by a political standpoint, as a goal for the educative process. Critical pedagogy is an educational practice, which informs, challenges, and engages people in the creation and re-creation of knowledge (Dykstra & Law, 1994; Holst 2002).

Key components of critical pedagogy are social consciousness, imagination, and dialogue. Collectively, these elements create a critical communication process rooted in a horizontal relationship between people. Pedagogy of mobilization is the last dimension under which four subgroups fall. These are organizing and building, continuing participation, political action, and coalition and network building (Dykstra & Law, 1994; Holst, 2002). This last dimension provides grounding for the work in progress, which Dykstra and Law (1994) refer to as "bottom up leadership and the development of analytical and strategic thinking" (p. 124).

Organizing and building represent a creation of an alternative culture characterized by informed perceptions and expectations of members, the values they hold, and their working style. It implies a complex learning process. Continuing participation in which ideas, decisions, and effort are meshed into a collective effort is a place for experiential learning. It is here where the oppressed develop leadership skills through conducting meetings, doing participatory research, learning to negotiate, developing strategies, and engaging in critical reflection regarding ongoing issues and problems. Political action is an educative process where persons

learn to confront and challenge authority. It helps participants relate their immediate actions to the larger political concerns. Finally, coalition building is an opportunity for learners to reflect upon their values and aspirations, and through negotiations, build the movement (Dykstra & Law, 1994).

This interlocking relationship between politics and education has liberating value for the oppressed. Equally important is that the work of social movements within civil society brings people together—those who have learned how to be social actors and have the leadership skills and organizational competence to restructure society—despite the social challenges they surely face. Oppressed groups learn to function as effective social actors by acquiring new knowledge. Ella Baker demonstrated an understanding that this outcome was essential for successfully challenging the social terrain of racial inequality. She was committed to seeing the struggle come to fruition.

Teaching the Fundamentals of Social Change

Though Ella Baker decided against a formal teaching career after graduating from Shaw University in 1927 as valedictorian, her secularized Christian roots led her to train others nonetheless. Unlike most historically Black colleges and universities at the time, the Shaw University leadership and faculty were diverse. Its first two presidents were White and so were some of its faculty (Baker, 1977). Ella Baker benefited from this diversity—diversity in talent, experience, background, and pedagogical approach.

To prepare for what would be a long and impressive life journey as a community and political activist, Ella Baker completed one semester in 1931 at the New York-based Brookwood Labor College (Grant, 1998). There, she not only learned about theoretical models of social change—those grounded in collectivist democratic decision making but also about the

linkage between freedom and economic emancipation (Polletta, 2002). From Myles Horton, founder of the Highlander Folk School, Baker learned about the "radical potential of adult education" (Polletta, 2002, p. 63)—from which emerged a different type of learning which Brookfield and Holst (2011) call radical adult learning.

Ransby (2003) was the first to characterize Ella Baker's pedagogical praxis as emblematic of a "Freirian teacher" and a "Gramscian intellectual, characterizations most often associated with Brazilian educator Paulo Freire" and Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci, respectively (pp.357-358). Between 1934 and 1941, Ella Baker worked at the New York Public Library Adult Education Program and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) where she developed and taught literacy programs and consumer education programs, respectively (Bobo et al, 2004; Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003a). In many respects, Ella Baker was an "activist community educator" and "teacher-activist" who used her talents to build a community of learners (Ransby, 2003a, p. 358). Her approach had as its centerpiece participatory democracy.

The Freirean Way

In her biography on Ella Baker, Ransby (1993) characterizes her as a "movement teacher…an individual who embodied a radical pedagogy" (p. 7). Though Baker could not have read any of Freire's educational theories or even familiarized herself with their philosophical underpinnings, she nonetheless enacted many of them. This framework provides that a lack of knowledge frequently conspires to blind exploited people to their own oppression. Here, Freire (1993) notes that "as long as [they]…remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically accept their exploitation" (p. 64). Acquiring new knowledge and developing critical consciousness (or conscientização) through a process of critical reflection often leads to individual and group transformation. On the other hand, an absence of conscientization creates

for the oppressed a culture of silence and a relegated state of socialized compliance (Freire, 1993).

For more than twenty years, beginning in the 1930s, training community residents and indigenous leaders were part of Ella Baker's community organizing activities. While working for various organizations, she engaged adult learners in dialogue on the most pressing social issues of their time. Consumer education, organizing, voters' registration, leadership, and individual and group agency were part of their curricula. This pedagogical approach placed her and adult learners in a genuine dialectical exchange whereby Ella Baker, in the role of teacher, frequently used a line of questioning as means of engaging learners in knowledge acquisition— with no intentions of guiding the discussion towards a pre-determined ideologically place (Cantarow et al, 1980; Polletta, 2002; Brookfield & Holst, 2011; Ransby, 2003). In the process, she created a reciprocal process in which both she and adult learners participated actively. Such a pedagogical praxis is characteristic of Freire's (1993) problem-posing method of education. It contextualizes knowledge based on questions both teacher and learner pose serving as a catalyst for learning.

Problem-posing education is among the most celebrated aspects of Freire's scholarly work. The efficacy of problem-posing lies in its ability to liberate and license the oppressed to resist oppressive social systems (Chapman & Hobbel, 2010; Freire, 1993; Shim, 2007) through developing critical consciousness. In this context, development relies on dialogue, participatory inquiry, and recognition of the interlocking relationship between people and the world in which they must live and survive (Freire, 1993). Dialogue must be the starting point. It is one way people who are socially stationed outside the dominant culture acquire new knowledge, which enables them to dismantle oppressive systems and/or structures.

When questioned during an interview about her community organizing and pedagogical practices, Ella Baker responded this way:

> You don't start with what you think. You start with what they think ... You start where the people are…If you talk down to people, they can sense it. They can feel it. And they know whether you are talking with them, or talking at them, or talking about them. (Cantarow et al, pp. 70-72; Preskill, 2005; para. 4)

She understood that teachers, whether informally or formally trained, need to respect and exchange critical ideas with learners to help them better understand their world. One can conclude from Ransby's (1993) characterizations of Baker as a Freirean teacher that such an individual investigates injustices and protests against them when the ability of teachers to teach and learners to learn is threatened. Chapman and Hobbel (2010) offer a more expansive definition of a Freirean teacher. They write that such a teacher is a "problem-poser who asks thought provoking questions …elicits descriptions of current inequality, and asks students to ask their own questions" (p. 64).

Though one might equate this approach with Socratic dialogue—Ransby (2003) posits that as a Freirean teacher, Baker understood the value of posing questions and opposed anyone simply issuing directives. She might ask during meetings with SNCC members: "Now let me ask this again; what [is] our purpose here? What are we trying to accomplish?" (Ransby, 2003, p. 360). Julian Bond, who was among the first group of SNCC members, confirmed this postulation during an interview in which he answered questions about Ella Baker's problem-posing approach. He said the following of her:

> She never said, "Do this." But she always was able to pose questions to you that made you think about alternative ways and end up with a solution that involved some kind of democratic process involving everybody. So that if four or five of us were sitting here, she would ask what everybody thinks. What's best and have some discussion about it. She wouldn't tolerate someone coming in and saying, "Okay, here's what we're going to do." It had to be talked out among us all. It took us forever to make decisions. But when we made them, you had the feeling that everyone had had their say. (Gritter, 1999)

The objective of such an approach was to empower student activists to explore alternative ways of thinking about issues and problems and then developing ways to solve them. Utilizing problematizing created for activists or learners the opportunity to examine their own historical and cultural experiences, such as those of racial discrimination, segregation, and countless decades of racial violence. From Ella Baker's perspective, "people [have] many of the answers within themselves; teachers and leaders simply need to facilitate the process of tapping and framing that knowledge, [and] drawing it out" (Ransby, 2003a, pp. 358-9). This, she often lamented, was not an approach many traditional educators embraced or even practiced. Ella Baker believed traditional educators lacked tolerance for student dissent, rejected students' questions about course instructions, and insisted on absolute student conformance (Ransby, 2003a).

For Freire (1993), such a pedagogical approach is representative of the banking concept of adult education—a metaphor connoting the traditional approach to education which is anathema to problem-posing education. The former "becomes an act of depositing in which students are the depositories, and the teacher is the depositor" (Freire, 1993, p. 72). This approach inculcates in learners a passive way of being and posits that teachers are all-knowing while students passively accept the information they receive.

Rather than embracing the banking education approach, Ella Baker seems to have embraced Freire's argument for problem-posing education. Teachers who use this approach encourage students to question situations and data they receive and learn from both. It is a dialectical exchange between the teacher and his or her students. As though reading from a Freirean guidebook, Ella Baker seemed to have understood that liberating education allows learning to occur through posing for learners real world problems where they, in turn, acquire

knowledge through critical reflection and action (Freire, 1993).

One explanation for Freire's (1993) denouncement of banking education is its treatment of learners as inanimate objects upon which teachers impose their will. In Freire's view, it is oppressive when teachers use an a priori technique by which learners are acted upon rather than using education as a tool of enlightenment and knowledge production that lead to participation in the democratic process. By this, Freire (1993) means the act of banking education conditions learners not to engage in a transformative and liberating process of learning but rather to accept the social and political status quo of the dominant culture. Freire (1993) advocates instead that teachers encourage learners to question situations and data in order to learn from both. This form of liberating education—which is the ethos of problem posing education—enables learners to reach a stage of critical reflection, which Freire (1993) calls critical consciousness, a dialectical process which links reflection and action. As a consciousness-raising, liberating agent of social change, critical reflection makes it possible for the oppressed to analyze the realities of the real world and take action to transform it (Brookfield & Holst, 2011; Freire 1993; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009).

For Ella Baker, teaching in the Freirean way undoubtedly also meant recognizing and respecting the dignity and experiences of adult learners and encouraging them to question the underlying assumptions not only about the dominant cultural systems but also about their own. Cultural assumptions understandably comprise the realities of social oppression and marginalization. Like Gramsci (1971), Freire (1989) argues that all people are intellectuals. They participate in the world by interpreting and giving it meaning. Knowledge acquisition and production facilitate this process.

A Gramscian Organic Intellectual

While Ransby (1993a) was one of the first to acknowledge Ella Baker as a Freirean teacher, Glisson (2000) and Ransby (2003) were among the first scholars to regard her as a Gramscian organic intellectual—a characterization Ella Baker earned because of her vision and philosophical reliance on the precept that within oppressed communities resides a wealth of knowledge and leadership potential. Ella Baker encouraged individuals, especially SNCC members, to think about cause and effect relationships and did so by engaging them in critical analyses. Ann Braden, one of Ella Baker's co-workers and close friends eulogized Ella Baker in the following way: Miss Baker had the ability to sift through the superficial to find the real human being...She wanted to know what people thought, but mostly she wanted them to think (Holsaert, Noonan, Richardson, Robinson, Young, & Zellner, 2012, p.309).

According to Cohen and Snyder (2013), within SNCC existed "a heady intellectual culture, rooted in analysis, action, and reflection grounded in mutual respect and curiosity rather than hard-edge grand philosophy and factional splits based on theoretical disagreements" (p. 51). The authors acknowledge that the origin of this phenomenon at the time was Ella Baker's penchant for proactive democracy, ability to re-imagine current realities, and skillfulness in developing strategies and contingencies to address communal problems. Ransby (2003a) expands Cohen and Snyder's (2013) postulation by theorizing that Ella Baker was an organic intellectual because

> Her primary base of knowledge came from grassroots communities and from lived experience, not from formal study. She was a partisan intellectual, never feigning a bloodless objectivity, but always insisting that ideas should be employed in the service of oppressed people and toward the goal of justice. (p. 74)

The concept of organic intellectual, which Antonio Gramsci details in his "Prison Notebooks," is one of two types of intellectuals. Traditional intellectuals represent the second.

According to Gramsci (1971), intellectuals are individuals who possess the ability and social function to organize or mobilize others—though they lack independence from the social class into which they are born. The type of traditional intellectuals which Gramsci envisions is not unique to a particular gender, racial, ethnic group, or socioeconomic class. Instead, they have a unique relationship with the world of production mediated by civil and political society (Gramsci, 1971; Holst, 2002)—though both organic and traditional intellectuals illustrate hegemony in different ways.

Organic intellectuals view their role as expediting social change and creating the social conditions for perpetual knowledge acquisition (Gramsci, 1971; Holst, 2002). These types of intellectuals reflect the close ties they have with their social class and represent its thinking (Gramsci, 1971). Organic intellectuals from marginalized groups neither choose to align themselves with the interests of the dominant class nor repressive forces. Instead, they align with the interests and concerns of these marginalized groups (Cunningham, 1999). Organic intellectuals are "distinguished less by their profession…than by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 3).

Moreover, organic intellectuals play a dual role; they provide oppressed and marginalized groups with a sense of oneness and a mirror-like view into the realities of their sociopolitical and economic status. They also strive for consent on counter-hegemonic ideas, structures, and practices (Cunningham, 1999; Gramsci, 1971). On the other hand, traditional intellectuals create and safeguard historic and official knowledge. The dominant group aligns its self-interest with the powerful whose objective is to create knowledge in order to maintain the status quo from which the powerful derives social and economic benefits (Cunningham, 1999; Gramsci, 1971; Holst, 2002).

Marable (1998) underscores Gramsci's postulations in his book, *Black leadership*, by offering a more expansive way of understanding organic intellectuals from an African-American perspective. Black intellectuals, many of whom fit Gramsci's definition, are most interested in discerning the linkage between systemic racism and other forms of sociopolitical hegemony—all of which are grounded in "social class, nationality" (Marable, 1998, p. 102). What is true about organic intellectuals, as Marble (1998) notes, is their insight and ability to surface

> gross contradictions within the political process…express the deep grievances percolating up from the masses below regarding educational, social, cultural, economic, or political rights; they may promote a counterhegemonic perspective with civil society that establishes a culture of resistance, glorifying beliefs, rituals, or symbols of struggle against the dominant social classes and political elites; and they may assist in the advancement of educational and cultural awareness at a mass participatory level, through public school intervention, literacy campaigns. (p. 99)

All social classes produce intellectuals—though intellectuals whose interests align with the state develop knowledge which enables them to maintain power over the powerless (Gramsci, 1971). Knowing that both classes are able to produce intellectuals is a motivator for the oppressed to create social spaces for collective action and promote social change for the betterment of their class (Gramsci, 1971; Holst, 2002; Marable, 1998). The way knowledge relates to power is based on our understanding that knowledge is socially produced, and that all people have the capacity to become organic intellectuals. If knowledge is socially constructed, then transformative education has as its goal to develop knowledge producers, not knowledge consumers (Holst, 2002). Knowledge produced by organic intellectuals from marginalized groups is different from knowledge produced by those who place their self-interest with those in power creating knowledge that maintains state hegemony (Holst, 2002). Therefore, adult education that occurs within these social spaces is transformative and leads to a more

democratic and participatory society.

Gramsci (1971) argues that an important goal of any rising class should be to assimilate in and transform the ideology of the dominant group. In every successful social movement, the oppressed class produces its own organic intellectuals who play a critical ideological role in forcing social transformation. Doing so requires an understanding of the systems and structures that need transforming. Reaching this level of understanding also requires access to knowledge. According to Holst (2002), knowledge and power are interrelated, a claim best evidenced during the pre-civil rights era when for centuries African-Americans and other marginalized groups were denied access to knowledge. It was a historical time when the dominant group possessed the knowledge and, thus, the power to determine the fate of the oppressed.

Ella Baker's leadership philosophy mirrored that of Gramsci's concept of organic intellectuals. She understood the essentiality of African-Americans deriving knowledge not only from informal and nonformal learning but also from their interactions and dialogue with each other.

Conclusion

The struggle is eternal. The tribe increases. Somebody else carries on.
--Ella Baker

This chapter served as the foundation of this research study. Reconceptualizing Ella Baker's leadership through the prism of the Civil Rights Movement was not a linear process. There are many interconnecting factors this study considered. Among these are the confluence of events, which shaped and influenced Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. These included the influence of her Christian, middle-class upbringing; range and diversity of her experience in community and political activism; leadership of numerous organizations; interconnectedness of her gender, race, and class; and her strong sense of purpose. Challenging

the status quo, as Baker did, required a specific set of leadership skills. In a real sense, her life's narrative itself serves as a heuristic for understanding community and political activism.

Except for Ella Baker, few other civil rights leaders during the 1930s through the 1970s possessed the vision, organizing skills, and leadership prowess to construct and execute the types of strategies required to galvanize the African-American community. She was an advocate for the civil rights and growth and development of ordinary people (Barnett, 1993; Bobo et al, 2004; Bohannon, 2005; Brookfield & Holst, 2011; Butler-White, 2008; Cantarow et al, 1980; Charles, 2007; Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Crawford, Rouse, & Woods, 1993; Dallard, 1990; DeLaure, 2008; Elliott, 1996; Gilsson, 2000; Grant, 1998, 2001; Gyant, 1996; Mueller, 1990; Olson, 2001; Orr, 1991; Payne, 1989, 1990, 1995, 2004; Payne & Strickland, 2008; Petty, 1996; Preskill, 2005; Preskill, & Brookfield, 2009; Ransby, 2003a/b; Robnett, 1999; Ross, 2003). Her ability to create an interpretive space for the socially and politically oppressed enabled them to find their voices and demand, through concerted collective action, that the dominant group listen and address their grievances. The end result was the dismantling of most racially oppressive social systems and structures. Though not alone in this endeavor, achieving such a goal exemplifies the uniqueness of Ella Baker's leadership. Despite her successes, movement scholars have under-theorized her leadership.

It is undeniable that leadership is a complex construct. This is evident, in part, by the lack of a universal definition of leadership and the absence of consensus on the role of a leader. For some, leadership is a human process, an activity that must be considered within both cultural and historical contexts (Astin & Leland, 1991; Ruth, 2006). For others, leadership emphasizes social change and human emancipation (Parker, 2004). Yet for others, leadership is about the relationship and influence between the leader and the led (Rost, 1993). Still for others,

leadership inspires and empowers (Preskill and Brookfield, 2009); it concerns people development, collective goal setting, and dialogical relationships (Barker et al, 2001). Just as the definition of leadership varies among scholars, so does the role of a leader.

Both Freire's educational theories and Gramsci's theoretical framework on knowledge production and acquisition placed prominently among Ella Baker's pedagogical approaches to training civil rights activists (Ransby, 2003). She recognized that knowledge, leadership development, agency, and a sense of collectiveness and purpose were strategic imperatives for African-Americans in their quest for racial equality. Sexism and classism were two social barriers Ella Baker encountered during her fifty-year career as a community and political activist (Cantarow et al, 1980; Collier-Thomas, 2001; Grant, 1998; Ransby, 2003). Despite these impediments, her work represented a quintessential example of leadership during a socially tumultuous time when women's leadership was not respected or understood.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

Researchers have available to them an array of research methodologies from which to

choose. The research methodology serves as a guidepost for the researcher by prescribing

methods and procedures, ways to gauge research progress, and specific milestones by which to

measure research effectiveness (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). A researcher can choose to

conduct a quantitative or qualitative study, where the former relies on numerical data while the

latter uses descriptive data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2007). This study is guided by

qualitative research methodologies, which combines grounded theory and case study. This

chapter describes the methodologies on which this study relied to answer the following three

guiding research questions about Ella Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors.

1. How does Ella Baker's community and political activism epitomize leadership?

2. What are the primary characteristics of her leadership philosophy and leader
   behaviors?

3. What leadership frameworks best reflect and encapsulate the multi-dimensional
   character of both her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors?

Qualitative Research

This is a qualitative research study. The underlying assumption of this methodology is

that reality is socially constructed and reproduced through human activity (Bogdan & Biklen,

1998). Inquiries of this type attempt to explain problems in their natural settings and describe

the process in detail (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research begins with

"assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens" to inquire "into the meaning

individuals or groups ascribe" to social or human problems (Creswell, 2007, p. 37).

A unique aspect of this interpretive form of inquiry is its flexibility. Qualitative research

enables the researcher to combine methods to explain one or more social phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). Qualitative research is descriptive, interpretive, naturalistic, contextual, and emergent. Its efficacy lies in its ability to broaden our understanding of "human behavior and experience…to grasp the processes by which people construct meaning" and to describe what those meanings are and represent (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 43). Qualitative research is well-suited for studies that attempt to understand the experiences of people in as detailed and multifaceted a fashion as possible, where statistical methods do not aid in enhancing that understanding, but where theory development is the ultimate goal (Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Grounded theory enables a researcher to analyze the words of participants, use participants' words to construct a holistic picture that illuminates the social meanings participants attach to their lived experiences, and glean meaning from the data through an inductive analytical process (Creswell, 2007).

Philosophical Assumptions, Paradigms, and Worldviews

This study is situated within a social constructivist paradigm. Constructivism posits that people strive to understand the world in which they live and derive meaning from it, especially from their interactions with others (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007). A researcher's worldview plays a critical role in qualitative research, such as fundamental beliefs about the way things ought to be. These beliefs influence the researcher's decisions throughout the research study— such as those related to the theoretical lens used to analyze study data and/or the sampling strategy and unit of analysis (Creswell, 2007). According to Creswell (2007), these "philosophical assumptions...paradigms or worldviews" carry with them "subjective meanings [which] are negotiated socially and historically…and formed through…historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives" (pp. 16-21).

Constructivism is an excellent lens through which to interpret and understand the research data of this study. The reason is that when using a social constructivism perspective, the researcher relies heavily on participants' accounts of certain situations (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007). For this study, those accounts and situations relate to the lived experiences of participants who worked and/or interacted with Ella Baker during the modern Civil Rights Movement. Focusing on social contexts and "processes of interaction among individuals" is essential (Creswell, 2007, p. 21).

A constructivist researcher bases her interpretations on what she learns from the personal accounts of research participants in order to view and understand the world through their lens. This interpretive process, Charmaz (2006) and Creswell (2007) argue, is shaped by the researcher's own personal background and experiential knowledge. An advantage of using a constructivist paradigm is the close collaboration that develops between the researcher and participants (Creswell, 2007). This type of collaboration increases the comfort level of participants, enabling them to recount more freely real-world experiences.

Research Design

There are five qualitative research designs, among which are grounded theory, case study, and narrative studies, such as oral history (Creswell, 2007). This current study used a hybrid design, which united grounded theory and case study. The usefulness of combining the two lies in the freedom both designs afford researchers to use similar, yet multiple, data sources; interpret the data to illuminate the case; and develop theory (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). Grounded theory moves beyond description to discovery of how social processes work in context (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007). Similarly, case studies rely on multiple data sources that form an integrated unit and follow an iterative process (Yin, 2009). This allows a researcher

to retain the holistic and salient characteristics of real-life events, generate detailed information about a case, and make theory development an essential component.

Given that this study uses historical data, some may question why oral history was not the preferred research design. There are two reasons for choosing a grounded-theory case study over an oral history research design. The first is that the focus of oral histories is not on answering research questions, such as the three this study sought to answer, or on fulfilling a range of purposes. There were three purposes of this study: to reconceptualize the leadership of Baker during the modern Civil Rights Movement; to develop a leadership framework in which her community and political activism naturally fits; and to place her style of leadership in a broader framework of research—focusing primarily on the role of leadership in social activism. While oral histories rely on similar data sources as does a grounded theory case study, researchers use the data of the former to achieve a different objective. Oral histories are historical inquiries, whose aim is to document the past (Creswell, 2007). Clearly, this was not the aim of this current study.

Properties of grounded theory and case study research. An important property of grounded theory is its flexibility, which allows the researcher to select participants who meet a pre-determined set of criteria based on the research questions the study seeks to answer (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). This study focused on the lived experiences of a small sample of civil rights activists who worked and/or interacted with Ella Baker in order to explain her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. Discovery and interpretation of the lived experiences of participants, which surface inside the data, are equally important to a qualitative research study (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

A grounded theory design allows for a bottom-up approach where meaning flows from

the data on a particular phenomenon, situation, or issue (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory

provides for an iterative process through which research data become more focused and

categorical. Like qualitative research, a significant advantage of grounded theory is its

flexibility and theory development capability (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). It is an

adaptable research design, which enables the researcher to use any data or combination of data.

Like grounded theory, a case study design is equally useful in answering the three

research questions of this current study. Case study research is an empirical inquiry. It is

appropriate for research studies, which seek to understand one or more complex social

phenomena (Yin, 2009). This method enables a researcher to answer "how" or "why" questions

in order to view and understand an event in a new light, one or more people, or phenomena in

their real-life context (Yin, 2009, pp. 8-10). A case study method is also useful "when relevant

behaviors cannot be manipulated" (Yin, 2009, p. 11). Interviews, direct observations, archival

records, physical artifacts, and participant-observation are typical data sources for case studies

(Yin, 2009). When combined, these attributes make a grounded theory case study an appropriate

methodology to guide this current study.

Combining grounded theory and case study. Choosing a hybrid research design is not

atypical for the types of research questions this current study sought to answer. There are

numerous examples in qualitative research where scholars have combined grounded theory and

case study. For example, a search of the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Digital Database

using the phrases "grounded theory case study" and "case study and grounded theory" yielded

342 and 315 dissertations, respectively. To illustrate this point more clearly, the following

examples include three doctoral studies plus a qualitative study conducted by Adriana Kezar

(2005).

Caminita's (2011) study, *Teacher Voice in Decision making at two High-Performing Takeover Charter Schools in the Southern United States*, sought to determine whether the decision-making processes within two Southern charter schools reflected the voices of teaching faculty. A second study titled C*reating Classroom Relationships that Allow Students to Feel Known*, Divoll (2010) identifies and describes strategies for helping students "feel known and respected for who they are by creating a relationship-driven classroom community" (p. v).

Finally, Welsh's (2010) study entitled *Increasing a Community College Governing Board's Engagement in Accountability for Student Success: What are the Principal Influences* sought to understand the motivating factors of the governing board of a community college to increase its level of accountability for student success. The study also developed a model to describe the ways these factors interact.

In addition to these doctoral studies, Kezar's (2005) study, *Consequences of Radical Change in Governance: A Grounded Theory Approach*, provides further confirmation of the applicability of combining grounded theory and case study. Kezar's (2005) highlights the unintended consequences for higher education institutions that attempt to radically change their governance system. The more than 300 studies in social science and education research, which rely on a grounded theory case study design, confirm the appropriateness of this study employing such a hybrid approach to achieve its three research objectives. However, Yin (2009) advises researchers to exercise care when combining case study and another research method. The concern is that researchers ensure the canons of case study research do not interfere with theory development.

Data Collection and Analysis Activities and Procedures

A grounded theory approach guided the data collection activities of this qualitative research study. Qualitative data are useful in helping researchers understand more clearly the reactions,

beliefs, and behaviors of people (Creswell, 2007; Charmaz, 2006). This study relied on primary and secondary data sources: indepth interviews, third-party interviews conducted with Baker between December 1966 through March 4, 1979, archival materials, and a single video documentary about Baker's life. Though some of these data units are of a historical nature, their use was geared solely toward answering the three research questions and achieving the multi-purpose of this study.

The upcoming sections provide a comprehensive description of the data collection and analysis procedures used in this study, beginning with the approval of the Institutional Review Board and ending with an introduction of the five research participants.

Institutional Review Board Approval

Prior to initiating contact with research participants, I sought and obtained the approval of the University of St. Thomas, Institutional Review Board (IRB) on June 25, 2013 (see IRB Approval Letter, Appendix A). Research studies using human subjects require this advance approval, in part, to protect both researcher and research participants. In this context, protection means reducing the risks of harm to research participants.

Each research participant received and returned a signed Informed Consent Form via electronic mail. This form described significant aspects of this study, the voluntary nature of participation, known risks and benefits of participation, and steps I would take to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality. Appendix D is a copy of the Informed Consent Form for this research study.

Sampling and Selection Strategies

Deciding the appropriate sample size and selecting participants were critical to this study. Charmaz (2006) argues that determining the optimum sample size of a research study depends on the number of participants needed to reach data saturation. This study employed a purposeful

sampling and criterion-based selection method to identify study participants. Using this approach

allows the researcher to deliberately select particular settings, persons, or activities" to obtain

information she could not easily obtain otherwise (Maxwell, 2005, p. 88).

In light of the research questions of this study, the sampling frame consisted of SNCC

veterans and civil rights activists. Their names and demographic information of approximately 300

SNCC veterans are provided in the SNCC Public Share List, which planners developed for SNCC's

50th Anniversary Conference. From that list, I selected the names of thirty-five (n=35) individuals

whom I concluded—based on the period of their active SNCC membership—may have worked

with or interacted with Ella Baker. For verification purposes, I also accessed and reviewed the list

of civil rights veterans which is accessible from the Civil Rights Movement Veteran (CRMV)

website. This database contains the names and demographic information on 568 SNCC, CORE,

SCLC, and NAACP members. All 300 names and demographic information of SNCC members are

also included in this broader list.

To expand the sphere of inquiry, this study also used snowball or chain sampling to include

referrals of research participants (Creswell, 2007). This secondary sampling technique enabled me

to gain multiple perspectives from civil rights activists who worked and/or interacted with Baker

and could speak from their lived experiences about her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors.

One of the interview questions in the Interview Guide and Protocol inquired of each participant

about other similarly situated activists who might be willing to participate in the study. Snowball

sampling yielded the names of eight potential participants. Of that number, four responded to my

electronic inquiry. Two declined the invitation, one eagerly agreed, and one individual who

originally declined to participate later agreed to join the study. This conversion was made possible

by a well-known SNCC and civil rights veteran and one participant granted me permission to use

their names to recruit others. Despite sending multiple electronic inquiries and follow-ups, I was only able to recruit five participants for the study.

Participant selection. From the list of approximate 300 SNCC veterans on the SNCC Public Share List, I selected a representative sample of 35 potential participants. Their demographic information indicated they were active SNCC members during the period of Ella Baker's SNCC involvement—from 1960 through 1966. Based on my reading of the literature, I concluded this representative sample of individuals worked and/or interacted with Ella Baker and could provide rich insights into her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors.

In order to determine their willingness to participate in the study, I sent each of the 35 potential participants an electronic letter of invitation (see Electronic Letter of Invitation, Appendix B). Those who did not respond within seven days from the date of my initial invitation received a follow-up letter (see Electronic Follow-Up Letter; Appendix C). I speculated from the outset that for many reasons, recruiting SNCC and other civil rights veterans might pose great difficulty. In the end, reality confirmed my suspicions.

As part of my research proposal, I proposed developing a sample of twelve (n=12) study participants. I assumed sending electronic letters of invitation to thirty-five (n=35) would return a yield rate of approximately 35% or 12 participants. Instead, six of the 35 individuals agreed to participate in the study. Immediately after receiving their electronic agreements, I sent each participant an electronic copy of the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D) and described in the transmittal message the purpose of the form and IRB requirements. Two participants were quite familiar with IRB procedures; both hold terminal degrees and have taught at the college level.

Data Collection

There are several data collection methods available to qualitative researchers, with interviews being the most common among these (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). The original study sample consisted of six participants—although I determined during the first part of the telephonic interview one prospective participant did not meet the selection criteria of this study. This individual lacked first-hand knowledge of Baker, which his response revealed when answering the first interview protocol question: "In what year and venue did you meet Ella Baker?" He acknowledged the majority of his knowledge of Baker was based on second- rather than first-hand personal experience or observation. This prospective participant was subsequently excluded from the study, resulting in a sample of five (n=5): three White females (n=3) and two African-American males (n=2). All five participants worked with and interacted with Baker due to their affiliation with or membership in SNCC. Each participant provided rich first-hand information. No information obtained during my brief, yet pleasant, interview with the sixth participant was used in this study.

It also is important to note that there was not a pre-established gender or racial participation requirement for this study. Because SNCC and civil rights veterans are predominantly African-American, I expected the majority of study participants would be of the same race. This was not the case. Neither did I have any preconceived notions about the gender composition of the sample. Since the sampling strategy of this study was purposeful and criterion-based, I assumed the participation levels of females and males, African-Americans and Whites would be uneven. The final gender and racial composition of the sample confirmed this assumption. Despite multiple attempts to recruit African-American women to participate in this study, none agreed to do so. Their participation would have established an even higher degree

of validity of the research findings—particularly because of their unique standpoint on oppression or perspective on the intersectionality of gender, race, and class that Baker and other women experienced during the modern Civil Rights Movement. It is accepted as factual that only African-American women can locate their experiences within those of other similarly situated women.

Within qualitative research, however, data triangulation is particularly useful in ameliorating factors of this type. Triangulation involves the use of different data sources as a means for increasing the validity of a study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). Viewing data from multiple perspectives minimizes systematic biases or limitations and allow for triangulation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). The data units for this study included primary and secondary data sources: five indepth interviews, five third-party interview transcripts, archival materials, and a 1981video documentary and biography on the life of Ella Baker called *Fundi*.

As the primary data source of this study, a semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol enabled me to elicit the detailed responses of participants and explore an issue indepth in order to understand a participant's perspective and its origin (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The interview guide for this study contained 15 open-ended questions (see Interview Guide and Protocol; Appendix E). Semi-structured, indepth interviews are extremely effective in collecting the diverse perspectives of individuals, particularly when a researcher wants to explore sensitive topics (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007).

The three research questions informed the development of the semi-structured interview questions presented in the interview guide and in accordance with the theoretical framework and reviews of the literature discussed in Chapter 3. Archival records and videos augment and

corroborate other data sources (Yin, 2009). This was the purpose of the archival research I conducted. Archival documents, third party interviews, and a video documentary represented the secondary data of this study.

Semi-Structured Interviews

This study relied on the primary qualitative data gathered through indepth interviews with five SNCC and civil rights veterans (n=5). Using a semi-structured interview protocol, questions posed to each participant were open-ended to elicit detailed, concrete accounts of participants' interactions and perspective on Ella Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. The objective was to understand as best as possible the lived experiences of these participants gained through their interactions with Ella Baker and to analyze those through subsequent coding to arrive at a theory of leadership. Except in the case of one of the five study participants, all live outside the State of Minnesota—making it financially prohibitive to conduct in-person interviews of all of them. Conducting telephone interviews rather than in-person interviews is practical when the researcher does not have direct access to study participants (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). Since the fifth research participant lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, this allowed for an in-person interview. Consequently, I interviewed four participants by telephone and the Minnesota participant in-person interview. This latter participant preferred holding the interview at a downtown St. Paul restaurant after the regular lunch period ended. I accommodated his request and paid for lunch.

Both the telephone and in-person interviews spanned four months—beginning August 21, 2013 and ending November 5, 2013. All interview questions focused exclusively on Ella Baker's leadership and leader-behaviors during the Civil Rights Movement (see Interview Guide and Protocol, Appendix D). Because of their first-hand knowledge and personal

interactions with Baker, all except one of the five research participants provided comprehensive responses to 15 open-ended interview questions (see Interview Guide and Protocol, Appendix E). The excepted participant's responses were extremely concise—although she alerted me from the outset to her failing health.

Confirming Participants' Consent

Prior to beginning each interview, I confirmed the participant's continued willingness to participate in the study. After receiving confirmation, I reviewed with each the details of the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D). Since one of the provisions pertained to remuneration for participation in the form of a $50 gift card to a national retail store of my choice—such as Amazon.com, Barnes and Nobles, Target, Best Buy, etc.—I took special care to review with participants the two eligibility criteria. These were: (1) participation in a one-on-one telephone interview with the researcher and (2) continuation in the research study until its completion. Next, I sought and obtained the permission of each participant to record the interview using a digital recorder.

After receiving the permission of each participant to record the interview digitally, I then inquired about any remaining concerns and/or issues. While no participant posed any questions, one participant reminded me that she might need to stop the telephone interview in case her current location became too noisy. This participant was at the Amtrak Train Station in Philadelphia awaiting a train to New York City.

Individual Interviews

During the interviews, which lasted from one to three hours, I followed a pre-designed interview guide and protocol (see Interview Guide and Protocol; Appendix E). By way of example, below is a list of the interview questions each participant was asked to answer.

1.   In what year and venue did you meet Ella Baker?

2.   Please describe the frequency of your interactions with her?

3.   What were the purpose and nature of those interactions?

4.   Based on your own personal knowledge of Ella Baker, what role did she play in the Movement?

5.   When you think about the Civil Rights Movement, how would you describe the leadership style most frequently displayed during the Movement?

6.   In what ways, if at all, did Ella Baker's leadership mirror the type of leadership you observed during the Movement? Why?

7.   What five attributes best describe Ella Baker as a leader?

8.   Please provide a few examples of Ella Baker's behaviors toward you and/or others that you feel provide a glimpse into her leadership style?

9.   From your perspective, what were a few of her leadership successes, shortcomings? What factors do you believe contributed to those successes and/or shortcomings?

10. Describe a particular time when you were the proudest of Ella Baker.

11. In what ways, if at all, did Ella Baker's gender, personal traits or attributes advantage or disadvantage her in the Civil Rights Movement? Please provide a few examples.

12. In what ways, if at all, do you feel the passage of time may have influenced your views about Ella Baker, her leadership philosophy and/or leader-behaviors? If so, to do what factors do you attribute this change in your perspective? What are the most notable changes?

13. Are there other civil rights activists you believe I should talk with and who has first-hand knowledge of Ella Baker's leadership?

14. Describe for me Ella Baker's pedagogical approach when teaching or training community and student activists.

15. Is there anything more you would like to share with me about your Ella Baker's leadership?

These questions aided in obtaining rich data regarding Ella Baker's leadership

philosophy and leader-behaviors. In addition to their usefulness in gathering primary data, the

interview questions above also aided in data triangulation and validation. Both the Electronic

Letter of Invitation (see Appendix B) and the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D)

informed participants that the interview would not exceed 60 minutes. This was not the case for

each of the five interviews—since they ranged in duration from one to three hours. I surmised

from the varying length of the interviews that participants shared a genuine fondness for Baker

and wanted to share their perspective with me. For example, the telephone interview with

Berkeley, Chisolm, and Zenith ranged from 80 to 120 minutes. For McDowell, his in-person

interview lasted approximately 180 minutes. These four participants seemed to enjoy

reminiscing about the Movement, their respective roles in it, and especially reliving their

experiences and interactions with Baker. While the telephone interview with Custer lasted only

33 minutes, it became clear that she wanted to participate in the study—despite her serious

health condition. I deduced from Custer's early comments that "Ella and I were close friends,"

and that her fondness for Baker was the strong motivation for her participation in the study.

Sensing she was quite ill, I thanked her profusely for her graciousness and willingness to

participate in the interview.

As several interviews began to approach the 60 minute cut-off and several interview

questions still remained, I inquired of participants about any personal time constraints. Wanting

to be respectful of participants and their time, I used a timekeeping device to monitor the length

of each interview. It became clear early into the interview that 60 minutes were insufficient for

the type of conversation several participants desired. I checked in with each participant, except

in the case of Custer, as the interview approached 45 minutes to determine his or her

willingness to continue the interview or to reconvene at a later date. After receiving the

unqualified consent of four participants, I surmised from their individual responses that they wanted to share more information.

In the case of the interview with four of the five participants, I attempted unsuccessfully a couple of times to conclude the interview—since each individual had already answered all 15 interview questions. It became apparent each participant had more to say. With the exception of Custer, who was recovering from a serious illness, the other four participants revisited and expounded upon earlier answers to one or more interview questions. Experiencing the generosity of these participants, I felt a deep sense of gratitude and expressed my appreciation for their participation and gracious generosity.

Participant Introductions

This study benefited from the participation of five research participants, and this section introduces them individually. The biographical synopses that follow use each participant's verbatim responses to the first three interview questions: (1) in what year and venue did you meet Ella Baker? (2) Please describe the frequency of your interactions with her. What were the purpose and nature of those interactions? And (3) please describe the role you played during the Civil Rights Movement. These interview questions determined the eligibility of participants to participate in this study.

Participant demographic synopses. Comprising the study sample were three White females and two African-American males. Participants' introductions begin with Table 1 below. Their names and synopses are in alphabetical order with no significance to the ordering. To reiterate, this study uses pseudonym identifiers to preserve the anonymity of participants.

Table 1
Participant Demographic Data (n=5)

Participants (in Pseudonyms)	Race	Gender	Organizational Affiliation	First Interaction with Ella Baker
Carla Custer	White	F	NSA-Southern Student Human Relations Project and SNCC	1960
Colin McDowell	African- American	M	SNCC	1960
Corbett Chisolm	African- American	M	SNCC	1960
Darlene Zenith	White	F	Student Conference Educational Fund and SNCC	1962
Debra Berkeley	White	F	NSA-Southern Student Human Relations Project and SNCC	1961

All participants are SNCC and/or civil rights veterans. Several devoted a significant portion of their lives protesting against oppressive systems and laws. They interacted frequently with Ella Baker during the period of the modern Civil Rights Movement. And all participants reported that their association with Baker began in the early 1960s as a result of their SNCC membership, work, and/or affiliation with SNCC. Two of the three female participants met Baker between 1960 and 1961 while working for the Southern Student Human Relations Project and later while volunteering for SNCC. The third female met Baker in 1962—while working for the Southern Regional Council and later with SNCC.

Both African-American males first interacted with Baker in 1960. Only one of them was among the first members of SNCC and attended the 1960 Youth Leadership Meeting at Shaw University, which Baker organized while working for the SCLC.

In the case of Berkeley and Chisolm, their interactions with Baker did not end in 1966—the reported last year of Baker's active involvement with SNCC as its "adult advisor" (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013; Chisolm, personal communication,

September 13, 2013). Theirs continued until Baker's death in December 1986. Berkeley said, "I can tell you that before she died, I had gone to see her in New York." Chisolm recalled, "We were always with Ms. Baker. I mean, we were going to New York to see her...you know, age started catching up with her."

The biographical synopses drawn from the interviews that follow provide a contextual framework for the upcoming chapters of this dissertation.

Debra Berkeley. Berkeley was a graduate student at Harvard University in early 1960 and years later received her PhD in clinical psychology. At the behest of Baker and Custer, Berkeley traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to work with the two women to plan and oversee two SNCC sponsored "voters' registration projects" funded by a Field Foundation grant (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013). Raleigh, North Carolina and Jackson, Tennessee were the sites of the first "interracial voters' registration projects. Both races and genders" participated—thus, reflecting geographical diversity as well.

Later during 1961, Berkeley partnered with Baker and Julian Bond to fundraise on behalf of SNCC. One of the fundraising strategies Berkeley used involved designing and selling "one of the first hand shaking buttons ever made." The initial "colors of the buttons were originally green and white like the SNCC logo." Berkeley and Baker became close friends.

Corbett Chisolm. Chisolm was a student at Howard University and a member of the Non-Violent Action Group (NAG). NAG was the Howard University chapter of SNCC. Though he did not attend the Youth Leadership Meeting at Shaw University, he nonetheless met Baker in 1960. He was the NAG representative on the "Coordinating Committee," which was the informal name of SNCC at the time. In 1962, Chisolm served as a SNCC "field organizer when the organization moved from...a campus organization to...an organization of organizers." In

1963, he moved to Mississippi to serve on the Steering Committee for the March on Washington. The following year, in 1964, Chisolm worked on the Mississippi Summer Project and was also elected SNCC Program Secretary. Finally in 1966, Chisolm was the SNCC representative on the War Crimes Tribunal, which Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre chaired.

Carla Custer. Custer met Baker at the Atlanta University Center during a student meeting where she worked with Baker on planning the 1960 Youth Leadership Meeting at Shaw University. Custer recalled that following that meeting, SNCC was formed. She and Baker were named the first "adult advisors of SNCC." Custer remained in constant communication with Baker during the following two years—attending SNCC meetings both in Atlanta, Georgia and other cities and states.

In 1964 and because of her training as a lawyer, Baker asked Custer to serve as "an official observer at marches and demonstrations because she was White." This was advantageous for SNCC, since Custer, as a White woman, "could witness arrests, violence, and other atrocities and contact sympathetic news people, lawyers, families, etc." Custer's race legitimized any complaints she filed with authorities or reported to the media. She also was the first White female appointed to and served as a member of the executive committee of SNCC. Baker and Custer later became close friends.

Colin McDowell. McDowell was a student at South Carolina State University. He first met Baker in 1960 at the Youth Leadership Meeting at Shaw University. McDowell was the leader of the South Carolina State student group. His first sit-in experience was in Raleigh, North Carolina. He also served for three years as SNCC Chairman during the organization's early years. McDowell was part of the first SNCC cohort, which comprised only 16 members at

the time. Because of his active involvement and leadership in SNCC, McDowell interacted with Baker frequently during her six years of active involvement with the student organization.

To illustrate the closeness of his relationship with Baker, McDowell recalled two conversations with her. The first occurred, he believes, in 1961 in which he learned Baker's given name was not Ella but rather JoElla. According to McDowell, Baker told him that "as a kid, that's what they called me." He further stated that she permitted him to address her as JoElla in private but not in public. In another conversation with Baker, McDowell recalls learning from her about some of his relatives who lived in Georgia.

Darlene Zenith. As one of the Jewish SNCC volunteers, Zenith met Baker in 1960 while working for the Atlanta, Georgia-based Southern Regional Council. Two years later, she accepted Jim Forman's 1962 invitation to become a SNCC volunteer at night. Zenith worked with Julian Bond on the SNCC newspaper, called *The Student Voice*. Due to this new volunteer activity, she began interacting with Baker on a regular basis.

There were other periods when Baker and Zenith worked together. It was during a six-week period when Zenith worked with Baker and Ann Braden to design and arrange the SNCC Civil Liberties Workshop. This period was followed by the one-day SNCC workshop that Zenith helped Baker and Braden organize. Zenith recalled its purpose was to allow student activists to decide SNCC's official position and strategy for "handling controversial speakers." The next time Zenith worked with Baker was as an employee while working for the Student Conference Educational Fund (SCEF). Zenith recalled that since Braden did not live in Atlanta at the time, and Baker did, Baker was Zenith's supervisor. Depending on the venue, however, Zenith's interactions with Baker became more frequent.

Secondary Data Sources

In addition to the use of primary data, five semi-structured interviews, this research study also conducted a secondary data analysis. Heaton (2004) writes that a secondary data analysis allows the researcher to enhance data credibility by verifying research results. Using this level of analysis enabled me to compare and verify my interpretations throughout the data analysis process. I also used the secondary sources, which I describe next, to augment and enrich the literature review of this study.

Comprising the secondary data set were third-party interview transcripts, archival documents, and a single biographical video film on Ella Baker. During the 1960s through 1980s, numerous researchers interviewed Ella Baker. This study relied on five third-party interviews, which are stored in the archives and online databases of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Southern Oral History Program Interview Database; University of Minnesota, T.C. Wilson Library archives; and the online database of the Civil Rights Movement Veterans.

Third-party interviews and video film. I examined five third-party interview transcripts of conversations between Ella Baker and other scholars. These included the following interviews:

- Emily Stoper (Interviewer) and Ella Baker (Interviewee), December 1966;
- John Britton (Interviewer) and Ella Baker (Interviewee), June 19, 1968;
- Eugene P. Walker (Interviewer) and Ella Baker (Interviewee), September 4, 1974;
- Sue Thrasher and Casey Hayden (Interviewers) and Ella Baker (Interviewee), April 19, 1977;
- Lenore Bredeson Hogan (Interviewer) and Ella Baker (Interviewee), March 4, 1979.

Each interview transcript confirmed certain aspects of Baker's life and civil rights activities, such as those documented in the literature and confirmed by research participants. For example, Emily Stoper's partial transcript of her December 1966 interview with Baker focuses on Baker's work and involvement in SNCC and SCLC. In particular, Baker discussed SNCC's early formation, its purpose, and the decisions student activists made which Baker believed set them on the right course. She recounted events that prompted SNCC's decision to remain independent of the more established civil rights organization. Baker explained that "SNCC rejected the idea of a God-sent leader." Because the "basic goal was to make it unnecessary for the people to depend on a leader, for them to be strong themselves."

The June 19, 1968 interview of Baker, conducted by John Britton of the Civil Rights Documentation Project, took place during Baker's tenure at the Southern Conference Education Fund (SCEF). That interview focused on several topics: Martin Luther King's leadership of the SCLC, her impressions of his leadership, SNCC's early years, and Stokley Carmichael's election as SNCC chairman and his influence on the organization.

In the September 4, 1974 interview of Baker by Eugene Walker, Baker recounts her work and frustrations with NAACP and SCLC leadership and the formation and objectives of In Friendship. Baker also addressed the issue of sexism within the Movement, which she recalled being the cause of the SCLC leadership deciding not to appoint her as the permanent SCLC executive director.

The April 19, 1977 interview with Ella Baker, which Sue Thrasher and Casey Hayden conducted, covered a wide range of topics. The interview focused on key aspects of Baker's life—beginning with her childhood, the influence of her parents and grandparents on her life, and her early adult years. In the latter half of the interview, Baker discussed the formation of

SNCC, its role in the Movement, and that of certain student activists. Baker also recounted her role in SCLC, attempts of SCLC leaders to annex SNCC making it a student arm of the organization, and her opposition to such a decision.

Finally, the March 4, 1979 interview of Baker by Lenore Bredeson Hogan took place at her Harlem apartment, seven years before her death in 1986. Like the other interviews, it covered a wide range of topics. The first was Baker's confirmation of her influence on SNCC. Baker revisited the reason she engaged so vigorously to help the young activists organize and consolidate the disparate student groups into a national student organization and the assistance she provided to make this happen. Baker also recalled certain aspects of her childhood, the influence of those early years on her vocation, and the reasons she concluded her mother was a "feminist."

Fundi **documentary on Ella Baker**. For validity purposes, this study also incorporated as an additional data source the 1981 documentary, *Fundi*: The Story of Ella Baker." This video is a sociopolitical biography of Baker. It presents actual events during the modern Civil Rights Movement and the many roles Baker played in advancing the cause of the Movement and human rights in general.

Archival records. Archival records are useful in validating or invalidating a researcher's understanding of an issue, one or more persons, a group, or phenomena (Yin, 2009). Archival records on Ella Baker are available in various genres. Some are stored on microfilm or digitized and housed in public and university libraries, free online databases, or as part of other historical archival series—such as those related to the NAACP, SCLC, and/or SNCC. This current study used historical data from the following archives and databases.

Ella Baker's personal paper archives. Many of Ella Baker's papers are housed at

the New York Public Library at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. I spent

five full days—seven days in total—at the Center reviewing, copying, and analyzing

documents on Baker's life, work, and civil rights activities. According to the electronic "Guide

to Ella Baker's Papers" published by the NYP Library, this collection contains seven series

spanning 60 years—from 1926 through 1986. These papers document Baker's civil and human

rights activities from 1926 through 1986 in the form of correspondences, field reports,

announcements of workshops and leadership conferences, meeting minutes, and other printed

materials related to her work with the NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, and other human rights

organizations.

Papers of the NACCP. A variety of NAACP papers are available on microfilm

at the University of Minnesota, T.C. Wilson Library spanning 1909 through 1955—although

included are miscellaneous materials on the 1965 Voting Rights Act. My document search and

review targeted records generated between 1940 through 1955—the period of Baker's work

and affiliation with NAACP. The year 1955 was the last year for which I located any relevant

materials. I reviewed minutes of NAACP Board of Directors, records of annual conferences,

personal correspondence of key organizational leaders, speeches, campaign materials. Some of

these documents were duplicates of those reviewed, analyzed, and collected during my archival

research at the New York Public Library Schomburg Black Culture Center

Other archival and database materials. To ensure the data set for this study was

comprehensive as possible, I expanded my search to include the online databases of a few

additional sources. These databases included the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and

Education Institute hosted by Stanford University; Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for

Nonviolent Social Change (the "King Center Library and Archives"); and the Civil Rights

Movement Veterans.

These databases provided limited access to SCLC and SNCC digitized copies of several SCLC initiatives, board meeting minutes, documentation of its leadership and organizational structure, financial and legal records spanning the period of 1957 to 1965. In the case of the small collection of SNCC papers, which I downloaded from the King Center Library and Archives, spanning 1960 to 1968, I reviewed a range of documents, looking specifically for illustrations of Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. Some of these documents included SNCC's founding documents, its internal operations, and correspondences describing the conditions throughout the Deep South during the organization's first eight-years. As in the case of materials described above, the majority of these data were also duplicates of those reviewed and analyzed during my archival research at the New York Public Library Schomburg Black Culture Center and the University of Minnesota T. C. Wilson Library.

The purpose of these secondary sources was two-fold: to augment the review of the literature and to verify the preliminary findings of this study. What follows next is a discussion on the data analysis procedures and techniques used in this study.

Modes of Data Analysis

Using a grounded theory approach enabled me to achieve the three objectives of this study, as well as answer the three research questions. A discussion on the data analysis procedures used during this phase of the research process follows next.

Data analysis steps. Representing the primary data of this study were five semi-structured interviews. The first step in the data analysis process was transcribing and re-reading carefully each interview transcripts of first-hand accounts of Ella Baker—on whom this grounded theory case study is based. Personally transcribing the interviews allowed me to

immerse myself in the data. After completing all transcription activities, I sent each participant

an electronic copy of his or her individual transcript for confirmation of its accuracy. This,

Charmaz (2006) calls member checking. Member checking allows the researcher to confirm the

accuracy of the data, obtain additional data and, in the case of each research participant, to

expand on or clarify his or her earlier responses to any of the 15 interview questions.

During each interview, I took hand-written notes of key phrases and statements. These

notes served as a personal reminder to document my thoughts and impressions in a self-

reflective memorandum, where the act itself is called *memoing* (Creswell, 2007). Memoing

enables the researcher to document her thoughts throughout this phase of the data collection and

analysis processes about any revelations, interesting discrepancies, or potential new concepts or

theories (Charmaz, 2006). Memos represent the researcher's unstructured musings on what she

concludes is happening or surfacing within the data.

Coding Scheme

For purposes of this study, the coding process was guided by three research questions:

(1) how does Ella Baker's community and political activism epitomize leadership? (2) What are

the primary characteristics of her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors? And (3) what

leadership frameworks best reflect and encapsulate the multi-dimensionality of both her

leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors? The coding scheme defines the categories

identified and constructed from the data and provide a way to break up the data for more

indepth analysis. The upcoming sections elaborate on the coding scheme in greater details.

Coding the interview transcripts. The second step of the process involved sorting and

organizing my interview data. I used an inductive and iterative approach to identify emerging

patterns in the data (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007). After analyzing each transcript, I then

looked across all the transcripts to discern similarities, differences, and obvious themes that might reveal patterns across the data. With the aid of a qualitative software program, HyperRESEARCH, I used *in vivo* coding at each of the three levels of analyses: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding schemes. *In vivo* coding allows the researcher to remain close to the data and preserve each participant's views and meanings (Charmaz, 2006). In addition, I used gerunds to assign action descriptions to each code and category (Charmaz, 2006).

Open coding. This initial level of coding assisted me in constructing data categories (Creswell, 2007). I re-read each transcript and used line-by-line coding, which Charmaz (2006) advises is an effective way for the researcher to remain close to the data and construct the analysis from the bottom up. I later expanded this procedure to include complete sentences. Doing so enabled me to organize and analyze the data by dividing it into "manageable units ... search for patterns, discover" the most important data segments, and learn from each segment (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006, p. 159).

This initial step yielded 172 open codes. Arriving at these codes was the result of a content analysis and constant comparison. Content analysis is a systematic way to draw inferences about a particular subject or issue (Charmaz, 2006; Merten, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). This type of analysis is mainly inductive and an effective technique for analyzing interview transcripts. Table 2 provides a sample of a few the initial codes of this study.

There was much redundancy across the 172 open codes—primarily because all five research participants recalled their interactions with Baker in similar ways. There also were areas of dissimilarities, which I determined was due to the social location of one or more participants within SNCC.

Table 2
Sample of Open Codes

Providing guidance	Organizing people
Facilitating way forward	Delegating responsibilities
Displaying humanism	Fighting inequality
Asking questions	Shaping worldview
Reshaping landscape	Discouraging individualism
Protecting students	Defining leadership
Modeling behaviors	Disliking self-promotion
Engaging others	Keeping fire burning
Exhibiting patience	Affirming people
Communicating effectively	Forward-looking
Listening	Motivating people
Displaying courage	Knowing people

Axial coding. Developing categories using axial coding was the second step in the data analysis process. Charmaz (2006) writes that this level of coding reconnects the data into a "coherent whole ... and answers questions such as 'when, where, why, who, how, and with what consequences" (p. 60).

Table 3
Samples of Data Categories Resulting from Axial Coding

Guiding activists	Legitimizing others
Promoting collectivism	Influencing outcomes
Empowering others to learn	Focusing on relations
Believing in ordinary people	Encouraging critical thinking
Connecting to people's emotional needs	Rejecting "leader" label
Organizing people so they could organize others	Taking the long view
Training through modeling	Rejecting top-down leadership
Authoring their lives	Nurturing and mentoring
Offering a vision	Demonstrating competence
Managing tensions	Inspiring and motivating people

Condensing and categorizing the 172 open codes resulted in 39 axial codes. Clear patterns within the data began to emerge, as well as areas of redundancies. I continually

reorganized the codes and emerging themes placing them in a different hierarchy (Creswell, 2007). Where a participant used the same word or phrase to describe the same event or experience, I assigned to it an originally developed code rather than assigning it a discreet code. At this point, an overlap in the data became more visible, confirming the data had reached saturation. A sample of the axial codes is depicted in Table 3 above.

According to Charmaz (2006), saturation "is the conceptualization of comparisons of these incidents which yield different properties of the pattern until no "new properties of the pattern emerge" (p. 113). To confirm my speculations, I looked for indices of saturation. This technique, Merten (2005) argues, is accomplished by looking for "repetition" in the data "and confirming previously collected data," such as secondary data (p. 308). I reexamined the five third-party transcripts and approximately 70 archival documents, which I collected on Ella Baker during the early stages of the data collection process. This second-tier analysis enabled me to connect categories to secondary data, including those data reported used to construct my literature review, to determine if properties of the emerging categories were consistent across all codes and data. I confirmed that they were.

Selective coding. This last stage of the data analysis process, selective coding, involved synthesizing and integrating the categories developed during the previous step of axial coding. Integrating the data categories was accomplished by considering each in the context of the three research questions of this study. The other consideration was the degree to which the primary categories answered convincingly the research questions of this study. Proceeding in this way helped to construct a storyline which connected the categories (Creswell, 2007). This outcome was extremely beneficial, since, as Creswell, 2007, notes enables the researcher to generate a proposition or theory using the constructed story.

Selective coding sorted the codes into six major categories and five subcategories according to how well they answered the three research questions of this study. Strauss and Corbin (1998) described selective coding as "the process of integrating and refining categories" (p. 143). After redefining all major categories, I compared them to interpret the meaning of participants' experiences further. Table 4 presents the major categories and subcategories that emerged from the data.

Table 4
Major Categories and Subcategories

Research Question (RQ)	Categories	Subcategories
RQ1	Developing People for Social Change	• Legitimizing and Giving Voice • Training Through Patience • Encouraging Critical Thinking • Enabling People to Act • Displaying humanity and humility
RQ2	• Leading with Principles, Competence, and Courage • Thinking and Acting Strategically • Impacting Lives, Influencing Outcomes • Providing Philosophical Grounding • Overcoming Obstacles	
RQ3	Identifying the Leadership Framework	

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries or restrictions the researcher consciously places on the

study before it begins (Marshall & Rossman, 2007). Delimitations typically arise from the study's research questions, its purpose, design, and/or methodology. Some of the delimitations resident in this study included its narrow focus—the isolation and exploration of a small aspect of Ella Baker's life—her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors as demonstrated during the Civil Rights Movement. Sampling procedures, sample size, and sampling frame are other delimitations. Deviation from any can have a delimiting effect on this current study. This study remained consistent with the declaration I made in my research proposal and repeated in this dissertation.

Study Limitations

No research study is immune from one or more limitations (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Limitations are factors that usually are beyond the researcher's control which may affect study results or how the researcher interprets those (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Within this current study were four known limitations. The first concerned the sampling procedures, a purposeful sampling and criterion-based selection strategy. Employing this strategy enabled me to recruit a representative sample of research participants best positioned to answer the three research questions because of their work or interaction with Ella Baker (Maxwell, 2005). This assumption was confirmed during the data collection and analysis processes.

A second limitation of this study was the imperfection of human recall. The Civil Rights Movement ended more than four decades ago. For two of the five research participants, the aging process may have affected their cognitive abilities. This type of impairment may have affected their ability to recall certain critical aspects of Ella Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. Triangulation reduces the likely effects of this limitation.

Third is the limitation of participant bias. Some participants may recall their interactions

with Ella Baker more positively or negatively than historical facts support. To minimize this effect as well as that of the previous limitation, this study used *triangulation* and *member checking* to corroborate and verify my research results. Triangulation provides for the use of multiple data sources, while member checking enlists study participants in reviewing and confirming data accuracy (Creswell, 2007). All participants responded favorably to my request for them to verify their particular interview transcript. Only one participant asked to amend her transcript in order to expound upon her previous response to two interview questions.

The final known limitation was researcher bias, which concerns the researcher's own personal and cultural background and predispositions (Maxwell, 2005). In my attempt to minimize and control my own personal biases, I disclosed from the outset in the section titled "Researcher's Positionality" some of my personal and cultural predispositions. Believing a mere disclosure was insufficient, I asked two colleagues whom I refer to as peer briefers and supporters to read a draft of this dissertation not only for form, substance, and coherence but also for researcher bias. As a result, one peer briefer suggested I modify two sections of this report. I took to heart that recommendation, reevaluated my findings, and made appropriate changes. Taking the steps discussed above helped minimize the effects of the four known study limitations.

Ethics and Confidentiality

This current study faithfully adhered to all prescribed and relevant ethical standards. When conducting research involving human subjects, ethical standards must be followed and the confidentiality of research participants preserved. Chief among these are obtaining the informed consent of participants and assuring their confidentiality and safety (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Participation in this study was voluntary. Participants received a full disclosure of its nature and scope. Both the Informed Consent form, which all study participants received and signed (see Appendix C), and the electronic letter of invitation (see Appendix B) described the voluntary nature of the study, participation criteria, scope and purpose of the study, the date by which participants could withdraw from the study, and steps I would take to ensure their confidentiality.

This study presented minimal risk to participants. The extent of their participation was limited to an indepth interview and member checking—that is, reviewing their particular interview transcript for accuracy. Though three of the five research participants voluntarily expressed their willingness to be identified in the study, I decided to preserve the anonymity of all participants by using pseudonym identifiers (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Pseudonyms were used throughout the transcription of each interview, the coding activities of them, as well as while writing and reporting the results of this study. When quoting and/or paraphrasing participants' responses, I also use each participant's assigned pseudonym identifier.

In fact, no participant knew his or her unique pseudonym identifier. The key to the pseudonym identifier is stored securely on my personal laptop to which the security access code is known only to me. Though I used HyperRESEARCH software to organize, code, and analyze my research data, this software is also installed on my personal laptop. Access to the data requires knowledge of my security access code, which only I possess. As an added precautionary measure, I asked each participant during the interview not to share with anyone the substance of the interview. Of course, as a researcher, I can make the request but cannot guarantee participants will honor it.

Validity and Generalizability

Validity is the touchstone of qualitative research. It determines whether a study measures what it intends to measure or whether research results are reliable (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). The important questions a qualitative researcher must answer are whether the measurements used will lead to valid conclusions, and whether the research sample allows for valid inferences. There are several techniques for testing the validity of a researcher's conclusion (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). This study established validity or trustworthiness through triangulation of the data, clarification of researcher's bias, member checking, peer debriefings, and by providing in this dissertation a general description of each research participants.

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Chapter Summary

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This chapter described the research methodology that guided this study. Its design is a grounded theory case study, which benefited from characteristics of an oral history. This study used both primary and secondary sources: five indepth interviews, archival documents, third-party interview transcripts, and a single documentary and biographical video on Ella Baker. Interpretation of data in this study occurred within a constructivist paradigm. The mode of data analysis was inductive, using five analytical techniques. Also addressed in this chapter were delimitations and known limitations of this study, including steps taken to minimize their effects. Given the importance of research ethics, this chapter described steps taken to ensure compliance with all University of St. Thomas research standards. This chapter concluded with a description of steps taken to ensure the credibility and/or confirmability of the study design and its results.

This study now turns to chapters 4 and 5, which contain analytical presentations of the coding results from the five semi-structured interviews. From those interviews emerged six

major categories and five subcategories—all of which reflect the reported lived experiences of participants. The fifteen semi-structured interview questions align with the three research questions of this study. This alignment surfaced rich first-hand data, which this study used to answer the following three research questions.

Research Question 1: How does Ella Baker's community and political activism epitomize leadership?

Research Question 2: What are the primary characteristics of her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors?

Research Question 3: What leadership framework(s) best reflect and encapsulate the multi-dimensional character of both her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors?

One major category and five subcategories answer Research Question 1, while five major categories answer Research Question 2. The answer to Research Question 3 is a synthesis of all data categories and subcategories, including participants' responses to Interview Question 7: W*hat five attributes best describe Ella Baker as a leader?* Major categories and subcategories are organized according to their alignment with the three research questions above and are presented in Table 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

Developing People for Social Change: Answering

Research Question One

The data categories presented in this chapter answer Research Question 1: *How does Ella Baker's community and political activism epitomize leadership*? One major category and five subcategories emerged from the research data. *Developing people for social change* is the single major category. Comprising the five subcategories are *legitimizing and giving voice*, *training through patience*, *encouraging critical thinking*, *enabling people to act*, and *displaying humanity and humility*. The upcoming sections connect each category and subcategory to participants' reported experiences with Baker.

Major Category: Developing People for Social Change

This major category was the first to emerge from the data. People development was a common theme across all interviews. Five subcategories comprise this major category, which include legitimizing and giving voice, training through patience, encouraging critical thinking, enabling people to act, and showing humanity and humility.

Participants described the way Baker helped them develop, not only to become effective organizers and young leaders but also to mature emotionally. The terms participants used to describe Baker's pedagogical and leadership approaches included taught, enabled, helped, gave, introduced, questioned, and legitimized. Examples ranged from instances where Baker trained participants to carry-out routine activities, to simply asking a question to prompt critical thinking in the group, to activities varying in degrees of complexity where learning occurred over an extended period. From the interviews of several participants emerged more than one set of actions and/or meanings.

For example, McDowell recalled a time immediately following the 1960 "Raleigh meeting," as well as during the formative years of SNCC when "she taught us how to build an organization. We didn't know anything. But we thought we did" (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013). McDowell also recalled a discussion with Baker in which she expressed confidence in his leadership abilities—despite his skills being untested at the time—and suggested he consider a leadership position in SNCC. McDowell recalled that exchange in the following way:

> She was the one who said, '[Colin], you should be the chairman.' See, some of those students that gathered were very political, and they came from very political institutions and backgrounds. So, they didn't understand the importance of being the heads of organizations, but they wanted to be the heads. So you had these political-type people from Nashville, those who are around there from Atlanta from all those schools around there, and Washington just all those people wanted to be power-takers. That's why they wanted to be the leader of the organization.
>
> Ms. Baker told me, 'You don't want to be the leader. You don't give a damn about leadership. That's why you should be the leader cause you are just directing the other people's energies and interests on the problems and getting them solved. And whoever can do that will have the support, they all will support you for the same reason that you don't want to be the leader. They know you are dedicated to getting things done...You are the only one that everybody will be able to agree you will focus on getting the job done.' (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

Moreover, McDowell recalled how Baker mentored, taught, and advised him and others. The implication is that these are political activities that create and shape organizations such as SNCC. McDowell said of Baker:

> She taught me more than anybody else. Ms. Baker taught me about the, the formation of my ideas and then came the ideas about SNCC too... I would talk with Ms. Baker about everything. But you know, she was always organizing [inaudible] and she talked to us about being organizers and teachers. Ms. Baker told us that there is no or should be no line between you and the people you organize and are teaching. (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

Chisolm discussed Baker's focus on people development in the context of her role as a SNCC advisor. He believed she created for SNCC the space in which to develop their leadership skills and do so through dialogue and training. Chisolm said of Baker:

> So I mean while she had much more experience than we did, while she understood much more than we did, she was, it appeared, to sit there and let us develop our own leadership, let us develop our own path in the world that would allow us to do what we needed to do. (Chisolm, personal communications, September 13, 2013)

Zenith recalled the time Baker, along with Ann Braden, demonstrated confidence in her (Zenith's) abilities by delegating to her responsibility for arranging an important SNCC conference to decide whether SNCC should adopt a policy on controversial speakers. Zenith said, "They asked me to organize it. So I was organizing it for SNCC. It was not across organizational efforts; it was internal to SNCC. And we had a workshop that was a whole day examining all the issues" (Personal communication, October 6, 2013).

Berkeley, Chisolm, and Custer recounted similar experiences. Berkeley recalled the planning of a voters' registration project which Baker and Braden asked her to arrange and oversee. Berkeley reported that Baker placed importance on her safety and that of others. She said of Baker:

> She helped me find a place and think through how to set up the voters' registration project. It was the first interracial voters' registration project in the South. So it had to be in a place that was relatively safe...I didn't know all of those characters or how to look for a place for the project. But Ella had this great network. So she sent me to Raleigh, North Carolina and Jackson, Tennessee and knew that we were going to do a project that was interracial and that included both genders and northerners and southerners. How stupid was that? It was the first interracial voters' registration project in the South. So, it had to be in a place that was relatively safe. You couldn't have put it in the middle of Mississippi. You would have gotten killed. (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Much like McDowell, Berkeley, and Zenith, Chisolm referenced Baker's approach to training and the way it enabled SNCC to survive the dangers of organizing and registering

African-Americans to vote. Chisolm makes clear distinctions between the style of leadership

required during periods of social conflict and that required during calmer times.

> It's one thing to be a leader in a normal situation; it is another to be a leader in warfare. And she was a leader in warfare. You know, she was training young people to go into battle. So, I mean the abilities and skills that it took to enable us to become leaders were critical to our survival. Because at the end of the day, it was clear that you could not go into battle without skills. You had to be your own leader, and Ms. Baker knew that. (Chisolm, personal communication, September 13, 2013)

Chisolm continued his report with an account of Baker's emphasis on people

development but in the context of her SNCC advisory role. He suggested that she created for

SNCC the space in which to develop their leadership skills and do so through dialogue and

training. Chisolm said of Baker:

> So I mean while she had much more experience than we did, while she understood much more than we did, she was, it appeared, to sit there and let us develop our own leadership, let us develop our own path in the world that would allow us to do what we needed to do. (Chisolm, personal communications, September 13, 2013)

Custer reminisced about the time Baker guided her through the difficulties of

organizing a large scale conference. According to her, this was "the first meeting of the

students involved in direct action from many campuses" (Personal communication, October 4,

2013). Custer also recalled how Baker's mentorship and guidance were pivotal to her when

organizing the conference.

> Ella knew I had a lot of experience but that I had never worked on anything like that. So she helped me get started. What is strange to me today as I look back is that I had a sense the student conference would be extremely important to the success of the Civil Rights Movement. (Custer, personal communication, October 4, 2013)

Berkeley recalled Baker's understanding of people's strengths and talents and the way

she leveraged both to develop them, which she also understood would move the Movement

forward. Berkeley provided the following report.

And then there was her understanding of different roles for different people. You know like the ministers were going to do some things but they weren't going to do the other things. Students would take on the challenges that ministers wouldn't or couldn't. And I don't think she was totally unforgiving with the ministers, because you know there is something that has never been written about in my opinion, and I think that was the challenge of having a family while you are in the Movement. (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Recalling life's experiences are not always completely positive for the people who experienced them. This was the purpose of one of the interview questions that inquired not only about Baker's leadership successes but also about any shortcomings. Berkeley was the only participant who offered a negative analysis. Her verbatim critique of Baker's leadership follows.

I mean that it's possible she could have been more forceful in certain situations when things were chaotic, but I don't know if that would have been the right thing to do. No, I don't really know. I'm not willing to say, because no one is perfect. You know, I think there was, I'm thinking as I go along, but I think one thing may have been the challenges from the young people of the older people, like questioning why they don't speak up more, why aren't they more forceful, etc.. And I'm not sure that we, and I'll speak for myself, respected the work of the older, so-called liberals or so-called leaders as much as we ought to have.

We didn't appreciate what they had done, or what they were doing. And I think Ella could have taught us more about that. She might have said, 'Well, it's true Martin Luther King, this and that, was not so great but he's a great orator. What else do you want? He pushed on Lyndon Johnson to get the Civil Rights Act passed.'

So, not until I was older did I realize that different people play different roles. I was very judgmental, very critical, very arrogant, and stupid. But since she was older, and so was Ann Braden, and so was Howard Zinn, and so was Septima, but they probably didn't want to squelch our enthusiasm and our determination to be so-called revolutionary, more challenging. I mean I can't think of anything else that I can point to. (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Subcategory: Legitimizing and giving voice. This first subcategory highlights the ways Baker legitimized the inherent talents of people by giving voice to their ideas and opinions. This category emerged from participants' responses to the interview question which inquired about the similarities, if any, between Baker's leadership style and that of other

movement leaders. It was Zenith who used the term "legitimize" when comparing Baker's

leadership style to that of other movement leaders. She said of Baker:

> She didn't promote individual people. She didn't promote in anyway the concept that one person could do this, or that one person could represent an organization. This didn't mean that she didn't feel who the talented people were, or who the people were that were well respected, people like Bob Moses or Jim Forman. It is just to say that she was not an anarchist; she believed in structure but she just thought that talent didn't reside in only one person, but that it resided in many people. She felt it was her role to legitimize that and to bring those people out. (Zenith, personal communication, October 6, 2013)

When recalling Baker's interest in listening to all voices, he suggested that social

stratification was not a consideration for her. She believed all voices were equally important.

McDowell said of Baker:

> The thing that she taught us was that everybody's voice is equal. It doesn't matter that you were a janitor or coal miner rather than a porter. That's how the social stratification was back then. So...I can remember her saying, 'you don't know where the good ideas will come from unless you listen to everybody.' That's what Ms. Baker said. She was conscious of how much classism was destructive to the Black community. (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

McDowell expounded upon his earlier comments when comparing Baker's leadership to

that of certain SCLC and NAACP leaders. He recalled how Baker preferred starting with the

bottom to ensure everyone was included in the discussion or activity. McDowell suggested that

she led by listening first to ideas which emanated from the bottom—an approach he believed

was different from the prevailing leadership style in the more well-established civil rights

organizations. McDowell said of Baker:

> She included everybody from the bottom-up. The only way you get that is by listening to the people on the bottom. So that was the key difference between hers and the others. Ms. Baker believed there were ideas that would come from the bottom if you incorporated them…those were the people you needed to listen to. (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

In addition to these reported experiences, McDowell referenced Baker's passion for

organizing and "egalitarian" teaching. He speculated that Baker's passion was the reason she

placed such importance on creating an interpretative space where everyone could speak and

have their voices heard. He said of Baker:

> So that thing about our meetings, they would last for days 'cause' we would let everybody speak. It was truly egalitarian in that way. She passed that on to us: to let everybody speak. And she told us that you help people voice what they want to be doing there. So in that way [inaudible], I learned later that was her philosophical position—letting everybody have their say. (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

Subcategory: Training through patience. This subcategory presents participants'

recollections of how Baker used personal patience as a pedagogical approach for training and

developing participants and, by extrapolation, other activists. Four of five participants recalled

the way she modeled patience to encourage critical thinking and consensus-building. Chisolm,

McDowell, and Zenith recalled Baker's willingness to sacrifice her personal health and comfort

to facilitate their development.

For example, Chisolm reported on Baker's generosity which he believes explains the

inordinate amount of the time and energy she devoted to help them develop and succeed. He

said of Baker:

> Now, I think the impression I had of Ms. Baker was that, you know, at that time, we used to smoke. So, Ms. Baker would sit and we did not in SNCC, we did not have short meetings. We had, our meetings were long, and we talked about everything in the world and had to come to consensus on everything in the world. And Ms. Baker would get her little mask, sit at the meetings and, you know, you know, try to deal with the smoke but begin to be there as a solid guide. She didn't interject herself in the meetings a great deal. I mean, she just sat there, and so forth but, you know, when there was an interjection necessary or raised questions, she might say something. But I mean, she might, say if we met six to eight to ten hours, she might say one thing.
>
> So, you know, my big impression of Ms. Baker is her sitting in the meetings, you know, giving us her time and her energy; and, you know, being an advisor that would allow us to keep on the path that she laid out for us, which basically focused on her view that 'strong people didn't need strong leaders.' (Chisolm, personal communications, September 13, 2013)

Chisolm described Baker as an individual defined by her tolerance and patience. He

referenced how she tolerated the different personal choices of others. Chisolm said of Baker:

> The thing that I remember, even to this day, is the image of her patience. It would have
> driven me, I would tell you, it would have driven me to distraction to have had to deal
> with these guys. The meetings were long; they were rambling. Her patience, her
> imprimatur allowed us to know we were on the right track. I mean that is, whenever I
> think of Ms. Baker in different circumstances, the first thing that comes to mind is her
> sitting there with her purse and a white mask around her face. That is what I see when I
> think of Ms. Baker. Yes, a white mask—like they wear in Japan when you're dealing
> with fog. So she knew she had to be in those circumstances, so she had a white mask to
> help her deal with the smoke. (Chisolm, personal communications, September 13, 2013)

And while answering the interview question about Baker's leader-behaviors and

leadership style, Chisolm repeated and expounded on his earlier comments. He said:

> I think, as I said earlier, the first thing I mentioned was her ability to be patient. You've
> got to remember, she was dealing with 18 and 19 to 22 year olds whom she was trying
> to give some directions and to give some sense of what we were dealing with—like I
> said, in a war-like situation. You know, she was training young people to go into battle.
> So, I mean the ability and skills that it took to allow us to become leaders, because at the
> end of the day, it was clear that you could not go into battle without skills. You had to be
> your own leader. And so, you know, the kind of patience it took to help train us, I mean
> SNCC. I mean that kind of patience was unique. (Chisolm, personal communications,
> September 13, 2013)

In addition to his earlier statements, Chisolm also recalled that Baker recognized their

skill gaps and immaturity and took steps to nurture and mentor them. He recalled her

extraordinary efforts and the amount of time she spent with him and other SNCC members

during the organization's formative years. Chisolm remarked:

> I think probably even earlier, I mean, the kind of long hours that she spent with us early
> on you know, started decreasing. Cause in the beginning when we started, she really
> spent, I mean, as we were trying to find our way, she really spent long hours with us.
> (Chisolm, personal communications, September 13, 2013)

Berkeley recalled similar memories of Baker. She recalled times when Baker would

stand in the back of the meeting room, observe, and absorb information, while recording in

writing what she was hearing. Berkeley said Baker "would stand in the back of the room with a stenographer notebook, watch, and figure out how to help us move forward" (Personal communication, October 16, 2013).

Both McDowell and Zenith characterized Baker's patience in similar ways. McDowell said: "I can see Ms. Baker sitting there covering her mouth, because a lot of us smoked as we hammered out a point. She was generally quiet. It was her style, and maybe it was just because she was with us and she wanted us to speak" (Personal communication, November 5, 2013).

Zenith recalled the way Baker listened to and respected everyone's viewpoint. She said of Baker:

> She was capable of sitting long hours. She didn't feel she had to jump up and answer every single person's point of view, just waving. She sat in those meetings in the back with her mask on her face, you know, so that she wouldn't die of the cigarette smoke. We all smoked like chimneys...She could be at a meeting for days and never say a word...that was, in a sense, part of her style. (Zenith, personal communication, October 6, 2013)

Subcategory: Encouraging critical thinking. Two participants recalled the way Baker encouraged them to problem-solve by exploring, investigating, and reflecting on issues. The common threads across their experiences are thinking critically, problem-solving, analyzing, and encouraging dialogue. Of all participants, Zenith explained in great detail her perspective on the emphasis Baker placed on teaching SNCC and others how best to problem-solve.

Zenith recalled the time Baker and Braden asked her to arrange a day-long conference so that SNCC could decide how best to respond to requests from controversial speakers—those known to be communist sympathizers. Zenith suggested that the vestiges of McCarthyism were still part of the consciousness of some civil rights leaders, leading the more prominent civil rights organizations to adopt policies that barred the services of controversial speakers. Zenith described the situation in the following way.

The issues that were facing SNCC was whether SNCC would institute some sort of internal loyalty oath for people who were coming South...there had been volunteers coming from Stanford University who were led by Allen Lowenstein, who later became a congressman. And he was extremely vigilant about not having communists or other controversial people come to the South. And that was probably in the winter of 60 and December of 63...there were all kinds of rumblings about this. The NAACP at the time had pretty much endorsed the whole general feelings in the country about people with controversial views—that they were anathema. And I don't know what CORE'S position was. And SNCC's position was that we didn't bother; we didn't care. But the time was coming when we would have to take a more, you know, take a more overt position. Ms. Baker wanted SNCC to really discuss this and go into it very deeply.

She wanted people to think; she didn't want them to think about her. She wanted them to think about what they were doing, where they were going. And she chose her words very, very well...Sometimes she was enigmatic. She would ask a question and you would sort of think, 'um, what is she getting at here?' She usually asked questions—like what about this? Have you thought of this? So she was really, I think, remarkable. (Zenith, personal communication, October 6, 2013)

Zenith also recalled a second observation of Baker—of her using the Socratic Method to gain insight or to prompt others to think critically or reflectively not only about issues but also about their behaviors. Zenith relayed two such experiences. She said of Baker: "So when I was organizing that workshop, and I was in love, she asked, 'are you concentrating on what you're doing?' But that was her style. She didn't say "you are not concentrating.' Yes, she asked the question" (Zenith, personal communication, October 6, 2013).

Berkeley recalled the way Baker empowered and fostered an environment conducive to critical thinking. She said of Baker: "She never told people what to do. She would talk about what she would do" (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013).

Subcategory: Enabling people to act. This subcategory reveals some approaches Baker used to enable others to take action. All participants recalled instances when Baker used her knowledge, personal relationships, and networks to pave the way for them and others in order to achieve organizational and/or movement objectives. In fact, it was Berkeley who characterized Baker as an "enabler," a concept I discuss in an upcoming section.

McDowell recalled when he was selected or appointed the new SNCC Chairman that

Baker wanted to ensure he knew the major players in the Movement, and that they knew him.

McDowell said: "We were getting into the voters' registration thing. So she was introducing me

to the people I should know. E.D. Nixon was one of the people of courage; so she took me to

meet him" (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013).

McDowell also recalled another instance where Baker helped him and SNCC make the

contacts they needed to organize successfully. He offered the following comments:

> When we started organizing the voters' registration, we would use the roles that other people had used. They belonged to union members because they knew how to run meetings. Ms. Baker told us that we would save time by giving old leaders who would come before us and had developed some techniques because they were the Sleeping Car Porters. And then there was this thing that people would go back down South to retire. Though you were a porter here in St. Louis and in Lyons County, Alabama, you were a big shot. You had a check coming in every month. You were in the upper class. So, that's who we reached out to them. (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

Chisolm recalled the way Baker paved the way for SNCC to organize in the most

segregated parts of the Deep South. He said the following about that period and Baker's role.

> And one of the things, as we tried to break into Mississippi in 1962 and 1963, which was I mean, you talk about closed society in terms of race. I mean, it's unimaginable but you know Bob was able to use the contacts and introductions that Ms. Baker could make [inaudible] as a   stepping stone [inaudible]. And all those guys used to be NAACP persons, and she could direct Bob to the right ones. And the introductions she was able to make in 1962 to certain key people in Mississippi allowed SNCC to be able to penetrate and, you know, and survive frankly, survive the, you know, going into Mississippi when the, you know, the objective was to end the terror and the segregation that existed there. So, if it were not for Ms. Baker, we would not have been able to even go into Mississippi or to live through the experience. She was able to guide us to the right people who lived in Mississippi, who could help us move around and give us shelter and contacts. (Chisolm, personal communication, September 13, 2013)

When recalling the planning of an early interracial voters' registration campaign in

North Carolina and Tennessee, Berkeley remembered using Baker's network of contacts to

launch the project. She said about the situation:

And we located out in Raleigh. And you know, Ella had contacts both at St. Augustine's and at Shaw; so we decided to locate it at St. Augustine's and to have the students live there and work out of St. Augustine's...She walked me through it. What did I know? But she did it so graciously and so supportively, I mean, it was whatever—go ahead. (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Berkley also recalled another example of the way Baker enabled others to take action through the advisory and mentorship role she played. Berkeley said about Baker:

Let me tell you one other way she was a leader. She was the Rock of Gibraltar to other leaders, such as Bob Moses and James Lawson. I think that she was critical to their having someone to talk to, to discuss strategy with, to envision the future with, to think through how to handle problems. She was an enabler of other people. And the other jargon I thought of when I thought you were going to call me is that she was able to see the potential in others and able to maximize it. (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Berkeley talked about Baker's ability to motivate others to work, to be their very best. She implied that Baker instilled confidence in people, created conditions for them to contribute, and motivated them to reach their full potential. Specifically, Berkeley said of Baker:

In fact, she would take little people like me and get good work out of us.
But I'm serious. I you know, I'm serious. She took me, a little White Southern girl and she knew how to help me be helpful. She had that skill with everybody. You know whether it was a wash woman from Southern Georgia a rural area, or me, or Bob Moses, or whoever. She got the best out of us. That's a good leader. And the other people didn't have that. (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Like Berkeley and Chisolm, Custer, McDowell, and Zenith recalled similar experiences. Custer said of Baker:

Ella gave Bob Moses her NAACP contacts because he was going to set up a voters' registration project in Mississippi. He had come down from New York where he was living at the time. That must have been in 1961 or 62. (Custer, personal communication, October 4, 2013)
Zenith said of Baker:

She wasn't out there getting people to register to vote. She defined herself in a limited way: I am older. I have been through this before. I know all the people that I have been, you know, visiting over the years. I know this context. So, she gave it all over to Bob Moses. It was sort of like watering the garden all of those years....She didn't keep those names or her large network of people to herself. She gave them away when she thought

the time was right. Now this was leadership. (Zenith, personal communication, October 6, 2013)

Subcategory: Displaying humanity and humility. This subcategory focuses on relational issues, such as the emotional aspects of Baker's relationship with participants and others, as well as her deep humility. Four of five participants referenced Baker's keen sense of the personal needs of others. Three participants characterized her dislike of public recognition as a manifestation of her humility. The simplicity of Baker's personal life was also associated with her humility.

Custer said of Baker:

I will never forget one time around 1965 when I met Ella at a hotel in New York, and we had dinner. I was telling her about my disappointment in a recent relationship with my male friend. And she was very sympathetic and told me I had to keep looking for a good man and get married. I was always moved by this, since Ella, at least to my knowledge, not having a close male on any level, had never been a priority for her... She was very tuned in, in a way that so-called leaders were not to the need to support people when they were really hurting. And she also went to jail to visit people. She was rare in her sensitivity to people's emotional needs. (Custer, personal communication, October 4, 2013)

Berkeley reported several experiences which illustrated Baker's humanistic approach to others. She said of Baker:

Then, when I went back to Atlanta, and I was in Ella's office (but I don't know how that could have been). But a phone call came from Ms. Johnson telling me that her son, which was her only son, a pre-med student, a football star, and a great young man, had drowned in a swimming accident at the at the SCLC literacy thing...on the coast of South or North Carolina. He was down there, and the story was that he was swimming and started to drown for reasons I don't know. And there were some White shrimpers who didn't come over to help him. And he died. And his mother, she was devastated, totally devastated...But Ella was sitting there when I was talking with Ms. Johnson on the phone, with Cecilia, I just love her name. And Ella said: 'I'm going with you.' And I said: you don't know her. Ella said, 'I'm going with you.' I don't know whether she was scared for my life because she knew everybody would be pretty angry, or because she just wanted an opportunity to meet Mrs. Johnson and the Monroe people. I don't really know. But she went, and we stayed there for three days.

She really was an important person to me emotionally...We became very close friends...she had no ego; she was just there for the causes she was fighting for...She

wouldn't ever voluntarily take center stage. Not ever. She would stand in the back with a stenographer notebook wearing a suit and hat, and think and watch and figure out how to help people move forward. She was totally dedicated herself, but she understood that we needed some time off and recreation as a way to be renewed to not be burned out. She was psychologically very savvy. (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Berkeley also recalled the way Baker shied away from personal accolades. "Ella didn't need recognition and didn't want appreciation. She got up every day to see the Movement move forward" (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013).

McDowell referenced Baker's display of humanism when recalling a 1960 conversation with her during the time when SNCC's membership included only 16 students. He reported that they were trying to decide which counties SNCC would target first to organize and launch a voters' registration campaign. They decided to target the "worst places...Jefferson and Davis County." McDowell recalled Baker telling him during that conversation:

> 'You have people up there.' I said, who? Ms. Baker said 'you; that's where the [McDowells] are, the heads of the NAACP in Jefferson Davis County.' So, that's how I found out about some of my relatives. They were heads of the NAACP. My relatives were in Savannah and in Hazlehurst, which is in Jefferson Davis County. (Personal communication, November 5, 2013)

Zenith spoke of Baker's humility and preference for simplicity. She said:

> You've seen flyers that had her name on them. And I can just see her with her hands just dismissing them. It didn't mean that she was this person who was so exalted. She viewed herself, maybe she even used the word technician who was doing this particular job. She was doing a job. I don't think she had any thoughts of ever, ever enriching herself. She never did.

> Ella never had any money. She was always an employee of somebody. And when she died, I'm sure she had nothing. I'd been in her apartment and saw that she had nothing. I mean, she had enough. (Zenith, personal communication, October 6, 2013)

Baker's penchant for simplicity transcended her personal life, as did her deep humility which led her to dismiss the efforts of others who applauded her efforts. In fact, Zenith recalled Baker even rejecting the label of leader when others described her in that way.

She would correct people. She would say, 'I'm a facilitator.' She liked that word. She never saw herself as a leader. In her mind, what I observed, she saw herself as someone who got people together. She saw herself as someone who could open the door for other people. Now today, we could look back in hindsight and say she was a leader. But I don't think she would agree with that. Her leadership, given a wide definition of that word, she was what she said she was—a facilitator. (Zenith, personal communication, October 6, 2013)

Both Zenith and Chisolm recalled Baker's contentment with working in "background," another illustration of her humility. Zenith said of Baker:

One thing that may not have come out in some of these books, and I can understand why. She kept herself in the background. I think her intelligence has not really come to bear...That's why when Joanne [Grant] was making the movie she had difficulty getting a lot of quotes of her [Ella Baker]. And the reason why is because she was seldom in the public eye. Now that was a ridiculous mistake. Somebody who was completely knowledgeable, and spoke beautifully, and was very smart but they didn't use her in that way. (Personal communication, October 6, 2013)

Chisolm shared Zenith's sentiments about Baker's dislike of the spotlight. He said: "Ms. Baker was able to fly a lot below the radar. You know, I think she was more comfortable that way" (Chisolm, personal communication, September 13, 2013).

Chapter Summary

The first major category, *developing people for social change*, presents the perspectives of all participants on the way they benefited personally from Baker's emphasis on people development. While different in their particularities, all participants reported personal experiences with Baker in this area and articulated a common meaning: that Baker shared, transferred, and leverage her knowledge to develop others—which one participant referred to as a stepping stone to his success. Several participants recalled how Baker delegated responsibilities, which enabled them to grow; believed in and affirmed the potential of others; and "watered the garden" for their growth and survival. Another participant contextualized Baker's training of SNCC as preparing them for "warfare," a euphemism to be sure which

describe the aggressive and barbaric resistance to African-Americans who sought to acquire their civil rights.

As a subcategory, *legitimizing and giving voice*, presents the views of three participants who believe Baker placed great emphasis on everyone having an opportunity to speak and being heard. One participant described Baker's leader-behaviors as "legitimizing," while another participant referred to her as an "egalitarian" teacher. Here, the emphasis was on Baker's belief that there should not be any "lines" between organizers, teachers, followers, and learners, because everybody is a learner as well as a leader. Also undergirding this subcategory are themes such as valuing people, respecting diverse voices, building community, and actualizing the silenced. Participants provided some evidence of Baker's propensity for empowering people—especially the diverse voices that represented a range of meanings.

The subcategory, training through patience, provides examples of Baker's use of patience to train and develop others. Four of five participants recalled Baker sacrificing her personal comfort and health to achieve loftier goals. Of course, there are other interpretations that might be equally applicable. One can argue that Baker's mask symbolized the masking of her views on issues to allow SNCC members to develop their own. The mask might also symbolize Baker's own recognition of her influence on SNCC and wanted to mask it so as to encourage deep exploration of issues. Two participants seemed to suggest intimated that Baker's silence was her way of allowing them to chart their own leadership path. Despite the range of possible interpretations, they all whether individually or collectively connote training and development.

Within the subcategory, *encouraging critical thinking*, three of five participants provided examples of the ways Baker created the conditions for SNCC to explore, analyze, and

think critically about issues. Their examples portrayed Baker as a leader who encouraged planning rather than reacting to events. At least one participant recalled Baker's reluctance to interject herself into their discussions so that they could arrive at their own solutions. The accounts of participants regarding Baker's training of them were indicative of Freirean's problem-posing approach. They recalled how she inquired rather than issued pronouncements.

The subcategory, *enabling people to act*, presents the articulated views of four participants regarding the way Baker paved the way for them enabling them to act. Undergirding this subcategory are such themes as sharing knowledge and information, networking to open doors, molding leaders, organizing so they could organize others, and focusing on people's safety. Participants intimated that they and others learned much from Baker who served as their official advisor but also a mentor. According to one participant, Baker was an "enabler of other people."

Finally, the subcategory labeled *displaying humanity and humility* provides insight into Baker's ease with identifying with the personal needs of others, cultivating and maintain close personal relations. Participants described Baker as possessing an acute sensitivity to the personal challenges of others and embodying a selfless devotion to those around her. The implication of these characterizations is that Baker accepted and practiced the Biblical doctrine which posits that "We are our brother and sister's keeper." This subcategory also provides evidence that Baker declined any opportunity for self-aggrandizement. Seeking or receiving recognition was not a motivator for her.

CHAPTER FIVE

**Leading with Principles, Competence, and Courage: Answering
Research Question Two**

This chapter answers the second research question of this study: *What are the primary characteristics of Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors?* Based on participants' reported experiences, five major categories emerged from the research data: *leading with principles*, *competence*, *and courage*, *thinking and acting strategically*; *impacting lives, influencing outcomes*; *providing philosophical grounding*; and *overcoming obstacles*. Augmenting these data categories are leadership characteristics that participants articulated in response to the interview question: *What five attributes best describe Ella Baker as a leader*? Most participants answered this question by contextualizing Baker's leadership philosophy and/or leader-behaviors. Their verbatim responses follow within the context of the data categories.

Leading with Principles, Competence, and Courage

Within this major category are examples of the principled, competent, and courageous nature of Baker's leadership, as reported by research participants. All five recalled instances when they observed or learned of Baker denouncing the unproductive behaviors of others, placing her own personal values and courage on display, using her skills and competence to help advance organizational or Movement goals, problem-solving using analysis, and empowering others to act similarly.

Several participants provided more than one description of instances when they experienced Baker leading with principle, competence, and/or courage. For example, McDowell reported on two instances where Baker exhibited principled and courageous leader-behaviors.

He recalled that one of his proudest moments was in 1963 when Baker took a stand and refused

to silence the voices of SNCC members. McDowell reported the story in the following way.

> Before the March on Washington, she had called and was meeting with all these people, Joe Riles, lawyer and White dude out of Washington, one of them. She was telling them 'no' that she was not going to restrict what we said [inaudible]. This was long before the March on Washington happened. They were trying to get Ms. Baker to influence what we were going to say at the March. And she said no; she was not going to do that. She said, 'you go to hell.' And she said 'I helped them develop these strong voices, and I am not going to do anything to shut them up.' Yes, that was the proudest time for me. Cause she said: 'I helped them develop their strong voices, and I will not tell them to shut up.' (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

McDowell also recalled a time in the early 1960s when activists needed to hear the truth

about the risks of organizing in the Deep South. He reported that:

> People talked about being killed. But we played that down every time. We had to reject that idea. But then, we knew being killed was a real sound possibility. So we told ourselves this was the sacrifice. That's what I got from Ms. Baker. We got that from Ms. Baker. (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

As guiding principles, *trust* and *respect* were the two values McDowell, Chisolm, and

Zenith referenced when recalling their experiences with of Baker. McDowell recalled a

conversation with an Orangeburg, South Carolina minster who spoke favorably about Baker's

character. McDowell reported that conversation in the following way:

> So the minister, who was Matthews in Orangeburg, said: 'Well, you may be skeptical about Dr. King but he is [inaudible]. You can ask any Black person in the world about Ella Baker. And you can bet your life on her word.' I trusted him. And I trusted anybody he trusted...And so, when he said you can depend on Ella Baker, that's when I said okay. So, when we went to Raleigh, that's when I met Ms. Baker, at Shaw. (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

Chisolm recalled SNCC's formative years and their willingness to trust and accept

Baker's guidance. He and others recognized there was much they did not know but was eager

and willing to learn from Baker—a person whom they trusted and respected. He said of her:

"She was one of the advisors who gave us some direction. And we were young people who

wanted to listen to what she had to say" (personal communication, September 13, 2013).

Chisolm also referenced Baker's competence and leadership prowess—those that enabled an

individual to chart a way forward and pursue it tenaciously. He said of Baker:

> She led with determination, doggedness, and with the ability to achieve goals. Ms. Baker
> was a good orator. She wasn't Martin Luther King or Malcolm X. But I think the kind of
> leadership that Ms. Baker showed was a kind of determination, doggedness, and the
> ability to really pursue a goal which I think was great for SNCC. (Chisolm, personal
> communication, September 13, 2013)

> Like McDowell and Chisolm, Zenith shared similar impressions of Baker and referenced

the respect people had for her, as well as for her intellect.

> There was something very majestic about her. So, you knew as soon as she said
> anything, she was a person you should listen to. She had incredible presence...Since she
> didn't babble all of the time, when she had something to say, you would listen.
> Everybody stopped to listen to her. Now, she didn't thrust herself on you. And I mean, it
> was not a 'me, me, me' thing. But as I said, she was not a sweetie pie either, just sitting
> there saying, 'Oh, I love you. Hug, hug, kiss, kiss.' I mean that was just anathema to her.
> She was a very dignified lady. I think her intelligence has not really come to bear. I
> mean she was very, very thoughtful. She analyzed things. She didn't just say, 'Oh, this
> sounds good.' She thought about things over. (Zenith, personal communication, October
> 16, 2013)

> Berkeley reported that Baker's leadership comprised a range of skills.

> She was a person who was both an intellectual and someone who could sit down and
> drink Jim Beam with someone with an eighth grade education, or a third grade
> education, or no education. A rare, rare skill; she was so dignified; self-possessed.
> (Zenith, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Zenith also intimated that Baker's supervision of others was a manifestation of her

principles and courage. The sense of Zenith's report is that Baker expected staff to honor their

commitments, to perform the job for which they were hired, and to honor the organization's

attendance policy. Zenith said of Baker: "somebody told me recently that she would tell the

staff: 'You are coming in too late. You are not doing your job.' She was not a sweetie pie but

she definitely was very approachable (Personal communication, October 16, 2013).

Several participants referenced Baker's keen sense of equality and fairness. Berkeley

mentioned the way Baker embraced racial and class differences and appreciated the potential of

all forms of diversity. She said of Baker:

> She was comfortable with Whites as well as Blacks, with all classes. She understood about race, class, and gender. How rare is that? She never, you just couldn't find bias or prejudice in her—which would have been a reasonable thing. It just wasn't there. I mean she was of course very conscious of all the variables. But she transcended them. She didn't carry a grudge. It wasn't like she hated White people, I mean, which would have been a reasonable response to what was going on. (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Both Zenith and McDowell contextualized Baker's personal courage when referencing her

community organizing. Zenith highlighted Baker's travels on behalf of civil rights organizations

and, by extension, the Movement, which Zenith intimated represented a portrait in courage. She

said of Baker:

> I told Joanne [Grant] that I hope you put into the movie that a single Black woman traveling around in the South in those days when lynching was going on around is truly breathtaking, at least to me. It was pure unadulterated courage... She also gave speeches all around...She stepped out there when other women didn't. (Zenith, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

McDowell recalled SNCC's planning of their first voters' registration campaign and the

states they decided to target. He said: "Ms. Baker had been in all of these places that other

people didn't go, including rural counties in Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina"

(Personal communication, November 5, 2013).

Baker's competence, skills, and talents represented a consistent theme across most

interviews. For example, several participants contextualized each of these qualities when

recalling her efforts during the Movement. Berkeley recalled that Baker remained current on

political trends, adept in history and politics. Berkeley said of Baker: "She knew her history

and political trends. She was very sophisticated politically (Personal communication, October 16, 2013).

Much like two other participants, Berkeley compared Baker's leadership style to that of male movement leaders whom they believed lacked certain important leadership qualities. She said:

> Ella combined qualities in a way that was rare. You just didn't find them. So for example, you might have a Martin Luther King, who was a brilliant orator, who could inspire people with his oratory. You know, he was a great speaker. Or you might have a Jim Forman, who was a brilliant strategist. Or Bob Moses, who would take on the belly of the breast, and who was a fiduciary. But Ella Baker combined all of it. And that's what made her so unique. (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Zenith provided several perspectives on Baker's competence in community organizing, communications, and problem-solving. She also referenced Baker's thoughtful analysis of issues. Zenith said of Baker: "She had perfect speech; she did not have a trace of any local accent. Her vocabulary and pronunciation were perfect. In my mind, she could have easily gone on the stage. She was "very deliberate in her speech" (Personal communication, October 16, 2013). Zenith also mentioned another unique talent of Baker: "She was very gifted, a gifted organizer. She wasn't just a new edge, hippy dippy person; she simply knew that certain jobs needed to be done and she did them" (Personal communication, October 16, 2013).

Custer reported that one of Baker's leadership characteristics was "respecting everyone's opinion, listening to what all had to say and her indomitable courage to take a different road mirrored her leadership to me" (Personal communication, October 4, 2013).

Thinking and Acting Strategically

Underpinning this major category are participants' views on Baker as a strategist. Several participants noted the way she continually looked to the future, focused on achieving goals, and analyzed information to determine how best to position for success whatever

organization she was affiliated with. Berkeley recalled, for example, how Baker refused to confine herself to the present and thought in futuristic terms. She said of Baker:

> She took a long view of things but she thought strategically about steps to move forward...She bonded with anyone who was willing to create quality, great quality. She didn't have anger as her motivator. She had, I don't know what to say; she had the idealism and the pragmatism moving her forward. She got up every morning knowing who she was and what she wanted. And what she wanted was justice for Black people. It was really simple. So when you have a single aim, life is simple. Or it is not simple, but you are focused, you're not diverted, you're not distracted; you don't get off course. You keep your eye on the prize. She really did that. There was just no wavering or confusion, no chaos; she was steady as a rock.
>
> She knew when the moment was, when the people in her community, when the Black people were ready to move. And that's doesn't sound like much, but it's really everything. When she looked at those kids, she knew this was something that only happens every hundred years. She knew and so she positioned herself so that she could keep this flame alive. And that's what she did. (Zenith, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Custer recalled Baker's competence as a strategist and problem-solver. She said of Baker: "She was a brilliant strategist, fearless in choosing projects, and traveling to where she might be of help. She was always ready and able to give personal support to any problem SNCC people might be having" (personal communication, October 4, 2013).

Impacting Lives, Influencing Outcomes

This category describes some of the strategies Baker used to influence SNCC and Movement outcomes. Participants highlighted the way Baker's leadership not only impacted their earlier lives but their lives even today. All participants had much to share about Baker's influence on them personally and its impact on SNCC and the Movement. In this category, Chisolm provided the lengthiest and richest descriptions of Baker's influence on his thinking and that of others which, in turn, impacted Movement outcomes. Other participants reported similar experiences.

Chisolm recalled the 2013 March on Washington, which reminded him of Baker's

philosophical belief in the power of ordinary people.

> You know, when we would have our own discussions, you know, like we went to Southwest Georgia the other day...Rather than just talking about quotes of the most famous SNCC people and the other people, people at the Georgia event wanted to make sure that the people who really made the most difference in the local communities and who really bore the brunt of the struggle were the ones who were lifted up. That's what Ms. Baker taught us.

> I think, I think that, you know, Ms. Baker's view about how you show the world when we were 19 and 20 still is the view we've adopted today....So, I see Ms. Baker, when you think about the Civil Rights Movement, you know. I went to the March on Washington the other day. I saw, you know, I didn't get into the Lincoln Memorial area. I got there late you know. But there were more than 50,000 people outside the Lincoln Memorial area. They were talking to themselves; they didn't feel pressed to get into the Lincoln Memorial area. They were talking to each other about their issues. People were marching up and down with their signs. People were conversing and so forth.

> And you know, at the end of the day, the March on Washington was successful not because of those people who were on the podium, you know, making the speeches, and giving all sort of pronouncements. The March on Washington the other day was successful because all these people came and were talking among themselves about what needed to be done and where they needed to go, you know, kind of agreeing to join together to make it happen. So I mean, you know, I think at that point, we came to understand that leadership it is not at the podium. Leadership is the agreement of the people, who are suffering the most; people whose existence is really impacted by what is going on; who want to make change because they are not going to live in those circumstances anymore. Ms. Baker taught us that. And we viewed the world as she did. That's how we see everything. (Chisolm, personal communication, September 13, 2013)

Chisolm also recalled the way Baker leveraged her influence for good. His sense was that she led through influencing others. He said of Baker:

> I think that she didn't have the organizational base. So, you know, my sense is that Ms. Baker was a great influencer. She didn't have an organization; she didn't have the platform; but she was able to influence a lot of people who made a difference. (Chisolm, personal communication, September 13, 2013)

Chisolm also recalled that Baker served as the protector of SNCC in that she safeguarded it from the personal agendas of a few prominent civil rights leaders. He said of Baker: "I guess the first impact that Ms. Baker had on SNCC, probably one of the most profound impacts was...you know influencing SNCC not to become a youth organization of the SCLC or any

other major organization" (Chisolm, personal communication, September 13, 2013).

Finally, Chisolm reported on the way Baker shaped SNCC's worldview and encouraged

them to reimagine leadership. He described Baker as the influencing force behind SNCC. He

said the following of Baker:

> But I think of the most, of all the advisors, Ms. Baker probably had the most influence. Because I think her view that 'strong people don't need strong leaders' really helped to define the way SNCC looked at the world; that SNCC through its forward efforts, you know, really had a view that what we were trying to do was organize the communities and, you know, allow the people there to do their own leadership. I mean, I think that was probably the most profound discussion.
>
> I would say that the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee was her greatest success. Within that context, you know, Ms. Baker was part of the generation before us. She was able to transfer her philosophy and skills to a generation that went beyond her, and we're hopefully trying to transfer it to people who've come after us. Now, we are saying that Ms. Baker stopped really doing a lot of stuff in 66, you know, here in 2013, we are still talking about what she's done. You could go to people besides me who knew her and they would have the same kind of view of Ms. Baker. (Chisolm, personal communication, September 13, 2013)

Like Chisolm, McDowell recalled Baker's influence and impact on him, SNCC, and the

Movement. He reported that SNCC took to heart her advice and guidance, which they used to

initiate, plan, and execute. He said of Baker:

> She made us. And we made changes in so many ways, like in how we worked. And we did what we said we were going to do...she created our values, or helped create our values. They really came from her. (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)
>
> They [SCLC and NAACP leaders] were convinced that a lot of what we were saying and doing was coming from Ms. Baker, which was true. We had no problem with how and what she was saying and the way she was guiding. We all were accused of it: 'You listen too much to Ms. Baker.' (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

McDowell also recalled the way Baker influenced male-female relations and interactions

in SNCC—that is, the way male SNCC members viewed females and their contributions. He

suggested that Baker modeled the way they should treat each other.

> We, in SNCC, became less sexist...because of Ms. Baker. The way we were with the women in our movement was because of Ms. Baker. We knew we had these really tough women, like Ruby Doris Smith, who was really tough, and the Ladners. Dorie was then and still is today one of my favorite people in the world because she is tough. Connie started with Ms. Baker back at the SCLC, the Y, and another organization. (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

McDowell speculated about the impact Baker might have on young African- Americans today had she lived. He believes she was passionate about many things, and that today's young adults of color could learn a lot from her.

> I just sort of wish she was still around. Because they don't understand how much of her, is in that [inaudible]. You can go a couple of places where there are Ella Baker schools and centers. And I thought, I wish they had just been around to see, to see her and meet the woman whose name is plastered on those schools. And so, I've seen many women today who speak of the Women's Movement and Ms. Baker. It's sort of like it's like jazz going to a jazz concert. There are always seventy-five White women to two Black women who talk about Ms. Baker. Black women don't know anything about her... just like most people don't know who Ms. Baker really was; never heard her voice; experienced the passion of her beliefs. And yes, that's one thing: it was passion that she had. At the 50th anniversary of SNCC in Raleigh, there was a group of kids from that school in Los Angeles, and they were like 5th graders. And I thought: I wish they had just been able to talk with the woman who made this school possible. (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2014)

Berkeley referenced Baker's great fortitude and the actions she took to ensure the survival of the Movement. She said of Baker:

> She was the mother of the Movement. Without her, we would not have survived... Everybody knows that she wanted bottom-up organizing. That's common knowledge...But when she died, I couldn't even I wasn't even able to go to the memorial service because I was so distraught. I was just devastated. It was like losing a very important person in my life. In other words, I sort of ran away from the pain. I mean, her picture is on my wall right now, right now. No, my feelings have not changed about her. I just thank God I had her. She was such strength for. (Berkeley, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Both Zenith and Berkeley provided a perspective on Baker's impact during the Movement. To Zenith, Baker was the guiding force and represented a vital organ in SNCC. Zenith said of Baker:

> She was kind of the heart and soul of the Freedom Summers and then the Mississippi

Democratic Party...When she was traveling in the 1940s for the NAACP, she wasn't really getting people on the streets either but she was keeping a whole network alive. She kept them alive. (Zenith, personal communication, October 16, 2013)

Berkeley recalled the times when Baker had to facilitate resolutions to internal conflicts among SNCC members. She said of Baker: "She saved SNCC from falling apart more than once when they disagreed and somehow held them together" (personal communication, October 16, 2013). Custer's statements were more personal; she and Baker were close friends. Custer said: "When I think of her, I am inspired and my heart is filled with love" (personal communication, October 4, 2013).

Providing Philosophical Grounding

Several themes comprise this category: laying the philosophical foundation, redefining values, and shaping worldviews. Several participants reported on Baker's philosophies and the way others operationalize them today. Of all participants, Chisolm devoted the most time explaining the way Baker grounded him and SNCC philosophically. He said of her:

> Well, I mean, as I said earlier, Ms. Baker defined the working philosophy, you know, the philosophical basis for SNCC. So people in SNCC, even today, any conversation I have had with people is what we talk about. I mean, I worked on the SNCC Legacy Project's communications with a lot of SNCC people, and you know, we talked about Ms. Baker's fundamental belief that one, 'strong people don't need strong leaders;' and two, 'that you have to recognize that the people who are most important are the people who are...at the bottom of the discussion.'

> Her view of the world and her philosophy is still operational, as we go into the New Year. You know, in 1963, we had the March on Washington. But next year, we will have Freedom Summer. And we are going to be doing a lot of stuff that is different. You know, [19]63 was celebratory. Next year, we are organizing now to advance the Movement. So, I mean, my sense is that her influence, you know, probably at the end of the day because it was not captured and bottled will probably be more profound as we go forward. (Chisolm, personal communication, September 13, 2013)

By way of example, Chisolm highlighted Bob Moses' Algebra Project. He noted that it is based on Baker's philosophies of "bottom-up" organizing and her belief in the potential of

every person. Chisolm stated:

> You know, Bob Moses has what is called the Algebra Project, and basically his view comes, the Algebra Project is based on the philosophy and the teachings of Ms. Baker, which says, that what you have to do is deal with the bottom quartile and teach them algebra and bring them into the classroom and give them math literacy that would allow them to perform and function at, you know, every level. (Personal communication, September 13, 2013)

And finally, Chisolm personalized the impact of Baker's teachings on him. He said of her:

> So my sense is that the kind of grounding that Ms. Baker gave us, and gave me, you know, from the early days are things that have been constant. I mean, they were so fundamental in terms of the way we saw the world. They have not changed. I mean, they have not changed at least for me. At the end of the day, things haven't changed but have gotten better. Her philosophy is used in different circumstances, at least for me. (Chisolm, personal communication, September 13, 2013)

McDowell reported on a conversation with another SNCC member about "old times" as

he recalled Baker's typical response to them whenever they "griped" about some action of an

older civil rights leader. McDowell said:

> Because you know when she was the head of the New York Chapter, they were always saying, remember back then when Ms. Baker would tell us that 'if someone is willing to support you, is going the same way you are going, you should accept their help.' (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

Zenith referenced Baker's philosophical influence on SNCC and other activists. She

believes this influence manifested in the way SNCC viewed and reacted toward others. Zenith

said of Baker:

> I'm sure SNCC was very affected by that. Her feeling that way, and her talking about it all the time…If not, they probably wouldn't have reacted toward Mrs. Hamer the way they did. I'm sure. We all knew that Mrs. Hamer was talented; yes, Fannie Lou Hamer. (Personal communication, October 6, 2013)

Overcoming Obstacles

Comprising this category are reports of four of five participants regarding the obstacles

Baker encountered during a certain periods as a civil rights and political activist. Several

participants noted sexism as the social obstacle she faced—not only outside the boundary walls

of the Movement but also within the Movement itself. The two male participants provided rich

and lengthy descriptions of their observations and perspectives. Of the three female participants,

one chose not to answer the interview question which inquired about gender, class, and racial

inequality within the Movement. Chisolm described the ways in which women's contributions

were devalued, if not ignored—including those of Baker. He intimated that sexism prevented

Baker from playing a public leadership role.

> Ms. Baker was unusual because in the Civil Rights Movement, whether we like it or not, the fact was that women were not playing any serious roles in leadership...Given that she was a woman, it was very, very difficult for her to play a serious role, to get the credit she was due. So even though she helped the NAACP, and even though she helped King, and worked with him on the SCLC, none of them wanted to give her due because there was no room for a woman to be in a leadership role in those things. (Chisolm, personal communication, September 13, 2013)

> Like Chisolm, McDowell recalled Baker's experiences and reactions to sexism in the

SCLC and NAACP. He suggested that this social barrier misplaced women, muted many of

their voices, and that the replacement of Baker at the SCLC meant that the voices of female

leaders continued to remain unfamiliar to male movement leaders. McDowell provided the

following report.

> I think when Ms. Baker left the NAACP in the 50s, she probably was one of the most powerful Black women in the country as Director. And ...there's no doubt in my mind that there were men in the national NAACP who just felt she should go because she was a woman.

> Most of them, like Wyatt Walker and Martin, had definite issues with strong women. They didn't, as Ms. Baker said, 'they didn't overcome; they wouldn't overcome a woman having equal rewards.' I think that was the problem from the get go.
> So, anything she said was always taken with a grain of salt. I think that's why for example, she got replaced in SCLC with Wyatt Walker, that [expletives deleted] was a man's man. And see, Ms. Baker, as a woman, and I don't think that crowd [inaudible], these so-called "men about town" were used to a woman with a voice. Cause' I always had the feeling she was sort of misplaced in SCLC. Yeah, she would talk about not being a woman of the cloth. They considered her of questionable religious background [inaudible]. So if she were on the Usher Board of one of their churches, I think they would have had to pay a little more attention to her rather than an independent

[inaudible]. I think that was her problem at SCLC. She was marginalized but not as much in the NAACP but especially in the SCLC.

I talked to Ms. Baker about it. And then Ms. Baker said, 'well, they are not used to women speaking up. These are men, minsters who are not use to people standing up and talking back to them—especially if you have a loud voice like myself and tell them to go to the devil.' (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

Zenith talked about Baker's dedication to fighting for racial justice and rejecting

discrimination. From her perspective, Baker was a "dedicated race fighter, a race woman."

Zenith continued by sharing the following additional thoughts.

You know, of the number of people who heard of her, twenty five times as many heard of Walter White. So, I believe sexism had an awful lot to do with that. I don't think in those days the women, quote, unquote, leaders were few and far between. And Dorothy Height got to her position because she was the leader of a women's group [inaudible] and category. An organization where the men were the stars, I think the women did a lot of the work.

In the milieu that she [Ella Baker] came from, I think she probably would have learned that there were certain things she could say and certain things she couldn't say. And in *Fundi,* she said, you know, that great quote where she would tell those ministers, 'no,' she would say 'no' [Laughter]. And they were completely shocked that a woman would say no. I think sexism had a lot to do with it.

She obviously was very gifted. She was very brilliant. As I said, she was incredibly well-spoken. Obviously, they didn't use her as a spokesperson. And nobody did actually. That's why when Joanne [Grant] was making the movie; she had difficulty getting a lot of quotes of her [Ella Baker]. And the reason why is because of sexism; she was seldom in the public eye. Now that was a ridiculous mistake. Somebody who is completely knowledgeable, and spoke beautifully, and was very smart, but they didn't use her in that way. (Zenith, personal communication, October 6, 2013)

Though Berkeley did not highlight sexism as a social obstacle that Baker encountered,

she instead addressed Baker's paradoxical attitude about feminism. Berkeley intimated that

Baker prioritized the Movement over concerns about feminism or other gender issues. Berkeley

said of Baker: "She wasn't into feminism. But she understood that kind of thing. She just wasn't

going to work on it because that wasn't her mission. But she was going to promote women

leaders" (personal communication, October 16, 2013).

Chapter Summary

Like Chapter 4 before it, this chapter tells the second part of the Ella Baker story through the lived experiences of the five research participants. Their stories answer Research Question 2: *What are the primary characteristics of her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors?*

Within this chapter is a presentation of the five major categories and subcategories that emerged from the data. Those include: leading with principles, competence, and courage; impacting lives, influencing outcomes; thinking and acting strategically; providing philosophical grounding; and overcoming obstacles. Participants told the story about a woman of principles, courage, competence, and great influence. They experienced Baker as the stabilizing force behind SNCC because of her efforts to foster cohesiveness and a spirit of community within the student organization. She spoke truth to power--regardless of the person or his or her formal position or role. To participants, Baker was "thoughtful" and analytical," a person who acted strategically in the way she planned and selected projects.

Additionally, participants characterized her as an individual who looked forward and whose principles they and others embraced—even today. Sexism was a social obstacle Baker encountered, which she navigated during a time when women were marginalized and their leadership and contributions discounted. Despite this social impediment, participants argued that her impact on SNCC and the Movement was incalculable. Her leadership influenced the lives of an untold number of individuals. Since impact and influence are different constructs, participants provided many examples in these areas. One participant mentioned the schools and centers that bear her name today, as well as a national mathematics program, the Algebra Project, whose foundation rests on Baker's community organizing philosophy. These and the

previous examples illustrate the reach of her impact and influence. Both inspired and motivated

people to take actions they would not have otherwise.

CHAPTER SIX

Moving toward the Theorization of Ella Baker's Leadership

Answering Research Question 3

The study of leadership is not a new field of scholarship. Yet, leadership and the role of leaders continue to be the subject of relentless research and debate. Even among the most astute scholars, the definition of leadership seems to vary wildly. But when explored in the context of social movements, such as the Civil Rights Movement, leadership becomes even more difficult to theorize (Morris & Staggenborg, 2002). This difficulty arises from the notion that leadership within social movements is a "complex phenomenon that remains relatively unexplored theoretically," primarily due to limited empirical research on which to base a robust assessment (Morris, 1984, p. 537). Morris and Staggenborg (2002) posit that this "lacuna results from a failure" on the part of social movement scholars "to fully integrate agency and structure in theories of social movements" (p. 1).

This postulation suggests that merely focusing on leadership or even on the leader overlooks the importance of human agency, structural opportunities, and obstacles to collective action (Barker, Johnson, & Lavalette, 2001). It is precisely this type of scholarly debate on leadership in the context of social movements which evidences the need for further research. The upcoming sections and ultimately this research study served this purpose.

A Step towards a Holistic View of Leadership

Frequently, questions about leadership yield numerous and sometimes ambiguous responses. Though myriads of leadership definitions abound, they frequently fail to reflect the range of diverse viewpoints or provide alternatives to our contemporary understanding of the concept. Several scholars (Astin & Leland, 1991; Barker et al, 2001; Lerner, 2009; Preskill &

Brookfield, 2009; Rost, 1993; Ruth, 2006) corroborate this thesis with great precision. For example, Ruth (2006) observes that leadership must be viewed within a social context—since it is a human process concerned with the triangle of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of the people involved in the leadership process.

Leadership and liberation are inextricably linked in that the connection between a leader and participants is their shared history and involvement in a dynamic relationship (Ruth, 2006). While Astin and Leland (1991) agree with Ruth's argument that leadership is a process, they add the importance of recognizing that such a process "takes place when a certain combination of elements comes together where something needs to be done and enough people want to do it, and there's the right combination of the people that have the ideas and the people who understand the process." (p. 1).

Though sharing Astin and Leland's (1991) viewpoints on leadership, Hellriegel, Jackson, and Slocum (2002) articulate it more concisely when they write that leadership "involves influencing others to strive to achieve one or more goals" (p. 404). From the perspective of Preskill and Brookfield (2009), defining leadership must be done in the context of social action. They argue that leadership empowers others to achieve their social change agendas to dismantle hegemonic social structures and systems, which have long denied people the chance to utilize their skills and abilities.

When asked for her views on leadership during a 1995 interview for the summer edition of *A Magazine of Feminism, Spirituality, and Politics*, Gerda Lerner responded in the following way:

> My concept of leadership is embodied by somebody like Ella Baker…who was the foremost organizer of the civil rights movement; yet, until recently, hardly anybody knew her name. Leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the 1940s, Executive Secretary of the Southern Christian

Leadership Conference (SCLC) in the 1950s, founder and chief source of inspiration for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the 1960s, this African American woman was the guiding spirit and the organizing genius behind the civil rights movement. (Lerner, 2009, p. 180)

Parker (2004) explores leadership through a feminist lens while emphasizing social change and human emancipation. She writes that the ultimate goal of leadership is to refine "human communities" (Parker, 2004, p. 25). Viewing leadership in this context raises the specter of leadership as a "localized, negotiated process of mutual influence that would theoretically accommodate the multiple, often contradictory viewpoints and paradoxical situational challenges of [the] 21st century" (Parker, 2004, p. 25). In discussing the four elements of his leadership model, Rost (1993) argues that leadership concerns the "influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102). Rost observes that the four elements, which comprise his leadership frameworks, are: (1) multidirectional, non-coercive influence; (2) exclusive relationship between leader and followers with active participation of followers; (3) intention of leaders and followers is to forge real change; and (4) mutuality of purpose among leaders and followers.

Unquestionably, leadership is a complex construct. This complexity makes reconceptualizing Ella Baker's leadership possible only when explored from multiple perspectives. The discussion that follows emphasizes the diverse meanings and functions of leadership. In some respects, these diverse perspectives supplant traditional leadership paradigms—though a few others share similarities. Reviewed next are bridge leadership, group-centered leadership and participatory democracy, collective leadership, non-positional leadership, Black leadership, transformational leadership, grassroots leadership, servant leadership, and liberation leadership. Each framework uses a different lens through which to explain Baker's leadership.

Bridging the Social Gap with Bridge Leadership

As a distinct form of grassroots community organizing, Robnett (1999) was among the first scholars to analyze the complexities of women's leadership roles within the Civil Rights Movement and to offer a theoretical framework for understanding them. Using a qualitative research approach, which encompassed twenty-five telephone interviews with women civil rights activists, Robnett's (1999) model provides a different perspective on the leadership of Baker and other women activists.

According to Robnett (1999), sexism within the Movement was the then current reality of women. Its pervasiveness created a substructure for women, which Robnett (1999) calls bridge leadership. This type of leadership is best understood as "an intermediate layer of leadership whose tasks include bridging potential constituents and adherents, as well as potential formal leaders to the movement" (Robnett, 1999, p.191). In the Movement, bridge leaders served as the "stepping stones necessary for potential constituents and adherents to cross formidable barriers between their personal lives and the political life of civil rights movement organizations" (Robnett, 1999, p. 19). The exclusion of women from formal leadership positions is what incentivized Baker and other women civil rights activists to adopt alternative and more strategic ways to lead. Bridge leadership provided them that vehicle. Robnett (1999) cautions, however, that not all bridge leaders were women—though the leitmotif is that women held a larger share of these positions than men. And the majority of these leaders were African-American women.

Within the bridging leadership framework are three variants: professional bridge leaders, community bridge leaders, and indigenous bridge leaders (Robnett, 1999, pp. 20-21). A woman's background and social activism experience determine the frame in which her

leadership role fits. For example, professional bridge leaders, such as Baker, have significant experience in grassroots activism and generally are not in the public eye (Robnett, 1999). These leaders had frequent and extended affiliations with various civil rights organizations, and they did not restrict their involvement to a single cause. Professional bridge leaders recognized that "resources, charismatic leaders, hierarchical structures, deposited action frames, and political opportunities were not sufficient to sustain or even mobilize a movement" (Robnett, 1999, p. 202). Instead, these types of leaders advocated a different organizing philosophy

Community bridge leaders were individuals with a narrow set of grassroots organizing experience, such as that acquired through work for a specific organization or locale (Robnett, 1999). These leaders appealed to the emotional state of the African-American community and persuaded them to join the Movement. Russell (2011) postulates, however, that community bridge leadership positions "were not fixed identities, but rather roles women assumed when situations required them to do so and in order to support political frames and ideologies of social movements" (p. 31).

On the other hand, indigenous bridge leaders were individuals known within the community and trusted for their self-determination—especially during times of community crises (Robnett, 1999). These leaders worked closely with community bridge leaders and served as the first point of contact for community bridge leaders when they arrived in a new city. Mainstream bridge leaders were usually White women who partnered with community bridge leaders to secure broad support for the Movement from White institutions and organizations (Robnett, 1999). White women had greater access to the institutionalized patriarchal system while White men pursued acts of inhumanities to sustain it.

Linking Group-Centered Leadership and Participatory Democracy

Several scholars (Brookfield & Holst, 2011; Butler, 2008; Charles, 2011; Crawford et al, 1990; DeLaure, 2008; Mueller, 1990; Payne, 1989, 1995, 2007; Preskill, 2005; Ransby, 2003a) point specifically to Baker's philosophy as emblematic of group-centered leadership. The practice of group-centered leadership includes "discourse, debate, reflection, consensus, and protracted struggle; it is a viable approach to empower ordinary people to foster justice," to transform their social conditions and themselves individually (Butler, 2008, pp. 33-34). This paradigm incorporates tenets of participatory democracy (Crawford et al, 1990), a concept based on broad participation in the decision making process, democracy, egalitarianism, dialogue, and critical thinking (Butler, 2008; Crawford et al, 1993; Payne, 1989, 1995, 2007; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009; Ransby, 2003a; Ross, 2003). Both group-centered leadership and participatory democracy decentralize power and decision-making responsibilities from a single leader to the group as a whole (DeLaure, 2008; Mueller, 1990; Payne, 1989, 1995).

In her essay, "Ella Baker and the Origins of Participatory Democracy," Mueller (1990) writes that Baker's vision of participatory democracy comprised three components:

- The involvement of people in decisions that will affect their lives;
- The minimization of hierarchal structures and the consequent emphasis placed on expertise and professionalism as criteria for leadership; and
- A call for direct action as the antidote for fear, alienation, and intellectual detachment. (as cited in Crawford et al, 1990, pp. 51-52)

Thus, decision making flows from the bottom-up as opposed to from the top-down. In many respects, group-centered leadership and participatory democracy are interdependent with each relying on and informing the other. Such an approach places "the ego needs of leaders…beneath the developmental needs of the group" (Payne, 1989, p. 896) and recasts the role of the leader to that of facilitator (Crawford et al, 1990). Unquestionably, group-centered

leadership is antithetical to leader-centered leadership. It eliminates and renders inconsequential the need for or appeals of charismatic leadership. This emphasis on broad participation and decentralization stems from Baker's earlier views on grassroots organizing.

Engaging community members in the decision making process not only decentralizes power and develops participants' leadership skills but it also creates an environment in which all people can participate—especially women who frequently were excluded from the process. Baker rejected the notion that men, and by extension religious leaders, in the Civil Rights Movement were the only individuals capable of making sound decisions (Elliott, 1996; Ransby, 2003a; Robnett, 1999). Rejecting this notion is evident in the emphasis Ella Baker placed on group-centered leadership and participatory democracy not only in the Civil Rights Movement but also in the SNCC and other civil rights organizations in which she played a leadership role. The single leadership principle that best illustrates this philosophy is Baker's insistence that people impacted directly by a decision ought to be involved in the process which leads to that decision. Butler (2008) echoes this viewpoint and adds that Baker's theory of group-centered leadership is best understood when viewed through the prism of participatory democratic leadership. Like group-centered leadership, group participation and democracy are foundational principles of participatory democratic leadership.

For instance, in an organization or grassroots movement in which a leader practices participatory democratic leadership,

- Everyone in the human family has some inherent value, strength, and something to contribute.
- Ordinary people have the capacity to transform their social conditions, from the simplest to the most difficult, dangerous, and complex conditions.
- Local people have tacit knowledge gained through direct experience; they should be at the forefront of decisions and initiatives they ultimately will have to live with.
- Ordinary people must rely on themselves to change things in social and institutional

systems that adversely affect them; they must actively engage in the creation of a just system.

- Participatory democracy is situational; there must be genuine participation and deliberation; through the democratic process of fairness and inclusion, those who are often excluded and marginalized will have a potent and equal voice at the table.
- Ordinary people must take direct action and be prepared to endure until they accomplish their vision or goals. (Butler, 2008, pp. 33-34)

While participatory democratic leadership is heralded as an effective leadership style, its shortcomings must not be overlooked. In situations where the role of a group is unclear or timeliness is critical, this leadership construct can cause communication failures resulting in uncompleted tasks and/or activities (Cherry, n.d.). It also is possible that not all group members are equipped sufficiently with the knowledge needed to participate fully in the decision making process. Nonetheless, group-centered leadership and its underlying principles of participatory democracy are useful in infusing into grassroots movements a sense of cohesiveness, opportunities for leadership development, creativity and innovation, and accountability. All of these represent forces for significant social change.

Understanding Collective Leadership

Ella Baker and Septima Clark were principally responsible for modifying the concept of collective leadership during the Civil Rights Movement, which emphasizes the engagement of the oppressed in a transformational process that enables them to shape their own future (Payne, 1995). Baker's philosophy significantly influenced the development of collective leadership; she provided a form of imprimatur for this type of leadership. Expanding on these arguments, Preskill and Brookfield (2009) note that "Ella Baker was the most influential theorist of and practitioner in collective leadership" (p. 95). In fact, her early childhood indoctrination in the traditions of community activism and resistance to cultural hegemony fueled Baker's passion for pursuing a communal approach to leadership (Grant, 1998; Parker, 2004; Payne, 1995;

Preskill & Brookfield, 2009; Ransby, 2003a).

From Baker's perspective, collective leadership represented for African-American women the central motif of "resistance and transformation" and "community building" (Parker, 2004, p. 56). The first such tradition involved "developing and using voice (your own and others) as a mechanism to invite participation in a collective effort; and, second, working against the intrusion of hierarchy" (Parker, 2004, p. 56). The literature is replete with examples of instances in which Baker rejected hierarchical organizational structures, which from her perspective impeded dialogue, collaboration, and participation. Ella Baker expressed this philosophy directly when she said:

> Everyone has a contribution to make. Just as one has to be able to look at a sharecropper and see a potential teacher, one must be able to look at a conservative lawyer and see a potential crusader for justice. (Parker, 2004, p. 56; Payne, 1995, p. 89)

Researchers frequently use the terms collective leadership and group-centered leadership interchangeably. This is understandable since both shift the focus from the leader to the collective whole. Collective leadership emphasizes the development of leadership skills in ordinary people (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009)—which, like the group-centered leadership model—rejects the notion of leader dependency or leader centeredness. Instead, collective leadership promotes self-efficacy and leader empowerment as guiding principles and provides tools for effective leadership. Unity and accountability are essential ingredients of collective leadership (Walter & Smith, 1999). Absent either criterion, leaders are less likely to interact effectively with group members or achieve successful outcomes.

Another differentiating feature of collective leadership is its area of emphasis. Collective leadership emphasizes learning. When combined, both learning and leading function within a coexistent and interdependent process (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). Neither can function

without the other, since embedded in the leadership process is a focus on learning rather than on leading. Group members, including the leader, learn from their collective experiences (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009) as opposed to the leader functioning solely as teacher. From this learning-leading approach, both group members and the leader leverage their collective experiences to design and launch effective grassroots campaign (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009).

Based on this, the most impactful leaders are those who pursue an agenda of "developing leadership in others [rather] than in getting recognition for their individual achievements" (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009, p. 96) Adopting such a philosophy means both group members and leader operate as partners. They collaborate on movement strategies and assume equal responsibility for decisions. Moreover, mutual respect resides at the core of collective leadership (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). In this context, respect means "seeing again, to regard with new, more penetrating eyes," which as Baker instructs, means creating the public space for ordinary people to "[become] more acutely aware of their own intelligence and power" (Preskill and Brookfield, 2009, p. 97).

While Parker (2004) and Payne (1995) make these points in their work on the character of collective leadership, none crystallizes the objectives and possibilities of this framework more than the 2007 publication released by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, titled *The Collective Leadership Framework: A Workbook for Cultivating and Sustaining Community Change*. The Foundation established the Kellogg Leadership for Community Change (KLCC) initiative in 2001 in response to widespread concerns about the absence of a leadership framework that addresses evolving community challenges. This relatively new initiative, elucidated in a 60-page workbook, moves the analysis of collective leadership a step further by exploring a framework for facilitating community change. The publication's corporate authors instruct that

due to the changing nature of many communities, their increasing complexities and inter-connectedness, learning to share power and resources are an imperative if communities expect to sustain the type of change that benefits all community residents (W. F. Kellogg, 2007).

Based on the KLCC initiative, the importance of a collectivist approach is critical for communities—especially those where discriminatory and oppression are the reality of community members. The premise is that challenges inside these communities require leaders who are able to leverage the "gifts and talents" of all community members (W. F. Kellogg, 2007, p. 12). The quality and effectiveness of decisions are greatly improved when the decision making process incorporates the voices of the entire community.

The KLCC framework provides the following multilevel definition based on three underlying principles.

- Collective leadership is relational: the group as a whole is a leader in the community just as members within the group can be leaders within the group.
- Collective leadership is fluid: it emerges out of specific situations, the process of defining vision and setting direction, as well as exercising influence over other people and organizations; it becomes a shared function of the group.
- Collective leadership is transformational: it begins with a belief in and a commitment to social advocacy and social justice. (W.K. Kellogg, 2007, pp. 3-4)

Leveraging the power of collective leadership presents certain challenges for community leaders. They must be able to cross social boundaries, such as those related to age, race, culture, and religion, as well as "those among organizations and those fostered by issues that divide the population" (W. K. Kellogg, 2007, p. 12). Doing so requires leaders to bring people together in ways that help arrest old internal conflicts, recommit themselves to the values and cultures of their communities, and challenge old assumptions.

Non-positional Leadership

A large body of research exists today, which debunks the myths that men rather than

women have the facilities to be strong leaders. Numerous recent studies address this misconception, giving rise to a growing interest in non-positional leadership. It has begun to receive increased attention in research areas such as academia (Astin & Leland, 1991; Kezar, 2002; Renesch, 2002) and leadership development (Charles, 2007; Petty, 1996). A primary reason for its appeal is a growing view among women scholars and leaders that non-positional leadership more accurately characterizes women's leadership style.

Scholarly literature traditionally equated leadership with hierarchal authority and power (Astin & Leland, 1991; Kezar, 2002; Renesch, 2002). Individuals with the most impressive titles and the highest ranks generally made decisions for the group, including developing the vision and directing organizational or group activities. Non-positional leadership shifts the emphases from a gendered to non-gendered paradigm (Astin & Leland, 1991; Kezar, 2000, 2002). In addition to its incongruence with traditional leadership models, non-positional leadership strives to understand how the diverse worldviews of people influence their understanding of leadership (Astin & Leland, 1991; Kezar, 2000, 2002).

This paradigm finds resonance in positionality—an epistemological theory that is useful in examining whether the position and titles people hold influence what they know and how they know it (Kezar, 2002). Positionality emerged during the late 1980s and early 1990s as an improvement upon feminist standpoint theory (Houle, 2009). Positionality observes that "women enact, think about, and interpret leadership differently from traditional images [and] models ... those based on the experiences of White men in positions of authority" (Kezar, 2002, para. 2).

As a form of descriptive and normative theory, feminist standpoint theory is a method of knowledge-making, which "begins with the lives of the least powerful and counts their

knowledge claims as among the more adequate and less partial descriptions of phenomena [resulting] in better knowing" (Houle, 2009, p. 174). Using standpoint theory to arrive at positionality allows for a more comprehensive examination of women's leadership across a broad spectrum of ascribed statuses such as gender, race and ethnicity, age, social class, occupation, and/or formal roles within an organization (Kezar, 2000). Because of these unique statuses, "people have multiple, overlapping identities and thus make meaning from various aspects of their identity," including views about leadership (Kezar, 2000, p. 726).

In addition, positionality has properties of both diversity and democracy, which transcend the type of knowing that arises from power conditions, such as those in which the dominant or majority class lives (Collins, 2000; Houle, 2009; Kezar, 2002). In essence, the knower impacts what is known—that is, the way she or he perceives and understands leadership.

During the last decade, 131 doctoral dissertations were stored in the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Database that use non-positional leadership as the theoretical framework for examining women leadership and that of oppressed groups in influencing social or organizational change. For example, Petty (1996) examines non-positional leadership within a horizontally structured organization and relates its characteristics to those of Ella Baker's leadership and SNCC's organizational structure. Two novel leadership concepts emerged from that study: centerperson and core-leader. Charles (2007) uses non-positional leadership to examine political activism within social movements through exploring Ella Baker's life narrative and role in the SNCC. The significance of Charles' research is its focus on social change in the United States which, she argues, was due in large part to the efficacy of non-positional, grassroots leadership within a nonhierarchal organization.

While the number of dissertations defended and stored in ProQuest and the two previous examples of relevant studies illustrate the increasing appeal and application of non-positional leadership, there are many other such examples. Consider Kezar's (2002) ethnographic study, which investigated non-positional leadership using a diverse sample of thirty-six community college faculty and administrators. The study sought to determine how gender, race, ethnicity, and the formal positions women hold influence their understanding and images of leadership. Study results revealed that participants' viewed status as a factor in determining whether they defined leadership as non-positional or positional (Kezar, 2002). Both minority and nonminority study participants generally highlighted oppression as influencing their personal philosophy of leadership. And overwhelmingly, participants characterized their leadership philosophy using descriptors such as collective, collaborative, nonhierarchical, non-positional, empowerment-based, nondirective, facilitative, and team oriented (Kezar, 2002).

A foundational principle of non-positionality is group participation. However, both Kezar (2000) and Tierney (1989) question the notion that broad participation creates among group members a sense of inclusiveness, or that all group members have a common reality and understanding of leadership. This skepticism finds some resonance in Astin's and Leland's (1991) qualitative study on women's leadership, which explores the factors that equip women leaders to wage successful organizational change initiatives. The study results identified three leader-categories: predecessors, instigators, and inheritors (Astin & Leland, 1991). Predecessors are women who hold formal, traditional leadership positions as early as the 1950s and who have held such positions as college presidents or deans of women's colleges. Instigators are social pioneers who paved the way for social change through "the patriarchal structure of existing institutions" and provided leadership, served as a mentor to others, and served as role models

(Astin & Leland, 1991, p. 33). Finally, inhibitors are young women appointed to formal leadership positions in the 1970s or who were mentored by a few instigators. In addition to these results, several basic tenets of non-positional leadership also emerged: (1) leadership is a collaborative process; (2) power is different from control; (3) power is the ability to energize others; and (4) the social, cultural, and historical context is the strongest influence on leadership (Astin & Leland, 1991).

Clearly, many factors—such as social, structural, and the leader-behavior of leaders—influence women's views on leadership. This suggests that non-positionality represents another critical aspect of leadership that has grown in significance due to the changing needs of people, communities, organizations, and ultimately society. There is reason to assume its appeal will continue to grow in the foreseeable future.

Black Leadership

African-Americans have a rich history of leadership dating as far back as the Southampton revolt of 1831, which abolitionist Nat Turner orchestrated, led, and paid the ultimate price in the process (Greenberg, 2003). African-Americans have pursued an array of approaches to overcome the historical weight of racial injustice and the consequent indignities it bred. Rather than succumb to racial oppression, they chose to engage in collective action and looked within "their own ranks" for leadership (Gordon (2000, p. xiv). Though there were many courageous and morally driven heroes and heroines who succeeded Turner, Black leadership was on clear display when Southern African-Americans engaged in collective social action and launched the modern Civil Rights Movement. These civil rights activists understood leadership as a catalyst for social change—their liberation from the hegemonic and racially oppressive systems, which reflected their reality for centuries.

Occasionally, the terms Black leadership and African-American leadership are used interchangeably to describe the same construct. This current study follows that convention as well. The term Black is not simply an adjective modifying the noun leadership. Neither is it simply a phrase intended to create confusion about the traditional connotation of the words Black and leadership. Rather, when combined, Black leadership describes a certain way of leading, a different perspective on leadership, and thus a specific approach to leadership. As is the case within the White community, there is not a monolithic leadership style within the African-American community. Gordon (2000) observes that "although Black leaders share a common destiny, values, [and respect] human dignity, they differ markedly in ideologies, leadership styles, and tactics" (p. xiv).

Black leadership originated within the African-American community and contributed to maintaining its social life, including encouraging agency, personal and group accountability, and group advancement (Walters & Smith, 999). Few scholars illustrate this point more adeptly than Gordon (2000), Davis (2007), and Marable (1998). For example, in his book, *Black Leadership for Social Change*, Gordon (2000) discusses the critical role Black leadership played in igniting sweeping social changes in American during the last two centuries. Other scholars (Gordon, 2000; Keiser, 1997; Marable, 1998; Walters & Smith, 1999) who consider leadership in the context of sociopolitical activism find resonance in the postulations of Astin and Leland (1991), which observe that the historical and racial perspective of the leader cannot be excluded from a theoretical exploration on leadership. This is especially felicitous for Black leadership. According to Gordon (2000), Black leadership must be considered "as part of American leadership history.… [but it]…is different from the American 'dominant culture' of leadership" (p. xiv). While these factors are critical to understanding Black leadership, it is

fitting at this point to ask: what then is the character of Black leadership?

Unveiling the Character of Black Leadership

Views diverge on the nature and character of Black leadership. That which is undisputed is that any exploration of Black leadership must consider the unique perspectives of African-Americans (Walters and Smith, 1999). This viewpoint emphasizes the importance of positionality when pursuing research in the area of Black leadership. Collins (1990) expands this postulation by adding that the perspectives of African-Americans must also include the social location or border space they have occupied or currently occupy, which intersects to generate a distinctive group history or group experience. Social location and border space represent the social sphere the powerless have occupied historically.

In defining Black leadership, Gordon (2000) posits it is "a group reaction of peoples of African descent in America to their oppression, engendered by the psychology of slavery" and whose "desire to be free human beings in the world's greatest democracy was their driving force" (p. 17). This definition establishes a process, which is understood as "Black self-determination, a search for the realization of the 'American Dream' for all Black Americans" (Gordon, 2000, p. 23).

Traditionally, leadership within the African-American community reflected a "charismatic or dominating political style" with leaders possessing "a powerful, magnetic presence and the ability to articulate deeply held grievances and hopes among their people" (Marable, 1998, p. xiii). These leaders possessed strong organizational skills and the ability to inspire group members who, in turn, were willing and able to promote their ideas. However, Walter and Smith (1999) assert that a prerequisite for any individual aspiring to lead in the African-American community must have membership within that community, possess the same

cultural orientation, and the ability to advocate for the needs and aspirations of community members.

On the other hand, Davis (2007) instructs that Black leadership is "a dynamic internal conflict over values, resources, and legitimacy as well as a simultaneous conflict with the dominant community, a dominant community that is frequently involved in a patron-client relationship with leadership factions within the community" (p. 62). Based on the history of African-Americans in the United States, both definitions seem to incorporate a level of truth. While arguing for a more democratic political system, Marable (1998) posits that unlike decades passed, African-Americans have the ability to "move away from the charismatic, authoritarian leadership style, [and] paternalistic organizations toward the goal of 'group-centered leaders' and grassroots empowerment…instead of leadership from above, democracy from below" (p. xvii).

This model of leadership advocates total community engagement in a process of togetherness whereby one voice is not any more valuable than another. It is a process in which all voices have the opportunity to be heard and ability to influence.

Transformational Leadership

A large number of scholars extol the virtues of transformational leadership. Sociologist James Downton first coined this concept in 1973 (Northhouse, 2010), which leadership theorist James MacGregor Burns further developed in 1978 to describe an effective relationship between leaders and followers (Homrig, 2001). According to Northhouse (2010), transformational leadership is a "process that changes and transforms individuals" (p. 130). Through this process, leaders and followers form a harmonious relationship which leads to increased motivation and morality for both. Charisma, individual attention, and intellectual

stimulation are behavioral factors generally associated with transformational leaders (Gibson et al, 2003).

Bass (1990) provides an instructive analysis of the way transformational leadership is used generally in the African-American community. He writes that:

> The needs and experiences of the black population may dictate great emphases on transformational leadership…Leaders of black movements are characterized by their satisfaction of mutual problems and the resulting injustices. They focus much on group identity and the need for a sense of community. While leaders in the white mainstream more often direct their attention to conserving resources and the status quo, leaders of minorities, such as the blacks, must more often be transformational in their concern for social change, as well as for unmet social needs for inequalities in the distribution of opportunities. (Bass, 1990, p. 745)

There are two foci of transformational leadership. The first is it emphasis on the needs of followers by focusing on mentoring, coaching, and empowering them to achieve (Einstein & Humphreys, 2001; Gibson et al, 2003). The second is its emphasis on leaders developing and maintaining followers' trust achieved through consistent behaviors toward followers, building confidence by sharing in the success of goal achievement(s), and heightening in followers a desire to succeed are ways a leader gains trust (Einstein & Humphreys, 2001). What matters most to a transformational leader is the self-actualization of followers (Einstein & Humphreys, 2001). Inspiring and stimulating followers to unite to achieve mutually established goals is another characteristic of transformational leadership. In essence, transformational leaders empower followers to embrace self-actualization as an important collective objective and to move beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group or community.

Oftentimes, transformational leadership and charismatic leadership are believed to exist along a continuum. According to Hansbrough (2012) and Northhouse (2010), the two paradigms differ in important ways. Charismatic leadership incorporates both personalized and socialized leadership. Personalized leaders, such as former dictators Benito Mussolini and

Adolph Hitler, used power for personal gain while socialized leaders, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, used power to empower others (Hansbrough, 2012). To make clear the distinctions between the two groups, Northhouse (2010) uses the term pseudotransformational leadership, which refers to "leaders who are self-consumed, exploitive, and power-oriented with warped moral values" (p. 173). While leaders in both categories are regarded as charismatic, only socialized leaders are considered transformational (Hansbrough, 2012).

Just as there are dissimilarities between transformational leaders and charismatic leaders, there also are important similarities. Both constructs begin the leader-follower relationship with a sense of responsibility for the growth and development of followers (Bass, 1999; Einstein & Humphreys, 2001; Gibson et al, 2003; Shamir, 1999). Transformational leaders strive to influence for the better the behavior of followers, the organization, and its processes while modeling the desired behavior, communicating the vision, and displaying confidence in followers (Bass, 1999; Einstein & Humphreys, 2001; Gibson et al, 2003; Shamir, 1999). These leaders are concerned about long range, as opposed to short range problems and issues (Shamir, 1999). They instill in followers confidence; they encourage followers to re-imagine the future and question social norms; and they empower followers to seek their full potential. Furthermore, transformational leaders integrate creative insight, persistence and energy, and intuition and sensitivity to the needs of others for a better society (Sharmir, 1999).

As with any leadership model, transformation leadership has several weaknesses. It lacks conceptual clarity, is oftentimes viewed as an all-inclusive approach to leadership rather than a matter of degree, and frequently associates leadership with the personality of the leader rather than behaviors that aspirants can learn (Nemiro, Beyerlein, Bradley, & Beyerlein, 2008; Northhouse, 1997). Equally important to note are the strengths of this leadership concept, which

includes its efficacy in influencing for the good a change process which enables followers to transform their behaviors in ways that benefit themselves and the group directly.

Grassroots Leadership as a Call to Action

Grassroots leadership has a well-established history in the United States. In many respects, this form of leadership represents a call to action to engage collectively for the greater good. Therefore, grassroots leadership plays a vital role in organizing and mobilizing communities (Tierney, 1983; Tandon, Azelton, Kelly, & Strickland, 1998; Boehm & Staples, 2005). This type of informal leadership generally unites a community, serves as the liaison to politicians and government officials on issues that matter to the community. Grassroots leadership also creates an environment in which community members can identify with the community and feel a sense of belonging

Kezar and Lester (2011) argue that grassroots leadership operates at the local level and is informal rather than formal. In social movement literature, grassroots leadership is the "stimulation of social change or the challenge of the status quo by those who lack formal authority or delegated power, or institutionalized methods for doing so" (Kezar & Lester, 2011, p. 9). Two distinctive features characterize grassroots leadership. It is associated with grassroots activism and observable in the way ordinary people pursue a range of social issues (Kezar, 2012) such as those related to women's rights, marriage equality, climate change, and nuclear disarmament are a few examples.

Among the many stellar examples of grassroots leadership, few are more crystallizing than what occurred during the Civil Rights Movement. Grassroots activism and leadership resulted in major social and legislative victories—which enfranchised African-Americans and other historically marginalized groups through the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. These successes made it possible for many African-Americans to enter the mainstream of American society, participate in the political franchise, and access professions previously foreclosed to them.

Though grassroots leadership offers many advantages for social change initiatives, Kezar (2012) cautions that this form of leadership is fragile and can fail overtime if grassroots leaders are unable to secure long-range support and institutionalize the results of their change agendas. In fact, the activism of the seamstresses, sharecroppers, maids, cooks, day laborers, teachers, ministers, railroad workers, nurses, and others who participated in the Civil Rights Movement illustrates the positive effects of grassroots leadership (Cobb, 2002). The socioeconomic background, race, religion, class, or gender of the activists was not determinative of their participation.

Characteristics of grassroots leaders. Just as grassroots leadership emerges within a community, so do grassroots leaders. These leaders typically do not self-appoint. Because they are informal leaders, grassroots leaders generally lack authority or power over the community or its residents (Kezar & Lester, 2011). Rather, these leaders engage from the bottom-up and in cooperation and solidarity with the community and its residents (Kezar, 2012; Kezar & Lester, 2011). In essence, grassroots leaders represent the purist form of a facilitator. Their primary objective is to work collaboratively with the communities they represent to help develop an agenda that maps a mutually acceptable course of action to alter the status quo.

In describing the role of grassroots leaders, Kezar (2012) clarifies that "grassroots or bottom-up leaders are individuals without positions of authority who make change without formal power" (pp. 775-6). The worldviews of these leaders are different from leaders appointed to formal positions—that is, formal leaders. Unlike formal leaders who receive

various forms of rewards and recognition from their employers, grassroots leaders typically do not receive either. Neither do these leaders receive remuneration for work they perform on behalf of the community (Kezar, 2012). They oftentimes volunteer their time.

Furthermore, grassroots leaders function within a nonhierarchal organizational structure with little or no association to formal organizations (Kezar & Lester (2011). These leaders must create their own organizational structure, as well as provide their own support and network systems (Kezar & Lester, 2011; Prindeville, 2002). Generally, grassroots organizations are structurally and ideologically democratic and tend to value equality, participation, and consensus.

Serving Others through Servant Leadership

Though little empirical research exists today to support a theory of servant leadership (Bowman, 1997; Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999), the concept of servant leadership has gained popularity during the last two decades. Robert Greenleaf first introduced the concept of servant leadership in his 1970 seminal essay, "The Servant as Leader" (Northhouse, 2012; Spears, 1996, 2010), but later expanded his exploration of the concept in a 1977 essay titled "Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness" (Bowman, 1997; Greenleaf, 1977; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). In both essays, Greenleaf (1970, 1977) argues for a different type of leadership model—one which makes serving others a first priority of leadership.

For Greenleaf and Spears (2002), "the great leader is seen as a servant first, and this simple fact is the key to his [or her] greatness" (p. 21). From Greenleaf's perspective, servant leadership begins in a specific way.

> It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead…The difference manifests itself in the care taken by

the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 27)

From Spears' (1996) perspective, servant leadership "emphasizes increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; promoting a sense of community; and the sharing of power in decision-making" (p. 33). The strength of this leadership concept is its focus on the knowledge acquisition, growth, and autonomy of followers (Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Servant leadership does not simply refer to a style of leadership but rather a way of living for those who choose to serve others. According to Greenleaf (1977), the litmus test for determining whether a set of leader-behaviors comport with the principles of servant leadership begins with answers to the following questions:

> Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (p. 27)

Though generally anecdotal, some scholars argue that answers to these questions are implicit in the behaviors authentic servant leaders exhibit (Bowman, 1977). While Greenleaf (1970, 1977) discusses numerous ways to express the essence of serving others, he failed to elucidate these. Other scholars, however, used Greenleaf's writings to develop a profile of a servant leader. For Spears 1996), ten characteristics best personify such a leader: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, conceptualization, foresight, persuasion, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community" (pp. 27-29).

The prevailing characteristics of a servant leader differ among scholars. For example, Hayden (2011) writes that the philosophical foundation of servant leadership is grounded in values—most of which are associated with Christian values. Servant leadership is concerned with leader-behaviors that focus on the needs and concerns of followers (Bowman, 1997;

Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Greenleaf, 1970, 1977; Northhouse, 2012; Spears, 2010;

Spears & Lawrence, 2004). And servant leaders place the needs, aspirations, and interests of

followers above their own. These types of leaders strive to transform followers by empowering

them to reach their full potential (Bowman, 1997; Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Greenleaf,

1970, 1977; Hayden, 2011; Northhouse, 2012; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). People

follow servant leaders freely because they trust them.

The grassroots organizers and community activists involved in the Civil Rights

Movement understood that their activism was not only for their own individual freedoms but

also for the freedoms of others. Beyond all else, the primary objective of a servant leader is

serving others.

Achieving Social Transformation through Liberation Leadership

Understanding the concept of liberation leadership generally requires some knowledge

of history. Context matters, since liberation leadership is steeped in history. Consider that the

social struggle for the liberation of African-Americans from oppressive sociopolitical and

economic systems served as the mantra of the modern Civil Rights Movement (Levy, 1998;

Lewis, 2012) as well as for the Black freedom movements of centuries passed. It was through

the intervention of liberation leadership that a road map to social change emerged.

Liberation leadership is a relatively unknown paradigm. A couple of scholars offer a

definition of this construct. Noer (1997) argues liberation leadership "facilitates the

development of the learning response in individuals…[that]…frees people to invest their energy

in meaningful and satisfying work that increases organizational productivity and personal

development" (p. 163). In his unpublished doctoral dissertation, *Courting Strategy Management

through the Intervention of Liberation Leadership*, O'Donovan (2007) describes liberation

leadership as a concept geared toward social justice and learning. It is a

> Process in which leaders are not seen as individuals in charge of followers, but as members of a community of practice, i.e. people united in a common enterprise who share a history and thus certain values, beliefs, ways of talking, and ways of doing things. (p. 30)

By this, O'Donovan (2007) means the aim of such a process is to create a sense of collective oneness between the leader and the people involved in the group or community. Ruth (2006) agrees that when contextualizing leadership within a liberation framework, it indeed is a process but one that requires "building close relationships within which we listen deeply to people's thinking about and feelings so as, together, to think clearly about what is happening in the current situation and what needs to happen to address the issues facing us" (p. 16). Ruth (2006) adds that liberation leadership is not concerned with the position an individual holds but rather his or her leader-behaviors, the way the leader relates to people, and the recognition that "everyone is a potential leader" (p. 37).

Though liberation leadership is a nontraditional leadership framework, a more indepth review of its character provides greater clarity. An excellent starting point is Willie's (1983) historical analysis of liberation leadership in the article, "A Theory of Liberation Leadership." It establishes a linkage between education and leadership by equating the tenets of liberation leadership to the leadership of the Hebrew prophet Moses, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

According to Willie (1983), these liberation leaders were among the greatest crusaders for the rights of the oppressed and marginalized. Some of the most influential ethnic and racial leaders emerged from affluent sectors of oppressed societies; they were members of a small cadre of the most highly educated who assimilated successfully in the dominant culture (Willie, 1983). For example, the aforementioned leaders were educated in the ways of their respective

dominant cultures: for Moses, within the cultural space of Pharaoh; for Gandhi, within the elite British culture; and for King, within the cultural trappings of a prestigious New England university.

While each leader lived during a different epoch, with differing mores and possibilities, and was influenced differently by his respective environment, Moses, Gandhi, and King were educated within what W.E. B. DuBois refers to as a "double culture" (as cited in Willie, 1983, p. 6). By this, DuBois meant that such a leader "becomes a marginal person who knows and understands the ways of life of the…dominant and subdominant power groups" (as cited in Willie, 1983, p. 6). This sensitivity endows liberation leaders with insights into the world of their oppressors, which enabled individuals like Moses, Gandhi, and King to identify with the oppressed while using their knowledge of the dominant culture to spearhead sweeping social change.

In many respects, the direct nonviolent actions of these men were the quintessence of double-consciousness. DuBois observed that gaining knowledge within a double-culture leads to double-consciousness. Bray (1984) conceptualizes double-consciousness within a psychological paradigm and posits that the concept represents a "psychological dichotomy which results when an individual lives in a culture, such as the black community; yet must be aware for his [her] survival of the workings and expectations of a dominant culture" (p. 57).

Though the social space in which oppressed and marginalized groups have been forced to live, liberation leadership enables them to challenge the paralyzing grasp of double-consciousness. DuBois clarifies this perspective when he wrote that double-consciousness evokes in the dominated and marginalized a

> sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his

twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (DuBois, 1994, p. 2)

In the case of Moses, Gandhi, and King, education placed prominently in their sociopolitical victories, which they achieved on behalf of the oppressed and marginalized. Not only were those victories linked to their leadership but also occurred, as Willie (1983) notes, only after each man made a double-choice. By this, Willie (1983) means they rejected "vain glory" and the oppression of a race of people. In the absence of making a double-choice, Moses, Gandhi, and King's privileged knowledge and influence could not be characterized as "leadership for liberation…which must be cultivated and mediated by personal choices" (Willie, 1983, p. 4).

From O'Donovan's (2007) work, I identified the following characteristics of liberation leadership.

- Emphasizes inclusive fellowship, community and communion, with an overriding concern for the welfare of learners
- Focuses on relational rather than individual
- Views influencing behaviors as the exclusive core of all relationships
- Subscribes to a process conducive to social change initiatives whose aim is to forge significant change
- Embraces diverse opinions and differing interpretations of meaning
- Values a participatory democratic decision-making process
- Emphasizes tenets of distributive leadership whereby all members play a leadership role
- Encourages members to establish long-range goals and objectives
- Encourages members to recast and use creative ways to achieve desired outcomes.

Much like most leadership frameworks, liberation leadership is a complex social construct—though historical evidence has shown that those who subscribe to its principles typically have done so in the name of freedom and justice. Through the use of liberation leadership, the oppressed and marginalized are able to chart their own course in life and ultimately determine their own destiny. It was Greene (1988) who argued that "the modes of seeking liberation differ along with the means of resistance. What is common to all is a

determination to act (sometimes at any cost) against what is experienced as oppression, coercion,

injustice, exclusion, [and/or] neglect" (p. 24). Unquestionably this was the motivation of the tens

of millions of African-Americans who fought for their rights during the Civil Rights Movement.

Significance of the Leader's Role

Discussions about leadership rarely take place in a vacuum—that is, independent of the

leader and his or her role. Leaders play a vital role in an organization and, most definitely, in

social movements. At few other times in American history has this been more evident than during

the Civil Rights Movement. But just as there is not a unified definition of leadership, there also is

not unanimity among scholars about the definition and attributes of a leader. Marable (1998)

wrote these words:

> Leaders are essentially individuals who have the ability to understand their own times,
> who express or articulate programs or policies that reflect the perceived interests and
> desires of particular groups, and who devise instruments or political vehicles that
> enhance the capacity to achieve effective change. In very limited ways, leaders imprint
> their personal characteristics or individual stamp on a given moment in time. Leaders do
> make history, but never by themselves, and never in ways that they fully recognize. (p.
> xvi)

In discussing the historical struggle of African-Americans to overcome racial oppression,

Gordon (2000) offers for comparison several definitions of a leader. Beginning this comparison,

Burgess (1962) views a leader as "an individual whose behavior affects the patterning of behavior

within the black community at a given time" (as cited in Gordon, 2000, p. 22). Ladd (1966) and

Hamilton (1981) use a racialized prism through which to consider the role of a leader. For Ladd

(1966), an African-American leader is a "person able to make decisions affecting the choice of

race objectives and/or the means utilized to attain them" though to Hamilton (1981), such a leader

is "one who is racially black in a leadership role and who speaks and acts on matters of specific

(but not necessarily exclusive) concern to Black people as a direct purpose of occupying that role"
(as cited in Gordon, 2000, p. 22).

On the other hand, Thompson (1963) uses what he calls a "functional approach to
leadership" in which the leader is an individual actor who identifies in a visible way with the
Black agenda to achieve a set of pre-established objectives (as cited in Gordon, 2000). For
Holden (1973), leaders are "those who seek (or claim to seek) the interests of the whole black
population…Such persons purport to lead by defining for blacks how they should relate to
whites" (as cited in Gordon, 2000, p. 22). Morris and Staggenborg (2002) place the definition
of a leader in a social movement context. They argue that leaders "inspire commitment,
mobilize resources, create and recognize opportunities, devise strategies, frame demands, and
influence outcomes" (p. 1).

Finally, Preskill and Brookfield (2009) offer a slightly different perspective, one which
focuses on the role of leaders in the context of adult education, and a concept discussed later in
an upcoming section. Preskill and Brookfield (2009) regard a leader as a teacher whose primary
responsibility is to pave the way for collective learning and critical reflection. In this respect, a
leader must be able to create an environment conducive to leadership development.

Despite this range of perspectives on the role of leaders, those closest to Baker frequently
heard from her this frequent rejoinder: "My theory is strong people don't need strong leaders"
because they [have] the capacity within themselves to self-direct" (Cantarow et al, 1980, p. 53;
Crawford et al, 1993, p. 51; Bobo, et al, 2004, p. 79). Developing leaders within marginalized
communities was a goal Baker sought to achieve. Doing so laid the foundation for broad
community organizing throughout the Deep South, which helped claim the civil rights of African-
Americans and other socio-politically oppressed groups.

Discussion

The thesis of this study began with the postulation that none of the five leadership frameworks inculcates the multidimensionality of Baker's leadership. While these frameworks and their associated elements share some commonalities with Baker's participants-reported leader-behaviors, the linkage between the two data sets diverge in significant ways. Table 5 below presents participants' responses to Interview Question 7 within the *Interview Guide and Protocol* of this study. That question inquired about Baker's leadership attributes—specifically, what five attributes best describe her as a leader?

Participants' responses illuminated further Baker's leader-behaviors and leadership philosophy. No participant constrained him or herself to articulating only five leadership attributes. Data presented in Tables 5 and 6 aided in comparing and contrasting Baker's participants reported leader-behaviors to the primary characteristics of the five leadership frameworks frequently used to explain Baker's leadership. The comparison that follows illuminates the points of convergence and divergence. For example, in the case of professional bridge leadership, Robnett (1999) argues that the nature of Baker's role during the Movement is consistent with the characteristics of professional bridge leadership. Both participant-reports confirm Robnett's postulation. Indeed, Baker was an experienced grassroots or community organizer who amassed a wealth of knowledge during her more than five decades of civil rights activism. She worked for several civil rights organizations but did not confine her activism to only one social cause. Baker promoted a different type of organizing philosophy but also understood that hierarchical structures and charismatic leaders were ineffective in sustaining a mass movement. Baker was also trusted within the Black community. All of these, Robnett (1999) instructs, are key elements of professional bridge leadership.

Table 5
Participant-Generated Leadership Attributes of Ella Baker

Berkeley	Chisolm	Custer	McDowell	Zenith
Articulate speaker but held back	Dogged determination	Very sympathetic	Very compassionate and loving	Viewed herself as a facilitator, a technician
Promoted others and gave them voice	Excellent orator	Brilliant strategist and speaker	Concerned about how you develop	Someone who got people together
Understood the potential of every person; worked to get the best out of all of us	A great influencer; able to pursue and achieve goals; clear understanding of the objective	Fearless in choosing projects	Concerned about people being prepared	Someone who opened doors for others
Was aware of what was needed without being antagonistic or vitriolic	Leader in warfare; had foresight	Ready and able to give personal support	She wanted you to know what you're talking about	A defender of young people
Dignified and self-possessed	Patient and understanding	Kind and loving	Didn't need to be seen or paid attention to	A critic who spoke her mind
Politically sophisticated	Bold and fearless	Courageous but a good listener	She had faith in people	Could be stern when needed
Shied away from publicity	Ability to relate to people around her	Valued relationships	She could see things that nobody else could	Possessed unadulterated courage
Led from the bottom-up	Motivated people to do extraordinary things in situations that were extremely dangerous	Respected everyone's opinion	She gave us our values	Harbored no thoughts of self-enrichment
Book smart but practical; pragmatic and idealistic	Goal-oriented	Listened to what all had to say	She spoke her mind	Able to keep a whole network alive; she kept them alive
Accepting of people's strengths as well as their frailties		Possessed indomitable courage to take a different road	She was very impactful	Played the role of mentor
Took a long view of things and steps for moving forward		Willing to listen to all opinions	Excellent leader; very smart	
Was focused, not diverted, not distracted; kept her eyes on the prize		Had a sense of humor		

While this leadership framework clearly aligns with several of Baker's participants-reported leadership characteristics, there also are areas of omission. Participants reported that the core foundation of Baker's leadership comprised the following leader-behaviors:

- Using patience as a pedagogical tool to develop leadership skills in others, i.e. encouraging critical thinking, empowering others to exercise agency
- Displaying humanity and humility, i.e. harboring no interest in self-enrichment, exhibiting genuine concern for others, viewed herself as a facilitator rather than a leader
- Leading with principles, competence, and courage, i.e. speaking truth to power, acting boldly, courageously, and strategically
- Providing philosophical grounding, i.e. laying a philosophical foundation for others, redefining their values, and shaping their worldviews
- Enabling people to act, i.e. using her knowledge, personal relationships, and networks to facilitate the way forward
- Organizing from the bottom-up
- Decision-making through broad participation, i.e. valuing inclusivity and diversity of thought, legitimizing and giving voice to others
- Overcoming social obstacles, i.e. gender and class discrimination

These interpretive findings confirm that professional bridge leadership does not incorporate any of these participant-reported leader-behaviors. Consequently, this framework is not representative of Baker's leadership. With few exceptions, the same pattern holds when comparing Baker's reported leader-behaviors (see Table 5 above) to the primary characteristics of collective leadership, group-centered leadership and participatory democracy, grassroots leadership, and servant leadership (see Table 6 below). These leadership frameworks are most often associated with Baker's leadership, and Table 6 highlights their salient characteristics.

Consistent with Baker's leader-behaviors, collective leadership focuses on leadership skills development, rejects the notion of leader-centeredness, encourages self-efficacy, consensus decision-making, and encourages challenges of the status quo (Tandon, Azelton, Kelly, & Strickland, 1998; Tierney, 1983; W. F. Kellogg, 2007). The degree of dissimilarity between the two stem from the lack of emphasis collective leadership places on the leader displaying humanity and humility; leading with principles, competence, and courage; providing

philosophical grounding; and overcoming social obstacles. Of Baker's eight participants reported

leader-behaviors, there is convergence between only four collective leadership characteristics.

Table 6

Leadership Frameworks Used to Explain Baker's Leadership

Bridge Leadership	Collective Leadership	Group-Centered Leadership and Participatory Democracy	Grassroots Leadership	Servant Leadership
Functions as an intermediate layer of informal leadership	Supports leadership skills development	Emphasizes participatory democracy	Focuses on organizing and mobilizing communities	Emphasizes service to others
Bridges people to the Movement	Rejects leader dependency and leader-centeredness	Decentralizes power and decision-making	Fosters a sense of belonging	Promotes a sense of community
Enables women to play informal leadership roles	Promotes self-efficacy and leader empowerment	Values bottom-up decision-making	Promotes identification with the community	Shares responsibility for decision-making
Persons known and trusted within the Black community	Emphasizes unity, partnership, and accountability	Emphasizes the principle of social justice	Encourages challenges of the status quo	Focuses on knowledge acquisition, growth, and autonomy of followers
Enables women to support political frames and ideologies	Emphasizes learning as well as collective learning	Values inclusivity	Relates to grassroots activism	Emphasizes listening, empathy, healing, and awareness
Emphasizes self-determination	Responsibility is shared between leader and followers	Recasts the leader's role to one of facilitator	Is a type of informal leadership	Takes a holistic approach to work
Promotes a different organizing philosophy	Mutual respect is a core principle	Emphasizes discourse, debate, reflection, and consensus	Posits that everyone has inherent talents, can make a contribution, and must actively engage to create a just system.	Emphasizes foresight, conceptualization persuasion, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building communities
Acknowledges the limitations of hierarchies and charismatic leaders to forge social change	Encourages challenges of old assumptions			

Much like collective leadership, group-centered leadership and participatory democracy, grassroots leadership, and servant leadership share many of Baker's leader-behaviors. Despite their strong alignment, these three frameworks share many of the same points of divergence as collective leadership. For example, group-centered leadership and participatory democracy emphasize (1) discourse, debate, reflection, and consensus; (2) participatory democracy; (3) bottom-up decision-making; (4) social justice and inclusivity; (5) decentralization of power; and (6) the leader's role functioning as facilitator. All of these characteristics are consistent with Baker's leader-behaviors.

The areas in which the two diverge are: leading with principles, competence, and courage; providing philosophical grounding; enabling people to act; and overcoming social obstacles. Rather than aligning with only four of Baker's leader-behaviors, as collective leadership does, the comparison revealed that group-centered leadership and participatory democracy align with five of her eight leader-behaviors. These comparisons provide convincing evidence that none of the five leadership frameworks, which previous scholars used to explain Baker's leadership fail to reflect the full range of her leader-behaviors.

This study now turns its focus in the upcoming section to answering the final research question. Doing so required the use of the findings discussed in previous sections of this report, as well as the eleven data categories and subcategories.

Answering the Final Research Question

This dissertation began with a clear, yet provocative, thesis: that previous scholarly works in the field of movement leadership fail to encapsulate the multidimensionality of Baker's leadership. Proving this thesis required answering the three research questions that guided this study. Chapters 4 and 5 answered Research Questions 1 and 2. This current chapter section

answers Research Question 3, which asks: *What leadership framework(s) best reflect and encapsulate the multi-dimensional character of both her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors?* Answering this question required comparing and contrasting several sets of data.

The first data set included findings presented in the previous sections of this chapter. Baker's leader-behaviors (see Table 5), which research participants articulated, and this study used to develop its data categories and subcategories, comprise the second data set. The third data set reflects the primary elements of liberation leadership. Comparing these data was useful in determining the leadership framework that best encapsulates Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. Table 7 below illustrates that comparison. The interpretive results of the previous comparisons led to an interesting finding: that liberation leadership is more closely aligned with Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors than any other framework discussed and compared in earlier sections of this dissertation. Though the primary characteristics of liberation leadership are enumerated in Table 7 above and discussed in a previous section of this chapter, it is useful to revisit its foundational elements. These and the primary elements of Baker's leadership are inextricably linked.

Recall that the aim of liberation leadership is achieving for the oppressed social justice and learning (O'Donovan, 2007; Noer, 1997; Ruth, 2006). Its focus is on the leader's behavior rather than on the leader or the position he or she holds. The foundational underpinning of liberation leadership is that every person is a potential leader (Ruth, 2006). This, indeed, was the bedrock of Baker's leadership philosophy, which she consistently enacted. One research participant referred to Baker as an egalitarian teacher (McDowell, personal communication, November 5, 2013). By this he meant Baker believed all people were learners, capable of functioning as leaders, and deserved the chance to contribute to their own liberation. She also

understood that without skills and knowledge, achieving these goals would be precarious, if not

impossible.

Table 7
Comparison of Liberation Leadership and Baker's Participants reported Leader-Behaviors

Liberation Leadership	Participants' Descriptors of Baker's Leader-Behaviors
Proposes a way forward	Used personal relationships and networks to pave the way forward for SNCC
Takes initiative	Self-actualized and possessed a "dogged determination"
Takes principled stands	Took principled stands speaking truth to power
Organizes people	Organized people and communities using a bottom-up approach
Inspires others	Inspired and motivated SNCC to take action it would not have otherwise
Develops potential in others	Emphasized leadership skills development
Challenges social systems; questions fundamental values	Organized, planned, and led campaigns that dismantled oppressive social systems
Inspires a shared vision	Inspired a shared vision of racial and social equality
Strives to understand the wider context	Was "analytical, took the long view" and acted strategically
Emphasizes "inclusive fellowship...embraces diverse opinions"	Gave voice to and legitimized all viewpoints
Views influencing behaviors as the core of all relationships	Influenced the lives of SNCC and other movement actors and impacted Movement outcomes
Focuses on the "well-being of learners"	Exhibited a strong sense of humanity during her interactions with others
Values participatory democratic decision-making	Espoused and practiced participatory democracy
Emphasizes "tenets of distributive leadership," where all members play a leadership role	Empowered others to lead; delegated leadership responsibilities
Encourages long-range planning	Encouraged SNCC to plan ahead, e.g. controversial speakers, voters' registration campaigns, etc.
Encourages members to use creative ways to achieve desired outcomes	Used patience as a pedagogical tool for teaching critical thinking and creative problem-solving

Sources: O'Donovan, S. (2007). Courting Strategy Management through the Intervention of Liberation
Leadership. Retrieved from https://hydra.hull.ac.uk/assets/hull:744a/content
Ruth, S. (2006). *Leadership and liberation: A psychological approach*. New York, NY: Routledge.

In fact, an important aspect of Baker's leadership philosophy was her belief that

race, gender, and/or class was not determinative of the capacity of people to learn, lead, or

participate in their own liberation—their enfranchisement, quest for freedom, or

emancipation. Unlike most leaders, whether accepting of the leader label or not, Baker saw

and recognized the nexus between these four constructs and oppression. An important

aspect of Baker's leadership philosophy was her belief that race, gender, and/or class was not determinative of people's capacity to learn, lead, or participate in their quest for liberation.

Participants routinely referenced Baker's high level of patience when meeting or interacting with them and the SNCC. She used patience as a pedagogical tool to train and prepare young activists to challenge oppressive social systems and to assume a leadership role while doing so. Baker understood that acquiring new skills and knowledge was the only way African-Americans would achieve liberation. From Baker, SNCC learned the importance of human agency; problem-solving through critical thinking; decision-making using the principles of participatory democracy; conflict resolution skills to resolve internal disagreements; and strategic planning to launch voters' registration campaigns and organize the African-American community in the Deep South states.

Much like Baker's leadership, liberation leadership is multi-dimensional. It is a process in which there are no leaders but rather members of a community who share a history, certain values, beliefs, and ways of doing things (O'Donovan, 2007). According to one participant, Baker did not view herself as a leader but rather a facilitator—a facilitator of social change (Zenith, personal communication, October 16, 2013). While she may not have contextualized the role she played in this way, participants provided compelling reports which stand in stark contrast. Indeed, Baker was a unique kind of leader; she was a liberation leader.

Consistent with the prerequisites for liberation leadership, Baker was a member of the African-American community, which movement literature traces her lineage back to the slavery period. Her grandparents were former slaves and, presumably, so were their ancestors. Baker's goal was the same as other African-Americans during the modern civil rights era: to be free,

free to exercise their full constitutional rights.

Moreover, liberation leadership posits that this type of leader proposes a way forward, takes initiative and principled stands, organizes people, and inspires them to pursue their freedom objective. The primary data of this study are replete with evidence of Baker's leader-behaviors and philosophy in each of these areas. For example, she was not reticent to speak truth to power, which is indicative of a principled leader. One participant recalled the time Baker rebuked the efforts of older civil rights leaders who wanted to sanitize the 1963 March on Washington speech that a SNCC member was scheduled to give. In a Freirean manner, Baker refused to allow SNCC members to remain trapped in the culture of silence; she knew the young activists had the capacity to view their world critically; to do so in a dialogical exchange with others; and to understand the inherent contradictions in their own social realities and those of the African-American race. They, of course, were African-Americans who understood from their own lived experiences the human toll of oppression. For Baker to have acquiesced to the overtures of senior civil rights leaders would have perpetuated the culture of silence for SNCC and, by extension, African-Americans—rendering them unable to continue challenging Jim Crow laws.

It is well documented and verified by the data of this study the ways in which Baker paved a way forward for SNCC. The significance of her efforts in this regard only became evident a couple decades ago. She paved the way for others by sharing with them her wealth of knowledge and providing them access to her large network of friends and supporters. Both facilitated SNCC's safe passage across many racially hostile parts of the Deep South. Without access to Baker's connections, SNCC may not have succeeded in registering tens of thousands of voters or survived their registration campaign trips to southern states. Racial violence, including lynching, was still sanctioned by the Jim Crow code, which some African-Americans

viewed not as a code but rather as law.

Liberation leadership is also about inspiring a shared vision. From the time Baker planned and organized the 1960 Youth Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina, and SNCC elected her its adult advisor, she and SNCC shared a common vision. That vision was to achieve racial and sociopolitical equality for African-Americans—which the Movement realized, in part, due to Baker's belief that liberation required those involved in the freedom struggle to be knowledgeable and skillful. This was one of the most important roles she played. Baker indeed was the *Fundi* of the Movement—the individual in the African-American community who transferred her knowledge and wisdom to those she mentored and trained to be effective activists and organizers.

Another element of liberation leadership is its philosophy that influencing behaviors is the core of all relationships. Some participants recalled Baker's leadership influence on their lives and how it impacted the outcome of the Movement. Two such examples pertain to her influence on male-female relations, both internal and external to SNCC, which influenced for the good the way male SNCC members interacted with and valued the contributions of their female peers. Baker modeled the behaviors she wanted the young activists to emulate.

As a liberation leader, Baker led with principle, competence, and courage. She thought and acted strategically and understood the essentiality of these leadership qualities to movement success. Baker also provided the philosophical grounding for participants and SNCC by teaching them the benefits of bottom-up organizing, decision-making based on critical thinking and participatory democracy, and people development. She demonstrated awareness that without such indoctrination, participants and SNCC members would not be able to envision liberation and a path for achieving it. When combined, all of these are tenets of liberation leadership and reflect the core of Baker's leadership and philosophy.

Discussion, Summary, and Recommendation

Reconceptualizing Baker's leadership within the context of the Civil Rights Movement was not a small scholarly pursuit, although the richness of the study data illuminated the path I ultimately followed. In addition to achieving its multiple purposes, this study contributes to existing literature on social movement leadership by modifying an emerging theory on liberation leadership in order to incorporate Baker's participant-reported leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. These new elements are those other leadership models fail to incorporate.

Except for the unpublished dissertation of O'Donovan (2007), which sought to determine the response levels of primary school principals to strategic management principles, no known study has fully developed a liberation leadership framework that reconceptualizes leadership within the context of the modern Civil Rights Movement and that militates against social oppression. Not only did this research study introduced liberation leadership as new framework based on empirical evidence but it also illustrated how this leadership model can effectively challenge oppressive social systems and structures.

Liberation leadership is grounded in the theoretical traditions of both adult education and Black feminist thought. Where adult education is interwoven into the fabric of social movements and represents a source of new knowledge for the oppressed (Dykstra & Law, 1994; Foley, 1999; Holst, 2002, 2009; Kilgore, 1999), Black feminist thought focuses on activism, empowerment, and gender equality. This latter theory holds that race, gender, and class are interlocking systems of oppression, and that African-American women have a unique standpoint on oppression (Collins, 1990, 1998). This distinct perspective enables them to locate their own lived experiences within those of other similarly situated individuals or groups. The reason is African-American women share a *collective identity* by virtue of their socio-historically marginalized status in society

(Collins, 1990, 1998). Their cultural experiences afford them a special type of perspective on their own oppression and the social structures that caused and sustain it. Black feminist thought highlights the intersectionality of race, gender, and class oppression (Collins, 1990, 1998).

As with most new theoretical developments, there is always a backstory that inspires an idea or discovery. The backstory regarding the development and/or modification of the liberation leadership model for this current study was filled with serendipitous finds. The first serendipitous moment was discovering that many articles, books, and recorded interviews with Ella Baker contained the word *liberation*—oftentimes more than once. It was not the frequency at which the term appeared in secondary data sources that inspired the me but rather how using a simple term, such as liberation, is often more effective for developing and telling a story—the story about the research findings of this study.

For example, Ransby (2003) describes Baker's pedagogical approach in several ways—one of which as "teaching for liberation based on the need to empower ordinary people to dig within themselves and their collective experiences for the answers to social and political questions" (p. 359). Ross' (2003) book, *Witnessing and testifying: Black women, religion, and civil rights*, in which Baker's contributions to the Movement is a primary focus, believes the act of "racial uplift" has "implications for liberation" (p. 3). And Collier-Thomas and Franklin (2001) argue in *Sisters in the struggle: African-American women in the Civil Rights Movement* that a relationship exists between "literacy and liberation" (p. 113).

These are only a few of the works on the Movement and/or Baker in which one or more authors emphasize the concept of liberation. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines liberation as "a movement seeking equal rights and status for a group" while also referencing the women's liberation movement. From these and other data consulted and/or used in this study, a clear and

potent theme emerged—one that aligned and supported the data collected during the study. The data supported the thesis that among other characteristics, liberation leadership is transformative and has a liberating effect.

Furthermore, the findings of this study provide us different ways or prisms through which to view and understand Baker's leadership and, ultimately, liberation leadership. Looking through the first prism reveals an image of liberation leadership that rests on a tripartite foundation with three free-standing pillars: social action, pedagogy, and transformation. The first pillar, social action, represents Baker's community organizing and the voters' registration campaigns that SNCC launched during the early 1960s, while under Baker's tutelage. The pillar of pedagogy emphasizes Baker's pedagogical approach to teaching and the emphasis she placed on developing the *whole person*. She not only taught the young activists how to make decisions using critical thinking and participatory democratic principles but also how to lead with principle, humanity, humility, and courage.

Transformation is the third pillar supported by personal and societal transformation. Much like Freire's (1993) postulations about critical pedagogy, liberation leadership transforms the way the oppressed view their world and their role within it. This framework emphasizes the development of critical consciousness as a means for understanding the world and its social contradictions. Liberation leadership enables the oppressed to reimagine their realities in order to view forms of oppression in a different light. Doing so increases the potential for achieving liberation for themselves and others. This transformation begins within an incubator for learning, which exists inside social movements, such as the Civil Rights Movement. There, movement actors acquired new knowledge and skills—which enabled them to exercise human agency, to believe in their personal efficacy and in their ability to effectuate social change. At the end of such

a process, societal transformation occurred—not by happenstance but due to the dismantling of the oppressive social systems that separated the oppressed from their constitutional and human rights.

Table 9
Reimagination of the Liberation Leadership Process

Community Organizing
- Organizing the Community
- Galvinizing the Community around a Shared Vision for Racial Equality

Training People
- Problem Solving through Critical Thinking and Participatory Democracy
- Modeling Humanity, Humility, Courage , and Principled Leadership
- Planning Strategically for the Short- and Long-Term

Philosophical Grounding
- Seeing Hidden Talents and Potential in People
- Respecting and Valuing Diversity--Gender, Race, Class, and Perspectives
- Organizing from the Bottom

Impacting, Influencing Outcomes
- Achieving Liberation through Legislative Actions
- Remembering and Enacting the Teacher's Teaching
- Influencing Lives and Impacting Outcomes of a Social Movement

A second way to understand liberation leadership is to imagine that it exists on a continuum, beginning with community organizing and ending with liberating freedoms for the oppressed. Between these two points is where the leader carries out the true essence of liberation leadership. This type of leadership follows a circular path, with inputs and outputs at each point. Table 9 above illustrates this process through a reimagination of liberation leadership, which recasts it to include Baker's leader-behaviors.

Within the modern Civil Rights Movement, organizing the African-American community represented the first input of the liberation process. It served as a prelude for Baker's leader-

behaviors she displayed throughout the Movement. Shared vision is the second input. Baker galvanized SNCC and other activists around a common vision, which they developed collectively through a participatory democratic process. Theirs was a vision of racial equality and, ultimately, liberation. That vision remained immutable and stable and was made possible because liberation leadership diverts the focus from the leader to the entire group—the community of civil rights activists, which Baker and SNCC played a crucial role in organizing.

The third input in the liberation process advocates praxis when initiating a demand for liberation. Embedded within this vision is a demand for freedom. It was Frederick Douglas who reminded us that "power concedes nothing without a demand" (1857). Praxis concerns reflection and action that enable the oppressed to challenge and transform oppressive social systems. This is the type of praxis that supported Baker's training of participants and other SNCC members.

Philosophical grounding is the fourth input; it acknowledges that the leader's role is to create and foster an environment where the potential of ordinary people to make a difference can be acknowledged and nurtured. Baker's famous dictum, "strong people don't need strong leaders," is an example of the type of grounding she provided participants and other SNCC members. This along with the previous four inputs, led to the output of the legislative abolishment of Jim Crow laws and restoration of the constitutional rights of African-Americans, including the right to vote.

It is highly instructive to consider that the four inputs of the liberation process not only impacted the outcome of the Movement, but it also influenced the lives of many people. Baker gave voice to SNCC and other activists whose voices had been muted by the heavy weight of social injustice. Several participants still recall today, some fifty years later, the life-changing lessons they learned from Baker. They continue today to enact these principles in their personal and professional lives.

Summary

This study had a clear purpose: to reconceptualize the leadership of Baker during the modern Civil Rights Movement; to develop a leadership framework in which her community and political activism naturally fits; and to place her style of leadership in a broader framework of research—focusing primarily on the role of leadership in social activism.

Five research participants comprised the study sample: two African-American males who are SNCC veterans and three White females, all of whom are veteran civil rights activists who worked closely with SNCC. African-American women are not represented in the study.

Six major categories and five subcategories emerged from the primary data of this study—gathered through telephone interviews and a single in-person interview. These categories include: developing people for social change; leading with principles, competence, and courage; impacting lives, influencing outcomes; thinking and acting strategically; providing philosophical grounding; and overcoming obstacles. Comprising the five subcategories are legitimizing and giving voice, training through patience, encouraging critical thinking, enabling people to act, and displaying humanity and humility.

While some aspects of Baker's leadership align with those of bridge leadership, collective leadership, group-centered leadership and participatory democracy, grassroots leadership, and servant leadership, her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors are more closely aligned with liberation leadership. This leadership framework can be understood as resting on a foundation beneath three pillars: social action, pedagogy, and transformation. Liberation leadership is not a linear process; it carries with it a number of inputs and outputs. Community organizing, people development, philosophical grounding, influencing lives and impacting outcomes are the inputs that led to liberation—representing the ultimate output of liberation leadership.

Finally, this dissertation documents a comprehensive story about Baker's leadership as experienced and reported by the five research participants of this study. Notwithstanding her focus on community organizing and training SNCC members to become leaders, the data provide new insights into Baker's leadership. The first insight concerns her deep concern and respect for people, as evidenced by her reported humanistic interactions with others. Participants described her as an individual who met people where she found them, not where she wanted them to be. Baker connected with people in their own *space*—primarily because she was a member of the African-American community and could identify with their lived experiences. Community membership is a perquisite for liberation leadership.

Recommendation

This study presents a compelling argument for liberation leadership as the framework that best reconceptualizes Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. Where other leadership models have failed to do so, liberation leadership encapsulates the multidimensionality of her community organizing and political activism. This study merely scratches the surface in furthering our understanding of the implications of liberation leadership. Despite the absence of African-American women participation in this study, the efficacy of liberation leadership lies in its usefulness to help address a variety of complex social problems by organizing, training, and empowering those directly impacted to take collective action.

For example, future researchers could explore the efficacy of liberation leadership in decreasing the rate of poverty, homelessness, and/or urban violence in the United States. All of these are forms of oppression for which empirical evidence has shown liberation leadership to be a plausible approach for reducing their pervasiveness in this country and the levels of societal suffering that accompany them.

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Appendices

Appendix A

IRBNetDocument--IR
B APPROVAL LETTER.

Appendix B

[Electronic Letter of Invitation]

Dear _ [Prospective Participant] __:

I write to request your participation in a research study on Ella Baker and her leadership during the Civil Rights Movement. This study is an essential program requirement for the doctorate in educational leadership at the University of St. Thomas (Minnesota), College of Education, Leadership, and Counseling.

You were selected as a possible study participant because of your affiliation and work with the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. I obtained your name from the SNCC Public Mailing List, which organizers developed for SNCC's 50th Anniversary Conference.

Based on the length of your work with SNCC, I assume you may have known and interacted with Ms. Baker and might be willing to answer a few questions regarding her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. I invite you to participate in this important research study.

Participation in this study is voluntary and will require less than two hours of your time. Within this timeframe, I would like to interview you by telephone asking only 15 questions. All interview questions will pertain to Ella Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors. The interview itself should not last longer than one hour. But during the following week, I will send you a transcript of our interview and ask you to review and confirm its accuracy.

As an expression of my appreciation for your voluntary participation in the study, you will receive a $50 gift card redeemable at a national retail store selected by me—such as Amazon.com, Barnes and Nobles, Target, Best Buy, etc. I will send all gift cards through the U.S. Postal Service within two months following the end of my research study but not later than March 1, 2014. Eligibility criteria for the $50 gift card include:

    (1)   Participation in a one-on-one telephone interview with me—the researcher; and

    (2)   Continuation in the research study until its completion.

If you agree to participate in this study, please reply to this e-mail no later than November 6, 2013. After receiving your affirmative response, I will send you a copy of the University of St. Thomas *Consent Form*. The University of St. Thomas requires all research participants to confirm their consent in writing to participate in the study. The *Consent Form* will also provide greater details about my doctoral research study.

I appreciate you taking the time to read and respond to my e-mail inquiry. I hope you will agree to participate. Please send me an e-mail if I can answer any questions to help you reach an informed decision. Alternatively, you may contact me at 651/332-0876 (Business) or 651/735-3579 (Residence). I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Edna R. Comedy, MBA, ABD
Doctoral Student Researcher
University of St. Thomas
College of Education, Leadership, and Counseling

APPENDIX C

Electronic Participant Follow-Up Memorandum

Dear _____:

I write to follow-up on our recent e-mail communications regarding participation in my doctoral research study on Ms. Ella Josephine Baker. You may recall from a previous e-mail that my research focuses on Ms. Baker's leadership philosophy and style, as exhibited during crucial periods of the Civil Rights Movement.

Please forgive me for sending a third e-mail. I do not mean to bother you, as I am sure you are extremely busy and likely have received numerous requests of this nature from a countless number of scholars. However, your participation in my particular research study is essential to the development of a new and unique leadership theory, which not only incorporates Ms. Baker's leadership style but also its various components, e.g. her leadership vision, commitment to training others, and community organizing--just to name a few.

Based on the literature, only you and a few other civil rights leaders interacted with Ms. Baker frequently enough during the 1960s to help me answer the three research questions that undergird my study. My data collection strategy is to gather as much primary data as possible to ensure the picture that emerges from my study is both comprehensive as well as factual.

Again, I request your participation. Agreeing to do so will not represent a long-term commitment for you. Rather, participation merely requires a maximum of two (2) hours of your time-- comprising a one-hour telephone interview during which I will ask only fifteen questions--all centered on Ms. Baker's leadership--and subsequently approximately thirty (30) minutes to review a transcribed copy of our telephone interview that will take place two weeks after our telephone interview.

Please respond promptly to let me know whether or not you are willing and/or able to participate. I thank you for your consideration.

Edna R. Comedy, SPHR, MBA, ABD
Doctoral Student Researcher
University of St. Thomas
2115 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55115
Telephone: 651.332-0876
Facsimile: 651. 925-0645

Appendix D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

Reconceptualizing Leadership through the Prism of the Civil Rights Movement: A Grounded Theory Case Study on Ella Baker

IRB Log Number #465192-1

I am conducting a doctoral research study on Ella Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors as exhibited during the modern Civil Rights Movement. I invite you to participate.

You were selected as a possible participant because of your affiliation and work with the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and/or other civil rights organizations during the 1960 through 1965 timeframe. I obtained your name from the *SNCC Mailing List*, which organizers developed and used to plan SNCC's 50th Anniversary Conference. Based on the length of your work with SNCC, I believe you may have interacted with Ms. Baker and may be willing to answer a few questions about her leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors.

Please read the remaining sections of this form and send me any questions you may have about the study.

This research study is being conducted by Edna R. Comedy, under the faculty direction of Dr. John D. Holst, College of Education, Leadership, and Counseling at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Background Information

The purpose of this research study is three-fold: to reconceptualize the leadership of Ella Baker during the modern Civil Rights Movement; to develop a leadership framework in which her community and political activism naturally fits; and to place Ella Baker's leadership style into a broader framework of research—focusing primarily on the role of leadership in social activism. Because of the explanatory nature of this current study, achieving these objectives is an important research endeavor because of its usefulness in closing the research gap in current literature on Ella Baker's leadership.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in the study, you will need to agree to a one-hour telephone interview with me at a mutually convenient time. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. You will be asked to review a copy of the transcribed interview to ensure the record is completely accurate. Data accuracy is essential, as the interview represents one of several primary data sources of my research study.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and will take approximately two hours of your time. Within this timeframe and during the interview, I will ask you 15 questions—all pertaining to Ella Baker's leadership philosophy and leader-behaviors, the source of your knowledge about Ella Baker, and the length of your relationship with her. The interview itself should not last longer than one hour. But during the following week, I will send you a transcript of our interview and ask that you review and confirm its accuracy. If you identify in the transcript an omission or misstatement, simply notify me using my contact information below. I will make the necessary correction immediately and send you a second draft of the transcript for your review and final approval.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

This study has minimal risks to you and others who elect to participate in this study. Two potential risks of your participation in the study are that of personal identification and the disclosure of personal and sensitive information during the one-on-one telephone interview with me. To minimize these risks, I will treat all information you share with me confidentially and will not share it with another individual. Additionally, I will use a numbering system—the key to which is known only to me. When quoting any of your interview responses, your name will not be associated with them. Instead, you and other participants will be identified as "Participant One," Participant Two," "Participant Three," etc. The key for deciphering the numbering system will be stored securely on my personal laptop, which requires a security access code known only to me—the researcher

There is one direct benefit you will derive from participating in the study. To show my appreciation for your voluntary and uninterrupted participation in the study through its completion, you will receive a $50 gift card redeemable at a national retail store of my choice within two months after the study ends by November 15, 2013.

Compensation

To demonstrate my appreciation for your voluntary participation in the study, you and other participants will receive a $50 gift card redeemable at a national retail store of my choice—such as Amazon.com, Barnes and Nobles, Target, Best Buy, etc. I will mail all gift cards through the U.S. Postal Service within two months following the end of the research study but not later than November 15, 2013. <u>Eligibility criteria for the $50 gift card include:</u>

    (1)   Participation in a one-on-one telephone interview with the researcher (Edna R. Comedy); and
    (2)   Continuation in the research study until its completion.

Confidentiality

Records of this study will be kept strictly confidential and secure. In any sort of report I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you in any way. The types of records I will produce during the study include a tape recording of each one-on-one telephone interview, which I will copy onto a computer flash drive; and a transcribed copy

of each interview. All data collected during telephone interviews will be stored on my personal laptop computer, which requires a security code to gain access. I am the only individual who uses this laptop and who has knowledge of the security access code.

To further preserve the confidentiality of each research participants, I will use a numbering system known only to me. I will use this system not only during the data collection process but also when reporting my research findings and results. Specifically, when quoting participants and/or paraphrasing one or more of their statements, I will reference each participant as "Participant One," Participant Two," "Participant Three," etc. The key to deciphering the numbering system will be securely stored on my personal laptop, which again is password protected and used exclusively and solely by me. All functions related to data collection and analysis will be performed by me. I will not utilize the services of a professional transcriber or data entry clerk.

Therefore, the workflow for my interview data will follow a linear path: I will copy data from the digital recorder to a flash drive, perform all transcription work, and enter interview data into the NVivo software program. No one other than myself will have access to the data. As a precautionary measure, I will also request each interviewee or participant to keep confidential all information he or she provides me or the questions I request him or her to answer. Of course, as a researcher, I can only make the request; I cannot ensure or enforce compliance.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with me or the University of St. Thomas. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time up to and until October 30, 2013. To ensure your voluntary participation in this study, you also are free to skip any questions I may ask, which you find uncomfortable.
Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will not be used in this research study. I will also send you a confirmation letter acknowledging your decision to withdraw from the study. Only participants who remain in the study through its completion and participate in a one-on-one telephone interview with me will receive a $50 gift card.

Contacts and Questions

My name is Edna Comedy. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at (651) 332-0876, (651) 735-3579, or via e-mail at come6601@stthomas.edu. You also may contact my dissertation committee chairperson, Dr. John D. Holst, at (651) 962- 962-4433 or jdholst@stthomas.edu or the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-5341 with any questions or concerns. The mailing address of the University of St. Thomas is: 2115 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I

consent to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age.

_____   _____

Signature of Study Participant   **Date**

_____   _____

Signature of Researcher   **Date**

Appendix E

Interview Guide and Protocol

1. In what year and venue did you meet Ella Baker?

2. Please describe the frequency of your interactions with her? What were the purpose and nature of those interactions?

3. Please describe the role you played during the Civil Rights Movement.

4. Based on your own personal knowledge of Ella Baker, what role did she play in the Movement?

5. When you think about the Civil Rights Movement, how would you describe the leadership style most frequently displayed during the Movement?

6. In what ways, if at all, did Ella Baker's leadership mirror the type of leadership you observed during the Movement? Why?

7. What five attributes best describe Ella Baker as a leader?

8. Please provide a few examples of Ella Baker's behaviors toward you and/or others that you feel provide a glimpse into her leadership style?

9. From your perspective, what were a few of her leadership successes? Shortcomings?

   a. What factors do you believe contributed to those successes and/or shortcomings?

10. Describe a particular time when you were the proudest of Ella Baker.

11. In what ways, if at all, did Ella Baker's gender, personal traits or attributes advantage or disadvantage her in the Civil Rights Movement?

    a. Please provide a few examples.

12. In what ways, if at all, do you feel the passage of time may have influenced your views about Ella Baker, her leadership philosophy and/or leader-behaviors?

    a. If so, to do what factors do you attribute this change in your perspective?
    b. What are the most notable changes?

13. Are there other civil rights activists you believe I should talk with and who has first-hand knowledge of Ella Baker's leadership?

14. Describe for me Ella Baker's pedagogical approach when teaching or training community and student activists.

15. Is there anything more you would like to share with me about your Ella   Baker's leadership?

Thank you for your time and generosity. I sincerely appreciate you taking time from your day to talk with me today and for agreeing to participate in my research study. May I contact you again if I have questions while transcribing the tape of our interview? Data integrity is an extremely important aspect of my research study. If you wouldn't mind, I also would like to send you a copy of the interview transcript to ensure it accurately reflects your comments as well as your intent. If you determine it does not, I would appreciate receiving your editorial changes. I will incorporate your recommended changes and send acceptable, I will send you a revised version for you to review again. If you this approach is via e-mail during the upcoming week a copy of the interview transcript. Please confirm for me your e-mail address.

Are there any questions I can answer for me? If you think of any later and would like to discuss them, please contact me. You can send me an e-mail at come6601@stthomas.edu or call me at 651/735-3579. Thank you again for your time and participation.

Appendix F

Chronology of Ella Baker's Community Organizing, Political, and Human Right Activities

December 15, 1903	Born in Norfolk, Virginia
1927	Moved to New York and worked as a waitress
1929-1931	Hired as a member of the editorial staff of the American West Indian News and the Negro National News
1931	Served as Executive Director of the Young Negroes Cooperative League (YNCL) and is active in the consumer cooperative movement
1934	Joined staff of the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library
1935	Served as Publicity Director for the Sponsoring Committee of the National Negro Congress (NNC)
1936	Hired as consumer education instructor for the Works Progress Administration (WPA)
1937-1940	Worked for the National Association of Consumers as a fundraiser
1937-1940	Appointed Education and Publicity Officer for the Harlem's Own Co-Operative
1941	Joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as Assistant Field Secretary
1943	Appointed as NAACP Director of New York Branches
1946	Joined the staff of the New York Urban League
1947	Hired as fundraiser for the New York City Cancer Society in the Education and Outreach Office
1953	Competed unsuccessfully for the New York City Council on the Liberal Party ticket
1954	Rejoined the staff of the New York Branch of the NAACP as chairwoman of a special committee.
1955	Co-founder of In Friendship—a support group for Southern school desegregation school desegregation and the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott

1956	Appointed to the Commission on School Integration by the New York City Mayor
1957	Co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and served as head of the Crusade for Citizenship Unit
1960	Orchestrated the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
1960-1966	Appointed by SNCC members to serve as adult advisor to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
1960	Served as Human Relations Consultant for the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association)
1961	Co-founder of Operation Freedom
1962 - 1967	Appointed as consultant to the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF)
1964	Oversaw the Washington, D.C. and Atlantic City, N.J. offices of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP)
1965-68	Appointed as consultant to the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church
1971	Appointed Associate Director of the Coalition of Concerned Black Americans
1972	Elected vice-chair of the Mass Party Organizing Committee and board member of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee
1985	Received honorary doctorate from the City College of New York
December 13, 1986	Died in Harlem, New York

Sources: Joanne Grant. *Ella Baker: Freedom Bound*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998)

Barbara Ransby. *Ella Baker and the Black freedom movement: a radical democratic vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003)

"The Ella Baker Women's Center for Leadership and Community Activism," (http://ellabakerwomenscenter.org/about_us.html)

"Guide to the Ella Baker Papers," www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/archival collections/... /scmmg630.pdf)

Tables

Table 1
Participant Demographic Data (n=5)

Participants (in Pseudonyms)	Race	Gender	Organizational Affiliation	First Interaction with Ella Baker
Carla Custer	White	F	NSA-Southern Student Human Relations Project and SNCC	1960
Colin McDowell	African- American	M	SNCC	1960
Corbett Chisolm	African- American	M	SNCC	1960
Darlene Zenith	White	F	Student Conference Educational Fund and SNCC	1962
Debra Berkeley	White	F	NSA-Southern Student Human Relations Project and SNCC	1961

Table 2
Sample of Open Codes

Providing guidance	Organizing people
Facilitating way forward	Delegating responsibilities
Displaying humanism	Fighting inequality
Asking questions	Shaping worldview
Reshaping landscape	Discouraging individualism
Protecting students	Defining leadership
Modeling behaviors	Disliking self-promotion
Engaging others	Keeping fire burning
Exhibiting patience	Affirming people
Communicating effectively	Forward-looking
Listening	Motivating people
Displaying courage	Knowing people

Table 3

Samples of Data Categories Resulting from Axial Coding

Guiding activists	Legitimizing others
Promoting collectivism	Influencing outcomes
Empowering others to learn	Focusing on relations
Believing in ordinary people	Encouraging critical thinking
Connecting to people's emotional needs	Rejecting "leader" label
Organizing people so they could organize others	Taking the long view
Training through modeling	Rejecting top-down leadership
Authoring their lives	Nurturing and mentoring
Offering a vision	Demonstrating competence
Managing tensions	Inspiring and motivating people

Table 4
Major Categories and Subcategories

Research Questions (RQ)		Major Categories		Subcategories
RQ1		Developing People for Social Change		• Legitimizing and Giving Voice • Training Through Patience • Encouraging Critical Thinking • Enabling People to Act • Displaying Humanity and Humility
				•
RQ2		• Leading with Principles, Competence, and Courage • Thinking and Acting Strategically • Impacting Lives, Influencing Outcomes • Providing Philosophical Grounding • Overcoming Obstacles		
		•		
RQ3		Identifying the Baker Leadership Framework		

Table 5

Participant-Generated Leadership Attributes of Ella Baker

Berkeley	Chisolm	Custer	McDowell	Zenith
Articulate speaker but held back	Dogged determination	Very sympathetic	Very compassionate and loving	Viewed herself as a facilitator, a technician
Promoted others and gave them voice	Excellent orator	Brilliant strategist and speaker	Concerned about how you develop	Someone who got people together
Understood the potential of every person; worked to get the best out of all of us	A great influencer; able to pursue and achieve goals; clear understanding of the objective	Fearless in choosing projects	Concerned about people being prepared	Someone who opened doors for others
Was aware of what was needed without being antagonistic or vitriolic	Leader in warfare; had foresight	Ready and able to give personal support	She wanted you to know what you're talking about.	A defender of young people
Dignified and self-possessed	Patient and understanding	Kind and loving	Didn't need to be seen or paid attention to	A critic who spoke her mind
Politically sophisticated	Bold and fearless	Courageous but a good listener	She had faith in people	Could be stern when needed
Shied away from publicity	Ability to relate to people around her	Valued relationships	She could see things that nobody else could	Possessed unadulterated courage
Led from the bottom-up	Motivated people to do extraordinary things in situations that were extremely dangerous	Respected everyone's opinion	She gave us our values	Harbored no thoughts of self- enrichment
Book smart but practical; pragmatic and idealistic	Goal-oriented	Listened to what all had to say	She spoke her mind	Able to keep a whole network alive; she kept them alive
Accepting of people's strengths as well as frailties		Possessed indomitable courage to take a different roads	She was very impactful	Played the role of mentor
Took a long view of things and steps for moving forward		Willing to listen to all opinions	Excellent leader; very smart	
Focused not diverted, not distracted; kept her eyes on the prize		Had a sense of humor		

Table 6

Leadership Frameworks Used to Explain Baker's Leadership

Bridge Leadership	Collective Leadership	Group-Centered Leadership and Participatory Democracy	Grassroots Leadership	Servant Leadership
An intermediate layer of informal leadership	Supports leadership skills development	Emphasizes participatory democracy	Focus is on organizing and mobilizing communities	Emphasizes service to others
Bridged people to the Movement	Rejects leader dependency and leader-centeredness	Decentralizes power and decision-making	Fosters a sense of belonging	Promotes a sense of community
Enabled women to play informal leadership roles	Promotes self-efficacy and leader empowerment	Values bottom-up decision-making	Promotes identification with the community	Shares responsibility for decision-making
Persons known and trusted within the Black community	Emphasizes unity, partnership, and accountability	Fosters social justice	Encourages challenges of the status quo	Focuses on knowledge acquisition, growth, and autonomy of followers
Enabled women to support political frames and ideologies	Emphasizes learning, including collective learning	Emphasizes inclusion	Relates to grassroots activism	Emphasizes listening, empathy, healing, and awareness
Emphasize self-determination	Responsibility is shared between leader and followers	Recasts the leader's to facilitator	Is a type of informal leadership	Takes a holistic approach to work
	Mutual respect is a core principle	Emphasizes discourse, debate, reflection, and consensus		Emphasizes conceptualization, foresight, persuasion, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building communities
	Encourages challenges of old assumptions			

Table 7

Comparison of Liberation Leadership to Baker's Leader-Behaviors

Liberation Leadership	Participants' Descriptors of Baker's Leader-Behaviors
Proposes a way forward	Proposed way forward for SNCC
Takes initiative	Self-actualized and possessed a "dogged determination"
Takes principled stands	Took principled stands and spoke truth to power
Organizes people	Organized people and communities which enabled others to act
Inspires others	Inspired and motivated SNCC and others to take action that they would not have otherwise
Develops potential in others	Emphasized people development
Challenges social systems; questions fundamental values	Organized, planned, and led campaigns that dismantled oppressive social systems
Inspires a shared vision	Inspired a shared vision of racial and social equality
Strives to understand the wider context	Was "analytical, took the long view"
Emphasizes "inclusive fellowship; embraces diverse opinions"	Gave voice to and legitimized all viewpoints
Views influencing behaviors as the core of all relationships	Influenced the lives and outcomes of SNCC and the Movement more broadly
Focuses on the "well-being of learners"	Displayed humanity during interactions with others
Values participatory democratic decision-making	Espoused and practiced participatory democracy
Emphasizes "tenets of distributive leadership," where all members play a leadership role	Empowered others to lead; delegated leadership responsibilities
Encourages long-range planning	Encouraged SNCC to plan ahead, e.g. controversial speakers, voters' registration campaigns, etc.
Encourages members to use creative ways to achieve desired outcomes	Encouraged critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and reimagination of issues

Sources: O'Donovan, S. (2007). Courting Strategy Management through the Intervention of Liberation Leadership. Retrieved from https://hydra.hull.ac.uk/resources/hull:744

Ruth, S. (2006). *Leadership and liberation: A psychological approach*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Table 8

McComb Project: 1960 Voters' Registration Statistics for McComb, Mississippi

County	Number of Adult Blacks	Number Registered	Registration Percentage
Pike County (McComb)	8,000	200	2.5%
Amite County	5,000	1	0%
Walthall County	3,000	0	0%
Note: Based on 1960 Census data. Blacks comprised 42 percent of the 12,000 McComb, Mississippi residents. McComb is the largest city in Pike County, Mississippi Source: Civil Rights Movement Veterans Website, http://www.crmvet.org/tim/timhis61.htm# 1961mccomb			

Table 9
Reimagination of the Liberation Leadership Process

Community Organizing	• Galvinizing the Community around a Shared Vision for Racial Equality
Training People	• Problem Solving through Critical Thinking and Participatory Democracy • Modeling Humanity, Humility, Competence, and Courage as Essential leader-behaviors • Planning Strategically and Long-Range
Philosophical Grounding	• Seeing the Hidden Talent and Leadership Potential in all People • Respecting the Value of Diversity--Gender, Race, and Class • Organizing from the Bottom up
Impacting, Influencing Outcomes	• Remembering and Enacting the Teacher's Teaching • Impacting in a Material Way the Outcomes of a Social Movement